

RMRU

RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

Mission Reviews:

April - October 2015

Rescuer Profile

Kirk Cloyd

RMRU Training

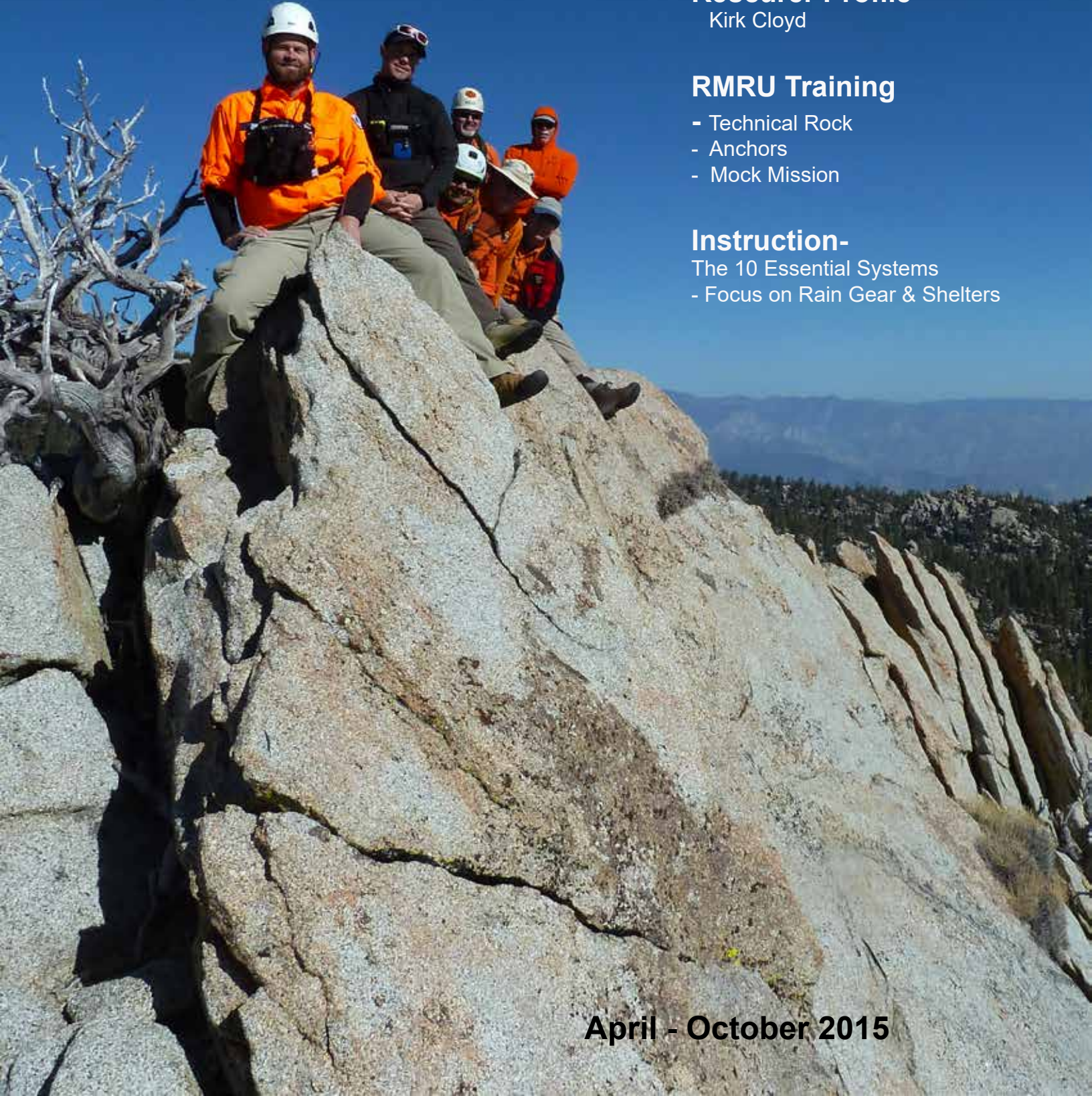
- Technical Rock
- Anchors
- Mock Mission

Instruction-

The 10 Essential Systems

- Focus on Rain Gear & Shelters

April - October 2015



ABOUT RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

FOUNDED 1961

MEMBER MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION 1963

GOVERNING BODY: RIVERSIDE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

MEMBERS: ORIGINAL: 6 | CURRENT MEMBERS: 32

ANNUAL BUDGET: ORIGINAL \$200 | CURRENT \$15,000

MISSIONS: TOTAL OVER 2,000 | AVERAGE PER MONTH: 3.33

The Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit is a group of volunteers trained and ready to respond to wilderness emergencies. At any hour of the day, law enforcement agencies, national park and military officials may call upon the Unit to aid an unfortunate victim. The unit is on constant alert, via text messages, to search for and effect the rescue of hikers, skiers, rock climbers and outdoorsmen whenever and wherever tragedy strikes. The unit performs about 95% of its missions in Riverside County. However, it has traveled south into Mexico, north into the High Sierras and into Nevada to accomplish its lifesaving missions.

The unit is currently comprised of 32 volunteers, who literally come from all walks of life. They regularly leave their jobs (or in the middle of the night, their warm beds) to respond to a call for help. They do not receive remuneration for time given to search and rescue. The members make up a small, but spirited, group of mountaineers who spend one weekend each month training to sharpen their rescue skills. Each member must provide all of their own equipment at a cost of more than \$2,500. Beside acting as highly competent rescue workers, members also work closely with schools, clubs, church groups, and Scout troops throughout the area to teach mountain safety. The ounce of prevention may well prevent the untimely pound of cure.

On the Cover...



RMRU Team Members on
Divide Peak after Anchor Training



Mock Mission Training
near 7 Pines Trailhead - Idyllwild, CA



Technical Rock Rescue Training
on Suicide Rock - Idyllwild, CA

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit with its home base located at the Sheriff's department in Hemet, California primarily conducts Search and Rescue activities in the 280,000 acre Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. This vast area includes the San Jacinto Wilderness and two of the best Rock Climbing locations in the United States, Tahquitz and Suicide Rocks near Idyllwild. Locating missing hikers or backpackers in the vast wilderness requires tracking skills. Tahquitz with a vertical drop of near 1,000 feet requires special highly technical rescue skill sets. Annually RMRU conducts several technical trainings in both disciplines for team members. In this issue we review the April anchor placement similar, technical Rock Rescue Training, Tracking, and our mock mission which combines all these skill sets. **On the cover** the RMRU team sits on top of Divide Peak, located about 1 mile Southwest of the Palm Springs Tramway Upper Station after completion of the May Anchor training.

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RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

Rescuer Profile - Kirk Cloyd

On Joining RMRU

In my early years, I enjoyed dual-sport motorcycle riding throughout the state as it helped to satisfy my desire to explore new places. While reading a motorcycle magazine, I came across an article that said if you want to ride and explore new places that most people aren't allowed to ride, join your local search & rescue team. Thinking that this might be a way I could give back to the community while doing something I enjoyed, I contacted the Sheriff's Dept. and they told me the date, time and location of the next meeting. I arrived at the meeting only to find out it was actually the Board of Directors monthly meeting the Sheriff Dept.



sent me to! The Board Members welcomed me in and asked how I heard about the team. When I

"Over nineteen years later, I have no regrets in joining this awesome team. The members have become family to me"

RMRU RESCUER KIRK CLOYD

told them about the magazine article, they looked at each other, laughed and said, "We are ground pounders, we hike everywhere we go." With my grandfather being the Deputy Director of the Fish & Game under Governor Reagan and my dad being with the Fish & Game before transferring to the CHP, I had been exposed to backpacking, day hiking and hunting most of my life so I thought I would give RMRU a go. Over nineteen years later, I have no regrets

in joining this awesome team and the members have become family to me. In 2004, I joined the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) Honor Guard (HG) and continue to provide HG duties when I am available. As a Scotsman, I find the kilt easier to wear than others do.

First Mission

On my first mission, I was teamed up with Dr. Bill Blasco. He was so patient with my slow pace up the



backside of Lilly Rock. When we arrived, I clipped in and took a photo of the helicopter below, scooping

Continued on Page 8

Mission Reviews

April 2015 - November 2015

The following pages contain a selection of first hand accounts of RMRU missions written by the team members involved.



RMRU volunteers are on call 24/7, to search for and rescue hikers, skiers, rock climbers, and outdoorsmen whenever and wherever needed.

Lost Female - Camp Emerson

April 16, 2015
Idyllwild, CA.

Written by Eric Holden

We got a call for a missing female out of the Emerson Campground in Idyllwild. After repacking my gear from a recent trip I headed out and up the mountain. As I arrived on scene Cameron was about 50ft down the trail and turned around so we could go out together. While I was preparing to head out she was brought to the command post by a Sheriff's Deputy. This was a quick mission that ended great. She just underestimated her hike and ended out past dark exhausted but in good condition.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, and Tony Hughes.



Missing Female Hiker

May 09, 2015
Black Mountain Road
Written by Tony Hughes

The call went out at 10:24 PM on Saturday night to locate a missing 18 year old female hiker. The mother of the solo hiker had dropped her off at the White Water trailhead 3 days earlier and was expecting to meet her daughter at the intersection of Black Mountain Road and the 243 at 4:30 PM earlier that day.

Base was setup at the intersection of Black Mountain Road and the 243. I arrived around 12:30 AM on Sunday, May 10th. Cameron and Ray were already on the scene and Kirk arrived right behind me. Four members of DSSAR as well as several Sheriff Deputies were also on scene. We were briefed by the Deputy. He stated the mother had text back and forth with the daughter confirming a 4:30 PM pickup on Saturday, May 9th at Black Mountain Road and the 243. The mother called 911 a little after 8:00 PM when the daughter

had not arrived. Sheriff's Deputies drove Black Mountain Road with lights and sirens on but were unable to locate any signs of the daughter. The officer did encounter another group that had spoken with the missing hiker near the 4 mile marker of Black Mountain Road at approximately 4 PM. They stated she was in good spirits and not injured. They also let her know she was within a few miles of her destination.

Kirk ran base while Ray, Cameron, and I took my vehicle up Black Mountain Road to clear two side spurs while DSAR went to the top of Black Mountain Road. We

The Deputy briefed of stating the mother had text back and forth with the daughter confirming a 4:30 PM pickup on Saturday,

RMRU RESCUER TONY HUGHES

cut for track along the way and cleared the first spur quickly. We traveled the second spur several

MISSION REVIEWS APRIL - NOVEMBER 2015

miles to the end and spotted no trace of any recent activity. We headed back to base and refocused our effort on the Pine Woods cabins off Azalea Trail.

DSSAR headed in from the side on Black Mountain Road but were quickly stopped by a locked gate. We headed to the side on Dark Canyon. DSSAR reported seeing foot prints in the snow near the gate. We hiked through to the area and saw no signs until we approached the gate near Black Mountain Road.

We picked up the trail of prints which lead to an occupied cabin. We found a set of prints for a second person and what appeared to be multiple days of back and forth foot traffic with the matching print. We ruled them out as not belonging to our subject.

We regrouped at Base around 6:00 AM. Ray and I headed home, Cameron and Kirk stayed to wait for the next shift of searchers. The subject exited the wilderness hiked out to a road at approximately 8:30 AM on Sunday, May 10th and was uninjured. She was spotted by a member of the US Forest Service who escorted her to Base.

RMRU Members Involved:
Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickinson, Tony Hughes, Patrick McCurdy, and Ray Weden

Missing Male Hiker

May 16, 2015

Black Mountain Road
Written by Eric Holden

We get a call out for a lost or stranded hiker at the top of black

mountain road. Cameron and I geared up to take the truck up the weathered road that may still have snow on it. We both got about 15 miles down the road when we got the call that the subject's friends would be driving him out. Looks like I get a good night sleep to-night!

RMRU Members Involved:
Cameron Dickinson and Eric Holden

Missing Couple

May 20, 2015

San Diego County
Written by Pete Carlson

We were asked to help San Diego County Sheriff search just off the roads in Riverside Country near where a couple had gone missing on Mother's day. The two Anaheim residents vanished after leaving the Valley View Casino Center, where they were last seen on surveillance video.

We did find where two other cars had gone over the side and been pulled out already. This gave us a good clue as to what we would see if a car went over the side.

RMRU RESCUER PETE CARLSON

They had been expected to go to their son's home in La Quinta for a Mother's Day dinner, but never arrived. The San Diego Sheriff's Department had searched in there county and now wanted help searching part of Riverside County. We met with the Riverside Sheriff's personal and the San Diego Sheriff's representative at 8am at a Cal-Fire Station in the Sage Area

of Riverside County. We broke into two teams and started walking along the road looking down over the edge into thick brush hoping to find their white Honda.

We did find where two other cars had gone over the side and been pulled out already. This gave us a good clue as to what we would see if a car went over the side. After several hours we found nothing. So we moved base camp over to Pinon Flats Cal-Fire Station and then search up and down Highway 74 the Palms to Pines Highway looking down into Deep Canyon. Again we found nothing.

It was now 1pm the Sheriff decided we had done all we could. We want to thank the San Diego Sheriff for a nice lunch at the Paradise Valley Café at 74 and 371 highways. As a final note 4 days later the Couple was found near the Schoepe Scout Reservation at Lost Valley, San Diego, CA. The man was deceased and the woman was alive but in critical condition due to severe dehydration.

RMRU Members Involved:
Steve Bryant, Pete Carlson, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Lew Kingman, and Patrick McCurdy.

Missing Male Corona

May 26-27, 2015

Grace Retreat Center Cleveland National Forest
Written by Patrick McCurdy

RMRU was called out late on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 26th, to search for a 24-year-old Hispanic male who had been at a religious retreat in the hills above Corona and gone missing two days be-

fore. Family and friends had been searching for two days, with no luck. Members of RMRU arrived shortly after 5 PM and searched until dusk, before deciding to take it up again the next Family and friends had been searching for two

"The subject was face-down in the ravine, not wearing any pants or any shoes. He was semi-conscious and only somewhat responsive."

RMRU RESCUER - Patrick McCurdy

days, with no luck. Members of RMRU arrived shortly after 5 PM and searched until dusk, before deciding to take it up again the next morning. At 7 AM on the 27th RMRU members, one searcher from (DSSAR), and one member of Riverside Search Dogs, took to the field along with the Sheriffs off-highway vehicle enforcement (ROVE) team to continue the search.



After several hours of searching Kevin and I noticed that our Star 9 helicopter which had been doing search patterns above us suddenly stopped and was in a low hover. We also noticed one of the ROVE team start running towards the

area under the helicopter. Kevin and I immediately followed and the ROVE team who did a fantastic job of breaking trail through very a brushed-choked ravine to assist us in getting to the subject as fast as we could.

The subject was face-down in the ravine, not wearing any pants or any shoes. He was semi-conscious and only somewhat responsive. His vital signs were stable and he had no obvious serious injuries, but he was unable to roll over or sit up. We quickly made the decision that a carry out was not an appropriate plan, and that a helicopter hoist was the best way

Video of this Hoist is Available to view on the RMRU Website rmru.org See mission May 26 - 27.

to get this person to medical aid as fast as possible. I called Glenn on the radio informed him we would need a Stokes litter, c-collar, and backboard. Glenn from RMRU and Chris Stephen from DDSAR, who had both been searching another area, quickly brought in the gear needed for a hoist.

We applied cervical spine immobilization and rolled him onto a backboard. Once strapped to the backboard, he was then secured in the Stokes litter and we rigged the Stokes harness for a hoist. In short order we had the man packaged and Star 9 hoisted him out and flew him a short distance to a

waiting ambulance.



What really impressed everyone on this mission was pilot Chad Marlatt (flying as Technical Flight Officer (TFO)) spotting this guy who was wearing black and lying face down in a very narrow ravine in dense foliage. It is very hard to see anyone from the air if they are not moving, but Chad did an amazing job in spotting this sick and injured man. Were it not for Chad's sharp eyes, the man very likely would not have lived. While we were rigging the litter pilot Eric Bashta landed and switched seats with (TFO- pilot) Chad Marlatt. Eric Bashta then became (TFO) for the hoist.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickenson, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Kevin Kearn, Roger May, Patrick McCurdy, and Ray Weden.

Sheriff's Aviation:

(Pilot/TFO - Eric Bashta) (Pilot/TFO - Chad Marlett)

Other Teams Involved:

Desert Sheriff's Search & Rescue (DS-SAR), Riverside County Search Dogs, Sheriff's Emergency Response Team, Sheriff's Off-Highway Vehicle Enforcement team (ROVE), CPL Todd Garvin (with his bloodhound Inge), and Deputies from the Elsinore Station.



MISSION REVIEWS APRIL - NOVEMBER 2015

Overdue Climbers

June 01, 2015

Tahquitz Rock

Written by Eric Holden

At 7:20am we got the callout, 3 missing climbers that went up Whodunit on Tahquitz rock last night and never came back down. Whodunit is 5.9, 800 foot route that is normally completed in 4-8 pitches. Knowing this was a technical mission I quickly load up my climbing rack, climbing shoes and a couple of ropes just in case. At Humber Park I spoke with the deputy and found out that he had spotted the climbers a few minutes ago topping out on the route. Also that last night one of the



climbers had texted his wife saying that they are ok, but sleeping the night on the rock.

Patrick, Kevin and Lew were all in route and Star 9 all showed up within a few minutes of each other. At this point the climbers could be coming down one of two ways so we decided to wait and see if aviation sees anything before heading out. As aviation was searching for them, they ended up walking into Humber Park, tired and a little dehydrated from a night on the rock, but otherwise in great shape. We gave them some

water and Kevin gave the climbers a little inspirational pep talk about not being embarrassed and then upset with their spouses for calling/starting a rescue. The climbers expressed extreme gratitude to us and the Riverside Sheriff and head back into town.

Other than getting a late start the climbers did everything correctly. They climbed till dark and did their best to get a message out to family that they were fine, just coming home tomorrow. At first light they finished the last pitch and hiked back down to the park in quick time.

RMRU Members Involved:

Eric Holden, Kevin Kearn, Lew Kingman, and Patrick McCurdy

Missing Woman

June 08, 2015

Grace Retreat Center - Cleveland National Forest

Written by Judy Spowart

RMRU received a call out on the morning of Monday, June 8th, to search for a 32-year-old Korean female who went missing the



previous evening from a religious retreat in the hills above Corona. Members of RMRU arrived around 8 AM, divided up into two teams, and began the search. The teams

searched the ravine and grove areas around the retreat for several hours before we received word that the subject had been located at a nearby business where she had been found the night before and given a place to stay for the night. We were released and headed home by 12:30 PM.

RMRU Members Involved:

Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Patrick McCurdy, Dana Potts, and Judy Spowart.

Other Teams Involved:

Desert Sheriff's Search & Rescue (DSSAR): Mike Calhoun and Sharon Ollewburger. Sheriff's Emergency Response Team (SERT). Sheriff's bloodhound.

Heat Problem

June 08, 2015

Whitewater, CA

Written by Matt Jordan

On Monday, June 8 at around 4:45pm a call out was initiated to respond to the Whitewater Preserve to search for a missing couple. The couple turned out to be strangers who met on Meetup.com and then decided to hike a section of the Pacific Crest Trail toward Mission Creek. Unfortunately, this day turned out to be the hottest of the year with temperatures over 112 degrees and for those who have hiked this section - it's a long and exposed dry one. The fellow who organized the "Meetup" was in his 50's and so was the lady accompanying him, but nevertheless, when this trip organizer finally petered out and could go no further, the female wisely turned back and requested

one injured climber off of the cliff face. After that, I was on the haul line bringing up the remaining



Tahquitz (Lilly) Rock

climbers and rescue members. I recall hiking down in the dark and stepping over several chasms. The abyss seemed to be bottomless! We arrived at Humber Park around 1am. Even though I was exhausted, I was hooked by the feeling of helping others in their time of need and the team members I was surrounded by. Since then, I have been back up Lilly Rock multiple times and I can't seem to find those same chasms that were so prominent that first night.

Most Memorable Mission

Without a doubt, my most memorable mission was on April 25, 2003. Marvin Matsumoto and his son Mark split up the Monday before to hike the Baker Dam Loop Trail in Joshua Tree National Park. Mark thought he was on the loop going clockwise while his father was on the loop going counter clockwise. They intend-

ed to meet up at Baker Dam. In actuality, Marvin was following a sandy dry stream bed that went nowhere near the Baker Dam. When Marvin didn't return the night of Monday April 21st, his son Mark called for help. With no sign of Marvin, mutual aid was requested Wed. April 23rd. Due to work constraints, I was not able to join the search until Friday April 25th. I was the team leader working with Jerri Sanchez (an OBGYN Nurse) and Will Carlson (an EMT and this was Will's first "official" mission!) We scoured the rocks and crevices to no avail. I note that while split up across the top of a large rock structure near the point last seen (PLS), each of us paused



independently to pray that Marvin was located so we could bring closure for his family (This was confirmed later.) With our search area covered and several hours of daylight left, we returned to base and requested another search area. The command post did not have any unsearched areas within the search grid so I told Will, since it was his first mission, to pick an area to search. Will literally covered his eyes and pointed at the map. It was a location far from the search area but I arranged a helicopter ride to the location. As we flew over the coordinates we gave the pilot, he noted that it was not possible for us to be put down there. The helicopter flew

"... we heard the faint words that are burned into our memories, "Over here"."

RMRU RESCUER - KIRK CLOYD

out to the open desert about a mile away where we did a hover step to get to the desert floor. We could have taken an easy wash to the original location Will chose or a more direct, but very rocky route. Of course we chose the latter. As we made our way up through the Wonderland of Rocks, Jerri dropped her GPS and we watched it shatter as it went bouncing down the rocks below. Shortly after that, Will split off to look for possible prints and sign of Marvin's travels on an adjacent animal trail. Jerri noted that it was time we shout for Marvin and as soon as we did, we heard the faint words that are burned into our memories, "Over here." Jerri & I thought Will was messing with us until he came crashing through the brush in a different direction than the voice came from. We immediately called out again and received the same faint response. We called out to stay there and we were on our way. We found Marvin approx. 12' below us between large boulders in the Wonderland of Rocks. As a

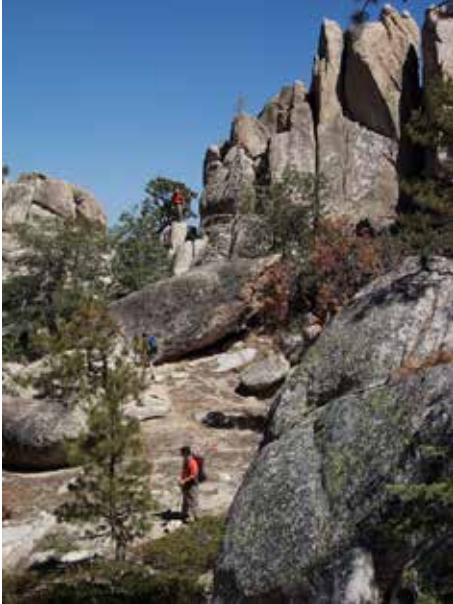


"Most Memorable Mission - April 25, 2003 - the Baker Dam Loop, Joshua Tree National Park"

RMRU RESCUER - KIRK CLOYD

RESCUER PROFILE - KIRK CLOYD

Nurse, we got Jerri down to Marvin as soon as possible. We were out of radio and phone range from base, so I had Will scramble to the top of the ridge with an FRS radio



& team radio. Will was able to make contact with a search helicopter and we used the FRS radios to relay Marvin's initial vital signs to Will and he used the team radio to talk to the helicopter which then relayed to base. A helicopter did a one skid landing to offload medical supplies and Will was able to establish an IV in Marvin. A liter was lowered and once packaged, the three of us raised Marvin out of the hole he was in. Marvin faded in & out of consciousness as we raised him so Will quickly raise his feet to improve the blood flow to his brain. A Paramedic was lowered from the helicopter and accompanied Marvin as he



was hoisted for the flight to the hospital. All of a sudden, it was quiet, the sound of the helicopter, rushing wind and adrenaline had stopped and the three of us realized it would be a long hike back to base! I noted the time Marvin was located and found out from one of our long time members and good friend, Jim Fairchild, that at the time they got the news Marvin had been found alive, Jim and Marvin's Wife Mits, were at a picnic table praying for his safe return. This reminded me of the prayers my team said for Marvin earlier that same day and my belief in the power of prayer.

Experience and Teamwork

I had no technical experience to speak of when I joined the team but was accustomed to camping, hiking, fishing, hunting and working in a team environment. As a sloooow, valley born hiker,

"I had no technical experience when I joined the team but was accustomed to working in a team environment."

RMRU RESCUER - KIRK CLOYD

I have always struggled to keep up with those living at altitude. I believe my strengths are an acute attention to detail and ability to remember processes and equipment functionality. I have served as a technical safety officer on missions and recertification's and as a licensed HAM operator, I have a basic knowledge of the radio, repeater and technical electronics

used in today's search & rescue operations. Prior to being on the team, I experienced acute mountain sickness, aka altitude sickness at Old Army Pass in the Sierra's while traveling with my dad and exploring his patrol area while he was with the Fish & Game. This firsthand knowledge has given me an appreciation for others that have had this happen to them as well. Additionally, while at a training mission on Yosemite's Lost Arrow Spire, I saw firsthand how mental and physical fatigue can negatively affect your thought process and actions. After only sleeping for 2 or 3 hours in a 42 hour period, I joined the team in rappelling down into the notch of the spire, aid climbed up the spire and then participated in a Tyrolean traverse back to our starting point.

As I began my final changeover to ascend the main rock face, I could not figure out why it was so difficult to get the last carabiner off of the Tyrolean traverse. Fortunately, I stopped to look at the situation and noted that I had not clipped in my ascender and it was laying on the rock not connected to the rope at all and the other ascender was still clipped to my harness! If I had removed that last carabiner, it would have been a 3,000 foot flight with a sudden stop at the bottom! I paused, composed myself, checked and triple checked my equipment and with three connection points, extracted myself from the situation.

I believe this experience so many years ago is why I am so safety conscious with the team and my personal gear.

RESCUER PROFILE - KIRK CLOYD



Lost Arrow Spire, Yosemite
RMRU team



What Skills Do You Bring to the Team?

I don't know what skills I bring to the team and frankly I don't know why they keep me around...LOL I know that I can be a team builder and aid in coming to a consensus when needed but I also believe in the "Get R' Done" mentality when the time warrants. That said, I enjoy teaching others and helping to advance their knowledge and skill level in areas such as communications, mapping, GPS interface, technical systems and safety.

Who Have Been Some of Your Team Guides or Mentors?

Wow, that's a loaded question as there have been so very many! Some still with us and some have

gone on to summit mountains beyond our human reach. Jim Fairchild taught me so much about Idyllwild both on and off trail. Dr. Ray inspired me to continue in my pursuit of medical knowledge, Glenn Henderson has always been there as a friend & mentor to guide me when I have questions about the team, policies and politics with our ever supportive Sheriff Dept.

What Value Do You See in Team Training?

The value of Team Training goes way beyond simply learning a new skill or brushing up on a skill set, however that is VERY important as well! Just as important is the fact that team training gives members



the opportunity to build the required confidence in each other's skills and learn about their personalities. It is a must for a team of this nature to work well together in times of stress when lives hang in the precarious balance based on our abilities, preparedness and the situation.

On Balancing Team and Life

This can be tricky at times. Holidays always seem to be when rescues occur and there was a time my wife was not as supportive of

leaving in the middle of a BBQ or family events. That all changed with the Marvin Matsumoto search as she had the opportunity to see what we do on the news and now she helps me to fill water bottles, prepare food and load my equipment as I head out the door no matter the time of day or night.

Additionally, for the last 13 years, my 19 yr. old son has helped with the annual pancake breakfast and my cousin Raquell & wife have helped for the last 3 years. Work can be a bit more difficult to leave at a moment's notice. In the past,



my employers have allowed me to leave if my immediate tasks are complete, but with a new job on the horizon, we will see if this same luxury will be afforded. When not training or working with RMRU, I enjoy time with family and friends at BBQ's, hiking, camping, shooting guns with my 28 year old daughter Vanessa who lives in TX and my 19 year old son Michael who lives with my wife Camille and I or going four wheeling. The next big adventure will be planning for retirement and looking for property out of state!

KIRK CLOYD - RMRU RESCUER



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE - ROB MAY

TRAINING

SUMMARY OF OUR ANNUAL

TECHNICAL ROCK TRAINING

July 11, 2015

Suicide Rock - Idyllwild, CA.



The RMRU team met at the Climbers Trailhead near Humber Park in Idyllwild at 8am. There was a great turnout, and we proceeded to hike to the top of Suicide Rock for our training.



Initial Instructions provided by RMRU
Pete Carlson on top of Suicide Rock

Upon arrival, the first order of business was to set up a safety line across the top of the rock. This was done by securing the safety rope to several large trees on either side of the ledge, using webbing doubled around each trunk and either a figure eight or butterfly knot attached to a carabiner.

The purpose of the safety line is for anyone who is working close to the edge to be clipped into it using a personal safety device.

The next step was to decide where to set up the anchor point. For the

best angle we chose a large rock that was a short distance away from the edge. Two redundant anchors were set up. One using multiple slings connected to each other with water knots and the other with a rope, wrapped three times around the rock. Each anchor was attached to a separate Rescue MPD (Multi-Purpose Device). A separate rope was attached to each MPD (one red, one blue) and then both were attached to the litter using a double bowline knot,

the first order of business was to set up a safety line across the top of the rock. This was done by securing the safety rope to several large trees

RMRU - Judy Spowart

which was new for the group. Now it was time to assign teams. An Operations Lead and a Safety Lead were chosen first. The Operations Lead is responsible for running the rescue operation, while the Safety Lead checks all of the equipment and gear to ensure



Litter Lowering Team anchored
to Large Rock

it is set up properly. A team of two was assigned to each MPD, one to operate the MPD and the other to feed/pull the rope, as needed. Finally, a Litter Attendant and two aids were selected.

The first exercise involved lowering an empty litter over the side of the rock, to simulate the rescue of a subject below.



Litter and Attendant lowered
with operations lead above

TECHNICAL ROCK TRAINING

The Litter Attendant is attached to and responsible for the litter while the aids are tied in to the safety

The Litter Attendant has adjustment straps that are used to ensure the litter remains level throughout the descent and ascent.....

RMRU - Judy Spowart

line and assist the Litter Attendant by guiding him/her for the first 10-15 feet. The Litter Attendant has adjustment straps that are used to ensure the litter remains level throughout the descent and ascent.

He/she is also responsible for issuing commands (via radio) to the



Preparing to lower Subject with Lowering Team in the rear anchored to large rock

Operations Lead regarding lowering, raising, or stopping movement of the litter. When lowering the litter, it is important for the two teams to work together to ensure they are releasing the rope at the same speed.

was repeated several times to give team members experience with the different roles. In one scenario we had a team member in the litter, which allowed us to feel the difference of lowering and raising the added weight. For the raise, we used a 5:1 pulley system to increase the mechanical advantage.

The Litter Attendant issues commands via radio to the Operations Lead regarding lowering, raising, or stopping movement of the litter.

RMRU - Judy Spowart

To raise the litter we set up a 3:1 pulley system. As the team pulls the rope, the pulley approaches and the team must stop and 'grab a bite' to move the prusik and pulley back down the rope. This is repeated until the litter and attendant are safely back on top of the rock.



Litter Attendant and Operations Lead beginning lowering process

We finished up around 3:00pm at which time we packed up all of the gear, and hiked back down to our cars at the trailhead.

Article by Judy Spowart - RMRU



Litter and Attendant lowered down the face of Suicide Rock

After a quick lunch, the exercise

help from Jack at the preserve who in turn also assisted the responding BLM and Sheriff. Early in the search and with a stroke of good fortune, one keen BLM ranger was allowed access into the Mission Creek Preserve where he hiked up-

"The takeaway here is: always use good judgement and do not hike in extremely hot weather (especially in mid-day)"

RMRU RESCUER
PATRICK McCURDY

stream and located the man who was in dire straits. The faithful Star 9 from Riverside County Sheriff Department then picked the male up and delivered him to Whitewater Preserve where he was then transported via ambulance.

The takeaway here is: No matter how few participants one has planned for these "Meetup-type groups" - or no matter how long the event has been planned -- always use good judgement and do not hike in extremely hot weather (especially in mid-day). It's just not worth getting heat stroke or worse - and the ladies are rarely impressed when they are the ones having to rescue you. It's very fortunate that both hikers made it out alive that day and it could have ended much worse if the sun went down before getting rescued.

RMRU Members Involved:
Cameron Dickinson, Matt Jordon, & Patrick McCurdy.

Hoist Massacre Canyon

June 09, 2015

City of San Jacinto, CA.

Written by Cameron Dickinson

I received a call from our call captain to see if I was able to respond quickly to perform a hoist of a hiker in Massacre Canyon in San Jacinto. Luckily I was relatively local and was able to arrive at the meeting location on Gilman Springs Road in 20 minutes. When I arrived, the San Jacinto Police Department, Riverside County Sheriff's Department, and Cal Fire had already arrived at the scene. Mercy Air had landed in the adjacent field and was on standby. I received word that a male hiker had sustained injuries from a 100 foot fall. His friends that were hiking with him called 911 and reported the emergency. Sheriff's Aviation was already on scene and was able to land and pick up the injured hiker and bring him back to base to awaiting paramedics.

RMRU Members Involved:
Cameron Dickinson.

Missing Hiker Wellmans

June 09, 2015

Mt. San Jacinto Wellmans Divide

Written by Cameron Dickinson

As I was leaving from a prior mission, another call went out to the team. This time it was for a missing hiker near Wellman's Divide out of Humbler Park. Since I was relatively short distance from the station, I decided to drive over to pick up our team vehicle and headed up to the trailhead to meet with the awaiting Deputy. At this point, RMRU members Pete, Lew, and Gary responded to the call-

out and were driving to meet at the trailhead.

Once I arrived, the Deputy was able to provide some detail on our missing hiker. The missing male hiker became separated from his friend as they were hiking on Wellman's Divide Trail on their return back from hiking the San Jacinto Peak earlier in the day. As his friend waited for an extended period of time, he became concerned and decided to call 911. Since he was losing daylight and didn't have a headlamp or flash light with him, he decided to continue on with his hike down the mountain back to the parking lot where his friend had parked his car.

As I was loading my pack on shoulders, I looked up on the hill and noticed a hiker with a bright light coming down the trail. I walked to greet the hiker, and confirmed that it was our missing subject. The hiker was good condition although exhausted, had extra food and water remaining, and was surprisingly well equipped with extra gear (GPS, trekking poles, etc.).

RMRU Members Involved:
Pete Carlson, Cameron Dickinson, Gary Farris, and Lew Kingman.

Missing Adults and Kids

June 17-18, 2015

Marion Mt. Trail, San Jacinto Mts.

Written by Eric Holden

At 2130 we get the call out, 1 adult and 4 missing children out of the Marion Mt Trailhead. I quickly pack up all my stuff and head on out, making sure to grab a couple of extra jackets. While in route I get a text from Cameron that it is just him and I and he is picking up the

MISSION REVIEWS APRIL - NOVEMBER 2015

truck. Excellent, Cameron and I have been on many missions just the two of us, and we operate very well as a team.



We both meet up at the Marion Mt. Campground and get the info from the Deputies, 1 Grandfather, age 37 and 4 kids ranging from age 5 to 17 are all lost on Marion Ridge. Aviation was able to spot them but the trees are too dense for an extraction. They took a Lat/Long reading for us and I plugged it into my GPS. Cameron and I geared up making sure we have enough supplies to support an extra 5 people and we started up the Marion Mt. Trail at 2330 on a dark moonless night.

After our recent mission (19-15) on Marion Mt, our biggest hope was that they stayed put and didn't move. After about 1 mile on the trail we decided to "Follow the Arrow" of my GPS and head straight up steep slopes of the ridge line. It wasn't until we were about 0.2 miles away that we finally make faint voice contact. We climbed over another ridge and once at the top made clear voice contact with the subjects and can see the glow sticks that aviation dropped to them.

A bushwhack or two later and we

made it to the lost family. Apparently they had hiked in from possibly Humber Park and eventually got lost. They had no supplies, just a couple of water bottles between the 5 of them that were already drained. I was amazed at the location that they were at as it took us a good amount of effort to get there. A couple of the younger kids were in the early stages of hypothermia, strong shivering but still mentally aware.

Our first task was to warm these boys up! The best way to do this is with clothing, food and water. Cameron passed out lots of high calorie snacks while I decked them out in my finest wardrobe of many jackets. I am a big guy at 6'2" 230lbs and getting these 5 and 7 year old boys outfitted was more like wrapping them in large blankets. In any case after about 15 minutes of food, water, and warmth the crew was ready for the hike back.



I follow the GPS back to the trail while Cameron took the rear and made sure no one decided to wander way from are group. The route we came in was steep and strewn with pine needles, sticks, pine cones, and lots of loose dirt. I told the kids that they will slip and fall,

this is normal, just make sure to land on your butt and not tumble down the hill. I then proceeded to demonstrate this method of falling. As many other team members will say, I have almost mastered the art of falling. After 90 minutes of hiking we made it back to the command post

"If you go on a hike with your kids, or any hike, bring supplies!!!!!! "

RMRU RESCUER - ERIC HOLDEN

To recap: If you go on a hike with your kids, or any hike, bring supplies!!!!!!

There are 10 essentials, bringing 1/2 of one is not enough. They had no food, little water, no map, no flashlights or head lamps, nothing but the clothing they hiked in with and that clothing was minimal at best. Hiking in shorts, T-shirts, and shoes with no socks is not the best clothing for hiking. They got very lucky that the weather was perfect. The one good thing that they did do was after calling for help, they stayed put! This made the search go very easy. Had they have moved, we may still be looking for them.

RMRU Members Involved:
Cameron Dickinson & Eric Holden.



Missing Mountain Biker

June 21, 2015

Hemet – Simpson Park

Written by Frank Snider

Being a father of three you know it would be a given there would be a rescue call on Father's Day. This was a very early morning call out at 1:18 am, in fact if it were not for a direct call from Gwenda to my cell phone I would have slept through the mission. The call was for a missing mountain biker at Simpson Park in Hemet. I dragged myself out of bed drank a pot of coffee and headed out making it to the park around 3 am.

I teamed up with Cameron as Team #1, Tony and Ray joined us as Team #2, and Gwenda and Kirk manned the command post. Deputy Garvin with Inga (bloodhound) escorted Team #1 and was able to set us on a trail consistent with bike tire tracks. The teams were able to track the tire markings for what seemed like miles. Right around sunrise a water bottle was found along the trail but later proved to not look like the water bottle in a given picture of the bike that we had available. Sunrise also brought out Sheriff's Aviation airship for helping with searching and more team members who started helping with the ground search. A cell phone ping put the

"A cell phone ping put the lost mountain biker at 3.2 miles from a known cell phone tower so a perimeter was setup....."

RMRU RESCUER FRANK SNIDER

lost mountain biker at 3.2 miles from a known cell phone tower so a perimeter search was set up after initial searches by ground crews and airship were unsuccessful.

Just about the time this was getting organized there was a report from a resident that she thought she saw someone waving a white t-shirt. The airship went to the residence, landed and found that she was seeing a Mylar balloon and not someone waving a shirt. At this point the teams came in for a

"The subject appeared to be down and in immediate need of medical attention..... unfortunately was deceased. "

RMRU RESCUER FRANK SNIDER

quick bite to eat, water break, and rest in the shade as temperatures were quickly rising into the 90's. Kirk returned with sandwiches and right as I opened the sandwich package an urgent call from the airship came in stating subject had been spotted from the air.

The subject appeared to be down and in immediate need of medical attention. The airship quickly landed at the command post and Team #1 was loaded and quickly taken to the site. Cameron and I jogged from the LZ to the subject who unfortunately was deceased. Team #2 joined Team #1 and helped in marking off the site and prepping it for the coroner. After a 3 hour wait for the coroner in

the direct sun and temperatures quickly rising above 100 degrees, the mission was called and all teams returned safely to the command post via Judy's nice new air conditioned Jeep. Thanks to Judy because we were spent!

Lessons learned: 1) It is difficult to make an improvised shade shelter with a body bag. 2) The cell phone pings are sometimes accurate. Body was found 3.24 miles from cell phone tower. 3) Subway sandwiches that have sat in the sun for one or two hours still taste wonderful when you are in the field and hungry. 4) Cell service is not good in Simpson Park. 5) It gets hot in Hemet!!

RMRU Members Involved:

Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickinson, Tony Hughes, Frank Snider, Judy Spowart, Ray Weden, and Gwenda Yates.

Riverside County Sheriff:

Todd Garvin with bloodhound Inga and Aviation.



Missing Hiker

June 23, 2015

Dripping Springs Campground, Temecula, CA

Written by Glenn Henderson

The team received a call for a hiker at the Dripping Springs Campground in Temecula. The hiker had cell phoned in that he was lost and about out of water. He reported he was trying to stay in some shade in a wash and did not know where he was. The team started out but the mission was aborted while we were driving to the Campground. The Sheriff had pinged his phone and discovered he was close to

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a dirt road. They had driven out and yelled for him. He responded and made it to the road and to the waiting car.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Lew Kingman, and Patrick McCurdy.



Missing Hiker - High Sierras

August 27-30, 2015

Fresno County - Guest Lake,
(Near Blackcap Mt. 11,559 feet).

Written by Kevin Kearn

RMRU alerted members at 9:21 PM on Thursday August 27, 2015 after an OES (Office of Emergency Services) request for Type I, Mountain Search and Rescue teams, to deploy to the Sierras in Fresno County. The mutual aid request from Fresno County Sheriff's Department was for lost 62-year old, female hiker, Miyuki Harwood. Miyuki had become separated from her Sierra Club hiking group in the vicinity of Blackcap Mountain (11,559'). The group had set up camp at Guest Lake (10,000') just below the summit and over 19 miles from the trail head at Wishon Reservoir.

The group was doing a day hike from the camp at Guest Lake when Miyuki, in exceptional physical condition and faster than the others in her group, decided to go on ahead at her own speed alone. She was reported to have already summited Blackcap Mountain and passed the ascending group at a saddle while she was on her way down on the afternoon of August

20, one week earlier. Another hiker had reported seeing what everyone believed to be her footprints on a ridge, north of that saddle. Summit ridges were characterized by steep cliffs on the northern and western sides and rescuers feared that she may have fallen. Despite no other signs of her, she was an experienced and super fit hiker; furthering the sense of urgency was the Rough Fire burning to the south.

The smoke from the Rough Fire was seriously disrupting the search effort. Obscuration prevented aircraft from effectively observing

"The smoke from the Rough Fire was seriously disrupting the search effort. "

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

the ground and it was often impossible to safely land helicopters.

Given the exceptional urgency conveyed by Gwenda, I was able to depart my work at Ft Irwin at 10:00 PM and link up with Donny Goetz at his home in Culver City by 2:00 AM. Donny had luckily been working the night shift and was reasonably fresh to drive, as I had already been up since 4:00 AM the day previous. After configuring our equipment and loading into one car, we departed at 2:30AM and drove to Wishon Reservoir off Route 168 in the Sierras. Cameron Dickinson would depart later in the morning around 4:00 AM

after getting the RMRU's Explorer from Hemet; Eric Holden and Tony Hughes also drove up later, Friday night, after work.



Donny and I arrived to find heavy smoke blanketing the command post at Wishon Reservoir at 7:15 AM. Temperatures were mild in the mid 50's and winds were light. The Fresno Sheriff's Deputies were finishing their brief with about 35 searchers when we signed in. Although the search teams had already been organized, we were aggressive and finally drew a radio, maps, and teamed up with Santa Barbara Mountain Rescue – another two man technical team. Together, with Craig Scott and Don Gordon from Santa Barbara, we formed Team 2.

For the rest of the morning and into the afternoon, all the teams had to convoy to three different Landing Zones over 20 miles apart because the smoke grew increasingly worse as the day got warmer



Smoke Inhibited Search Area

TRAINING

SUMMARY OF OUR ANNUAL

ROCK ANCHOR TRAINING

April 12, 2015

Near Upper Station 8,500 '
Palm Spring Aerial Tramway



On a brisk March morning the team boarded the 1st tram at the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway heading up not on a rescue mission, but mission to learn! Every month the team has a training ranging from a simple hiking/backpacking trip, to a high angle technical rescue. This month was "Anchor Training" led by team hard man, Pete Carlson! For those not into climbing terms,



an "anchor" isn't something you drop into water to keep your dinghy from floating away, but something, anything really, that a rope is going to be attached to. An anchor could consist of 3" bolts drilled into rock, a large boulder, trees, spring loaded camming devices (cams), and even a boat anchor if you brought one along (not RMRU recommended).

Normally on a mission when we have to go over the side we are going to wrap a big tree or a large rock with webbing and call it a day. This type of an anchor is what we call "Bomb Proof", basically drop a bomb on it and the anchor isn't going anywhere. For this specific training we could use any protection we brought but we could not wrap a tree or a rock. The team has a very nice selection of nuts, hexes and cams all different types of rock protection that can be used to make an anchor.

With this information in mind, we hiked up to the top of Divide Peak and after a quick summit we brought out the gear. After splitting up into teams Pete assigned each of us a problem. He gave us a fall line, direction the rope should go, and let us decide how to create an anchor giving the gear at hand.

Unless wrapping a large tree or rock, a single anchor should be redundant, equalized, non-extending and most importantly, something you would stake your life to. There are a few acronyms that are

used in the climbing world, but I like SERENE.

SERENE

- **S - Strong (or Solid)** - The stronger the better. Wrapping a 12" diameter tree is strong, a 1" diameter bush.... not so much.
- **E - Equalized - Anchors** should be constructed so that each component of the anchor carries an equal amount of the load.
- **R - Redundant - Anchors** should consist of multiple components in case one or more components fail
- **E - Efficient - Anchors** should be as simple and timely as possible without giving up any of the other SERENE qualities
- **NE - No Extension - Anchors** should be built so that if one or more of the components fail the remaining components won't be shock loaded.



ROCK ANCHOR TRAINING

After each team had assembled their anchor we all reviewed them as an entire group. Pointing out the pros and cons of each anchor. Most teams used the one of the simplest, and best, anchors which consists of three cams in three different cracks. Webbing is connected to each anchor and then to one master point, taking care that the master point is equalized, remember SERENE. This type of anchor is easy to assemble and is very strong due to the active protection that camming devices provide. After setting up a few different scenarios each, the team took a quick hike over to Landells Peak.

After summiting and a bite to eat we started setting up more anchors. Cameron and I got lucky and had to set ours up on a snow slope, I think it was the only snow left on the mountain but somehow Pete found it for us. I decided to utilize a different type of anchor



Completing the setup of a SERENE Anchoring System

known as the "dead man". The dead man anchor consists of wrapping a large rock in webbing and then securing this rock. In this case we could wedge the rock between two large boulders. This is something I get to bring to the team with my canyoneering experience.

Tony showed us all some interesting methods of protection, consisting of utilizing two nuts where no one nut would fit. Very cool stuff! For my teams last anchor we decided to "utilize" most of the gear we had and created an 11 point anchor. Reviewing SERENE, the 11 point anchor was definitely Strong, Equalized, Redundant.... very redundant..... and Non-Extending. However, it fails the Efficient test. 11 points of protection, while strong and fun to build, would be overkill in any rescue scenario and add complexity where complexity is not needed. After packing up all the gear we

headed back down to the tram

station to head back to our respective homes. You can always tell when you have a successful training when everyone, no matter their current skill level, learned something. Personally, this was one of my most favorite trainings that I have been to, even over Heli-tac! Big thanks to Pete and all the other team members that attended the training.

Article by Eric Holden



Need Training?

Beside acting as a highly competent rescue workers, RMRU members also work closely with school, clubs, church groups, and Scout troops throughout the area to teach mountain safety. Contact us to schedule a training.

The ounce of prevention may well prevent the untimely pound of cure.

- inversion layers dissipated and winds increased. Finally, at around 2:30 PM, our team was picked up at Shaver Lake when the smoke cleared for a short while, narrowly averting the need to move to a fourth Landing Zone in Fresno another hour west.

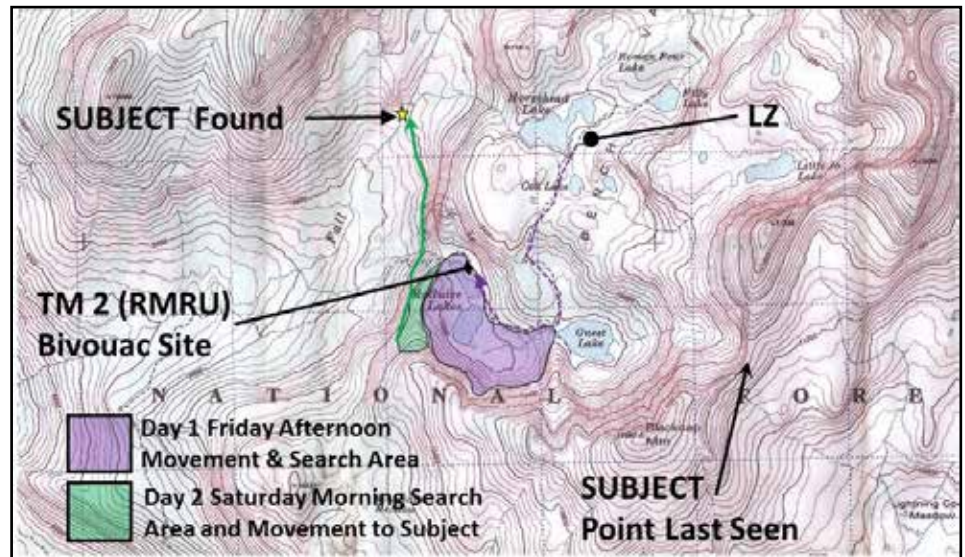
Team 2 went out on the second load, in a California Army National Guard CH-47 'Chinook', and inserted into the Land Zone established south of Horsehead Lake (10,400'). We flew above the smoke until the final approach from the west. I was sitting near the crew chief's window and although it was very

"Deputies made it clear that the worsening Rough Fire could potentially eliminate all air traffic at any time and require all teams to hike the 20 miles out on our own."

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

hazy, I was able to make out the steep cliff sides of Black Cap Mountain, Guest Lake where the Sierra Club's campsite was still located, and our assigned search zone. Aerial search for subject was impossible under the smoky conditions – and actually hazardous.

Horsehead Lake was also the site of the Forward Command Post and approximately 1 mile north of the Sierra Club's original camp site. Donny and I had a rope, climbing and medical equipment, along with all gear necessary to be out three days at 10,000'+. Although we expected to be extracted in 48 hours, Deputies made it clear that the worsening Rough Fire could



potentially eliminate all air traffic at any time and require all teams to hike the 20 miles out on our own.

We exited the aircraft and descended south-southwest along a trail to Maguire Lakes (10,000'), just east of the Sierra Club's camp at Guest Lake. Other inserted teams peeled off and also moved to their assigned sectors. We established a bivouac site by the north shore of the eastern lake, hung our food, and began a search of the areas around the lakes up



to the base of the cliffs as high as we could safely go without roping up. Before the darkness set, we returned to our bivouac site and communicated on one of our two radios that we had nothing significant to report. We planned

to search the ridge the next day and we all agreed that Donny and I would descend with ropes down a steep chute off the ridge where a person might have attempted to climb and slipped down.

Night illumination was 98% with the moon out the entire evening. Temperatures seemed warm and there was almost no wind, but our team woke with some frost on our equipment so it got down to the low 30's. After rising, checking in with the command post, and prepping our equipment, we set out at 07:30 AM Saturday again.

While ascending the ridge around 9:00 AM, we heard reports on the radio that a Marin County SAR Team had voice contact with Miyuki. She had initially responded to their calling with a whistle and then cried out - "Two broken legs!" We plotted the Marin team's location and their bearing (300 degrees) to Miyuki's communication – we estimated her location to be under a 1/2 mile and below us. We began moving as the Marin Tm closed in on her.

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The Marin Tm linked up with Miyuki first and transmitted her UTM grid which we quickly plugged into two GPS units. We headed north after descending 400' and linked up with Marin County SAR, Bay Area Mountain Rescue Unit (BAMRU), and a Fresno SAR on the scene. Miyuki was about 20' from a stream and not far from a steep ridge.

"Her major injuries included: a dual fracture in her left leg a broken right ankle, and mild pain in her lower back was determined to be a crushed vertebrae."

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

Shortly after our arrival, BAMRU's ER doctor got to the patient. She was conscious and very alert. Her major injuries included: a dual (tibia and fibula) fracture in her left leg with no evidence of compartment syndrome yet, a broken right ankle, and mild pain in her lower back that was later determined to be a crushed vertebrae. She was also mildly hypothermic and slightly dehydrated. Upon request, RMRU provided the SAMS splint that they used to splint her right broken ankle.

Miyuki later explained that she had descended down the trail from the saddle that she had taken up but that she had overshot her campsite on the way back. She realized her error as it was getting dark and had turned around to return when she fell off a ledge. She fell 4-5 feet and landed on both legs and her rear – breaking

her legs. She was immobile until the second day when she realized she had to move to the sounds of a nearby stream to get water. She dragged herself on her elbows over 150' to a drainage which was running with water. There, she survived another seven days in some pine straw about 25' from the stream – dragging herself back and forth once a day to drink a liter of water through a filter straw. Her location on the pine straw provided some insulation from the cold but the trees overhead prevented observation from the helicopters bringing searchers in.

A tentative Landing Zone was identified and Donny help set up a haul line with our Team 2 teammates, Don and Craig, to support bringing a litter up from Miyuki's location over a 15' high CL IV section. Initial planning had a CHP helicopter lowering a litter with a haul line. When queried, I was the only one who had experience with the hook they were expecting on the A-Star, so I prepared to receive and unhook the litter when it arrived. Eventually the plan changed; the CHP helicopter could land further below and to the south, and internally load the patient after reconfiguring the aircraft.

Smoke was increasing again - so much so that the CH-47 that loaded Cameron, Eric, and Tony at Shaver Lake could not land at the Horsehead Lake anymore and had to turn back. The three RMRU members, having been forced to return with the aircraft and receiving word of Miyuki's find, headed

back to Riverside County.

I moved to the new Landing Zone approximately 700' from Miyuki's location and linked up with the CHP helicopter as it landed. A runner took the backboard back and I helped the pilots with reconfiguring their aircraft which involved removing the left side pilot seat and controls out of the floor, reinstalling the seat behind the right pilot, and installing a 'tray' to put the patient in.

Meanwhile the plethora of rescuers now on site had found a way to bypass the hazardous section and prepared to carry Miyuki's. Donny took down the ropes and repositioned with me near a small trench 200' from the helicopter. When rescuers arrived at the trench, they handed the letter off to our group. Donny and I helped carry Miyuki the last 200' and loaded her into the helicopter.



After carefully placing the foot of her backboard into the front of the aircraft under the controls, I said, "Kiotsukete," – Japanese for "Take Care." She immediately opened her eyes, looked at me, and smiled widely ... And before the pilots closed the door, she shouted strongly to everyone,

"THANKYOUUUUUUUU!" The CHP whooped their sirens for the rescuers as they lifted off for a trauma center in Fresno.

Our team took our time to return to our bivouac site since extraction was no longer possible with the smoke until the next morning. We broke camp after first recovering Don Gordon's GPS that he had accidentally dropped before Miyuki was found. We hiked back to Horsehead Lake where all the SAR teams had consolidated. Fresno SAR had caught over 40 trout and we had a massive fish fry and SAR-B-QUE with all the rescuers. It was a great time bonding with the other teams from all over California after the great success of finding Miyuki alive after NINE DAYS. We got lifted out the next morning on the first CH-47 while the

It was a great time bonding with the other teams from all over California after the great success of finding Miyuki alive after NINE DAYS.

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

temperature inversion layer suppressed the smoke. Teams landed in Shaver Lake again because thick smoke obscured Wishon Reservoir. Donny and I drove the one hour back to the Main Command Post to drop off our radios, debrief, and sign out. We returned to Los Angeles that Sunday afternoon very happy that RMRU was part of this successful effort.

Lessons Learned:

Don't Hike Alone: Always hike with a buddy, especially in the deep wilderness. Make sure people know your route and intentions. If you absolutely must hike alone, consider getting a radio or personal locating beacon. Be wary of leaving a group to go faster on your own – you might need the group or the group might need you in an emergency. In the immortal words of the late, famous outdoorsman and beloved Riverside City College Professor, Bill Wiley, "When you hike alone, you hike with a fool."

Maintain Comprehensive Physical Fitness: Miyuki was the best hiker in her group and reportedly a competitive triathlete. Her superior cardiovascular fitness coupled with her mental toughness unquestionably contributed to her survival. As a 62-year old woman though, she suffered numerous fractures from a relatively short fall. Although we can only speculate if osteoporosis was a factor, it still underscores the importance for senior hikers to incorporate weight training into their fitness program along with a high calcium diet to retain bone strength.

Always Bring Small Signal Devices (Whistle and Mirror): Miyuki's decision to move to water saved her life, but it was her whistle that enabled rescuers to find her. A whistle carries much further than a human voice and is easier to do especially when one is tired or injured. Whistles can generally be heard over a 1½ mile away under good conditions. Visual signal devices are equally important;

Miyuki reported seeing multiple helicopters pass over her but was unable to signal them to her location. A lightweight, commercial 2"x 3" signal mirror is best but a compass mirror can work almost as well. Strobes and Rescue Lasers are great at night but, at a minimum, flashlight, or headlamp are practical visual signals too.

Always Have Warm Clothing to Survive the Night: Miyuki had a light jacket and even though she was uncomfortable and mildly hypothermic, she was able survive the night at 9,600' – in August with no winds. Had there been higher winds or any other time besides the warmest month of the year, she may have succumbed to hypothermia. In the mountains, exposure is the greatest survival risk and usually presents itself before dehydration. Always bring a shell, it provides a little warmth by trapping your heat, but more importantly will help reduce rapid heat loss through convection (wind) and protect from rain.

Tie 'Dummy Cord' Critical Equipment: Rescuers often operate at night and fumble with multiple tasks on the move. Sooner or later, we all drop something except some things are more important and can compromise a mission. On a cliff side, a dropped object can fall hundreds of feet away. Consider tying items off with a small cord, critical items like your knife, GPS, and radio. There are numerous retracting cords available as well to keep cords out of the way and still allow easy use. Clip rings inside the storm hood and back-

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pack are also a good idea to clip small equipment (headlamp or keys etc.) that may inadvertently fall out during an access stop in the darkness.

*"As a Rescuer, **NEVER STOP CALLING OUT.** Rescuers naturally become less optimistic that they are searching for a live person vice a body."*

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

Calling Out – NEVER STOP: Rescuers are realistic and sometimes after a period, naturally become less optimistic that they are searching for a live person vice a body. We must consciously resist the tendency to stop frequent group call-outs for our subjects. Miyuki survived NINE days and is a great example of why we must never catch ourselves reducing our call outs during a search.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Donny Goetz, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, and Kevin Kearn.

Search Lake Elsinore

September 16, 2015

McVicker Canyon in Elsinore

Written by Glenn Henderson

The team was activated to respond to a search in McVicker Canyon in Elsinore. We were searching for a 44 year old male that had been gone for an undetermined amount of time. We started the search and found his baseball cap within the first hour of searching. It had rained heavily the day before so there was no chance of

finding tracks from the cap. The canyon is extremely choked with brush so most of our time was spent crawling on hand and knees under the brush. A few more hours of searching turned up his I-Pad but still no clues as to his location.

Star 9 arrived on scene and after a short time of flying in widening circles they reported they had possibly found him. He was quite a ways out of our search area so Sheriff's personnel were dispatched to the location. They determined that it was probably our mission person. The coroner was dispatched and they removed the subject. It was later determined that it was our mission person. Cause of death has yet to be determined.

Our hearts felt sympathies go out to the subject's family and friends. It is always hard when a search results in a bad outcome.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Judy Spowart, and Raymond Weden.

Hoist Missing Hiker

September 19, 2015

Seven Pines Trail - San Jacinto

Written by Raymond Weden

Around 7:30pm we receive a call for a missing hiker who was separated from their group near the Seven Pines Trail. Our missing subject, Gopaul of San Diego, was able to call the Riverside Sheriff's Office on his cell phone requesting assistance. Sheriff's Aviation flying in Star 9 were able to lo-

cate him while RMRU had a team on their way to the Seven Pines Trailhead. The weather conditions were perfect for a hoist so as Eric and I neared the Sheriff's station in Hemet, we were informed by Kirk (who was the Call out Person) that we were to be redirected to Hemet/Ryan Airport to assist in a hoist. The other team members who were on their way (Cameron & Tony) were asked to stand down and be prepared to assist if needed.

Eric and I loaded up our gear and lifted off to the last known location of Gopaul. Hovering at his last known location, we were unable to find him. With four guys and a bunch of gear in an A-Star helicopter, the fuel burns rather quickly. Unable to initiate a search with that much weight on board, I was dropped off at nearby Keenwild Forestry Service Station just outside of Idyllwild. With Eric on board, the helicopter headed back up and was able to locate our missing subject. Eric was dropped in via a hoist in a relatively steep area near Gopaul. I was contacted by a Deputy asking me to contact Eric on the radio as his entry looked rough from the helicopter and they were unable to get ahold of him. I tried calling him on his cell phone and on our radio but was unable to make contact. I did have Gopaul's cell number but my earlier attempts to contact him were unsuccessful but it was worth a try. He did answer and after I inquired about his status, I asked if he had made contact with Eric yet. He confirmed they were in voice contact but not at the same

TRAINING

SUMMARY OF OUR ANNUAL

MOCK MISSION TRAINING

September 12, 2015
Seven Pines Trailhead
near Idyllwild, CA.



The RMRU Mock Mission Training is designed to closely simulate an actual search and rescue (SAR) mission. RMRU volunteers never know the time or place of an actual rescue prior to the call out and thus must be prepared for any situation.

This training is designed to incorporate several specific RMRU training disciplines; GPS / Map, Tracking, Rock Anchoring, High Angle Technical Rescue, medical, radio communications, evacuation, and team coordination.



On a normal search and rescue mission, Team members are notified via text message and then call the rescue phone line stating their availability to participate. The Mock Mission slightly deviates slightly with the team members knowing the date and time but not of the place.

Our Mock Mission base was established at the Seven Pines Trailhead near Idyllwild; the location identified by the subject's wife as the last known location. His failure to return home in the morning prompted the call to 911. The mission text message reflected this information. Upon arrival we were briefed on the subjects name and plan to hike up the 7 Pines trail. After the captain in this case Rob May, assigned SAR teams the first order of business was to evaluate and inspect the subject's car and camp site. Here the goal was to find information regarding the subject. This included attempting to identify a clear footprint (s) for tracking purposes.

Tracking teams were dispatched

in several directions; one up the 7 pines trail, another down a secondary road, and third around the subject's campsite. For the later, as it is always possible the subject had returned to camp and simply decided to take in the sunset but fell off a cliff a short distance away. After some searching the trail search team was able to identify clear tracks and follow them close to the subject.

This team was calling out and after some time, received a response from the subject, and was able to locate the subject on a shelf of vertical rock about 75 feet down. His location was communicated



MOCK MISSION TRAINING



via radio back to base and the other teams recalled and reassigned to move the litter and technical equipment up the trail.

At base the 3 available team members attached the "Big Wheel" to the litter and loaded it with medical supplies and extraction equipment that might be necessary. This added significant weight to the litter making it much more difficult to move up this steep and rarely used trail. After about 1

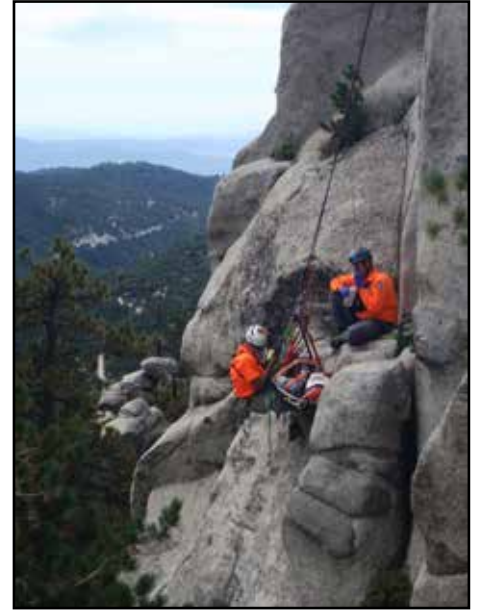


mile of struggling up the trail, the litter team called for assistance from some of the rescuers at the subject's site. Two joined to assist and it proved difficult for 5 people to all assist at one time due to the narrow trail. The idea to remove the gear from the litter and hand carry made it significantly easier to advance the litter.

Due to the subject's injuries it was determined that the subject would need to be stabilized on a backboard and "C" collar, loaded into the litter and wheeled down the trail back to base camp. The trick was doing all these items on the narrow ledge then extracting from this precarious location. Redundant anchor systems were setup on the top of the vertical rock and then Cameron as the Litter Attendant was lowered to the subject and Eric, who was monitoring him and continually relaying his vital medical information back to base. Kudos to Cam and Eric for completing this difficult task in this



very difficult location. Once loaded in the litter on the backboard, Cam, Eric, and the subject were lowered to the bottom on the rock outcropping. Due to the location at the base of the cliff, the team had to hand carry the litter with the subject, bushwhacking to



the trail. At the trail the Big Wheel was reattached and we began down the trail back to base. Even with 6 team members participating, maneuvering down the steep, narrow, and slippery scree covered trail with a 200 + pound load proved a challenge.

Lessons Learned:

1. Know the proper attachment points of the litter transport wheel to the litter. Tape location marks might be beneficial.
2. In pushing the litter up the trail it is best done with it empty and without rescue gear. The additional weight makes pushing the litter with wheel up a steep trail much more difficult.
3. Any SAR personal not directly involved in stabilizing the subject or setting up the extraction should assist the litter team.
4. Always carry your large callout pack capable of carrying out additional gear. Someone had to carry out the subject's backpack.

Article by Gary Farris - RMRU



location. Shortly after that I was contacted by Eric and he confirmed he did have a rough entry; sliding off a small cliff and landing in a bush prior to releasing from the hoist. He let me know he was uninjured.

Shortly after my call with Eric Star g picked me back up and we headed back to the same entry point. Eric had climbed up to some higher, flatter ground which made my entry less eventful than his. Aviation confirmed they would return to the same spot I was dropped at in 60 minutes. We headed down hill to the sound of Gopaul's voice. We found ourselves at his location relatively quickly. It was only a 15 minute down-climb and he was no more than 200 feet below us.

"How did you get lost?" He responded "The Internet "Meet up" group were much faster and basically left him behind"

RMRU RESCUER ERIC HOLDEN

Back at our hoist location, we had some time before our pickup so we asked Gopaul the obvious question - how did you get lost? He joined a "Meet Up" group formed on the internet. The other people in the group were much faster hikers than he was and basically left him behind. The Seven Pines Trail is a lightly traveled trail and can be hard to follow in places which ultimately led to his getting lost. We were all hoisted up one at a time. I went up first

and was dropped off at Keenwild. While I was in the air, Eric found an abandoned campsite. It was pretty obvious that it had not been used in quite a while. The problem was that there was backpack, water bottles, and other gear still there. With weird circumstances, we thought this might be our next search. Eric grabbed the backpack and sent it up in the helicopter with Gopaul.



As I was waiting for Gopaul at Keenwild, people from his meet up group were waiting for him as they all carpooled up from San Diego. They confirmed there were NOT hiking the Seven Pines Trail but rather the Fuller Ridge Trail to San Jacinto Peak and back. Gopaul, clearly unfamiliar with the area, picked up the wrong trail. I assisted him off the helicopter at the Keenwild station and jumped back in when Eric arrived shortly thereafter.

We lifted off from Keenwild and headed back to Hemet/Ryan Airport right around midnight. As we were landed, we heard over the Sheriff's radio that there was another hiker in the Pinion Pines

area needing assistance. Pinion Pines was too far out to be related to our newly acquired backpack. It was determined only one of us would be needed for the next hoist. The thought of my pillow sounded good as the night turned into the next morning, so I told Eric he could have this one; no rock, paper, scissors needed.

There are many things that went wrong that caused this situation. As an individual hiker, carry a GPS and know how to use it. Gopaul had food, water, flashlight and adequate clothing but a GPS could have prevented a rescue situation. As an organized group, you should NEVER leave anyone to hike alone. Gopaul was not familiar with the trail, nor was he prepared to hike alone. This whole situation would never have had happened if they just stuck together. Lucky for Gopaul, his cell phone had service and battery which is very rare in these mountains.

The next day Eric let me know that the backpack he found belonged to a PCT hiker that was rescued about 5 months prior. His camp has been sitting there undisturbed until Eric stumbled across it.

RMRU Members Involved:

Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickinson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, and Raymond Weden.

Sheriff's Aviation:

(Pilot – Chad Marlett),
(TFO – Raymond Hiers).



MISSION REVIEWS APRIL - NOVEMBER 2015

Hoist Pinyon Pines**September 20, 2015****Palms to Pines Highway**

Written by Eric Holden

Ray Weden and I had just finished mission 2015-036 and were landing to Hemet-Ryan airfield when we heard over the radio that we had another missing hiker. After the Star 9 crew gathered some information from dispatch we found we had a lost male hiker in the Pinyon Pines area. He was hiking on the Sawmill trail but somehow got lost and had no flashlight. He could see highway 74 from his location however.

Ray gave me his good wishes and let me take this one. It was a nice flight out and the subject was quickly spotted from the air. Technical Flight Officer (TFO) Ray Heirs and Pilot Chad Marlett were able to lower me to within about 5 feet from the subject. With cactus everywhere, I was perfectly placed and did not land in any.

A quick talk with the subject and he was being airlifted out in a scream suit. After Star 9 dropped him off they came back for me and finally we had an uneventful flight back to the airport. A quick and easy mission thanks to the experts with the Riverside Sheriffs Aviation Unit.

RMRU Members Involved:

Eric Holden.

Sheriff's Aviation:

(Pilot – Chad Marlett)
(TFO – Raymond Hiers).

**Lost Hiker Marion Trail****September 20, 2015****Marion Mountain Trail Head**

Written by Pete Carlson

The call came at 6pm as everyone was just starting to eat dinner. A group had come down the Marion Mountain Trail and one person was slower and got left behind. While we were on the way to the trailhead the friends had hiked back up a ways and found the missing person. At the same time we got another call for two people coming down the PCT into Snow Creek who were having problems with the heat. So we changed our road head and everyone headed to Snow Creek.

RMRU Members Involved:

Lee Arnson, Pete Carlson, Cameron Dickinson, and Eric Holden.


**Hikers with
Heat Problems**
September 20, 2015**Pacific Crest Trail Snow Creek**

Written by Pete Carlson

As one call out was cancelled another call for two people coming down the PCT into Snow Creek who were having problems with the heat. The first rescuers on scene were from Desert Search and Rescue (DSAR) and Lee from RMRU. They opened the gate to drive up to the PCT trailhead and when they reached it found the subjects already there. It turns out they were not out of water, just having leg cramps. They just went slowly and got down to the trailhead. We are not sure why the

even called for help? They were from out of the country and trying to hike the PCT from Mexico to Canada. They were given a ride back outside the gate and the Sheriff talked to them and got information and then Cameron gave them a ride to the casino hotel in the Banning Pass. The rest of us went home having spent 3 hours driving around to two call outs, but never having to hike.

RMRU Members Involved:

Lee Arnson, Pete Carlson, Cameron Dickinson, and Eric Holden.

DSAR Members Involved:

Sharon Ollenburger, Chris Miller, and Mike Smith.

**Missing British National****September 27, 2015****Josuha Tree National Park**

Written by Pete Carlson

Sunday morning at 7am we are called to help with a search in Josuha Tree National Park. A British National was last seen at 6pm the day before and did not have much water. It had been over 100 degrees the day before and was going to be that hot again today. The Park Service wanted as many searchers as possible to try and find him before it got too hot. As we were driving out to the Park we got a call that a helicopter had found him alive. So we turned around and went home.

RMRU Members Involved:

Pete Carlson, Cameron Dickinson, and Eric Holden



EQUIPMENT

FOCUS ON RAIN GEAR & SHELTERS

10 ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS

*Don't Leave the Trailhead
without them*



Clearing Storm Muir Pass 12,000' August

For this scenario you are on a August weeklong backpack along a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) in the High Sierras beginning South of Mt. Whitney at Horseshoe Meadows (10,000') and concluding at Onion Valley. On the way north your group will take a side trip to climb Mt. Whitney (14,505') from the west adding 2 days to the trek. The trek will span about 75 miles, cross 5 high passes, (New Army, Guyot, Trail Crest, Forester and Kearsarge) and every night camp above 11,000 feet.



Mt. Whitney Summit, August

The weather report for the week is excellent and trip reports state little snow remaining at the higher elevations. However as an experienced High Sierra Backpacker, you are well aware that the Mt.

Whitney zone can generate its own severe weather systems. Your personal rain gear includes set waterproof but breathable hooded rain jacket and pants, plus waterproof short gaiters, over mittens, and backpack cover. Rounding out your rain gear is a new lightweight tent which has been used once prior to your trek on your last training backpack trip the month before where no inclement weather occurred. All your other rain gear is about 5 years old and has successfully repelled rain on many occasions including last year's week long trek the year and a few short overnight backpack leading up to this major trek. Two years ago you washed your breathable rain gear jacket and pants then retreated per the manufacturer's instructions.

For the first 2 days and nights of the trek the weather was perfectly clear trending toward a bit hot during the day. Day three was a fairly big day of 13 miles with 3,000 of elevation gain plus a peak bag opportunity along the trail of Guyot Peak (12,300'), adding about another 3 miles and another 1,500 of gain. The summit of Guyot was

reached about noon affording a gorgeous clear blue skies, 360 degree view including Mt. Whitney in distance with a few clouds.



Hiking in a High Sierra Storm

The group still had 8 miles to go to reach tonight's camp, Guitar Lake (11,000') directly below Mt. Whitney. As you continued the days hike, the clouds around Whitney began to grow rapidly and with still with 4 miles left to go it began to rain. Everyone put on their complete rain gear including pack covers and continued climbing up the trail to Guitar as the rain turned hard and steady.

After about 1 hour you began to feel wet around your shoulders and arms; at first thinking this was perspiration but on inspection of your rain jacket arms the rain was not beading up on the garment as

EQUIPMENT - RAIN GEAR \$ SHELTERS

it should but seeping through the outer shell. Clearly the waterproofing failed. Pressing on for another hour you all reach Guitar Lake and setup your tent in now fortunately just a light rain.

Once your tent is setup and dried out with your super absorbent pack cloth, you pull out your sleeping bag and blowup pad which until now remained in your pack and under the pack cover. The outside, apart from the shoulder strap side of the pack it remained dry but to your shock the inside bottom



Clothes Drying at 12,000', August

section of the pack was soaking wet and unfortunately this where you keep your sleeping bag! Unfortunately the down sleeping bag compression bag leaked. Down is a wonderful insulator but fails completely when wet. Fortunately your extra clothes in a separate waterproof bag remained dry so at least you had dry clothes. However your problems continued when the heavy rain returned it leaked through a torn seam in one corner of tent. All night long you had the pleasure of wiping out the water.

Sound farfetched? Every one of the failures mentioned happened to me or someone I know on extended trip! So how can these failures be prevented?

THE 10 ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS

1. Navigation

Waterproof Topographic map or in a waterproof container plus a Magnetic compass. Optional altimeter or GPS receiver.

2. Sun protection

Sunglasses, sunscreen for lips and skin, hat, clothing for sun protection.

3. Insulation

Hat, gloves, jacket, extra clothing for coldest possible weather during current season.

4. Illumination

Headlamp, flashlight, batteries. LED bulb is preferred.

5. First-aid supplies

plus insect repellent.

6. Fire

Butane lighter, windproof matches in waterproof container.

7. Repair kit and tools

Knives, multi-tool, scissors, pliers, screwdriver, trowel/shovel, duct tape, cable ties.

8. Nutrition

One day of extra food.

9. Hydration

Extra 2 liters of water for one additional day.

10. Emergency shelter

Waterproofed Bivouac sack, tarp or space blanket plus insulated sleeping pad

Rain Gear

Breathable fabric requires special care and the exterior can be compromised. Check the manufacturer's website on how to revitalize the garment. It is always I do idea to test it if it has been used on a trek that encounters rain before the next trek. Here a water spray bottle works well. If you do use your gear in wet conditions, make sure you dry it out completely to avoid mildew.

Sleeping Bag

So how did the sleeping bag get wet inside your pack? While you have a rain jacket on and the pack is covered, the backpack shoulder straps and this side of the pack are not. A tear in the pack could allow water to penetrate. Here is a simple recommendation. Carry a medium weight large trash bag. Place your compression bag with sleeping bag in it only if you are hiking in rainy conditions.

Tent

Most major backpack tent manufacturers now seal the seams on the tent floor and rain fly. For a new tent I would highly recommend setting the tent up in your yard and turning on the sprinklers. This is an excellent way to verify the tent was sealed properly. Also inspect the tent after every use. After every trip I hang the tent in my garage to remove any moisture. Before repacking I inspect it for damage including the tent poles and stakes. On the trek have a small tent repair kit.

Article by: Gary Farris - RMRU





RMRU BOARD MEMBERS 2015

Rob May - President

Kirk Cloyd - 1st Vice-President

Gwenda Yates - 2nd Vice-President

Eric Holden - Secretary

Pete Carlson - Treasurer



TRAINING CALENDAR

-Night HELITAC: Nov 14

- Snow & Ice: December 5

- Winter Shakedown: Jan 9

- Ice Axe: February 6 - 7

- Winter Recertification: March 5

- Technical Rock: April 9

- HELITAC: May 14

- MRA Conference: June 10 - 12



Newsletter Editor - Gary Farris

You Can Help!

There are several ways you can help RMRU

Countless people owe their lives



NEW COMMUNICATIONS VAN



Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit is seeking your help!

We the team members of RMRU have been working hard on selecting a new Communications Vehicle for the team. Currently we are looking to retire the old box truck. (1987 Ford). In the day. this was a "dream Communications truck" it had everything. But that was almost 40 years ago. In the age of electronics and computers we feel it is time for an update. Vehicles today offer so much more. Currently our F350 is the truck we take to most of our missions. It is the best equipped and most efficient vehicle. Spreading out the maps on the hood of a truck is not so bad, when the weather is good. When it's raining, let's just say the cab of that truck gets quite small fast.

Now getting a group of team members to agree on a Communications Vehicle is no easy task. But we believe we have done it. We are looking at a cargo 4x4 van conversion. These vehicles have come a long way. We need to be able to carry all our gear and have enough room to preform our missions.

We are now seeking your help in making the new dream truck come true.

Our team is averaging 50 missions a year and putting in thousands of hours in training, in order to be the best at what we do. Now we need you help to make this a little easier for us. We are still a 501c3 so all donation are tax deductible. Taking on this large task we would like everyone know that no donation is too small or large. Every little bit helps.

BECOME A SUSTAINING MEMBER



SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Your Donaton is deductible from both your state and Federal taxes
RMRU tax ID number for Not-for-Profit status 95-2497048

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Membership Types:

- ☐ Benefactor Club \$1,000 +
- ☐ Summit Club \$500
- ☐ Patron Club \$200
- ☐ Century Club \$100
- ☐ Supporting Club \$25

Please send your donaton to:

Riverside Moutain Rescue Unit
43950 Acacia Street
Hemet, California 92544

Thank You!

To all that volunteer their time and financial assistance....
Countless people owe their lives



OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS



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