

RMRU Fresh Tracks

May-2004

The Newsletter of Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit

2004 Annual Meeting Election Results



Kirk Cloyd



Terry Greenstein



Ray Hussey



Travis Henderson



David Webb

Election of officers to be held



Jim Fairchild



Michael George



Lee Amson



Will Carlson

Pete Carlson
with
Glenn Henderson
as an Alternate

Rescue Committee with Five Members

Ice and Snow conditions make for dangerous conditions as a couple of our members can attest to. Ice is a reason to be cautious since accidents happen quickly.



These pictures are taken during the Mt. Baldy Search by RMRU

IN MEMORY OF

James Simons

The following people made donations to RMRU and we have listed only their names in no particular order.

Paula Earp, Misha Hammond, Ann Spears, Tracy DiAsio, Nancy Higgins, Sherry Gibson, Marilyn Jacobs, Robbie Stone, Scott Johnson, Scott Richardson, Cynthia Bale, Kevin DeWitte and Friends of Greg Schultejann, Thomas Erdman and Dorothy Wozniak.

Sunday January 25, 2004 Tramway San Jactinto Mountains

The call came at 23:00 after I had been asleep 2 hours. A solo male hiker age 33 had left Palm Springs in the morning planning on hiking up the Sky Line Trail to the Tramway. What he did not know was the last 1,000 feet were covered with snow and ice. Around 18:15 he called his girl friend on his cell phone and said it was getting very slippery and he did not like it, but he could see the Tramway and was continuing up. That was the last anyone had heard of him. They had tried calling his cell phone but he did not answer.

I arrived at the Tramway around 01:30 meeting up with Jim Fairchild, Steve Bryant, Glenn Henderson, Rick Maschek, Kirk Cloyd, and John Dempsey. We took a private 02:00 tram ride to the top. Once on top Steve, Kirk, and I went out to the top to the Sky Line Trail to take a look. It was a calm night and our voices calling for him went down over 1,000 feet. We went over the side a short ways and decide to wait unit first light at 05:30 to go down. We went back to the Tramway and got 2 hours sleep. At 06:00 Glenn, Rick, and I started over the side. We were yelling every few minutes but got on answer. After dropping down 1,000 feet we started traversing over small ridges and drainages heading for the main ridge where the Sky Line Trail comes into the steep drainages. We were wearing our Crampons and using Ice Axes the whole time. A fall in this area would be a long one.

We reached the main ridge around 08:30 and found a single set of tracks going straight up the ridge and across into drainage. We call base to let them know that we had his tracks and to get the helicopter to search above us. It took us about 45 minutes to climb back up 500 feet till we got to a steep cliff where the foot prints ended. He had climbed up the rocks. We did not have the correct equipment to climb the 75 foot face, so we found a way to go around it. While we were heading down 200 feet to go around the face and up the next drainage the helicopter flew over and circled to look on top of the rock face. As it came around they reported a body in the next drainage lying still with a lot of blood on the snow. It turned out that he had climbed the face and on top it was covered in ice. He must have slipped and fallen over 150 feet to his death. It took us another 20 minutes to get to him.

After taking pictures for the corner we waited for the helicopter to return and drop us equipment to load him for evacuation. They lifted him out on a long line and flew it to base camp at the Lower Tramway Parking Lot. We moved back down and over to the main ridge to be picked up and flown back to base also. By 12:30 everyone was out and ready to go eat a late breakfast.

While we were doing this mission 2 other solo hikers were still missing in Southern California and 5 others had died since Jan 1 falling on ice covered mountains. By the time I am writing this article the 2 missing hikers have been found, both died. In 5 weeks in 2004 a total of 8 hikers had fallen on ice and died in the local area mountains. Most people do not realize how dangerous the local mountains can be in winter. They hike them in the summer for years, but winter conditions change everything.

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit Mission Report # 26

Date: 10-19-03 S.O. file# DR03292046
S.O.: Hemet-- Dep. Martinez
Location: Humber Park-Tahquitz Rock
Call Out: 14:15 hrs Mission Completion: 0915 hrs 10-20-03

**Description:**

Incident was reported by adjacent climbers and hikers by cell phone and in person. Three pops and a loud thud were heard by adjacent climbers near the route called the "white maiden", the initial information was that a physician was close by and pronounced them both dead and that the bodies were located just east of lunch rock and 150 ft above the talus. 15 minutes later the story changed that no physician was present and they weren't sure if they were dead. This changed the gear for the bash team, emergency medical gear was added and a team physician was added to the bash team. The 5 member bash team reached the subjects and found that climbers had tied off the upper body to a rock anchor so the bodies would not fall down further. Both bodies were still securely tied together. The upper victim was pronounced dead by a team physician but the lower victim was about 20 ft down the face and was imbedded in brush. This necessitated attaching a lowering device and hauling him out of the brush and it was found that he was partially decapitated and also pronounced dead. Both subjects were lowered about 120 ft down the face to the talus. Additional team members had arrived with 2 litters and wheels and both victims were placed in body bags and lashed into the litters. By this time it was 21:00 hrs and winch extraction was requested by the RSO aerosquadron at first light and this was approved by the watch commander. Two RMRU members Michael George and Dana Potts volunteered to stay with the bodies overnight and assist in the extraction in the AM.

At approximately 07:00 hrs the extraction was performed. The extraction was complicated by rock fall produced by the helicopter's main rotor downwash but no injuries occurred. The bodies were transported to Keenwild heliport where the Coroner's personnel were waiting.

MEMBERS AT MISSION

RMRU (18) Travis Henderson, Darrell Bell, Brad Scott, Kirk Cloyd, Ray Hussey, Deborah Riegle, Gene Baune, Rick Maschek, Glen Henderson, Gwenda Yates, Dave Webb, Dana Potts, Terry Greenstein, Pete Carlson, Steve Bryant, Michael George, Bill Delo, William Carlson.

Mission #27 10/25/2003 Humber Park. Evidence search re: mission 26 above

Mission #29 11/21/2003 Humber Park. By Henry Negrete

Idyllwild is a Mecca for rock climbers in So. California, but sometimes the cool, sunny fall days can be deceiving, especially when they follow the first dusting of snow which often come with the change of seasons. Such was the case when two middle aged climbers from San Diego decided to come to Idyllwild and climb the internationally Famous Tahquitz Rock. Tahquitz Rock is well known for its "long climbs" on its spectacular monolith face. Unfortunately with the shorter days of fall, the north facing long climbs never really warm up. The upper elevations are nearly 8,000 feet and are often at freezing temperatures.

After ascending several hundred feet, the two climbers found themselves in the pit falls of these conditions. The climbers were on a popular route called "who dunit". The route is not particularly difficult for experienced climbers, but what the climbers didn't know was that in those upper elevations, the cracks, where they would usually place their climbing protection [wired nuts and stoppers], were filled with ice formed from the early snows and freezing rain. The climbers made several attempts to climb around the icy cracks but only found more of the same in every direction. The climbers contemplated rappelling back down the rock in stages, but they had never done so on a long climb together. Also they had heard about the two climbers that had fallen to their death a month earlier and became quite "gripped" at the thought of trying to descend.

They chose to stay put and call out for help, hoping that someone would hear them and come to their rescue. Fortunately for them Captain Tony Sandrini of the U.S. Forest Service was on Patrol in the area and was flagged down by a hiker who said he had heard someone yelling for help from Tahquitz Rock. After investigating the situation Capt. Sandrini contacted the Riverside Sheriffs office, who in turn activated R.M.R.U.

R.M.R.U. was requested to respond to Humber Park for a probable technical rescue on Tahquitz Rock. Living and working in Idyllwild I was one of the first to arrive "on scene" at Humber Park. With binoculars in hand I scoured the rock face trying to spot where the climbers might be. The deputy on scene informed me that he had already requested the Sheriff's Department Helicopter to assist in the search. Soon after the arrival of the helicopter the two climbers were spotted clinging to the side of the rock.

The helicopter crew requested that I rendezvous with them at the U.S. Forrest Service Helipad at Keenwild Station as soon as possible. The urgency was because the winds were picking up and both the temperatures and sun were going down. After arriving at the helipad, I was advised by Tony, the pilot, that this was going to be one of the "hairiest" rescues we've done because of the existing conditions. His words were a little unsettling at first, but then I thought, "This is what we train for".

We quickly ascended to the site of their predicament and I tethered my pack to my side so I could be winched down to the climbers. The helicopter had to hover about 200 feet over them so as to be directly above them but not too close to the rock. When I reached the climbers I was pleased to find three things...(1) the climbers were uninjured (2) they had stopped on a small ledge that would at least accommodate our feet, and (3) there was a nice, new, shiny bolt to clip into for safety.

After clipping into the bolt I was able to get off the hoist cable and hook it into the harness of the first climber to go up. When I tried to retrieve the cable for the second climber it was a little more difficult because the wind kept blowing it away from us. After finally "catching" the cable the second climber was soon on his way up to safety.

I needed some time to pack up the climber's gear left on the ledge so the helicopter flew the climbers back to the helipad to make room for me to return. When the helicopter returned for me, the wind had picked up and I had a little tougher time trying to grasp the cable. If it weren't for the superb skills of the Pilot and Crew this could have been a bigger ordeal for me.

I was soon back in the "bird" with renewed appreciation for the Pilot and Crew's expert abilities. After arriving back at Keenwild Station we exchanged expressions of gratitude and high 5's to each other and were soon on our way back to enjoying the remainder of our cool fall day in beautiful Idyllwild.

Mission #01 01/01/2004 Humber Park By Henry Negrete

Unfortunately rescues do not take holidays off. Such was the case on New Years day 2004. At about 14:30 that afternoon I received a call from the Idyllwild Fire Dept. to give me a heads-up call about a male hiker who had slipped off the icy trail near Tahquitz Peak in the San Jacinto Mountains. I intern called Glenn Henderson, one of RMRU's call captains to pass on the information. Glenn contacted the Riverside Sheriff's dept., and, returned my call to tell me that the Sheriff's helicopter (Star 91) would be in route to U.S.Forest Service helipad at Keenwild station to pick up fellow team member and Idyllwild resident Lee Arnsen and me to fly in and start the rescue. Lee and I rendezvoused with Star 91, and were quickly in the air to search for our fallen hiker. Lee and I went prepared with gear to do a ground

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Mission #02 January 2, 2004 Mount Baldy Out of County Search By Rick Maschek

As I was returning home from being canceled on a "Rescue in Humber Park" called out, I heard LA Air Rescue 5 on the radio trying to call the ski patrol. I looked up the Cajon Pass and could see them flying around Mt. Baldy. With the sun about to go down and a storm approaching, I prepared for a possible mutual aid call out the next day and consumed massive quantities of liquids as I had just given blood the day before.

Sure enough, at 0501 I was awakened by the page to be at Mt. Baldy by 06:00. I got there a few minutes after and met with Jim Fairchild who was the only other RMRU person there at the time. I was told to be ready in 40 minutes for something and then asked if I could be ready to go in 5 minutes with a group made up of two Alta Dina searchers and the team leader who was from West Valley SAR. We were to get a ride on a helicopter up to the top of Baldy and search from the PLS down into the bowl. We could not get a break in the weather so were transported to the ski hut

trailhead at San Antonio Falls to hike up to the bowl. There was a slight rain most of the way up to the bowl in 32 degree temperatures. It was nice to be able to stop at the ski hut, hang wet clothes up to dry and eat some food. Then we proceeded to hike up the switchbacks to the ridge dividing the bowl from Goode Canyon. We searched back and forth across the ridge on hard pack snow alternating with ice and then down and across the bowl with no luck finding any sign of the missing person, Charles Koa. We ended up at the ski hut and again stopped in to briefly warm up.

The others wanted to go back down due to being cold and wet so we headed back down the trail still occasionally calling out Charles name. We arrived back at the trailhead in the dark, four cold, wet and hungry searchers. I was to use the next day before going back out again on Sunday.

Our thanks to the Sierra Club for allowing the use of their Ski Hut and the caretaker there (forgot her name) who had a fire going with hot water for food and drink.

Mission #02 Mt. Baldy Out of County Search Second Article
Starting the Year Off with a Bang By William Carlson



Beep Beep Beep.....Beep Beep.....Beep Beep Beep. That sound could only mean one thing at 0400 in the morning. I thought to myself, "Why do people get lost at 04:00?" After calling the rescue line I learned that a man was missing on Mt. Baldy after taking a fall and the lead team was requesting additional resources. Our team was to meet at the Mt. Baldy fire department station at 06:00 to receive an assignment. I arrived and met up with Jim Fairchild and learned some unknown information about the search. Rick Mascheck was already in the field searching an area known as the Baldy Bowl. Travis Henderson showed up soon after and he and I were teamed up with two members of the Los Angeles County SAR team.

Our assignment was to hike from the top of the ski lift across the Devils Backbone and look for sign. We were also yelling off both sides of the Backbone to listen for a voice. We headed up and began our search in the worst conditions possible. We covered our lower area in pouring rain and quickly became damp. As we climbed higher the rain turned to sleet and snow. Everything was fast becoming frozen. At a certain point we put on our crampons and got out our ice axes because of the icy conditions that were present.

A couple of places were quite icy so we slowed down and took our time. Around 14:00 we took a break to rethink our plan. We were leaving the trees and no longer would be able to have visibility of where we were. This can be dangerous because of the steep ridges and drops so we opted to radio base that we were deciding to turn around for safety reasons. We continued to yell all the way back but because of the strong winds and the storm we knew that our voices were only carrying 100 feet if that. When we returned to the top of the ski resort we noticed that we had about a 1-inch layer of ice caked on everything. It was obvious that this missing man would be in bad shape if he were found.

We returned to base and they told us to rest up and get ready to head out again tomorrow so we enjoyed a nice dinner and headed home. Many members from our team were going to return the next day to continue the search.

Members Present 1-2-04: William Carlson, Travis Henderson, Jim Fairchild, and Rick Mascheck.

Note: the search was temporarily suspended 1-4-04 and resumed again a week later.....almost 3 weeks after the search began the missing mans body was recovered. **Pictures on Front Page**

Mission 03 01/21-23/2004

San Gorgonio

by Will Carlson



Search and Search.....and Search

Excitement ran through my veins as I heard the all too familiar sound of my pager. I called the rescue line and quickly learned that we were requested by San Gorgonio SAR to assist in a search for a missing 25-year-old hiker. I was itching to go because of all of the sad outcomes of the previous searches we had had this year. The man had been missing for only a few days and he was well equipped. That gave us hope that he was alive....just disoriented.

Wednesday morning Pete Carlson (my dad) and I met up with Jim Fairchild and Dave Webb. We waited around for an assignment that never came because of some issues with the weather conditions and the helicopter. However, many teams could be flown in to an area know as Dry Lake. They searched the North side of the mountain but found no sing of the missing hiker.

I returned on Friday and was teamed up with three members of the San Diego Mountain Rescue Team and a member of San Bernardino SAR. We were given the assignment of searching up the

Mill Creek Jump Off. It was a likely area that he could have ended up. We searched the whole streambed and many of the side canyons. As we approached the Jump Off we opted to split into two teams. Those of us who felt comfortable on icy conditions continued up and the other two went back to search some of the other canyons and return to base.

We climbed the last steep section and crested to see that we had to basically go swimming in Manzanita and other types of bushes in order to get to where the helicopter would pick us up. That was the hardest part of the day but we made it. The helicopter did a hovering pick off and we were flown back to base.

Members Present 1-21-04: William Carlson, Pete Carlson, Jim Fairchild, and Dave Webb

1-22-04: Jim Fairchild

1-23-04: William Carlson

Note: The search continued for 2 weeks and the body of the missing hiker was eventually found. This hiker was the 4th hiker to slip on ice and fall to his death since January 1st.

Mission 04 01/26/2004 Written up on page #2

Mission 05 01/31/2004 Skyline Trail Subjects walked out.

Mission 06 03/07/2005 Grotto near Idyllwild Arts Center Aborted



**Mission 07 04/05/2004 Joshua Tree. Search for man missing 6 days. Found]
By Dave Webb**

The call came out about 08:00 Easter Sunday. All we knew was that there was a missing person in Joshua Tree National Park and they needed us there at 07:30 Monday morning at the Ryan Camp grounds. After getting the support, (and normal response from my better half) I started gearing up.

When I got there the next morning I was relieved to see so many of my team members had made it. Jim Bakos, (AKA) Bill, Angie James, Patrick McCurdy, Jim Fairchild, Darrell Bell, and Travis Henderson. We gathered for the briefing to learn that the subject was a distraught male, who had last been seen seven days earlier. He was known to wear black caps, black shirts, and his weight was about 160 lbs. After the briefing we were told that due to the overwhelming response, they would need another 20 minutes to set up new assignments. Many used this extra time to get our gear together and use the last civilized bathrooms. (In the process Angie walking right by the subject). I went back to my truck and kicked my legs up on the tailgate, leaned back on my backpack, pulled my hat down, and acted like Joe cool enjoying the morning sun, anticipating a nice hike. Even though I thought that the consensus was that when we would find him, it probably wouldn't be pleasant.

As I was relaxing, I looked over and here was this guy walking towards me, he had a black shirt on, a black cap, he had the right build, and he had my attention. I sat up on the tailgate and watched as this guy came towards me. At one point he looked up and I could see this bewildered look in his eye. I asked, are you OK? He stopped as I got up and started towards him. In a mumbling voice and with half gesture he said, my camp's over

there, but my Jeep is gone. Knowing from the briefing earlier that the Park Rangers had already impounded his Jeep. I asked, are you Paul? He looks up at me with this, how did you know my name look and says, "yes". All I could do was chuckle, put my arm over his shoulder and I said, Paul! Buddy old pal! Partner if you could come over here with me. I know some people that are going to be real glad to see you. So I simply walked him 60 yds. around a boulder and into the command center. As we approached people started to gather and I saw that same bewildered look in everyone's eyes, the same one I had just seen in Paula's earlier. When we got there I said, everyone this is Paul. After a few questions someone asked, "are you Paul Jorgensen?" When he said, "yes." It was like a light just went on, the EMT was called and as the Park Rangers excused us so that they could do their questioning.

During the debriefing we learned he had indeed tried to commit suicide. It was a night when the temperatures were just above freezing, it was windy, and it was raining. Being hypothermic he took a piece of glass and tried to cut his wrist. Obviously it hurt and he didn't do it again. An ambulance was on the way to take Paul to the hospital for a few days of healing and close attention.

So RMRU got the credit for another successful mission. Afterwards we all headed to Denny's to get our complimentary lunch, (dinner, breakfast, or what ever time of day it is meal) from our Sheriffs Dept. Even though this might have been one of the shortest search and rescues RMRU has ever done, technically they had to give it to us. Out of three different rescue units that made it, it was someone from RMRU that had made gone to the briefing, spotted the subject, stopped him, questioned him, identified him, and brought him into the command center. I wish all mission could be this easy, but alas we all know this isn't to be true. Until the next mission, Climb Safe!

See picture top left last page of subject

MONTHLY TRAINING

November Training November 8, 2003

What was to be a cold and rainy day turned out to be a perfect day for technical rock training at Big Rock. The team met at Big Rock, a popular climbing area near Lake Perris, at 08:00. Our thanks to the Park service for letting us drive into the Big Rock area. It saved a lot of time getting everyone in and setting up our gear.

We had quite a few new members so we started with the basics of everything. Ray opened by talking about clothing, footwear, gear, and other basics involving technical rescue. We then moved on to knots, litter tie in, litter rigging and litter attendant duties.

We stopped for about 30 minutes for lunch and then started with personal skills. Several ropes of about 75 feet were set up and we began teaching new members rappelling and jummaring skills. The rappelling went quite smoothly but jummaring is another problem skill. There is a small roof that the ropes dropped over and it proved quite challenging to those new to jummaring. We worked on personal skills until 16:30 when we started to pack up our gear and head out for home. It was a very successful training with 17 members in attendance and new friends made with our FNG's. **Note: Pictures on back page of "Big Rock Training"**

Winter Training January 10-11, 2004

By Pete Carlson

We all rode up the 08:00 Tramway to start our Winter Snow Training. There was not much snow and we had not even taken snowshoes with us. We split into two groups with the new people going up the trail to Round Valley and then going over to upper Tamarack Valley. Four of us took the cross country ski route which is a much shorter route directly up to Tamarack Valley. Once at camp we set up shelters and again split into two groups. Some of us used a GPS and went over to the Ranger Cabin in Round Valley to see if we had the correct co-ordinates. While others tried to make a hard snow run for ice axe practice. We cooked dinner around 16:30 and at 18:00 about 10 of us headed up to San Jacinto Peak, about a 1,500 foot climb. We went cross country up to the saddle between Cornell Peak and Frank Miller Peak. Here we put on our crampons to head up the ridge to the peak. The snow was not very hard and we had no problems moving quickly up the ridge. Most of the group turned around half way up to Miller Peak and returned to camp. Three of us continued up the ridge and over Miller Peak to San Jacinto Peak. We reached the peak at 19:30 just as the full moon rose over far desert ridges to the east. We returned down the other side where the trail runs and got to see the moon rise 2 more times over Cornell Peak. On Sunday we did some more ice axe practice and familiarization as we hiked back to the Tramway. We did not have a lot of snow but for the new people it was a good introduction and for us old timers it was another fun trip in the mountains, another accent of San Jacinto, and another great moon rise in the wilderness.

February 7 – 8 TRAINING

February Training was held on Saturday and Sunday February 7 – 8. The team met at the Palm Springs Tram at 7:30 AM to catch the 8:00AM car to the high country for winter technical training. We hiked in Shangri La and set up camp for the weekend. It was really nice to see that we did have a winter this year. We didn't have to search for a patch of snow to camp on as in the past few years. There was plenty of fresh snow everywhere. Once camp was set up we carried the litter and all our gear over to the escarpment along the north face. Here we discussed how to set up snow anchors, and do raises and lowers during winter conditions. We then rotated members through the different systems of belaying, raises, lowers, and being a litter attendant. We broke for lunch and then continued training until late afternoon.

Once training was over dinner was cooked with everyone checking out what others were cooking and thinking mmmmmmm, that looks better than what I brought! After dinner we sat around and swapped rescue stories and lies until 21:00 when we all turned in. Sunday morning we packed up and went in search of a place to practice personal ice axe skills. We found a great place but after two hours of trying to pack it down we gave up, as it was too powdery to make a good run to practice on. We finally hiked back out to the tram and returned home to wait for the time when our training would be needed. The team would also like to thank the Palm Springs Tramway for their support of our trainings. [See Pictures.](#)

APRIL TRAINING

Thanks to Dave, Will, and Ray for planning and/or conducting the training this last weekend at Joshua Tree. We covered a wide range of individual and team skills and got a tremendous amount accomplished. The wind blew something fierce Saturday night, but the weather Sunday was simply spectacular. Speaking for myself, it was two days of very valuable training. Below is a link to some photos I took at JT, as well as some I took last November at Big Rock.

http://www.mccurdygroup.com/rmr/jt_apr04/

http://www.mccurdygroup.com/rmr/bigrock_nov03/

2004 MRA Search and Tracking Recertification By Rick Maschek

This year's Mountain Rescue Association's Team Recert tested our team in ELT search, grid search, ground search and medical skills at the Firestone Boy Scout Ranch in Brea, California. The San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team hosted the event this year. Last year we were tested in snow rescue skills and next year will be technical rope rescue skills as the third part of the three-year skill testing rotation.

RMRU had just trained with our ELT equipment before our night training with the sheriff department's aviation crew and we were eager to use our skills. Some of the team members showed up the evening before and camped out while the rest of us arrived early Saturday morning for what turned out to be a long day of multiple skill testing. Each team is required to provide two members to evaluate other teams and two of our best members, Glenn Henderson and Steve Bryant, were tapped for this assignment.

Our team's first test of the day was the ELT. Private aircraft are required to be equipped with an emergency locator transmitter (ELT) as a result of a 1970 search in Alaska for two congressmen that were never located. These beacons are automatically turned on upon impact and the signal picked up by satellite and then relayed to receiving stations on earth that pass the information on to the local jurisdiction/search resources. In the last 20 years, these beacons have enabled the rescue of over 14,000 people. We test on a special frequency so as not to activate the emergency system but that frequency has been changed and since our ELT finder equipment has not been updated for the new training frequency, the San Dimas MRA team allowed us to use three of their ELTs.

We had a two-hour time limit and in a short time we had picked up a weak signal and set off on dirt roads, under the leadership of team member Debbiy Riegler, following the direction of the signal. After a few miles, we eventually found ourselves in heavy brush on the side of some hills when we found the transmitter (under a large bush and covered up). Not your typical plane wreckage but it showed that we could also find a person with an activated personal locator beacon (PLB) that have been recently approved for people to carry. On the disconcerting side of this exercise was the fact that some of the heavy brush included poison oak that days later was to cause some of us to

Our next test was the medical assessment and packaging scenario. Our "victim" had fallen and sustained serious injuries that required dressing wounds, splinting fractures and packaging into our litter for carryout. We are fortunate enough to have two physicians on our team and Dr. Bill Delo was on hand to keep us on track with this portion of our recert.

Immediately after completing the medical test we were given the grid search. This involves searching a prescribed area for evidence and or clues both big and small, anything indicating the passage of a person. To make the task a bit more difficult, the area to be searched was on a steeply sloping vegetated hillside. An important thing to remember while grid searching is to be sure of complete coverage while looking in front, to the sides, and behind you. When in a treed area such as this, it's also important to look up. Again, RMRU passed without any difficulty.

After a short time back at our command post (the big white van) we were notified to get ready for our last test of the day - tracking. We sent one of our members with the evaluator to the point last seen (PLS) to talk with the reporting party to gain information and to mark off and protect and preserve the area for tracks. With that done the rest of us were called in to form tracking and search groups. Bruce Sanny, who has recently completed a POST certified tracking course at last year's SAR City lead the team actually following the missing person's tracks. The rest of us split into two teams to flank both sides of the tracking team to cut for sign and look ahead for the missing person. Since the person we were looking for had been "gone for over ten hours" the tracking (a tedious and time consuming but necessary process) would have taken a long time if the missing person had been continually walking during this time. While cutting for sign, one of the flanking teams found the "missing" person reading a book under a tree oblivious to the fact that he was missing, something that occasionally happens on actual searches.

With perfect weather, a varied assortment of tests of our skills, and good team camaraderie, this year's MRA Recertification was a huge success. Our thanks to the host team San Dimas Mountain Rescue. Now to train for next year's recert and for our next mission.

p.s. updating, replacing, or purchasing equipment seems to be a never-ending story as we learned about our ELT locating equipment. While our gear works for the currently used transmitted emergency signal, it uses an old frequency no longer used in the practice training mode that needs to be updated for us to be able to train with. On top of this is the planned shift by the government in a few years to use a completely different frequency band (406 MHz instead of 121.5 MHz) making it necessary to replace our equipment again? Another pancake fundraiser ?

Honor Guard Event

On February 12th, 2004, the Mountain Rescue Association lost two of its members from the Tacoma Mountain Rescue Team on a recreational ice-climbing trip in Canada. The members were John Miner and Jim Andruess. Additionally, a companion and fellow mountaineer Russ Howard also perished. The three were ascending the frozen, Midnight Rambler waterfall. The three fell victim to an unexpected avalanche from above that swept them from the mountain.

I proudly serve as a member of the MRA Honor Guard and currently the only Honor Guard member in the state of California. The Honor Guard was asked to respond to Seattle and to take part in three memorial services. The Honor Guard was represented by the following states, California, Colorado, Alaska, Idaho and Arizona. In all, there were eight members. I proudly served at all three memorial services and our group held the MRA flag high with honor. We were thanked by Chiefs of Police, Fire Chiefs, the local Sheriff and of course the friends and family of the victims.

I found it to be a very emotionally trying weekend for myself even though I never knew these fine men. But in a way I did. They stood for everything good about mountain rescue and mountaineering. They were "OUTSTANDING," outstanding members of their team, their communities and their families. Even though they were not on a mission, they were in fact out there to train and to keep themselves sharp for the real thing.

In closing I would like to say that it was my HONOR, to have represented the State of California, the MRA and the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit in Seattle.

The MRA says it all, "So that others may live." Jim and John, you will never be forgotten.

Dana Potts Rescue Member See HONOR GUARD picture on BACK PAGE of the Newsletter

Sustaining Members

Benefactor Club	\$1,000 +	Elaine Landells Scott Brothers Dairy Farms Palm Springs Aviation, Inc. [Memory: Don Landells]		
Summit Club	\$ 500 +	Steve & Rosemarie Johnson		
Patron Club	\$ 200 +	Gordon Austerman	R & S Krieger	Dave Hadley
		Marvin M. Oliver, Esq.	Jon Goldman	James Larson
		Bob & Susan Krieger	James Oliver	
		Ramona Valley Lions Club		
Century Club	\$ 100 +	J & T Larson	D & R Harrah	L & K Venable
		Dr. & Mrs. Schnurr	John & S Murdock	James Collins
		Larry & Nancy Carter	Rosemary Kraft	T & D Young
		Alan Note	Won Sok Yang	Rotary Anns
		Jerome H. Niswonger	Kathy Machir	Brett Faron
		Betty Moore	Lucinda Harton	David Harrah
		Al & Natlie Andrews	Roy Cheatwood	Mary Carricaburu
		Dr. & Mrs. Ray George		
Supporting Club	\$ 25 +	Bill & Juanita Starmer	Mary & Cloie Swain	
		Stuart & Ann Glickman	Dr. & Mrs. Jay Wallis	
		Jan Beyers & G Riechers	[Memory: Joseph Lennox]	
		Elva Cook	Milana De Beauvoir	
		Gordon Christiansen	Bill & Melody Blaschko	
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Your donation is deductible from both your state and federal tax

Name(s) _____ Amount _____

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A receipt of your tax deductible donation will be mailed to you.

Memberships

Benefactor club **\$1,000**
Summit Club **\$ 500**
Patron Club **\$ 200**
Century Club **\$ 100**
Supporting Club **\$ 25**

Please send your

donation with application to:

Attn: RMRU Box
C/O Riverside Sheriffs Office
43950 Acacia Street
Hemet, California 92544



Joshua Tree Search



Dana Potts- Part of MRA Honor Guard

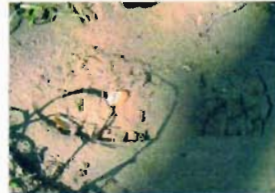


February Training pictures, both.
Classroom situation and camp.
See article



Training at "Big Rock" Joshua Tree including a FUN picture at FAR RIGHT

Pictures below were taken by Rick Maschek of our Recertification test to maintain MRA Status



Pictures above are of Recertification and depict the ELT [search for downed Aircraft], Medical and then the last two show some tracking skills being tested as a requirement for RMRU to be accredited by MRA = Mountain Rescue Association.

A special thanks to Magdy Farag of Greybar Printing located in the Banning Correctional Facility. He has found, corrected and in general cleaned up a lot of errors by the publisher. Because of him this looks a lot better.