

RMRU

RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

Remembering

Dr. Ray Hussey 1934 - 2016

RMRU 1984 - 2016

Mission Reviews

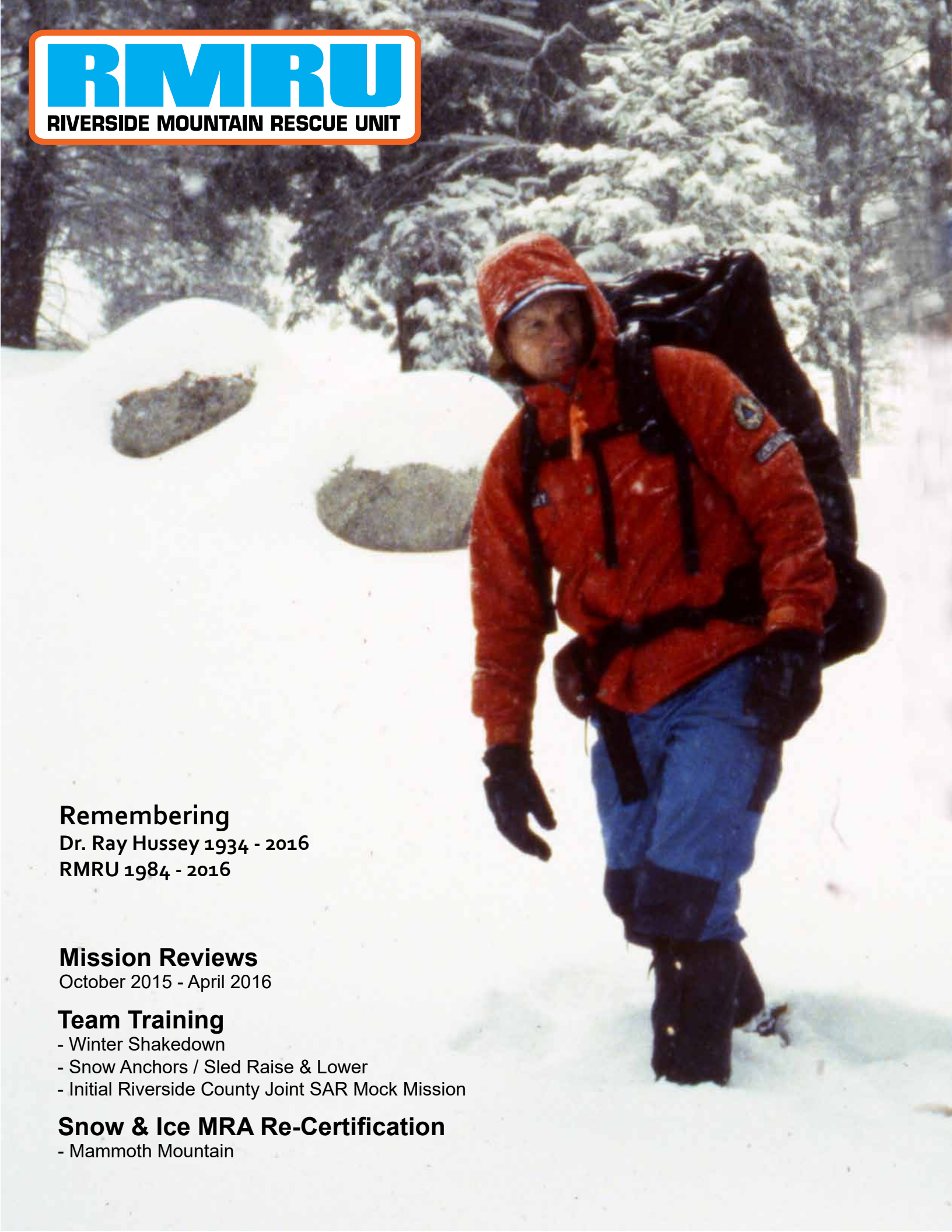
October 2015 - April 2016

Team Training

- Winter Shakedown
- Snow Anchors / Sled Raise & Lower
- Initial Riverside County Joint SAR Mock Mission

Snow & Ice MRA Re-Certification

- Mammoth Mountain



Dr. Ray Hussey



1986 Ray leaving helicopter Summit of San Jacinto (10,835 feet)

ON THE COVER:
Dr. Ray - 1987 Winter Mission



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RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

Dr. Ray Hussey 1934-2016

On Joining RMRU

Dr. Ray Hussey joined RMRU in 1984 and already had a great deal of experience in Backpacking, Camping, and a general outdoor knowledge. He was a useful field member right away and did not need much training. Ray was in good physical shape and could hike with a full pack all day. Over the years Ray went on over 100 missions and over 100 trainings and everyone remembers how he always had a smile on his face and a joke ready for every situation. His ability to keep things light and easy going in hard times was a great help to keeping everyone in a good mood when things got hard. He was serious when needed and had level head for seeing what needed to be done and then making sure it did get done correctly.

Ray has been on many missions involving getting in and out of helicopters in hazardous conditions.

He has gotten out on top of Mount San Jacinto in the winter when the peak was covered in over 10 feet of hard packed snow.

*Thank you Ray for your
RMRU Service from 1984 -
2016 and your friendship...*

*You will be missed but
NEVER forgotten!*

It is very icy and you exit the helicopter with ice axe ready in case you started to slide. He has been let off on top of cliffs with over a hundred foot drop on one side. He has been on many technical rock missions and been lowered or repelled over the side to give medical aid to injured persons, sometimes in the middle of the night with the only light being headlamps. He does all of this with expert skill that he has passed on

to newer team members over the years.

One such rescue was on July 13, 1985 when a young male hiker took a fall and fractured an ankle and suffered head injuries at the base of Tahquitz Rock. Due to loss of fluids from injuries, Dr. Hussey hooked up an IV solution of Ringers lactate to help get fluids back into his system. He was carried down to Humber Park and transported to Idyllwild Ball Field, where a helicopter took him to Loma Linda Medical Center.

On March 11, 1986 on a search for a hiker missing on Mt. San Jacinto with over 12 feet of snow on the summit. Ray was flown to the summit in powerful wind gusts 30 to 40 mph where only one person at a time could safely be in the helicopter. He and another team member then found tracks leading down from the summit. These tracks

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Mission Reviews

October 2015 - April 2016

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.

Hoist Soboba Canyon

October 06, 2015

Soboba, San Jacinto

Written by Cameron Dickinson

A rescue call went out to the team on the evening of October 6th regarding a male that was immobile in steep terrain in the hills north-east of the Soboba Casino. As the team was dispatched to the scene it was unclear at that time whether this mission would require an aerial hoist or a technical rescue from the ground. Fellow team member Eric and myself were in route to the Hemet Ryan Airport, while Kevin, Glenn, and Gwenda were on their way to scene with the team vehicle.

Once we arrived at the airport, Sheriff's Aviation had already obtained the subjects GPS coordinates of his location. With this information we were able review the terrain using satellite mapping which helped us better understand the conditions which our subject was in. The plan was to be dropped off on the hill above our subject, hike down to see if was possible to reach our subject with the intent

to perform a hoist. At this point the rest of our team arrived at the scene. The terrain between us and our subject below was very steep, with soft soil, and lots of loose rock. We determined with a careful approach, we can safely get down to our subject. We were able to get to subject, confirmed he didn't require any medical attention, and radioed to our Aviation awaiting overhead that were preparing for a hoist. Our subject was hoisted up into the helicopter and safely dropped off in an open field by the road below.

RMRU Members Involved:

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



Two Hikers Lost Overnight Tramway

October 13, 2015

Seven Pines Trail

Written by Pete Carlson

At 9:30 am we received a call that two hikers had called 911 on their cell phone after having just spent the night out lost. They had left the Tramway at 2:30pm to hike to San Jacinto

Peak and got to the top around 5:30 as it was getting dark. As they left the Peak and came down to the Saddle just below the Peak they went right down the Little Round Valley Trail. They lost the trail in the dark and made a shelter to spend the night in shorts and T-shirts with sweat shirts. They could not get any cell reception where they spent the night. The next morning, they started heading down and finally got a call in to 911. We got their location from there phone and it turned out they were very close to the Seven Pines Trail all the way down by Azalea Trails Girl Scout Camp.

"They lost the trail in the dark and made a shelter to spend the night in shorts and T-shirts with sweat shirts."

RMRU RESCUER-

PETE CARLSON

We arrived at the Camp to find a Sheriff Deputy who was on his cell phone with the two hikers and was sounding his siren ever five minutes and the hikers said they could hear it and were very close now. In 10 minutes they walked into the Camp and we met up with them. They were fine,

MISSION REVIEWS OCTOBER 2015 - APRIL 2016

just a little tired and hungry, both were in their early twenties and in good physical shape. After talking for a few minutes the Sheriff was going to give them a ride back to the Tramway to pick up their car.

RMRU Members Involved:

Pete Carlson, Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Tony Hughes, and Wayne Smith.

Lost Male 60 Year Old

October 13, 2015

Meniffee

Written by Glenn Henderson

The team was called out at the end of the Seven Pines trail mission to search for a missing person in Meniffee. The person lived at the end of a rural dirt road and was last seen at 7:30 AM the day before. It was now 12:30 the next day. He also had some physical issues and was confined to a wheel chair. We were assigned to search for tracks along one of the main roads in the area. We did not find anything and were released at 3:30 in the afternoon. He was eventually located in good condition three days later.

RMRU Members Involved:

Pete Carlson, Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Tony Hughes, Kevin Kearn, Dana Potts, and Wayne Smith

Hoist Corona - Walked Out

October 18, 2015

Corona Hills

Written by Pete Carlson

Gwenda got the call from the Sheriff that a hiker was stuck on a hillside in Corona and they needed someone for a hoist. Gwenda

called Dana who lives in Corona to meet the helicopter in a field near his home. Before Dana got going the Sheriff called Gwenda back and said the subject had walked out on his own.

RMRU Members Involved:

Dana Potts and Gwenda Yates.

Hoist Soboba Hills

October 31, 2015

Soboba Hills, San Jacinto

Written by Cameron Dickinson

I received a mission call-out on Halloween evening to perform a hoist evacuation of two local 17 year old males which were stuck on the side of a steep hill in the Soboba hills north of San Jacinto. I became familiar with this location, as I did a hoist rescue there a few weeks prior. Dana Potts also responded to the call, and was in route to the Hemet-Ryan Airport. Since there was minimal room in the aircraft, Dana would be on standby.

".... this time I would be hoisted down a few feet below on the downslope of our two subjects."

RMRU RESCUER -

CAMERON DICKINSON

Unlike the mission prior where the RSO helicopter dropped us off on the hilltop and hiked down to our subject, this time I would be hoisted down a few feet below on the downslope of our two subjects. After being lowered down, I was able to do a quick assessment of our 2 males. Both were unhurt and

in good condition. As the helicopter hovered above, we were able to hoist up one person at a time, followed by myself. From there we returned safely back to the Airport.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson and Dana Potts.

Riverside Sheriff's Office:

Aviation and Deputy Bruce.

Car Over Main Divide Road

November 23, 2015

Main Divide Road, Lake Elsinore

Written by Cameron Dickinson

A call went out to the Team around 10:00pm to respond to and assist Cal-Fire in evacuating a male driver that drove off a paved road, coming to a stop 500 feet down into the canyon below. Since I'm more local to the Hemet-Ryan Airport, I would drive there for a possible helicopter extraction, while team members Dana, Donny, Ray, and Tony were in route to meet awaiting Deputies and Cal fire at the scene.

Quick information provided on the male subject, he was conscious and alert, and was able to respond to verbal communication. Once we arrived, Cal-Fire was already on scene providing medical attention to the subject. Since the terrain was so thick with deep brush, the fastest method of getting him out was by helicopter evacuation.

As we flew overhead, I was lowered down to the subject, followed by the litter (stretcher) basket. With the assistance of Cal-Fire, we

were able to gently load him into the basket, secure him in place, and hoist him up and out to awaiting paramedics at fire station just down the hill in Lake Elsinore.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Donny Goetz, Tony Hughes, Dana Potts, and Ray Weden.

Riverside Sheriff's Office:

Sheriff's Aviation.



Two Hiker Near Wellman Cienega

November 27, 2015

San Jacinto State Park Wilderness

Written by Raymond Weden

Around 8pm RMRU was activated for a pair of lost hikers reported to be near Wellman Cienega. The initial information we received was that one of the hikers had a hurt ankle. Glenn, Cameron and I arrived at the Deer Springs trail head within a few minutes of each other. With Glenn running base operations, Cameron and I started up the Deer Springs trail with the litter and wheel anticipating our injured hiker needing the ride out.

"It was easily in the 20's and an early season storm had just passed through the area. "

RMRU RESCUER -
RAYMOND WEDEN

It was easily in the 20's and an early season storm had just passed through the area. As Cam and I starting climbing up in elevation the snow starting getting thick-

er on the trail and the air temperature may have been in the upper teens. At this point, a hurt ankle was beginning to turn into a secondary concern as hypothermia was a likely possibility if help didn't arrive soon.

We decided to ditch the litter on the side of the trail as it was slowing us down so we could get to their last known point quicker. We got word that California State Park Rangers were also assisting on this rescue. They were coming from the Long Valley Ranger Station over Wellman Divide. RMRU Members Eric, Judy, and Dana were staged at Humber Park ready for a possible hoist rescue. Sheriff's Aviation was off duty for the evening however a crew came in on their day off to be ready to assist us.

Shortly before 3am on now the next day, the Park Rangers made contact with our missing hikers. After giving our missing hikers some warmer clothes, it turned out not to be a sprained ankle and the Rangers hiked them out towards Saddle Junction down to Humber Park to our awaiting team members.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Eric Holden, Glenn Henderson, Dana Potts, Judy Spowart, and Raymond Weden.

Riverside Sheriff's Office:

Sheriff's Aviation.

Other Agencies:

San Jacinto State Park Rangers.



Lost Hikers Tramway

November 29, 2015

Wellman Divide Area

Written by Eric Holden

At 8:30pm we get the callout, Hasty Team needed at the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway to look for 3 missing hikers. I quickly grab my stuff and head out the door, making sure to take extra jackets as on our last mission temps were in the teens. I met Cameron in the parking lot of the tram when one of the employees said he the tram was closed and we would not be riding up. At this time Glenn got in contact with us and Cameron and I drove down to one of the lower parking lots where RSO Aviation (STAR-9) was waiting to fly us in.



Subjects and Cameron by fire

After a briefing with Glenn and TFO Eric Hannum we found that the subjects had been spotted from the helicopter and had built a substantial fire. Their location put them near Wellman's Divide, very close to a location I was at during our Radio Coverage training a few months ago. Kirk showed up just as we were about to leave to wish us good travels on our journey.

Even though the strong winds were pushing the helicopter around quite a bit, the expert

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piloting skills of Andy Rasmussen has us on the ground in Round Valley without incident. We made the quick hike up to ~9500ft and located the subjects within 75ft of the Lat./Long provided to us by aviation.



Subjects , Cameron, and Eric at Upper Tram Station

The first thing we noticed is that there were 4 people, not 3. The substantial fire was actually quite small but looked big as they made it next to a boulder that illuminated the entire area very well. The subjects were very happy to see us and although a little cold, in good spirits. They all had jackets, food and water.

Along the way we found out that they had made it to the peak in great time but lost the trail at Wellman's Divide, quite a common occurrence if you are not paying attention. They tried to find the trail but when it got dark they decided to text out for someone to dial 911 as they had spotty service. They then stayed put and made a small fire to keep warm.

The subjects were decently prepared for their hike with extra water, food and clothing but unfortunately lacked the necessary

navigation tools to make it back to the tram. Utilizing a map at every trail junction or a GPS would have prevented them getting lost. They did the right thing once they realized they were lost which was to stay put. This turned what could have been hours of searching into a quick find. Big thanks to the Riverside Sheriff's Aviation unit for their help with the search and to the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Eric Holden, Glenn Henderson, and Kirk Cloyd.

Sheriff's Aviation:

Andy Rasmussen (Pilot), Eric Hannum (TFO).



Lake Hemet Search

December 11, 2015

Lake Hemet, Garner Valley

Written by Camerson Dickinson

The team was dispatched on December 11th to locate two adults and a young child that went missing near Lake Hemet.

The couple decided to take a later afternoon hike off-trail into the forest south of the lake. Later in the evening the couple called 911 and reported that they were lost and unable to find their way back to their vehicle. The missing couple expressed that they had some warm clothes and water. The Deputy was able to make phone contact with the subjects and was asked them to stay where they were so the searchers could get to them, provide aid if necessary, and guide them back down. The weather was cold and had snowed

earlier that day, however the skies had cleared up and was partly cloudy.

Riverside Sheriff's Aviation was dispatched to try and locate the subjects. They were located up on the mountain, and their GPS coordinates were provided. Team members Lee, Judy, and myself headed up the mountain. Glenn would operate base. Other team members Ray, Tony, Eric, and Wayne were either in route, or on scene. As Lee, Judy & myself approached the subject's location, we shouted out to them with no response. We radioed back to base, and other team members were asked to see if the subject's car was still in the parking lot.

Ray would drive to that location, and radioed back indicating that their car had left the parking lot. Because of the dropping temps with concerns of the young child, the subjects decided to head back towards their vehicle. Luckily, they were able to find their vehicle, and ended up leaving. The Deputy was able to call the subjects, and confirmed that they did leave. The Deputy was able stay in touch and correspond with them thereafter.

RMRU Members Involved:

Lee Arnson, Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Wayne Smith, Judy Spowart, and Ray Weden.

Riverside Sheriff's Office:

Sheriff's Aviation.



eventually lead to the rescue of the missing hiker.

Another mission was on Tahquitz Rock, but this time in the dark on Jan 1, 1987. Ray was flown into Lunch Rock at the base of Tahquitz around 7pm, where the pilot placed one skid down on the 100 foot tall boulder and Ray stepped out into the dark. He then hiked around the base of the rock to the route the injured climber was on and then ascended up 130 feet to ascertain the injuries. It was determined he had some sort of fracture to the hip and his ribs. After a litter was brought up, Ray became the attendant and was lowered down with the subject in the litter. He then helped taking the litter down the long and steep slope out to Humber Park. He was put into an ambulance and taken to the hospital.

"Ray is a perfect example of what we look for and want in a member for RMRU."

In the past 30 years has served on the Board of Directors for 15 years as (Board Member, Secretary, Vice President, and President). He has also served for 5 years on the Rescue Committee and gone to National Conferences on Technical Standards where he has brought back many new and good ideas for Technical Rescue. He has been on the Medical Committee for almost all 30 years and brought many

new Medical ideas to RMRU for use in the field. Some members have come on the team for several years or more and then leave and hardly anyone remembers them or what they did. Ray with his long term of service, high skill levels, and ability to pass on what he knows makes him a member of RMRU who will not be forgotten for many years in the future. Ray no longer went in the field on missions but still attended meetings and keeps RMRU updated on new medical ideas. Ray is a perfect example of what we look for and want in a member for RMRU.



This is an interview with Ray 2 years ago:

Name: Ray Hussey

Age: 80

Job: Invasive Radiologist & Radiotherapist

Background:

I grew up.....in Newport, R.I. I live in.....Riverside, California. When I was a kid.....I enjoyed body surfing, boating outings commercial fishing with my uncle. My family is.....located in Middletown, RI., Mt Pleasant, SC &

"RMRU motivates me because.....I like helping people, mountaineering & the great outdoors"

RMRU RESCUER -

Dr. Ray Hussey

Riverside, California.

If I could have any job, I would.....do the same thing all over again. My hobbies are.....woodworking, playing handball, the tenor banjo & the ukulele.

You can strive to.....and accomplish anything you want to, with the proper motivation.

My favorite type of music is.....classical... especially Mozart & Dixieland Jazz.

I never saw.....combat but was with the USAF in SAC for 8 1/2 yrs. I have been on RMRU for.....30 years.

What I've learned.....mostly has been technical rescue.

RMRU motivates me because.....I like helping people, mountaineering & the great outdoors.

People wonder.....why I do what I do, I always say because I like to.

My most memorable moment with the team is.....the fall Kevin Walker & I took at the old Riverside quarry.

I offer this advice to wilderness travelers.....always carry the ten essentials and read and understand the best book- MOUNTAINEERING-The Freedom of the Hills.



Testimonials

Our Reward
are the people we help



Dear Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit,

Words cannot describe the feelings and thankfulness for saving our brother's life. How precious each and every one of you are to care enough to risk your own lives to save another's. Your dedication, professionalism, your talents and skills, your compassion and your willingness are so very appreciated. WOW!! Katherine

To the Riverside Mountain Rescue Team,

Thank you for taking time out of your night on Friday to search for my friend Heidi, and I when we lost the trail on the way back from San Jacinto Peak. While I know it is something you gladly do – and enjoy – I do apologize for taking up your time because I made a very horrible mistake. You guys are awesome! Tom

Dear Sirs,

I wanted to express my sincere gratitude to everyone involved in the search and rescue from Cabazon Mountain. Words can never even begin to express the new found appreciation and admiration I have for the jobs that each and every one of you do.

I really appreciate the quick response to your Rescue Unit and the coordination with the Sheriff's department. Because of your quick action I believe that I am here today and with my family and now have a new outlook on life and what is really important, and I thank you for that. Thank you for staying with my family during this time. Your compassions for humanity really shows. Best Regards Always, Won

Dear Friends,

I just celebrated my first anniversary of being saved by your dedicated volunteers. My hats off to you especially Sully who went way beyond the call of duty. Keep up the good works. God Bless Al

Dear Sirs,

I would like to thank you on behalf of my husband and granddaughter for the assistance you gave and my son's family last night and this morning. My husband and I are not hikers (although my husband is a retired Marine) so this is something we don't ordinarily do. When we got stuck up in the forest overnight we knew we would have to fend for ourselves, but we also were pretty certain that our son and daughter-in-law would call for help. They did and you were magnificent.

I also want to thank the volunteer search and rescue team, which was following us even though we never saw them. I know that having such a group in your area gives your residents and guests a great sense of security. I know that they are not under your command, but would you please forward our thanks. Kim

TRAINING

WINTER SNOWSHOE - OVERNIGHT BACKPACK

January 9 - 10, 2016

Upper Tram Station -
Tamarack Valley



We rode up the Tramway on the 7:30 pre-public car with the State Park Rangers and Volunteers. The purpose of this training is for new members to try out their winter equipment and for old



Tent Setup in Fresh 3 - 4 foot
deep snow

members to be sure their old gear is still working. So off we went with average pack weight of 50 pounds each. We chose to go up the ski route to the saddle between Yale and Harvard Peaks and then drop down into Tamarack Valley to spend the night and train. This is always a fun challenging route that gets quite steep in places, but a good workout and training for winter packs.

Once in camp we set up tents and had lunch before starting the

training.

We found a slope on the side of Cornell Peak that had enough snow for what we wanted to do. We set up different types of snow anchors: (Pickets vertically and horizontally, Deadmen, and we built snow bollards). Some of these held quite well and others failed right away. It all depends on the snow conditions what anchors

"This is always a fun challenging route that gets quite steep in places, but a good workout and training for winter packs."

RMRU - Pete Carlson

work best, but we wanted to show everyone each type and explain why they worked or failed.

In the late afternoon we then got out our avalanche transceivers and showed everyone how they worked. We then had one person bury one and the rest of us started



Snow Cooking and Meal Station

searching for it. We formed a line about 50 feet apart from each other and then walked down the avalanche area until someone's transceiver picked up the signal. We found and dug out the buried transceiver in about 3 minutes. We then repeated the exercise several more times.



Line-up in preparation to probe
for buried subject.

WINTER SNOW SHAKEDOWN JANUARY 9 - 10

Then we buried two transceivers, like two buried skiers, and went about finding them and digging them up.

"We found and dug out the buried transceiver in about 3 minutes. We then repeated the exercise several more times."

RMRU - Pete Carlson

Our new transceivers allow us to search for and mark up to three buried transceivers at one time.

Then it was time for dinner around the table. We built a round table and dug out around it so we could sit 10 members around the table to cook and eat as a group. This worked out well until the sun went down and everyone headed into



Testing a Snow Anchor to Failure
(it didn't fail)



Snowshoeing up hill in fresh powder snow
near the saddle between

the tents for the night. Winter nights get cold in a hurry and seem to last a long time. By 7am we were getting up and cooking breakfast before continuing training. We were out in the valley practicing avalanche probing in a line when the call for the first mission of the year came in Lost Skier out of the Tramway.

"We were practicing avalanche probing when the radio call came in... So training became the real thing."

RMRU - Pete Carlson

So training became the real thing as we got ready to search. Some headed back to the upper Tramway to get more information and run the mission while the rest of us stayed put and melted snow so we would have full water bottles for the upcoming search.

RMRU Members Involved:

Pete Carlson, Cameron Dickinson, Gary Farris, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Kevin Kearns, Rob May, Frank Snider, and Ray Weden.

Article by Pete Carlson



Snow Anchor Practice



After using transponder to find subject - digging out



Stranded Hikers

December 27, 2015

Hills above Corona

Written by Dana Potts

In the late evening hours of December 27th, 2015, a male and a female hiker had called 9-1-1 to report that they had become lost off of a trail in south Corona. Darkness had fallen and the only light source they had with them were their cellular phones. The couple did have water and some snacks with them, however they were not dressed for overnight temperatures. Initially, a helicopter from the Riverside Police Department located the two south of Upper Drive. Once it was established that the two could not hike out of their location and local resources in Corona could not get to them, RMRU was called.

"The air program and its highly trained crews constantly perform these missions at night using night vision."

RMRU RESCUER -
DANA POTTS

While this was occurring, team member Dana Potts was watching the event unfold as it was occurring within view of his house in south Corona. Dana was called and advised that he was needed to attempt a hoist rescue of the two. An additional helicopter crew was called in to conduct the mission. Within a few hours, Dana was picked up by the RSO helicopter in a field near the location and flown over the two subjects. RSO lowered Dana down to the two and backed away while Dana checked

the two for any medical complications. After it was quickly established that they were physically able to be hoisted, RSO moved in and hoisted the two up to the warmth and safety of the airship. They were flown a short distance to the Deputy Sheriff awaiting their arrival.

The airship then returned to get Dana. This rescue was a collaborative effort between the 9-1-1 system, the Riverside Police Department, Riverside Sheriff's Department and the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit. Lastly, without the technical skills of the Riverside Sheriff's Departments Air Crew to safely and expeditiously perform their duties the couple would have spent additional hours in the field. The air program and its highly trained crews constantly perform these missions at night using night vision flying in mountain environments with unpredictable conditions.

RMRU Members Involved:

Dana Potts.

Riverside Sheriff's Office:

Sheriff's Aviation.

Skier Lost Overnight

January 10, 2016

Tramway - San Jacinto Wilderness

Written by Pete Carlson

We were having our annual winter shakedown hike and had just spent the night in Tamarack Valley. We were practicing avalanche line probing when we got the radio call at gam that a day skier had not returned last night from a trip up

the Tramway the day before. We started to get organized by having Glenn, Rob, Ray, and Frank head back to the upper Tramway to run base and find out more information. The rest of us started melting snow to refill all the water bottles so everyone would have 2-3 liters of water when we started searching. We all would be carrying 45-55 pound packs with all our winter gear.

"the team was conducting our annual overnight winter backpack / snowshoe shakedown (see page 10) when the radio call came in"

RMRU RESCUER - PETE CARLSON

It took a good 90 minutes before Glenn and crew got back to the upper Tramway and got all the information. It turned out that Evan had come up Sat morning and gone to San Jacinto Peak to ski back down again. So we sent team 1 to Wellman Divide and then they were to check down the trail to Saddle Junction for any signs of ski tracks headed down into the Wellman drainage. Team 2 was going to San Jacinto Peak and check the North Face and then down towards Little Round Valley. Team 3 was going to Round Valley and then the high trail to Hidden Lake again looking for ski tracks. The State Park was sending a team to Hidden Lake and then down to Willow Creek Crossing looking to tracks. We hoped to find some sign from one of the teams.

As all teams were out on assign-

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ment around 2:30pm when we got word that Evan had walked into Snow Creek Village area and a Sheriff Deputy was going to pick him up.



Search Team Members
about to begin search on snowshoes

We all waited until the Deputy confirmed that it was Evan. All teams then hiked back to the upper Tramway by 4:30pm and went down to have a meal in Palm Springs before heading home. We have since learned that Evan reached the Summit and it was very cloudy and he could not see much. He skied off the North Face by mistake and just kept going until the snow ran out. He then left his skis and continued down on foot. He spent the night under a boulder and in the morning continued down and across the Isthmus passed the water district buildings and down the road to Snow Creek Village.

RMRU Members Involved:

Pete Carlson, Cameron Dickinson, Gary Farris, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Kevin Kearn, Rob May, Frank Snider, and Ray Weden.

Other Agencies:

San Jacinto State Park.

Hoist Rescue

February 6, 2016

North Mountain, San Jacinto City

Written by Kevin Kearn

On Saturday after a long day of snow and ice rescue training above Idyllwild, the Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) alerted RMRU to rescue three young males, ages 17-18, stranded above the city of San Jacinto. Glenn directed Ray and myself to report to the RSO's Aviation Detachment at Hemet-Ryan Airfield to attempt to conduct a hoist of the three-man group as the sun was starting to go down.



RSO had established communications with the party via cell phone and had a relatively accurate fix on their location just southwest of the "S" in the mountains above Hemet and San Jacinto. Temperatures were unseasonably warm in the 60's in and although hypothermia

was not a major concern, one of the three had reportedly injured his ankle, and the group was without water, food, or the ability to shelter for the night.

"Together with the pilot and Technical Flight Officer (TFO) we planned to drop me in first, followed by Ray"

RMRU RESCUER - KEVIN KEARN

Ray and I arrived and reconfigured our packs to conduct a hoist. Having just come off of snow and ice that afternoon, we slimmed down our packs and loaded up 'screamer suits' to extract our subjects. We also brought medical equipment to possibly splint the ankle injury if required. Together with the pilot and Technical Flight Officer (TFO) we planned to drop me in first, followed by Ray. After evaluating the subjects and rendering any emergency care, we'd suit up the first two subjects, and then the TFO would hoist Ray back up. As I hooked the subjects up below, the TFO would hoist them and Ray would secure them inside the aircraft. I would remain with the third subject as they flew the other two down to the command post established by RSO Deputy Pingle on Soboba Rd below. Then they'd return and extract the third subject and myself.

After launching at 6pm, conditions changed as we approached the mountains. It was now dark and the Santa Ana winds that had brought the warm weather



were now much more severe in the mountains. The subjects, who seemed fine, were on a knife edge spine that came off a steep ridge into a canyon with a high wall close to subjects. The spine itself was less than 6 feet wide with 20'+ drop offs on either side. The restrictive terrain amplified wind gusts which were already sustained at 30 knots.

"Still Ray and I, having had solid training for years with this very crew, were supremely confident in their judgement and ability."

RMRU RESCUER - KEVIN KEARN

Over our headsets, we acknowledged that this was extremely tricky. With the door open, hooked up, and my feet on the skid, I remembered the fact that more mountain rescue personnel are killed in aircraft incidents than on cliffs or accidents on the ground. Still Ray and I, having had solid training for years with this very crew, were supremely confident in their judgement and ability. We knew if anyone could lower us into a tiny target in high winds and "pin the tail on the donkey", the Pilot and TFO could. Of course, there was also a risk that we might get stranded down there if the winds increased between hoists as well.

After another gust of wind pushed our tiny helicopter precariously toward the wall again, our wise pilots decided to abort for now – it was just too dangerous. The TFO signaled abort and I climbed back

inside. I'm sure our subjects were disheartened to see our aircraft depart - I could empathize. We descended and landed near the RSO command post off Soboba Rd. and talked to Deputy Pingle on the ground.

The weather forecast was for continued winds all night. We contacted Glenn Henderson and let him know that we had to abort the hoist and that the position of the subjects would require a ground rescue that would probably demand some limited technical work given their position and the unknown mobility of the ankle-injured subject. Glen and Gwenda, still at the MRA conference in Salt Lake City, then put out the call for reinforcements from the rest of the team – already exhausted and probably asleep after intense training on snow and ice all day.

"In order to find a suitable Landing Zone (LZ) and identify a route to the subjects, the pilot suggested we go back and get Night Vision Goggles"

RMRU RESCUER - KEVIN KEARN

Deputy Pingle informed us that the subjects, who originally had three cellphones, now had only one still charged with only 30% battery left. We asked that he update the subjects and direct the them to conserve their remaining power by switching to airplane mode and only coming up at the top of the hour for ten minutes (or an emergency).

Since technical ground operations are significantly faster and easier if we can drop teams laden with extra equipment above the subjects to descend rather than climb to them, our pilots agreed to let us conduct a better aerial reconnaissance while our ground team and rescue truck assembled over the next two hours. In order to find a suitable Landing Zone (LZ) and identify a route to the subjects, the pilot suggested we go back and get Night Vision Goggles (NVGs) for the TFO and I since illumination was so poor. We flew back to Hemet-Ryan airfield. We got the goggles but while preparing a different aircraft, RSO got another call to assist the Idyllwild Fire Department. RSO now asked that Ray and I assist in rescuing a critically injured man whose car had gone off a cliff near Poppet Flats (see Mission 2016-003). We let the team know we'd been re-tasked.

We reloaded our original aircraft, swapped our screamer suits for a collapsible stokes litter, and launched to assist Idyllwild. When we arrived, firemen were nearly complete in hauling the victim up the steep slope with their own haul system. Although we landed briefly, it was clear that the victim's serious head injuries precluded evacuation on the outside of RSO's aircraft, and a special helicopter (Mercy Air) with paramedic onboard and capability to internally load the litter was on its way. We did observe that winds had died down significantly and took off to check winds near our

MISSION REVIEWS OCTOBER 2015 - APRIL 2016

original subjects' location on the mountain.

Winds had dropped below 30 knots when we arrived at the point last seen on the knife edge, however our subjects had moved. Since they were surrounded by steep drop offs, it was more likely that they had mustered the courage to scramble up the class 4+ slope above them. Without locating their exact location and not wanting to waste time with the window of low winds, we returned to Hemet-Ryan Airfield again to swap out the litter and retrieve the screamer suits. The extraction plan remained the same if we could not actually land. I attempted to call Lee and update the RMRU ground team again before we launched.

As we returned, we stopped briefly near the command post to load the new coordinates Deputy Pingle had obtained for the subjects' location. As predicted, they had ascended and were not far from the top. This was also good news in that the reportedly ankle-injured subject was mobile. After flying to the top, we saw the subjects flashing their cellphone flashlight at us – approximately 300' from the summit.

Radio antennas and obstacles made it difficult to find a place to safely land so we executed the hoist plan. After Ray and I were lowered, we ran to the subjects. All were somewhat dehydrated and one complained of an injured ankle. Ray did a quick check, gave him some water, and we got him up and moving towards to the

extraction point.

There we quickly suited up the two eighteen-year olds – including the one with the twisted ankle. (The seventeen-year old asked that the other two go before him.) Ray went up first and I sent up the other two as planned. As we waited for the helicopter to return for us, I gave the remaining seventeen-year old a liter of water and food.

He explained how he had brought eight (8 Oz.) bottles of water to hike with his two friends. One of the two brought three Fiber-1 bars

"Radio antennas and obstacles made it difficult to find a place to safely land so we executed the hoist plan. "

RMRU RESCUER - KEVIN KEARN

but no one else brought food, water, or supplies besides a pair of gloves and sweatshirts. No one had a map. Despite acknowledging that they were ill-prepared to go, they decided to hike anyway. They got disoriented and one eighteen-year old slipped down an embankment and twisted his ankle. While trying to descend, they run into a knife edge spine and couldn't descend safely any further when they called 911. After our aircraft had circled above and left, the ankle-injured teen feared "he was going to die" and the seventeen-year old took charge of the two older boys and made them climb up the cliff – eventually

getting them to location where we found them. When I asked, what he planned to do after high school, he responded, "I plan to join the Army. I plan to go Infantry."

The helicopter returned, lowered a screamer suit to me, and he was hoisted into the aircraft before I followed him. We landed shortly thereafter at the command post where Deputy Pingle took charge of the three. While I re-packed the screamer suits at the aircraft, Deputy Pingle took a picture of our hikers in good health and spirits with Ray.

The rest of RMRU's ground team, having fully assembled now with seven additional personnel, all of whom had trained hard all day in the snow, was relieved that it didn't have to continue the mission and buoyed by the success of this rescue before midnight. This ended the second mission in a row that happened after a long day(s) of team training. The fact that nine exhausted, volunteer rescuers returned again for what could have been another physically demanding night mission, underscores the character, commitment, and reliability of RMRU team members.

Lessons Learned:

Don't Rush to Failure: All too often, we unwisely make poor decisions because we don't thoroughly examine and manage risk – identification of all hazards, likelihood of occurrence, and severity of consequences. The three young men recognized that they lacked food, water, a map (other

Continued on Page 18

TRAINING

SNOW ANCHORS, ICE AXE, CRAMPON, SLED RAISE / LOWER

February 06, 2016

Devil's Slide, Idyllwild, CA.



Thanks to the abundance of snow this winter season in our local "hills", the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit was able to get out and do more snow trainings this season. This was great as the California drought of the last several years provided us very few opportunities to practice our snow and ice skills. Doubly important the team was scheduled to be winter rescue re-certified by the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) in March and the skills were practiced in January and this day would be part of the test.



Below Raising Teams

This training was held on the Devil's Slide Trail, a very popular trail and normally well maintained one starting at Idyllwild's Humber Park and leading to Saddle Junc-

tion. Here hikers can continue to the summit of Mt. San Jacinto or Tahquitz Peak a short distance away. However, with the number of snow storms this season, the trail had well over a foot of snow beginning at the Humber Park Trailhead making it a treacherous hike without proper equipment and training. In other words, excellent snow and ice conditions for our well-equipped team members.

The team hiked up the trail on crampons over 1 mile before finding a suitable training venue. Overall the training location was excellent providing a moderately steep slope below the trail in a shaded north facing gully. With overnight temperatures below freezing, this gave us icy conditions about 2 – 3 inches deep followed by hard pack snow at least another 2 feet deep.

Our first order of business was to assign teams and place the two independent anchor systems for the red and blue raise / lower ropes. Each anchor system used 3 snow pickets driven vertically or buried horizontally.

During last month's winter training, one of our focuses was on placing different snow anchors, testing their strength, and discussing applications. This training, expanded on this skill set, as we incorporated snow anchors as part of our rigging system.



View from the sled being raised

Our rigging system is a mechanical aid that will allow us to safely raise and lower our sled with training subject and medical personal in steeper terrain. The rigging system we're using here (see images)

ROCK ANCHOR TRAINING

is similar to what we use for our high angle technical rock rescues, but the primary difference is that we're using multiple anchor points in snow instead of rock cracks, outcroppings, trees, etc. In this training for our anchors we used a combination of snow pickets either placed vertically or horizontally in the snow. Evaluating the snow conditions was critically important in properly placing the snow pickets as soft or unstable snow could result in the pickets being pulled out of the snow; a potentially catastrophic equipment failure.

In this day's training, the objective was to refresh ourselves on our winter rigging system operations, general safety, medical personal training, use of ice axes (personal anchors, self-arrests) and proper



Equalizing Anchor System
Subject and sled far below



Equalizing Anchor System

use of crampons. Much of our team was handling the rigging set-up which will allow us to perform our raises or lowers, while our medical personal carefully loads the subject into the toboggan while providing necessary aid, and obtaining/relaying their vitals. In our training we'll include different rescue scenarios to simulate real-world situations.

Lessons Learned:

1. Stay Low to the Snow slope during the raise, using the pulley system to keep load on the pickets down the slope. Pulling at a higher level could potentially weaken the picket anchor placement to a point of failure.
2. The horizontal safety rope should be placed slightly below the team members placing the anchors and working the raise / lower system (MPD devices). One option discussed was placing the safety rope above the MPD due to the steepness of the snow as a slip by one person could result in

others being pulled off balance.

3. Anchoring team members directly to the snow anchors was also proposed as an option especially during the raise or lower process. While this restricts a person's movement, being that both hands are required for pulling on the rope meaning one cannot be on their ice axe, a slip would not result in any movement.

RMRU Members Involved:

Lee Arnson, Cameron Dickinson, Gary Farris, Michael George, Eric Holden, Kevin Kearns, Rob May, Dana Potts, Wayne Smith, Frank Snider, Judy Spowart, and Ray Weden



than on cellphone), and the proper gear to hike in the mountains but didn't fully think through what could possibly go wrong and what the impact might be – getting lost, injured, trapped overnight. Similarly, the pilots and members of RMRU, chose to abort the first insertion attempt after determining that the situation on the ground didn't require excessive risk with the potentially catastrophic consequences. The RMRU ground team also chose wisely to pause as the winds died down rather than rush up into the mountains and steep terrain while the subjects moved

"At one point, he had resigned himself that he would die, didn't want to move, and demoralized and burdened his friends."

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

away from them. We must guard are desire to move out immediately when it may only be to make ourselves feel like we're doing something, and premature commitment to a course of action may with limited resources may actually jeopardize the flexibility, mission, and even lives. Bottom line: We must be skillful and always think before we act.

Cultivate Physical and Mental Toughness: Both in yourself and your organization, it is important to be physically and mentally tough. The one 18-year old who claimed he had an injury, was in fact, in far better condition than he believed himself to be ...and



Hikers at Base, Raymond on Right

quite still capable of walking. It was clear that he had given up, largely in his mind when he became lost and twisted his ankle a little. At one point, he had resigned himself that he would die, didn't want to move, and demoralized and burdened his friends. It was only when the youngest boy took charge and led the other two, that their situation turned around. Similarly, RMRU members who were exhausted and trained all day in the mountains (some up for nearly 20 hours already) still summoned the strength to come out to support the rescue and were ready to hike/climb all night if required. Maintaining physical fitness not only gives one capability to be strong when required, but also makes a person less prone to injury and gives one the personal confidence that they can persevere in the wilderness.

RMRU Members Involved:

Lee Arnson, Cameron Dickinson, Michael George, Glenn Henderson, Kevin Kearn, Rob May, Dana Potts, Wayne Smith, and Raymond Weden.

Sheriff's Aviation:

Mike Calhoun (Pilot), Eric Bashta (TFO).

Car Over the Side

February 6, 2016

Poppet Flats

Written by Raymond Weden

While currently on assignment with Riverside County Sheriff's Aviation (see the previous mission) a call came in for a vehicle over the side in the Poppet Flats area. We reconfigured our gear anticipating a major medical situation and loaded up the stokes litter.

Upon arriving we assisted in spotlighting the area for the first responders below. An impressive ground hoist operations was underway. We landed as we were initially tasked to transport the patient directly to a hospital. Shortly after landing we were informed that Mercy Air was in route and they will be doing the transporting. This was a better option as Mercy Air can provide better patient care. We headed back to Hemet-Ryan Airport to re-reconfigure our gear to finish the previous mission.

RMRU Members Involved:

Kevin Kearn and Raymond Weden.

Riverside Sheriff's Office:

Aviation - Pilot: Mike Calhoun, Technical Flight Officer: Eric Bashta.

Other Agencies:

Cal-Fire and Mercy Air.

Three Lost Hikers

February 21, 2016

Marion Mountain Trailhead

Written by Eric Holden

At 6:40pm we got the callout for 3 missing hikers and were told to meet at Marion Mountain Trailhead. As I am gearing up I get the word to head to Hemet-Ryan for a possible hoist. Once with Aviation I find that one of the subjects fell into water and is wet and cold so we quickly gear up and head

"Once with Aviation we find out that one of the subjects fell into water and is wet and cold so we quickly gear up and head out."

RMRU RESCUER ERIC HOLDEN

out. Turns out the subjects were south of the Seven Pines Trail near the North Fork of the San Jacinto River. We quickly spot them and determine that a hoist will be the best option. Through the expert flight skills of STAR 9, they lowered me on a rock outcropping and then send down three screamer suits. Once with the three males I find that two are in good condition, but the one who fell into the river is suffering from mild hypothermia. Uncontrollable shivering, decreased mental status, and one foot was completely numb. He could still walk and follow directions so I threw another jacket on him to protect from the rotor wash and suited him up in a screamer suit and helmet. Once again aviation perfectly placed the hook into my hand and the subject was on his way. While he was getting se-

cured into the helicopter, I got the next subject prepared, and within a few minutes aviation was flying them both to Keenwild where medics were on scene.

While waiting on the helicopter's return I spoke with the third subject and found that they had left via the Marion Mt. Trailhead, but due to the snow ended up going much slower than they expected. They eventually turned around but got lost and followed another group that was moving very fast. They eventually lost that group and unknowingly started descending the down the North Fork. They knew if they followed the water they would eventually make it to civilization. Unfortunately, they didn't bring flashlights, food, maps, etc. and descending a canyon at night, without a headlamp/flashlight is a very bad thing. During their descent they all took a few slips and all got wet feet at some point in time. The wet subject was attempting to down climb a rock and somehow ended up falling and belly flopping into the North Fork of the San Jacinto River (really a stream at this point). Being in wet clothing will cause the body to lose heat up to 5 times as fast and can be quite deadly in the back-country. Unfortunately, the subject kept his wet clothing on instead of removing it and putting on one of his buddy's dry jackets. As the body starts to decrease in temperature it restricts the blood flow to the extremities to keep the core warm, hence the subjects foot going numb. Once the helicopter returned and picked us both up we went to Keenwild and

found the first subject was being warmed up by Cal Fire and Riverside Deputies. He was starting to feel much better and was in good spirits.

For detailed information on the 10 Essentials visit our RMRU website and read the 1st Quarter 2015 newsletter article on these items found on page 22.

Moral of the story, don't underestimate the outdoors. Be prepared! Remember to bring your essentials and if you do belly flop into a river that is being fed from melting snow.... get out of those wet cloths.

RMRU Members Involved:

Eric Holden



Two Lost Hikers near San Jacinto Peak

February 23, 2016

San Jacinto Wilderness Park

Written by Glenn Henderson

California State Parks got a call from the two Indiana men near the mountain's peak late Tuesday afternoon around 4:30 p.m. One hiker was 51 and the other 39. Star 9, (the Sheriff's helicopter crew) called for two rescuers to perform a rescue of two hikers on the North Face of San Jacinto. Star 9 flew to the area and determined that the winds were way too high to do any type of hoist. They found the hikers, not on the North Face, but on the Saddle between San Jacinto Peak and Frank Miller Peak.

Lee and Glenn were responding to Hemet-Ryan Airport when we learned the San Jacinto State Park had two rangers hiking to the subject's location, so we were called off.

"They lost the trail when coming back down and called for help on their cell phone."

RMRU RESCUER -
GLENN HENDERSON

The men took the Tramway up to Long Valley and then hiked to the peak. They lost the trail when coming back down and called for help on their cell phone. The two rangers got to the men and hiked them back to the Tramway, but it was after the tram had shut down for the night. They spent the night with the rangers and took a 6:30am Tramway car back down to the valley station.

RMRU Members Involved:
Lee Arnson and Glenn Henderson.



San Jacinto Peak - North Side

March 06, 2016

San Jacinto Wilderness Park

Written by Matt Jordon & Judy Spowart

Report: Matt's side of the mountain:

Of course just as I was falling asleep Friday night I got a call from Gwenda asking me to grab my gear and head to Snow Creek to assist a search for a missing alpine climber attempting the north face of Mt. San Jacinto. Since most of the team was out getting

re-certified in snow and ice, duty fell onto me to come out of early retirement (and quit my sniveling) - it was now go time again. Fortunately, I soon found out that I was to be taking a 'free ride' up the tram instead of a midnight trudge up Snow Creek and this made me happy!

Upon arriving at the valley station, I met up with RSO deputies and a few good men of the State Park (Rangers) who gave me a basic breakdown of the situation: Two 'experienced' buddies climbing the north face of San Jacinto for the first time - one was completely exhausted approximately 400 feet from the peak and hell bent on heading east. The climbers separated at this point and since the poor tired guy left behind had been missing for hours now, alarm bells started ringing. Nevertheless, I grabbed my snowshoes, throw some extra gear in my pack and stripped off my extra layers as to-night was panning out to be a fast hike up to the peak in windy late winter conditions.

At about this time I was walking with the rangers into what I thought was the last car up that night; an RSO deputy informed us that RMRU member [and tech climber] Donny Goetz was on his way from Los Angeles and that he's be taking another car up as soon as he arrived. Because of this new info, my plan changed again to man the radio/ repeater at the Mountain Station and wait for Donny so we could form our own team instead of me heading out with the park rangers as initially

conceived. More good news: Lee and Judy were going to come up from the Idyllwild side.

Cutting to the chase: When Donny arrived, we loaded up from the mountain station and wound our way down into the dark on the now quiet cement path toward the Long Valley ranger station. We were both remarking that it was good to see each other again since his wedding in Yosemite and we caught up on some of our recent adventures along the way. Popping into the station, we met with

"Two "Experienced" buddies climbing the north face of San Jacinto for the first time - one exhausted headed east 400 feet below the summit"

RMRU RESCUER -
MATT JORDON

a ranger making sure our team geared up since a storm was brewing and winds were really picking up - it was going to rain or snow within the next 24 hours.

We went out into the night set on finding this dude and so we headed off into the hills. Our route would be Sid Davis. The old 'locals trail' that many take as an alternate into the dark and now foreboding Tamarack Valley, this would be our bypass sweep of the Low Trail. As we hiked, we called out the subjects name every 3-5 minutes or so. Since the wind was howling by now, it became harder and harder to listen for any sort of faint reply over the creaking and rushing 'water' sounds that cold

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mountain air blowing through old growth pine trees commonly produce. We were having fun though. We checked in with the ranger station every 30 minutes and then decided to head up toward 'The Mound' which is near Cornell Peak in order to possibly get a better perspective of the Long Valley/ Round Valley area. This turned out to be a good idea because it gave us a chance to view the valleys and the northeast side of the mountain where we envisioned the subject possibly being. We called and called, we stood on an overlook and shone our headlamps back and forth across the valleys. Eventually, we spotted the rangers and made radio contact with them and then with Lee and Judy coming up from Idyllwild.

Around 4 am we Bivvyed for the night. We had a good spot here. Donny and I were beat though - the wind was howling and we were getting really chilled on this exposed ledge searching and calling. The wind was picking up and at times it felt like we could have literally been blown off the mountain. I couldn't help but think about the subject being trapped in some terrible spot on the north face (or worse) as I tried to stay warm under a draped sleeping bags between the rocks.

At 5:30 am we were back up and looking across the valleys and toward the east over the edge. Making our way back up along that same edge up and past the Cornell area continually calling for the subject. Not long after sunrise a fixed wing aircraft started

making passes. I also found out that Sharon and company with DSAR were going to ambitiously start the Snow Creek sweep, it was good to have teams come together like this in a pinch. The winds were howling and the

"The winds were howling and the entire peak was covered in a thick fog and getting lower"

RMRU RESCUER -
MATT JORDON

entire peak was covered in a thick fog getting lower like a god's hand reaching down over the mountain. The state park rangers were challenged with low visibility, again - it looked like a big dark grey hand moving over the mountain about to cover the entire thing, weird. Still moving, still calling, no luck. Really thinking that there is a slim chance this guy made it through the night on the north face if that's where he truly was.

Around 7:00am we got a call from Long Valley Ranger Station: "The subject has been found and he is being cared for... return to base". What a relief! Glad to find out that he made it through the night! Donny and I walked back through the deer brush, rocks and pine trees to later find out exactly what happened.

The subject got lost in what we believe to be the area below Jean Peak Bowl and Tamarack the 'Boulder Field' and possibly even the old Boy Scout Trail, he was

uninjured and in good spirits after the long slog up Snow Creek. He likely endured a cold night wandering around the old growth trees pondering the distant whistle blasts, but to his credit he was more prepared than most and he remained positive. His years of hiking and climbing paid dividends in a safe exit -- however complicated. Upon meeting at the Valley Station, I stated: 'All's well that ends well!' -- and he heartily agreed.

Report: Judy's side of the mountain: While Donny and Matt headed to the Palm Springs Tram, Lee and Judy decided to approach from Humber Park. The plan was to hike up the Devil's Slide trailhead towards Wellman's Divide in case the lost hiker took a wrong turn and ended up in that area.

The first order of business was to get the appropriate gear together. In anticipation of snow and ice on the trail this consisted of full winter packs, including snow shoes, crampons, and ice axes. After loading the packs into the car, we drove to the Humber Park parking lot. It was completely empty at this time of the night. It was beautiful and peaceful, but with the urgent task at hand, there was little time to enjoy it. We were told there would be no helicopter support tonight, due to the weather, so we knew we were in for a long night of hiking. No time to waste.

We donned our headlamps and started up the Devil's Slide trail around 10:30 PM. We continued 2 ½ miles to Saddle Junction and

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MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION Winter Re-Certification

Mammoth Mountain, CA.

March 05, 2016

RMRU Team Members - Mammoth Ski Lodge, CA



Group Photo of Participating
California Region MRA Teams

We drove up to Mammoth on Friday for the annual California Region Mountain Rescue Association recertification. This year's re-certification was snow and ice; Technical Rock and Tracking in other years.

This major MRA re-certification draws search and rescue teams from all over South California. Mono County Search and Rescue hosted this major event with over 200 participants. Base headquarters was located at the main Mammoth Mountain Ski Lodge.

Saturday morning, we woke to some new snow and as we got our assignment for the day at base it

started to snow again which continued throughout the day. Really perfect conditions to simulate real rescue situations. We hiked on snowshoes in about one mile to an area marked with a flag and a number. From this point the team continued on snowshoes through fresh power snow uphill several hundred yards to where our rescue problem began.

Our subject had a broken leg and was cold. We first got a foam

pad under him and then got him covered up from the falling snow. While the first aid people work on the subject, others started setting up snow anchors to be used to lower the subject down in our toboggan. Two sets of anchors were set up and rigged up for a lower. Next the subject was placed in the toboggan and tied in so he would not fall out during the lower.

As we lowered the subject down the snow slope out testers said we



Subject prepared to lower. MRA Evaluator standing at right

MRA WINTER RE-CERTIFICATION 2016

had reached point where we needed to raise the toboggan up 10



Snow Anchors - Final Inspection

feet and move it over to continue lowering. So we quickly switch the lower to a raise and did as we had been asked by the testers. Everything went smoothly and we had the subject back on the road below our test area in no time. This part of the test was now done.



Redundant - Equalized Snow Anchors



Team Members setting up 2 lower / raise systems

Hiking back to base we were to go over to an avalanche test area to find two buried subjects. The subjects were actually large backpacks with transceivers inside. We quickly got into a search line and turned all our transceivers to search mode



and started looking. We found and dug out both backpacks in under 10 minutes. They were both over 2 feet deep in the snow. Upon returning to base we met with our testers and found out we got a 17 out of 18 points, we needed 12 to pass. So another great

recertification. We headed back to our condo to clean up and relax for the evening and have a good meal. The next morning, we awoke to over 18 inches of new snow covering the ground outside. After a great breakfast cooked for us by Eric we started digging out the vehicles so we good head home.



18 inches of snow overnight

RMRU Members Involved:

Pete Carlson, Kirk Cloyd, Gary Farris, Cameron Dickinson, Joe Erickson, Michael George, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Kevin Kearns, Rob May, Dana Potts, Frank Snider, and Ray Weden.

Article by Pete Carlson - RMRU



turned onto the PCT. The weather was cold, and we started seeing some snow on the trail. The wind was blowing through the tree tops, providing a melodic background to the sound of our boots crunching in the snow. We hiked for another 2 1/2 miles, and around 2:30am decided we needed to catch a few hours of sleep and hit the trail again at daylight. We found a small level spot at the top of Angel's Glide and quickly

"We hiked for another 2 1/2 miles, and around 2:30am decided we needed to catch a few hours of sleep"

RMRU RESCUER -
JUDY SPOWART

set up camp. The wind was really blowing now, and the temperature was around 24 degrees. Sleepwear consisted of many layers, including thermals and two down jackets for Judy, mittens, and wool hats. In spite of the conditions, sleep came quickly, and we awoke at daylight feeling refreshed and ready to get back on the trail. We began breaking down camp when we heard over the radio that the lost hiker had made his way to the tram on his own. A quick call to Gwenda confirmed that the search was over and the lost hiker was found. We finished packing up, and headed down the mountain, relieved that this mission had a happy outcome.

RMRU Members Involved:

Lee Arnson, Donny Goetz, Matt Jordon and Judy Spowart. Hikers Stuck

Stuck Hikers

March 05, 2016

Cleveland National Forest

Written by Donny Goetz

Saturday night around 9 pm. It was my birthday weekend and I was supposed to be camping/climbing in Joshua Tree with my wife and a friend. But plans had changed as I had gone out on an overnight search on San Jacinto for a missing Snow Creek climber the night before.

I had just crawled into bed, a little tired from the previous night's mission, when my phone rang again! We had another search in Corona. Two hikers stranded on a 50' tall cliff. I knew I had to go. Most of our team was out of town for the annual California MRA team recertification up in Mammoth. Being tired was no excuse. We had a skeleton crew and this sounded like it was going to require some rope work - my specialty!

I got the trailhead location from Gwenda and knew I had been there before. In the hills above Corona lies a hillside with 5 or 6 very steep drainages where some locals have decided to make their own "trails". Known online as the Skyline Rope Trails, these ill-conceived routes follow the steep, overgrown drainages up from Tin Mine Canyon to the skyline ridge trail. The steepest, often vertical, rocky sections of the drainages have been made accessible to the untrained adventure seeker by these local folks hanging yellow, 1/4" polypropylene rope to

hold onto and help pull yourself up the route. This all seems like an ok idea and if you look at the numerous videos on YouTube, it sure looks like fun! Who wouldn't want to go up there?! The problem is, these ropes are woefully inadequate to support human life, especially after they have baked under the often harsh California sun for a month. These ropes break. And they don't break on their own. They break when some unsuspecting soul grabs hold and leans back, trusting the bulk of their body weight to them. When this happens, you will fall, and depending on where you fall, it could be a very long way down. I have been on several rescues in these drainages before and it is always a result of these ropes breaking and leaving people, who are otherwise unfit to climb these routes, stranded and possibly badly injured.



Judy in back, Lee, and Subject Hiking down

I arrive at the trailhead around 11 pm and meet up with Lee Arnson and Judy Spowart. Both had been on the previous night's mission. We were all a bit fatigued and ready to get in and get out



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with our subjects as quickly as we could. To add to our troubles, there was a storm brewing.

We started up the ridge line trail which is quite steep and has lots of fun loose rock to keep you engaged. "At least the temps are manageable tonight" I thought. We kept a good pace up the ridge. We had been in contact with one of our subjects via cell phone and he said he had made it up to the main trail but his friend was still stuck in the drainage below. Lee asked him to wait on the main trail and that we would be there soon.

We hiked as quickly as we could, gaining a significant elevation. After a time, we began to wonder if, somehow, we had missed our guy!! He said he was on the main trail. How could that happen?! Lee phoned our subject again and asked him to listen to our shouts. The subject said it sounded as if we were still below him. We asked him to shout back and we could barely hear him. The wind also made it difficult to discern where his voice was coming from.

It sounded like he was below us but also much further west. I looked at Google Earth on my phone and noticed that there were still a few more of these drainages that met the ridge up higher and to the west. Maybe they were in one of those. We pushed on. Now it was raining and the wind had picked up. The trail, which was a thick clay soil, became dangerously slippery. Clay clung to our shoes like peanut butter on a spoon; no amount of shaking would set it

free. We were struggling to stay upright, but pressed on into the night.

Nearly two hours into the hike, I checked Google Earth once more. Our trail was now turning away from the ridge. We had come to the top of the last of the drainages. Our subject was not there. We HAD passed them! We discussed options and decided we had to head back down and check every little side trail we could find. Heading down the slick, mucky trail was much worse than heading up. I fell several times, covering myself in mud.

As we descended, we called out for our subjects. About 20 minutes back down the trail, we all hear a shout back to Lee's call. Great! Now we have them! Lee kept shouting while I headed down over the ridge and finally got a visual contact with one of our intrepid wanderers. He was uninjured; just a little cold and wet. We all descended the upper part of this awful drainage to a perch about 70' above his stranded companion. She was clinging to a broken strand of yellow rope. Go figure.

Lee and I quickly set up a rope system by equalizing rope to several small shrubs while Judy took our other subject, Henry, back up to the ridge. I built a basic hauling system, anchored the rope, grabbed Judy's harness from Lee, and rappelled down to Gabby, our second subject. She was very cold and tired and ready to be out of there! She had fallen over 50' in each of three attempts to extract herself from this precari-

ous position. It was a miracle she wasn't more seriously injured! Just scrapes and bruises it seemed. Hanging from the haul line, I got Judy's harness onto the girl and tied her into the rope. Lee was up top, ready to haul. This section of the drainage was very steep and slippery. I helped our subject to climb as Lee hauled the rope with both of us on it. We slipped and fell constantly as we worked our way up. There was a short section of vertical rock which we negotiated carefully and soon were up with Lee! There was still another 80 vertical feet to go but it was less steep and Lee had anchored a REAL rope up this section which we all used to get back up.

Finally, out of the nasty drainage and up on the ridge we were certain of our success, yet knew we still had a long, miserable hike out down the steep ridge which, in spots, was now more "water slide" than trail. We descended slowly, taking great care to negotiate the steepest sections with our fatigued "clients" (a new term we coined which we all liked better than "subjects"!). Gabby was having a very difficult time and required Lee's support for nearly the entire descent of the ridge. Occasionally, both of us had to support her from each side to keep her from falling.

RMRU Members Involved:

Lee Arnson, Donny Goetz, and Judy Spowart.



Hoist Two Hikers

March 08, 2016

Soboba Hills, San Jacinto

Written by Glenn Henderson

I received a call from call coordinator Gwenda Yates that Star 9 (Sheriff's Aviation) had called for a rescuer to do a hoist rescue in Massacre Canyon. I responded to Hemet Ryan Air base in about 5 minutes. Pilot Chad Marlatt and TFO (technical flight officer) Jerry Osterloh were waiting for me. Chad said that there were two stuck at a cliff in Massacre Canyon and had run out of daylight as it was now 7:30 PM. I loaded two screamer suits into my pack and we took off.

It was a five-minute flight across the San Jacinto Valley to Massacre Canyon. Our stuck couple used their cell phone light to show us where they were. It was a pretty tight area and they were above the third falls with water running through it.

Chad maneuvered the helicopter over them after some pretty demanding reconnoitering to see if we could indeed do the hoist. Finally, Chad and Jerry were satisfied so I hooked up to the hoist and Jerry lowered me about 110 feet directly next to our two subjects. I sent the guy up first explaining that when I sent his girlfriend up next he was to have the seatbelt ready and get her belted in before the TFO could take the hook off. When they were both in the helicopter they dropped the hook back for me, raised me up and we all flew down to Gilman's

Springs Road where our subjects left their car.

Once they were off loaded it was back to Hemet Ryan, me home and Chad and Jerry back on patrol in the sky. Great work Chad and Jerry, they made a tough mission into an easy one.

RMRU Members Involved:

Glenn Henderson.

Missing Hikers -

Humber Park

March 26, 2016

San Jacinto Wilderness

Written by Tony Hughes

The page went out at just after 1:00 AM Saturday morning for 2 lost hikers. A male and female, both in their 40's, had left Humber Park around 4 PM on Friday, March 25th. Their goal was to summit and return to their vehicle at Humber Park. They were both experienced hikers but had never hiked this route to the summit. They were reported overdue by family. The Riverside County Sheriff's Helicopter, Star 9, had been dispatched earlier in the evening and scanned several trails, but were not able to locate the subjects.

Lee was first on scene and went to Willow Creek Crossing, then followed Willow Creek down to Laws Camp, then up to Reeds Meadow, then back to the Saddle, and down to Humber. He found no signs of the subjects. Cameron Dickin-son and I arrived at the trailhead around 3:30 AM. Ray was on scene with the team truck and ran Base.

After being briefed, Cameron, Ray, and I inspected the subjects' vehicle and looked for footprints nearby. We found a partial print, but were not confident it belonged to either subject. The subjects later confirmed it was not their print.

At 4:00 AM, Cameron and I headed up Devil's Slide. Near the top we met with Lee and did a quick information exchange. Cameron and I then proceeded to follow the subjects' intended route towards the summit. The sun came up soon after we left Saddle Junction towards Wellman Divide. We spotted a tent about .5 miles before the turn off to Strawberry Cienega and investigated. It was a local Boy Scout troop up for the night. They had not seen or heard anyone else in the area and were going to keep their eyes open.

Cameron and I continued on to the Wellman Divide. Right when we arrived, we received word the subjects may have been located by the State Park Rangers. We looked for signs at the junction and after a few minutes received confirmation that the subjects had been located. We headed back to Humber Park.

On arrival back at Humber, Ray briefed us that the subjects had only 2 of the 10 essentials and had slept in some garbage bags over night. They had plenty of food and water but had no means to start a fire. They were not prepared to be out overnight nor were they prepared for the snow travel, post holing through the snow. The subjects reported seeing Star 9

the previous evening and flashing the light on their cell phone, but they were unable to gain the aviation team's attention. In the morning they met some hikers who directed them in the direction of the Upper Tram Station where they walked into the Round Valley Ranger Station on their own. The subjects confirmed they had summited San Jacinto but had turned left down into Round Valley at Wellman Divide.

Star 9 returned to the scene once the subjects were located and airlifted them to Keen Wild where the Deputy on scene drove them back to their vehicle at Humber Park. Fortunately for the subjects, the temperatures that evening were mild and there was no wind.



Kirk, Subjects, and Ray at Base - Humber Park

Lessons: Know the conditions, know the route, and be prepared.

RMRU Members Involved:

Lee Arnson, Kirk Cloyd, Gary Farris, Cameron Dickinson, Tony Hughes, Wayne Smith, and Raymond Weden



Missing 20 Year Old Hiker March 29, 2016

San Jacinto Wilderness
Written by Glenn Henderson

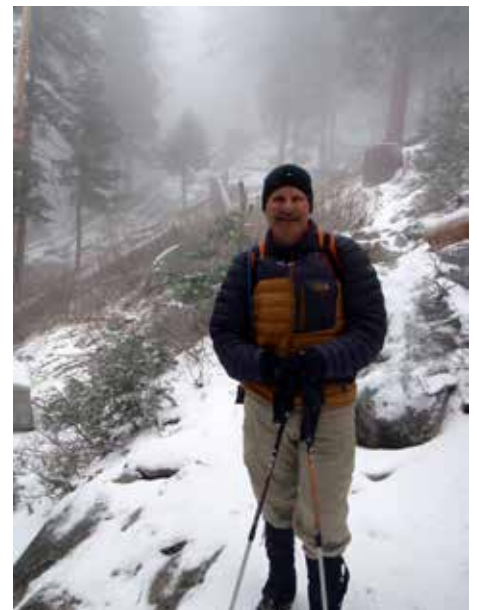
I received a call from dispatch at 3:09, Tuesday morning. They had a report of a 20-year-old male that had hiked up the Marion Mountain Trail with the intentions of summing San Jacinto Peak, 10,835 feet high, and returning to his car in the same day. The family reported that he had little experience, few supplies, and was not prepared to stay overnight. Monday night into Tuesday was when a large storm hit with rain, snow, and high winds in the mountains. This led to a great sense of urgency to the situation. I put the call out to all members, loaded up my gear and headed for the garage and our rescue truck.

When I got to the trailhead I met up with team members Cameron and Lee. We were all pleasantly surprised that there was no wind! Just intermittent snow or light rain. I immediately sent them up the Marion Mountain Trail to the summit. I put the call out for more help and Lew, Kirk, Gary, Tony, and Wayne responded. Star 9 was able to get up through the clouds and began searching the area around the trail and the drainages off of the trail. They spotted what looked like prints in the snow and gave us co-ordinates to that location. I sent Tony and Gary to that location to check it out. It was about 2 miles in a straight line from basecamp but the mountains don't work like that with many

ridges and ravines in the way.

I also put out a call from Desert Sheriff's Search and Rescue. Sharon and Jacob responded and hiked up the Deer Springs trail to Strawberry junction, talked to some people camped there and then continued on to the Marion Mountain Trail junction. Nothing. They then returned back the same way. Meanwhile Lee and Cam reported that they had checked for sign at the Little Round Valley campground and had now summited San Jacinto and were taking a break before continuing on down to Wellman's Divide.

On the east side of the mountain State Park Rangers were headed up from the Palm Springs Tram to the summit from their side. Other team members were now leaving to go to the Seven Pines trail head and hike up to the Marion Mountain intersection.



**RMRU Search Team Member
Wayne Smith**

Because it was so cold with lots of moisture we opted to send out an

Continued on Page 30

TRAINING

INITIAL RIVERSIDE COUNTY JOINT SAR MOCK MISSION

April 09, 2016

Garner Valley - Lake Hemet, CA.



Subject being raised up cliff

On Saturday Riverside County conducted its first Joint SAR exercise in years. The training scenario consisted of a fictitiously downed aircraft in the mountains around Garner Valley with four dead, injured, and lost personnel that needed to be rescued and recovered.

Over 40 personnel participated in the event. The Riverside Sheriff's Department deployed its Sheriff's Emergency Response Team (SERT) Command Post, one RSO Aviation helicopter (Star-9), three volunteer search teams including RMRU, Desert Search and Rescue (DSAR), and two Canine Search Teams, and support from RSO's Citizen Volunteers (Anza).

The exercise began at Lake Hemet Sheriff's Sub-Station where the Command Post was set up. Teams met there at 7:00 AM under sunny skies that would cloud up soon with a fast approaching storm. Temps were in the 50s when RSO SERT OIC, LT Perdue, gave the entire group safety and mission briefs on a scenario Glenn Henderson had primarily puppet-mastered for the county. Both Glen

and Gwenda Yates managed the exercise transparently in the background, with some help from DSAR's President, Sharon Ollenburger.



All Team Briefing at Base

Experienced RMRU members Kirk Cloyd and Lew Kingman, along with "injured-reserve-list" Judy Spowart, helped man the SERT Command Post. The remainder of RMRU was split into two teams – which became Teams 1 and 2 for the operation. RMRU's teams quickly distributed radios and gear and immediately broke out their Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) direction finding equipment. After reporting detection of the downed aircraft's ELT signal along two azimuths, RMRU's CP personnel sent the teams, each truck mounted, to two different locations along Highway 74 in order to

get better readings and triangulate a location more accurately. While RMRU attempted to get new azimuths from the ground, Star-9 launched, quickly got an aerial hit on the transponder, and sited the first missing victim, "Paul Doe," in the vicinity of Little Thomas Mountain

DSAR drove their truck up the mountain road and came upon, "Sheri Doe", the second victim, at a location less than 200yds south of the mountain top. Eric Holden current, qualified Wilderness First Responder, deployed by ground with the Canine Teams (dogs Inge and Journey). The first victim, Paul, was expired and the dog teams searched the area to try to pick up scent of any other victims. DSAR's first team was then lowered in to Sheri's location and began looking for additional signs of tracks from the other two victims still unaccounted for.

Gary Farris and I were then lifted in and lowered onto the road on Star-9's second turn. We took charge of Sheri, who was uninjured, and hoisted her out in a Screamer Suit.

INITIAL RIVERSIDE COUNTY JOINT SAR MOCK MISSION

Running low on fuel with worsening weather, Star-9 went off station and departed after dropping Sheri off at the CP. Gary and I then linked up with Eric.



Cameron using Directional Finder

Communications with the CP were difficult but Ray Weden took on the mission to function as a go between, with our diesel equipment, between the elements in the field and the CP by Lake Hemet. His actions greatly enhanced command and control of the operation. Tony Hughes and Cameron Dickinson also moved our second truck, and repositioned critical technical equipment we'd need shortly.

Eric, Gary, and I used our direction finding equipment to home in on the crash site which was approximately 300' east of the road while DSAR attempted to retrace Sheri's tracks in hopes of possibly detecting additional signs of other victims who may have left the crash site. One canine team (Journey) followed us.

Eric, Gary, and I came up on the crash site to find the "wreckage" (ELT transponder) and a third victim, "Teddy Bear," who was also expired. As we began to search the area around the wreckage, DSAR heard the shout from the fourth

victim, "Andrew Doe," and located him, conscious with a simulated broken leg, at the foot of a 25' cliff about 150" from the crash site.

After Eric and I got to him, I submitted a report to Ray with our location and request for a stokes litter and gear to perform a high angle technical rescue. Eric treated Andrew with DSAR assisting him while I checked out the top of the cliff to organize the fall lines and anchors for the raise. In a short time, Gary and two DSAR personnel, John Eddy and Mr. Paull, arrived at the cliff with equipment. Soon after that, Tony and Cameron also arrived.

Our 5-man RMRU crew, all proficient at high angle rescue, incorporated the two DSAR personnel into the operation. I was Ops Lead, Tony was Safety Officer, Eric was the Litter Attendant, Cam was in charge of the red line/MPD with Jacob Paull of DSAR, and Gary was the in charge of the blue line/MPD with help from John Eddy of DSAR. Together we quickly got the safety line set up followed by the anchors and dual lines all while making extra sure to keep everyone safe. Eric, with help from DSAR's Kevin Wahlstrom, Mike Smith, Joe McCuen, and Jason Roberson, got Andrew safely packaged up in the litter. With Eric hooked up, we quickly hoisted both of them. The DSAR personnel integrated well on the line teams with Cam and Gary close by to supervise.

After Eric skillfully maneuvered the litter over an obstructing knob, Tony and I helped pull the litter up

and back behind the safety line. At this point, with impending bad weather bearing down on all of us, the exercise ended and we broke the system down and recovered the equipment before rain could soak our ropes/webbing. More DSAR personnel arrived to assist and we were extra cautious to keep everyone safe during this final part of the field exercise.



Upon everyone's return to the Command Post, LT Perdue led an after action review with the entire group. After capturing lessons learned, there was wide consensus that it was an excellent, useful exercise and that Riverside County would try to do it again in six months. Great job by all involved and especially Glenn Henderson for planning and coordinating so much on behalf of RMRU.

RMRU Members Involved:

Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickinson, Gary Farris, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Kevin Kearn, Lew Kingman, Judy Spowart, Ray Weden, and Gwenda Yates.

Other Units Involved:

RSO SERT, RSO Aviation, DSAR, Riverside County Search Dog Team, Citizen Volunteers (Anza).

Article by: Kevin Kearn

OES, (Office of Emergence Services), call out for mountain teams from other counties.



**RMRU Search Team Member
Gary Farris**

About 4:30 in the afternoon we got the call that our missing subject had called his father and was in a car trying to get back to his car. It turns out that he had made a wrong turn at the Fuller Ridge trail and followed two sets of prints in the snow. The falling snow covered the tracks he was following and when he turned around he could not find his own tracks in the snow. He then dug under some rocks, covered the opening with bark and bushes and spent the night. He did have more gear than we were told and spent a fairly comfortable night except for his feet which did get pretty cold but no frostbite. He got up then next morning and hiked out the Fuller Ridge trail to Black Mountain road and then down the road to Hwy 243 where he hitched a ride back to basecamp.

I called all teams back in and all returned except for Lee and Cam who decided to go ahead and hike

out from Wellman's Divide down the Angel's Glide and Devils Slide trails. I picked them up at Humber Park at 5:30 after they had hiked 17 miles, mostly on hard packed snow and ice. Lee said that they experienced complete whiteout conditions at times with snow and hail falling straight down due to no wind.

Sheriff's SERT (Sheriff's Emergence Response Team) had just arrived with their communications vehicle and personnel but they were happy to pack up again with this great outcome (as we all were). After a quick dinner at La Casita in Idyllwild, we all made it home safely.

RMRU Members Involved:

Lee Arnson, Kirk Cloyd, Gary Farris, Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Tony Hughes, Lew Kingman, and Wayne Smith.

Desert Search and Rescue Team (DSAR) Members Involved:

Jacob Paull and Sharon Ollenburger.

Horse Rescue

April 03, 2016

Pacific Crest Trail - Snow Creek

Written by Glenn Henderson
Horse Rescue

I received a call from call coordinator Gwenda Yates that two RMRU members were needed to respond to a report of two injured horses with their owner on the PCT (Pacific Crest Trail) above Snow Creek. Cameron Dickinson and I responded to the Sheriff's helicopter hanger at Ryan Field in Hemet.

The horse's owner, Mike, was packing in supplies for the PCTA (Pacific Crest Trail Association) to do some trail maintenance work. As they were hiking up, a large swarm of bees attacked the horses and sent two of them over the side of the trail and down the mountain trying to get away. Both horses were injured by falling, rolling and running down and away. They ended up about a quarter mile apart and 300 yards below the trail. Mike was uninjured so we put him in a screamer suit and had him airlifted out. Since RMRU has no experience or training in large animal rescue our Sheriff's department put out a call for Riverside City fire departments HART, (Horse and Animal Rescue Team), to help us get the horses out.



Helicopter Hoist Horse extraction

That team really are the experts at what they do. A veterinarian and four members of the HART team and TFO (technical flight officer) Manny Romero were flown in and met by Cam. Cam led them to the first horse which we all felt was the

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least injured. I stayed with the second horse. The Hart team got the harness rigged up, the vet gave a final sedative and Pilot Tony Bowen flew the horse out.

".... a large swarm of bees attacked the horses and sent two of them over the side of the trail and down the mountain ..."

RMRU RESCUER -
GLENN HENDERSON

They all hiked over to me where the vet started an IV line in the horse's neck and she gave him a mild sedative. He had been entirely docile for the three hours or so that I was with him. Tony and TFO Ray Hiers flew the apparatus to rig the horse up to fly my horse out. Just as they got ready to start moving to the horse something spooked him. He ran over me and off a cliff and was killed. I could not believe what had just happened. He had been so calm that I have to wonder if a bee stung him again that caused him to jump into me.

After everyone calmed down we gathered up all our gear and Tony came back and did a one skid pickup of all of us in teams of two. It was a pretty depressed group of people back at base. No one knew what to say. Mike was very understanding but you could tell he was shaken up. We finally got Cam, Ray, Manny and me back in the helicopter and we flew back to Hemet Ryan.

RMRU Members Involved:
Cameron Dickinson & Glenn Henderson.

Caramba Search

April 17, 2016

Tramway - San Jacinto Mountains

Written by Matt Jordon

Of course - just as I was finishing a pleasant family dinner in Redlands I get a text alerting me to a rescue. Since I live about 5 miles from the Aerial Tramway, I usually try my best to respond to these particular missions so I checked the time and drove out, trying hard to make the last car up. After a quick grab of my gear bag at home along the way, I met up with Kirk at the valley station. "Subject last pinged in Caramba. We are going to try to use this new app to get a better location on him, hopefully it works" Kirk said. Good thing he had his phone, I thought to myself. By this time, the last car up was being held over as we waited for other members to arrive. Kevin, Eric, and Cameron appeared in succession and after a short scramble to select proper gear, we were all aboard.



Strange Burned Tree

Riding the tram up at night with no tourists, no external lights and no rotation is about what I'd imagine it's like to be in a submarine falling miles deep into the blackness of the ocean. The darkness when facing the mountain is

disorienting; rocking, swaying and the cold night air all remind me of being at sea. There is a unique eeriness to it that I somehow enjoy, it's almost like we'll be ambushed by a giant squid or Mynock from Star Wars.

The usual routine takes place when we arrive at the mountain station. The tram operator says a quick farewell and we're off to the "mission room" which is behind an infrequently used banquet hall on the second level complete with fridge, cot, heater and small bathroom. It's the place where he who 'mans' the radio is often jilted awake by the sounds of crackling hails from distant members on the radio. Most of the time, there's also a sense of urgency to lock all the doors behind the last team member out as the night is long and the creep factor is high at 8,500'. The unfamiliar sounds of raccoons and ring-tailed cats exploring the building don't help calm the nerves either.

Not much can be said about hiking to Caramba around midnight. Most don't want to do it in the daytime, much less with heavy packs carrying water for two. This is a section of mountain that drops about six miles and essentially dead ends into a large waterfall before tumbling over into oblivion. For those that have ever crept downstairs into an old basement at night, it's like that but a lot worse! It's an area that a lot of hikers who are unfamiliar with the mountain wind up for basically two reasons: #1. It looks like a copy of Round/Tamarack Valley so



people are easily confused, #2. Its ALL downhill and what can I say -- it's easier to hike down than up! Nevertheless, it takes a glutton for punishment to get this kind of



Kevin Looking for prints

mission done but in the beginning we're all highly motivated. The last time I was here was over three years ago before the massive fire so certainly I'd get to see what the forest looked like now. I was looking forward to some surprises.

The trail past Hidden Divide has been closed for only three years but there was so much debris scattered about that it was difficult to find in sections. Past Laws junction, the fallen logs, new brush and burned out ghosts of trees everywhere in sight made me recognize how fast nature can reclaim her property. Thereafter, the trail frequently washed out so we had to do some decent route finding.



Subject's Footprint highlighted by flashlight



Kevin, Cameron, and Matt with Subject when first found

We now relied heavily on GPS to take us to the subjects last known location which we received via cell phone ping and a miraculous screenshot text from this Air Force veteran that included his position coordinates. This was literally the best thing he could have done. We found out that he climbed to high ground to send it before his cell phone would die. Fortunately, we managed to communicate with the subject earlier via cell phone and we reminded him to stay put until we got to him.

We arrived in a textbook fashion then gave the man water and some food. It turned out that he was hoping to complete a longer circuit this day beginning at the tram and heading to Wellman's Divide down to Saddle Junction and back up toward Hidden Valley. Unfortunately, he somehow underestimated the distance and his location so he wound up deep

in Tahquitz drainage. Fortunately, he was astute enough to warm himself with a small emergency fire (that was later properly extinguished) and managed to drink a little water from the nearby creek.



He was found in good spirits yet obviously tired and understandably mentally fatigued. Nevertheless, he rallied and chose to hike out after about a ten-minute break.

On the way back, Eric took the lead with his GPS unit and led our meandering team up the loose and obscure mountainside on the way back up to the tramway. I

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was content to be a silent hiker at this point, occasionally cracking a dry comment as breath would permit. Temperatures dropped down to the low 30's and whenever we stopped for more than two minutes, our bodies began

"He was found in good spirits yet obviously tired and understandably mentally fatigued."

RMRU RESCUER -
KEVIN KEARN

freezing up as most of us were in lightweight gear to stay cool when actually moving. During one particular break at around 4am, Eric spotted something shimmering in the distance uphill to our left. We quickly recognized three sets of eyes peering at us through the darkness, bobbing up and down and blinking periodically. It was the bold presence of three mountain lions staring down on us from their high ground advantage. The sounds of our whistle blasts and claps didn't bother them and when we hiked on, we could faintly see them in the distance - still watching closely. Poor Cameron was cougar bait as the caboose on this train and I was impressed with Kevin's ability to see in front of himself and behind in the same stride!

By the time we reached the high trail above Round Valley, we were all feeling the wooziness of sleep encroaching. First light brings a glowing warmth despite being ambient and indirect. Another

successful mission in the bag. Our good-hearted veteran did a great job giving us his location and staying calm and upbeat despite being exhausted after a long day of hiking. We made it out and up the long ramp to the Tramway. I was honored to have spent another night hiking with the A-Team members of RMRU.

RMRU Members Involved:

Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickenson, Eric Holden, Kevin Kearns, and Matt Jordan

Tin Mine Canyon Rescue

April 20, 2016

Cleveland National Forest

Written by Eric Holden

At 2230 hours we get a call out for a missing female at the Tin Mine Canyon Trailhead. I meet Cameron at the trail and we find that she was spotted by an Army helicopter and they were able to give us coordinates of her location. Her coordinates put her about 2 miles out in the Hagadar Canyon area. I made a quick call to Ray Weden to have him send her a text to hopefully pinpoint her location, unfortunately she never had data. We knew Glenn was on the way with the truck so Cameron and I decided to head on out and Glenn would run base upon his arrival. After about 45 minutes of trail hiking, we had to bushwhack through steep terrain to finally get to the subject and her dog.

While Cameron spoke with Glenn about the plan of action, I spoke the subject, Jessa, to find out what had happened. While hiking, her dog "Buffy" broke free of her leash and ran away. Jessa gave

chase and eventually caught back up with Buffy, but she had to go through the same steep terrain we did with much less gear. She fell a few times and suffered a nasty looking bump to the head. She tried to hike up more to get out of the brush but unfortunately the brush just keeps getting worse the higher you go. Darkness eventually set in and she dialed 911.

Getting Jessa and Buffy back to the trailhead was quite the team effort. We put a helmet and harness on the her and Cameron belayed her down the steep stuff, while I acted as a human machete and began to carve a path back down the hill to the trail. Glenn was back at base organizing



medics to be on scene by the time we got back to base. Even though cut, bruised, and bumped she was quite the trooper and demonstrated great tenacity. After about 90 minutes we reunited Jessa and Buffy with their family. Many hugs and tears were a great reminder on why we do what we do.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden and Ray Weden

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.



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

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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



*Join our
team!*

JOIN OUR SEARCH & RESCUE TEAM

RMRU is always looking for new members!

..Countless People owe their lives.

We are an all-volunteer, non-profit team of rescue volunteers who are always looking for qualified people to join our team of dedicated rescue members. As a member of the Mountain Rescue Association, we are not your average search and rescue team. In addition to what is expected of most SAR teams, we specialize in high-angle rope rescue and extended back country and mountain rescue missions. If you think you have what it takes to be part of an elite mountain rescue team, please join us at one of our monthly meetings normally held the Wednesday of every month. While the regular meeting begins at 7 pm, a training season begins at 6 pm and is a great opportunity to meet one on one with team members.

We meet at Riverside County Sheriff's Office, Valley Vista substation at 43950 Acacia Street in Hemet. Email info@rmru.org ahead of time to make sure there will be someone out front to meet you.

We look forward to meeting you!

TRAINING CALENDAR

- Annual MRA Conference,
Port Angeles, Wa. June 7 - 12

Team Training

- Mock Mission: June 4
- Technical, Tahquitz Rock July 9
- Overnight High Country Backpack August 6 - 7
- Pancake Breakfast, Idyllwild: August 14
- GPS / Map & Compass : September 10

RMRU BOARD MEMBERS 2016

Gwenda Yates - President

Rob May - 1st Vice-President

Glenn Henderson - 2nd Vice-President

Eric Holden - Secretary

Kevin Kearn - Member at Large

Pete Carlson - Treasurer

Newsletter Editor - Gary Farris



Thank You!

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



OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS



October 2015 - April 2016

SUMMIT CLUB \$500.00+

Brad & Sally Scott | Marvin Matsumoto

PATRON CLUB \$200.00+

Stan Sniff | Theodore & Donna Young | Kathy A. Nixon | Dennis & Barbara Newton

CENTURY CLUB \$100.00+

Lynne Nicodemus | Ellen Coleman | Eric Ellenbogen | Nacy Carter
Mary Carricaburu | Daryl Dichek & Ken Smith

SUPPORTING \$25.00+

Bill & Melody Blaschiko | Gary & Susie Weber | Diann Coate | Samuel Prum
Thomas Kaczmarek | Bill & Jaunita Starmer

RAY HUSSEY - SPECIAL DONATIONS



SUMMIT CLUB \$500.00+

Mary Parsons

CENTURY CLUB \$100.00+

Marcia McQuem | Catherine Zimmer | Neal Dixon | Rob & Kathy Lennox
Anthony Ward Jr. | Margaret Robinson | William Kelly

SUPPORTING \$25.00+

Jan & Dwane Mickelson | Virginia Hiatt
Nancy Gordon | Dennis & Barbara Walsh | Rita Turner | Robert Duncanson MD