



Missions
October - December 2020

Thank You!

To all that volunteer their time and financial assistance....

Countless people owe their lives



OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS



October 01 - December 31, 2020

BENEFACTOR CLUB \$1,000.00 +

Dr Darel Benvenuti | Brad Scott
Victor Caro | Scott Bros. Dairy Farms

SUMMIT CLUB \$500.00+

Marvin & Mitsuru Matsumoto
Michelle Chung | Teresa Olcomendy

PATRON CLUB \$200.00+

Trina Richardson | Francis Mcorrow | Theodore Young
Dennis & Barbara Newton | Chris & Gigi Kramer

CENTURY CLUB \$100.00+

Nancy Carter | Timothy Johnston
Piotr Zalicki | Edward Omberg

SUPPORTING < \$100.00

Karin & Richard Greenwood | Suzanne Steiner
Robert and Mary De Wolf

RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS



Thomas Blanke - Oceanside | **Coby Brown** - Hemet | **Steve Bryant** - Alta Loma
Pete Carlson - Blue Jay | **Kase Chong** - Hemet | **Cameron Dickinson** - Temecula
Kirk Cloyd - Hemet | **Derek Donovan** - Temecula | **Blake Douglas** - Riverside
James Eckhardt - Riverside | **Corey Ellison** - Laguna Niguel | **Kaitlyn Ellison** - Laguna Niguel
Gary Farris - Palm Desert | **Michael George** - Riverside | **Donny Goetz** - Los Angeles
Josh Gould - Murrieta | **Beth Jeffery** - Murrieta | **Glenn Henderson** - Hemet
Eric Holden - Temecula | **Tony Hughes** - Yorba Linda | **Kevin Kearn** - Huntington Beach
Rob May - Riverside | **Robert Newton** - Hemet | **Dana Potts** - Corona
Shani Pynn - Riverside | **Vinay Rao** - San Jacinto | **Tyler Shumway** - Hemet
Becky Templeton - Murrieta | **Ray Weden** - Murrieta | **Gwenda Yates** - Hemet

Support Members

Joe Erickson | Kaylean May | Roger May | Brad Scott | Ty Wittersheim

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WEDDING BELLS !

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On the Cover -

University Peak
Elevation 13,589 '
Eastern High Sierras

RMRU Team Members on an
personal mountainering outing



Presidents Message

Greetings!!

So are we ready to be shut of 2020?

The year started off with great expectations.

RMRU hosted the California Region recertification in Search and tracking in Garner Valley on March 7.

News of the pandemic was just starting to develop but the seriousness of it was not known yet.

We held the recert and hosted 24 teams and over 400 SAR personnel over 3 days. It was a success and everything looked good until March 13 when the state was shut down.

This affected our team meetings which are now via Zoom and our trainings of which many were

canceled or scaled back. Missions have held steady with 58 in the books and two weeks left in the year.

2021 will be RMRU's sixty-year anniversary and (Covid19 willing) we have a celebration planned for this summer. I hope to see most of you there.

I feel good about the future of RMRU. In the last 5 years we have had many new members joining the team and are taking leadership roles in training and serving on the Board of Directors.

It looks like we have even more coming on in the near future that have great mountaineering skills and are eager to help out others in need.

Yours in Rescue,
Glenn Henderson

Newsletter Editor -
Gary Farris

Mountain Rescue Association



*Consists of 100 teams
with over 2,500 search and
rescue volunteers
located in the United States
and Canada.*

*RMRU joined MRA in 1961
is a regular member.*

*RMRU hosted the MRA
California Regions
Tracking Recertification in
March 2020*



*Figure 8 Follow Though
with Tie off*

Mission Reviews

October - December 2020

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



Missing at Risk

October 05, 2020

Rancho Mirage

Written by Glenn Henderson

The team was called out to assist Desert Sheriff's Search & Rescue (DSSAR) with a search for an at risk 77-year-old male in the town of Rancho Mirage.

Joe had walked away from his house at night and was discovered missing at 6:00 AM. We arrived on scene at 7:30 AM and were assigned different grids around his home.

Many of the communities nearby are gated and cannot be accessed so we passed them and concentrated on ditches, open areas, gas stations, and hotels, passing out flyers to be on the lookout for Joe. It was going to be over 100 degrees today, so time was a concern.

At 9:00 AM we were notified that Joe had been found 8 miles away in Cathedral City. He had asked directions and whoever he talked to realized that he needed more than directions and called police.

We drove back to base, checked out and then off to home.

RMRU Members Involved:

James Eckhardt, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, and Vinay Rao.

Injured Hiker

October 07, 2020

Ortega Highway Vista Point

Written by Editor

The team was called out to at 1pm for an injured hiker just off the Ortega Highway. The hiker had taken a fall and was injured and unable to hike out. As team members were driving to the Command Post in the turn out at Vista Point, we were informed that Cal-Fire would be doing a hoist and we would not be needed. Everyone turned around and headed back to home or work before our Regular Monthly Meeting tonight at 6pm.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Eric Holden, Beth Jeffery, Vinay Rao, and Tyler Shumway.

Injured Hiker

October 20, 2020

Saddle Junction,

San Jacinto Mtns.

Written by Editor

The team was called out at 3pm for an injured hiker just above Saddle Junction on the way to San Jacinto Peak. The hiker had taken a fall and was injured and unable to hike out. As team members were driving to the Command Post at Humber Park, we were informed that Riverside Sheriff's Aviation were training and had an extra TFO (Technical Flight Officer) on board and could do the hoist without RMRU. Everyone turned around and headed back home at 4pm one hour after the first call.

RMRU Members Involved:

Blake Douglas, Eric Holden, Beth Jeffery, and Vinay Rao



Double Fisherman's Knot
(Grapevine)

Upper Skyline Rescue

November 9, 2020

Skyline Trail just down
from Tramway

Written by Blake Douglas

RMRU was activated at 8:30pm on November 9th for a hiker near the top of the Skyline trail. James and I responded to the Hemet Ryan airport to be flown by Sheriff's Aviation into Long Valley, near the Palm Springs Tram station. We had a cell phone ping which placed our subject only a few minute's descent over the side of Grubb's Notch, where the trail tops out into Long Valley, which was fantastic since it meant we wouldn't be fighting our way up one of the other notch drainages where hikers often get lost on this final section. Unfortunately there was no further contact with the subject, but based on past experiences with Skyline rescues we expected this to be a short mission; we would pick them up, get them fed, hydrated and motivated, and then fly them out from Long Valley or spend the night at the tram.

James and I were dropped in Long Valley around 10pm in sub-zero temperatures and about a foot of powdery snow. We arrived at the coordinates within a few minutes, only to find nothing and hear no response to our callouts. The effectiveness of callouts in this area is limited due to the topography – our voices can carry straight down the notch to Coffman's Crag, but not southeast along the trail's Transverse section, due to an intervening ridge. It had been two hours since the subject had called 911, so we assumed he had either head-

ed back down the trail below the snowline, or, more likely, he had mustered up the energy to finish the hike and was now in the tram building or the ranger station. After a little more descent and additional callouts, we decided to ascend and check the buildings. Unfortunately, this produced no results either.

"James and I were dropped in Long Valley around 10pm in sub-zero temperatures and about a foot of powdery snow."

RMRU RESCUER -
BLAKE DOUGLAS

We decided that our only remaining option was to descend Skyline, potentially all the way to Palm Springs. While this was not physically challenging for us, it would lock us into the route, so we wanted to be certain that it was the best choice, particularly since no other RMRU members were immediately available. As we descended past Coffman's Crag, I remembered that another RMRU member, Vinay, had descended Skyline that afternoon and was currently camped out somewhere below the Rescue 2 emergency box. If Star 9 could contact him, he might be able to bracket our subject's location; with any luck, the subject might even be with him. After the mission, Vinay confirmed that he passed our subject earlier in the day.

James got on the radio to Star 9 to request that they fly the Skyline ridge, and I did callouts downslope

between transmissions. James noticed a "butt slide" track that looked fresh, headed downslope, and we were preparing to check it as soon as the radio call was complete. Abruptly I heard a faint groan. A few more callouts finally mustered the slurred response "I can see you guys..." from somewhere below. I asked him if he had a light to signal us with, but there was no response. James radioed that we had voice contact and we descended promptly.

Our subject was not in good shape. He was probably closer to death than any subject I have encountered. He was wearing tennis shoes, jeans, and a loose knit sweater, and was curled up under a rock with his legs and feet resting on snow. All his clothing was completely soaked through and he was unable to give coherent responses to our questions. In medical terms, he was AOx2, GCS 12, with shivering and capillary refill both absent, indicating moderate hypothermia. The term "moderate", when applied to hypothermia, is a bit misleading, because symptomatically it's like treating someone who is extremely drunk; while they might be cooperative, they have little coordination, are virtually immobile, and are confused by even simple tasks and questions – on several occasions we had to just move the subject's body where we needed it to go. James and I are confident that he would not have survived more than a few hours, let alone the entire night.

We spent the next hour alternating medical and evac tasks, piling the subject with insulation, food, and

warm water, while calling for a hoist from Star 9 and clearing the area to make a suitable hoist spot. Star 9 delivered a screamer suit, which is basically like a big fabric swaddle that can clip into the helicopter's hoist line. The subject was extremely fortunate to have ended up in a clearing with relatively little tree cover; nevertheless, we still had to carry him to the evac point so he could be clipped into the line. We learned afterwards that the subject was so immobile that he had to be pulled into the helicopter feet-first, because he was unable to climb in with the TFO's assistance.

Once the subject was secured, James and I climbed back up the trail, listening to the radio traffic between Star 9 and the Palm Springs fire/medical responders as we returned to the Long Valley landing zone, and we were back in Hemet by 2:30am. Best wishes to the subject for a full recovery.

Lessons from this mission:

Despite abundant on-trail signage, which warn of the various dangers of Skyline, the human factor continues to be the most important variable. While it might seem like the heat, cold, elevation or darkness are to blame, it almost always comes down to a subject failing to anticipate and prepare for the worst. Several of my previous writeups of Skyline missions attest to this pattern.

As in any hike, Skyline hikers should bring the Ten Hiking Essentials, particularly a dedicated light source (not your phone), and navigation gear (not your phone). The

Palm Springs Tram currently closes at 6pm; if one is unable to reach the tram in time, they either need camping equipment, or a firm turn-around time. Anyone venturing into the upper parts of the trail after recent snowfall needs to bring appropriate clothing and traction, such as micro-spikes, and be practiced in their use.

RMRU Members Involved:

Blake Douglas and James Eckhardt.



Skyline Flat Rock Rescue

November 12, 2020

Skyline Trail at Flat Rock.

Written by Editor

We got the call at 8:30am that a solo Male Hiker age 26 had started up the Skyline Trail to the Tramway at 3am. He got as far as Flat Rock and was very cold and unsteady and called 911. While team members were responding, a CHP helicopter flew in and picked him up and took him down to Palm Springs to be evaluated by medical personal. RMRU members got turned around at 10am and returned to home or back to work.

RMRU Members Involved:

Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Eric Holden, Vinay Rao, Glenn Henderson.



Prusik Knot

Tahquitz Rock Rescue

December 5, 2020

El Whampo route on

Tahquitz Rock

Written by Tyler Shumway

RMRU received a call out at 5:45pm after a long day of training which started at 8am at the Cactus Springs Trailhead. Just as we were making our way home, we got the call out and were to respond to Keenwild Station. Luckily, most of the team was only 30 minutes away which made for a quick response time.



Members doing rigging on Top.

The call came out for 2 climbers stuck on Tahquitz Rock. All we knew was that the lead climber had run out of rope and protection. With little to go on we prepared for a full technical rescue with 800 feet of rope and our twin tension rope system. We had 12 members respond and with an excellent turn out we prepped gear and briefed with Pilot Chad Marlatt and Technical Flight Officer Manny Romero with Riverside Sheriff Aviation. Chad and Manny were able to locate the subjects on the north face with one climber close to the top and the second a full rope length below. The plan was to insert 9 members and gear on top of Tahquitz Rock by hover step.

MISSION REVIEWS OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2020



Vinay Lowering Tyler with Blake waiting to help if needed.

James and I were first to fly in and established voice contact to determine their condition and exactly what route they were on. Luckily, the winds were calm, and we could effectively communicate and get a visual by their headlamps. They confirmed they were uninjured and the route they were on was El Whampo a 5.7 route which is a 5-pitch climb. James had scrambled down the shoulder of the rock and to the 3rd class gulley that leads to a big tree that marks the end of the technical climbing of the route. As I peered over, I saw the headlamp of the lead climber about 150 feet below. As we waited for team members to be flown in, we started building anchors and helped bring gear down.



Team members at rescue site, ready to climb back to top for

With all 9 members accounted for and anchors built, we tied 400ft of rope together on each system

since the second climber was going to be over 300ft from the edge. The plan was to lower me down to the lead climber, perform a pickoff and then have the team convert me to a raise. I was lowered down to the first climber with ease and attached him to my system. I fixed his rope to an anchor and confirmed down below to his belayer that he was also attached to an anchor below. The lead climber untied and with his weight safely on my system we were hauled back up.



Helicopter coming into top of Tahquiz Rock.

After safely bring the first climber up I was quickly converted back to a lower for the second climber. The team passed 2 knots (1 for each system), to get me down to the second the climber. I attached him to my system, broke down his anchor and we were quickly back to a raise. This time on the way up the conjoining knots of one of the ropes got stuck. Since I was on the face of a huge dihedral in a semi free hanging position, I could not provide any help. After several attempts to lower and raise, I had the team lower us back down to the slab below the dihedral. We then angled up the slab following the dihedral in hopes of freeing the stuck ropes.



James waits with Subject to be picked up.

With some luck the ropes were able to free themselves and we were raised back up with another passing of 2 knots without incident. Both climbers were in good spirits despite being cold and tired. After thorough rewarming, we broke down our systems and headed to the summit to be flown out.

Chad and Manny performed flawlessly in getting the team in and out with the hover step. First James and one of the subjects flew out.

Video of Tyler and the second subject doing the hover step can be viewed on the RMRU Website at this link:

<https://rmru.org/2020/12/05/2020-058/>

Notice how Tyler must back off and wait as the Helicopter moves around in a slight wind. This is all done with head signals because it is too noisy to hear anyone. Finally, he gets the OK to get on. This is what we train for with Aviation, so we are ready to back off and come again until the timing is right to get on the Helicopter. We train twice a year, once during daylight hours and once at night. It is this training that really pays off when we have missions like this one.



RMRU member follows packs in.

Then other team members went in groups of two, one member gets on then second member passes in the two packs, and finally the second member gets on and the TFO tells pilot that it is all clear to take off and head back to base. Everyone was back a base and heading home by 3am in the morning on Sunday December 6.



Everyone on board, TFO tells Pilot to lift off.

RMRU Members Involved:

Kase Chong, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Corey Ellison, Kaitlyn Ellison, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Beth Jeffery, Shani Pynn, Vinay Rao, and Tyler Shumway.



Clove Hitch

THE 10 ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS

1. Navigation

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

2. Sun protection

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

3. Insulation

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

4. Illumination

Headlamp, flashlight, batteries. LED bulb is preferred.

5. First-aid supplies

plus insect repellent.

6. Fire

Butane lighter, windproof matches in waterproof container.

7. Repair kit and tools

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

8. Nutrition

One day of extra food.

9. Hydration

Extra 2 liters of water for one additional day.

10. Emergency shelter

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

Marion Mt. Lost Hikers

December 19, 2020

Marion Mt. Trail -

San Jacinto Mountains

Written by Tom Blanke

RMRU was activated at 8:00 PM for two lost hikers that were possibly hypothermic near Marion Mountain. RMRU responded and Vinay and Coby established base with Riverside County Sheriff's Deputies at the Marion Mountain trailhead.



Coby, Blake, Thomas, James, Kase, 2 Subjects, RSO Deputy, and Vinay.

James and Blake formed the first team and set off on the trail to find the lost hikers. Kase and I forming the second team and following behind to provide support as required. Team 1 was able to locate the subjects off the trail, and after ensuring they had not sustained any injuries, they escorted them to the trail.

Team 2 linked up with Team 1 and the subjects at the Marion Mountain and Deer Spring Trail junction and escorted them back down to the trailhead.

RMRU Members Involved:

Thomas Blanke, Coby Brown, Kase Chong, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, and Vinay Rao.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RMRU TEAM MEMBERS !



*Marriage of
Team Members*

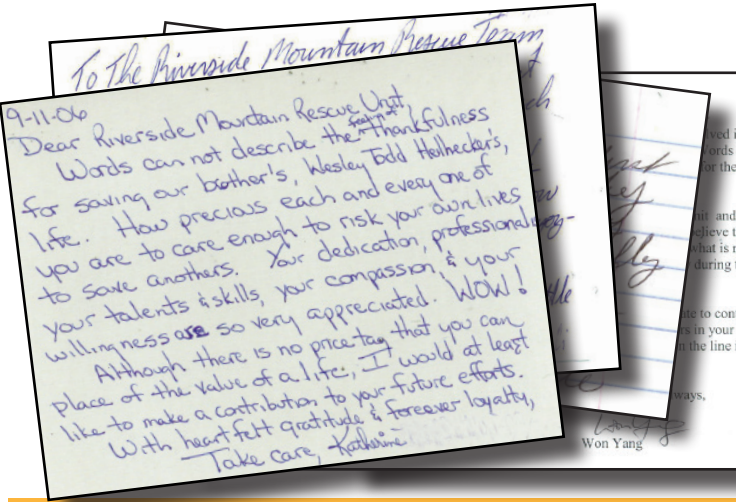


*Cory & Kaitlyn
Ellison*



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

ABOUT RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

FOUNDED 1961

MEMBER MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION 1963

GOVERNING BODY: RIVERSIDE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

MEMBERS: ORIGINAL: 6 | CURRENT MEMBERS: 31

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

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

RMRU BOARD MEMBERS 2020 - 2021

Glenn Henderson- President

Ray Weden - 1st Vice-President | Eric Holden - 2nd Vice-President

Shani Penn - Secretary | Kevin Kern - Member at Large



BECOME A SUSTAINING MEMBER



SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Your Donation 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 < \$100

Please send your donation to:

**Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit
43950 Acacia Street
Hemet, California 92544**

Help save a life.

Join RMRU

rmru.org



**Courage
Commitment
Compassion**

