



Missions
April - June 2021

Thank You!

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

Countless people owe their lives



OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS



April 1 - June 30, 2021

BENEFACTOR CLUB \$1,000.00 +
Annika Schlossberg | Olivia M. Borecka

SUMMIT CLUB \$500.00+
Florian Boyd | Idyllwild Rotary

PATRON CLUB \$200.00+
Michael Oldham

CENTURY CLUB \$100.00+
Rob Gardner

SUPPORTING < \$100.00
Shane Newell | Carrie Torres | Dulce Harris

RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS



Thomas Blanke - Oceanside | **Coby Brown** - Hemet | **Steve Bryant** - Alta Loma
Pete Carlson - Blue Jay | **Kase Chong** - Hemet | **Shawn Dennstedt** - San Diego
Kirk Cloyd - Hemet | **Blake Douglas** - Riverside | **James Eckhardt** - Riverside
Corey Ellison - Laguna Niguel | **Kaitlyn Ellison** - Laguna Niguel | **Gary Farris** - Anthem
Matt Frenken - Hemet | **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 | **Caleb Miner** - Hemet | **Robert Newton** - Hemet
Dana Potts - Corona | **Shani Pynn** - Riverside | **Vinay Rao** - San Jacinto
Steven Rider - Oceanside | **Tyler Shumway** - Hemet | **Becky Templeton** - Murrieta
Ray Weden - Murrieta | **Richard Yocum** - Hemet

Support Members

Joe Erickson | Kaylean May | Brad Scott | Ty Wittersheim

MISSION REVIEWS

April - June 2021

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On the Cover -

James Eckhardt - RMRU team member on "Rescue 9" Hoist

Photo -

Air to Air photography

Member Profile - Michael George

In 1995 at the age of 26, I had just realized one of my childhood dreams of joining a Mountain Rescue team when I discovered that hiking 9.4 miles down the steepest trail in the United States at night, was a bit overrated.

It was my first mission with my mentor Lew Kingman. We were clearing the Skyline trail from the tram down to Palm Springs. By the time we got to the bottom, I earned the Badge of having Blue Toes and I almost lost a toenail. Lesson learned in properly lacing up one's boots and running with larger boots.

Since I was a kid in High School, I grew up watching Altadena Mtn Rescue and Sierra Madre Search & Rescue practicing high angle rope work in my backyard. Altadena wasn't allowing volunteers at the time and Sierra Madre required you live in town. Years later after starting a career in Hilo mechanics, I was attempting to buy some



Jumars from an Anaheim Firefighter I worked with, Lew Kingman. His only condition was that I had to pick them up at a monthly RMRU meeting, which at the time was the Banning Correctional Facility. I was informed that if I lost my guest pass, I might be staying a little while longer. Well, Lew

continued on page 13

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 the MRA in 1961
and is a regular member.*

*RMRU hosted the MRA
California Region's
Tracking Recertification in
March 2020*

Mission Reviews

April - June 2021

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



Rescue Hoist Corona

April 03, 2021

Hagador Canyon, Corona

Written by Tyler Shumway

At 2120 I received a call from Gwenda to do a hoist near Skyline in Corona. This would be the first night mission with Riverside County Sheriff's Aviation new H145 helicopter. Rob also got the call since he is also less than 10 minutes away from Hemet Ryan Airport.



Rescue 9 Crew and Tyler & Robert
The call came in as two subjects lost and off trail near Hagador Canyon. With no light, food, or water they called 911. We received their location from dispatch via cell phone ping which put them at 1,900ft along a steep and brushy slope east of Hagador Canyon. Rob and I and geared up and rehearsed the extraction plan. After final

safety checks we were on our way with less than a 10-minute flight to their location. Rob and I were inserted onto a steep and brushy slope to make contact. After initial assessment, the two were in good spirits and without injuries. Both were unprepared for a day hike with no food, water, light, or proper footwear (one was wearing sandals). After suiting them up Rob and I briefed them on what to expect for the hoist.

All four of us were extracted without incident. With the capabilities of the new H145 we were able to hoist both subjects along with Rob and me. With a full crew this put a total of 7 people on board. Previously, this would have taken two trips with the smaller helicopter.

With the added power of the H145 this mission was over in less than an hour. Thank you, Riverside County Sheriff's Aviation Unit, for yet again another successful and safe rescue.

RMRU Members Involved:
Robert Newton & Tyler Shumway

Missing Person

April 10, 2021

Palm Desert Area

Written by Pete Carlson

At 3:55am in the morning we were all asleep in Joshua Tree to be ready to go first thing in the morning with Technical Rock Training. In the quiet night everyone's phone started making noise as the text came out for a mission. We were quickly up and packing things to head to Palm Desert for a missing Alzheimer's person. We had all just left the camp site and were driving out of the park when the text came that the person had been found. So back to camp around 4:50am. Everyone was wide awake by then, so we started an early breakfast to be ready to start training around 8am.

RMRU Members Involved:
Thomas Blanke, Coby Brown, James Eckhardt, Corey Ellison, Kaitlyn Ellison, Josh Gould, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Beth Jeffery, Robert Newton, Dana Potts, Shani Pynn, Vinay Rao, Tyler Shumway, Becky Templeton, and Ray Weden

Call for Help!

April 11, 2021

Humber Park Area,
Idyllwild

Written by James Eckhardt

We were spending the weekend training in Joshua Tree, and Saturday started with a 4:00AM wakeup for a mission in Palm Desert that was quickly called off. After a full day of hot technical rock training, we were starting to go to bed to rest for another day of training when we got our second mission. A woman was heard screaming for help somewhere in Idyllwild or the surrounding wilderness by multiple pairs of climbers on Tahquitz Rock and Idyllwild residents.

When we arrived scene, we were able to interview some of the climbers, who were extremely helpful in describing what they had heard. Based on the information we had, we sent a team (Josh and Tom) to search around Suicide Rock, a team (Becky and Vinay) to hike up Devil's Slide to Saddle Junction and a team and Tyler and I to search the base of Tahquitz rock. We started hiking just after midnight, and we were greatly aided in our callouts by the stillness of the night.

From Tahquitz, we could clearly hear the team on Suicide Rock, so we were confident our callouts could be heard over much of the valley. Tyler and I searched the base of the climbing routes and snowy runouts from the Northwestern side of Tahquitz to the friction descent route.

None of the teams heard respons-

es to their callouts or found any clues, and due to all teams having been up for at least 24 hours, we stopped searching at 4:00AM.

After a couple hours of sleep, we were joined by the rest of the team that was training at Joshua Tree and resumed our search at 7:00AM. We had more members available, so were able to re-search the base of Tahquitz and the common approach and descent routes, the base of Suicide, Strawberry Creek, and other areas of high probability. With no clues found and with no one reported missing, we suspended the search.

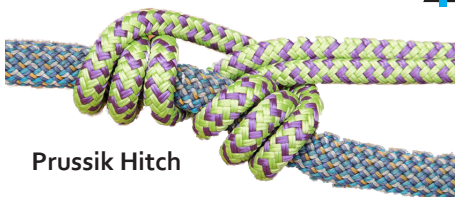
"After a couple hours of sleep, we were joined by the rest of the team that was training at Joshua Tree"

RMRU RESCUER -
JAMES ECKHARDT

We would like to thank Riverside Sheriff's Aviation and the Mountain Community Patrol for their help.

RMRU Members Involved:

Thomas Blanke, Coby Brown, Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Corey Ellison, Kaitlyn Ellison, Josh Gould, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Beth Jeffery, Robert Newton, Dana Potts, Shani Pynn, Vinay Rao, Tyler Shumway, Becky Templeton, and Ray Weden



Prussik Hitch

Roy Research

April 18, 2021

Pine Cove Area,
Idyllwild

Written by Glenn Henderson

The team conducted a research for Roy Prifogly on Saturday April 18. We had 19 searchers in the field from 6 AM until 4 PM. Roy went missing on March 7, 2020. We had searched for 6 days in the initial search and have conducted 2 other searches including a decent of the N Fork of the San Jacinto River from Pine Cove down to Hwy 74 in Hemet. No new clues or items of interest were found.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Shawn Dennstedt, Blake Douglas, Kase Chong, James Eckhardt, Corey Ellison, Kaitlyn Ellison, Matt Frenken, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tony Hughes, Dana Potts, Shani Pynn, Robert Newton, Vinay Rao, Steven Rider, Tyler Shumway, Becky Templeton, Raymond Weden

Possible Hoist

April 18, 2021

Whitewater Area

Written by James Eckhardt

After a long day on a search near Idyllwild, I received a call from Gwenda to meet at Hemet Ryan for a hoist in Whitewater. As I was driving to Hemet Ryan, I was notified RMRU was no longer needed for the hoist.

RMRU Members Involved:
James Eckhardt



Deer Springs Hiker

April 19, 2021

Deer Springs Trailhead

Written by Beth Jeffery

As everyone was headed to bed, we received a call out at 10:40pm on April 19, 2021. There was a lost hiker on the Deer Springs trail and her battery on her phone was about to die. We changed into uniforms, grabbed our packs, and headed up the hill in the dark to Idyllwild.

I was first to arrive to meet the deputy at the trailhead. Rescue 9 helicopter had located the lost hiker and had done a hoist and was bringing the hiker back to safety. Other RMRU members arrived, and some others were still on the way. We all headed home after Rescue 9 had the hikers safely on the ground.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Kase Chong, Shawn Dennstedt, Beth Jeffery, and Becky Templeton

Mapping Indio

May 04, 2021

INDO

Written by James Eckhardt

On Tuesday morning, I got a call from Gwenda notifying me that the Indio Police Department was requesting help with mapping on a search for a missing person in Indio. I picked up the van and headed out to Indio. Upon arriving I was able to gather information on the status of the search from the various agencies that had been searching overnight, and in the

morning, before I arrived.

The Border Patrol was able to track the individual for a distance from his last known location but had then lost the track. While I was mapping the areas that had been searched and preparing new assignments, the subject notified his family of his location and was shortly thereafter picked up.

RMRU Members Involved:

James Eckhardt

Lost Hiker near Peak

May 07, 2021

San Jacinto High Country

Written by James Eckhardt

On Friday night, I had just gotten to sleep when I heard a callout on my phone. A backpacker had called one and a half hours earlier notifying dispatch that he was lost and cold. Rescue 9 had located the hiker near Miller Peak but had been unable to hoist due to high winds. We were called after Rescue 9 had determined a hoist was not possible, and Blake and I were first to respond to the ranger station in Idyllwild. Glenn ran base while Blake and I hiked the 7 miles to the subject from Humber Park. Soon after Blake and I started hiking, Cam and Becky arrived and followed us up the trail.

Blake and I made it to the subject, who was about ten feet off trail. The backpacker had warmed up after getting in his sleeping bag and was well hydrated and fed as he had all the gear and food for a backpacking trip. Blake and I soon found out that he was section hiking the PCT and had started in the

morning from Humber Park with two others from a hiking group. The group had planned to meet up with three others who were taking the tram up to a campsite in Round Valley.

The three hiking from Humber had split up somewhere around Little Round Valley. One was exhausted and planned to camp on the trail, one was still feeling good and would continue to Round Valley and our subject also planned to continue to Round Valley. He got off trail near Miller Peak and then called 911.

By the time Blake and I arrived, he had rested and was ready to hike back to Humber Park with us. We met up with Cam and Becky, left the subject to continue down trail with them and then Blake and I hurried to Humber Park. Blake had a family commitment, and I needed to be in Garner Valley for a search briefing at 7:00AM. With the help of California State Parks, we were able to account for the other 5 hikers in the group and determine they were all safe.

Lessons:

The backpacker had the necessary equipment, food, and water to stay comfortable overnight in the San Jacinto high country. Injuries, fatigue, or poor navigation can lead to a situation in which rescue is necessary. Carrying adequate equipment, food and water prevented a much more uncomfortable night for the backpacker.

While Riverside County has helicopter rescue capabilities, a fast rescue is far from guaranteed.

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Wilderness users are responsible for their own safety.

RMRU Members Involved:

Cameron Dickinson, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Glenn Henderson, Steven Rider, Becky Templeton



Dia Research

May 08, 2021

Garner Valley

Written by Eric Holden

We got called out to perform additional searches for Dia Abrams, in the area of the Spittler peak trail. Unfortunately, due to the search the night before we had less members than expected. No additional information was found.

RMRU Members Involved:

Shawn Dennstedt, James Eckhardt, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Beth Jeffery, Shani Pynn, Steven Rider, Ray Weden



Death Valley Search

MAY 08, 2021

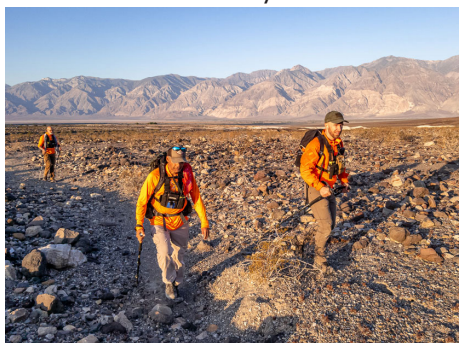
Saline Valley Hot Springs,
Death Valley NP

Written by Vinay Rao

On Tuesday, May 11th, RMRU received an OES (Office of Emergency Services) callout to assist with a search in a remote and relatively inaccessible area of the northwestern section of Death Valley National Park. Four team members responded, including one of our newest members Shawn.

The search was for a 78-year-old male who had driven his truck alone to the Saline Valley – Warm

Springs Campground during Easter where it broke down. According to the family on May 4th, approximately a month later, he took another truck into the area to attempt repairs with the understanding that he would return the next day. By May 8th not having heard from their loved one, the family notified authorities that he was missing. The Inyo County Sheriff's Office began a search of the area on May 9th using ground, air, and dog team resources. The search was expanded to include more teams on May 11th.



Shawn, Vinay, and Blake heading out.

RMRU drove to the area on Wednesday, May 12th, and arrived late in the evening and quickly settled into the campground near the Command Post (CP) since the search was set to begin early the next morning.

The search began with a briefing at 5:30am on Thursday, May 13th, and assignments were quickly handed out. The objective was to saturate a roughly 4 miles by .5-mile rectangle by having the searchers move in a rough straight line approximately 120 feet from each other starting at one end of the rectangle. The area was chosen due to its proximity to where the subject's vehicles were found. The terrain was relatively flat and with

sparse vegetation, so visibility was particularly good.

RMRU completed its first set of line assignments in about 2.5 hours and returned to the CP for a brief rest and hydration. We felt confident that we could pick up another line assignment and were able to complete that as well. By around 12:30pm all teams had collaborated to complete all 50 of the line assignments within the grid search. Also, by then the heat had reached 105 degrees and was having an impact on the searchers.

Unfortunately, the grid search did not result in finding the missing subject or any clues, and the search teams were released to go home.

Other search/support teams included: Inyo County Search and Rescue, Sierra Madre Search and Rescue, Death Valley National Park, Inyo Sheriff, Mono Search and Rescue, canines through CARDA, Cal OES, San Bernardino Search and Rescue, Los Angeles Search and Rescue, Malibu Search and Rescue, Tulare Search and Rescue, and Fresno Search and Rescue. Aerial support was provided by China Lake Naval Weapons Base, U.S. Army, and CHP Inland Division Air Operations.

RMRU sends its wishes to the family in its hopes of finding their loved one.

RMRU Members Involved:

Blake Douglas, Shawn Dennstedt, James Eckhardt, and Vinay Rao



Search Mt. Waterman

MAY 19, 2021

Mt. Waterman,
San Gabriel Mountains

Written by Blake Douglas

On Saturday May 15th, resident George Null of Los Angeles County was reported missing after not returning from a habitual day hike in the Angeles National Forest. His car was located in the Mt. Waterman area shortly thereafter, and a search was initiated by Montrose Search and Rescue. After two days of searching with no results, the search was escalated to an OES callout and RMRU's assistance was requested. Pete and I responded on Wednesday May 19th, the fifth day of the search.

The last time I had been to this area was for a similar OES callout, for a missing hiker in spring/summer conditions that posed no weather hazards, meaning that a subject who was simply lost was highly likely to be alive. On the other hand, five days was a long time to be "stuck" in this area when you are never more than about four miles from a road, but that is coming from the perspective of someone who does bushwhacking for fun. The subject from my previous search had ended up at the bottom of Devil's Canyon and was found there seven days later because he had no food and lacked the strength to move.

Mr. Null was reported to be an experienced hiker, particularly on the Mt. Waterman trail, and had no existing medical issues or concerns, so our working assumption was that he had experienced a medical

accident and was incapacitated. The last ping from his cell phone had been traced to the slopes near Waterman, but these had been thoroughly searched, meaning that the search areas were now starting to get pretty large and widely spaced.



Boulder Pile to Check and Search Area down and left.

The Waterman area alternates between high-visibility slopes and ridges that are relatively light on vegetation, and steep, brushy canyons with unstable rock, meaning that the time and quality of a search is highly dependent upon the area. Mr. Null was reported to prefer high points, so our search grids for Wednesday focused on a south-facing slope between Waterman Ridge and the section of the Waterman Trail leading to Three Points.

We completed our search area uneventfully and with little of note for the experience other than a few fun Class 3 moves to the top of the boulder piles that dot the ridgeline. We had initially signed up for a second assignment, but the second area turned out to have far more brush than our first area, no downslope visibility, and no shade. It was now 1230pm and we felt that this area would be better as a morning assignment, so we returned to base and began our debrief.

We had barely begun the debrief when the command post team reported that the subject had been spotted, alive and uninjured, and Air 5 was preparing to hoist him out. Details beyond this were sparse because the command post wanted to keep the radio traffic clear, but Mr. Null was apparently in Bear Creek, far outside our search area and evidently working his way downstream over the course of the five days. Media reports stated that he had lost the Waterman trail due to the trail markers being destroyed in the Bobcat Fire and kept himself alive using skills he learned as a Boy Scout.



Pete by large blooming Yucca on hike out.

Lessons from this mission:

An emergency satellite communicator would have quickly resolved a situation such as this, but these devices are still relatively uncommon, particularly among casual hikers. A more relevant piece of advice for the average hiker is to ignore the "common sense" heuristic, that says to follow a stream because it leads to civilization;

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while this is true, it does not account for the waterfalls and brush that you will hit along the way. When lost, stay higher if possible, preferably on a ridge line or natural prominence with high visibility from the air. This makes route finding easier for you and searching easier for SAR teams, who almost always check popular landmarks and formations before brush-lined canyons.

Responding Agencies:

Montrose, Ventura County, Sierra Madre, Tulare County, Malibu, and LA Air Rescue 5 Helicopter

RMRU Members Involved:

Pete Carlson and Blake Douglas



Deer Springs Missing Person

MAY 20, 2021

Deer Springs Trail Head

Written by Shawn Dennstedt

At approximately 2110 hours, a callout was initiated via Mission Manager for members to respond to the Deer Springs trailhead in Idyllwild reference a 45-year-old white male adult who had last been heard from at 1000 hours that morning.

It was reported by the man's mother that he was trying to find a shortcut between the Deer Springs trailhead and Pine Cove when his cell phone (a Razor-type flip phone) had lost power. It was unknown what clothing he was wearing, but it was believed he was possibly wearing an orange and black backpack and traveling

with a small, white, poodle-type dog.

Upon arrival at the trailhead, a Command Post (CP) was established. Vinay, Matt, and Beth began a hasty search with a deputy who was utilizing a bloodhound K-9 to confirm that the subject had indeed used the Deer Springs trail. Coby manned the CP, while Steven and Shawn assisted with support duties.

The K-9 was able to aggressively track the subject's scent to Strawberry Junction, where the deputy determined his K-9 was tired and needed to return to the CP. Beth escorted the deputy and his K-9 back to the CP, while Vinay and Matt continued to the Marion Ridge Trail, finishing at the Thousand Trails Campground with negative results. All members logged out of the CP at approximately 0400 hours, with the understanding that teams would reconvene at the trailhead on 05/21/21 at 0700 hours to continue the search.

After getting about an hour and a half of sleep at the Mountain Station courtesy of Deputy Funkhouser, Steven and Shawn returned to the Deer Springs trailhead where they were met by Glenn Henderson, members of the Sheriff's Emergency Response Team (SERT) and Idyllwild dayshift deputies.

It was decided that Steven and Shawn would track from the Deer Springs trailhead, to Strawberry Cienega, to the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) ending at Humber Park. Any additional responding members would be assigned as appropriate.

Steven and Shawn stepped off at about 0800 hours. At about 0900 hours just shy of the two-mile mark on Deer Springs Trail, Steven and Shawn encountered a hiker matching the subject's description.

After confirming the subject's identity, the subject stated he had continued hiking the previous day thinking he would eventually find a parking lot. At dusk, when his search for a parking lot met with negative results, he decided to take shelter overnight in the emergency hut he stumbled across on San Jacinto Peak.

The subject was strong and in good spirits. While he did not have overnight gear, he was wearing a light jacket, several layers of clothing, and hiking shoes. He was wearing a purple backpack in which he carried a small white dog who seemed perfectly content to be carried in this manner.

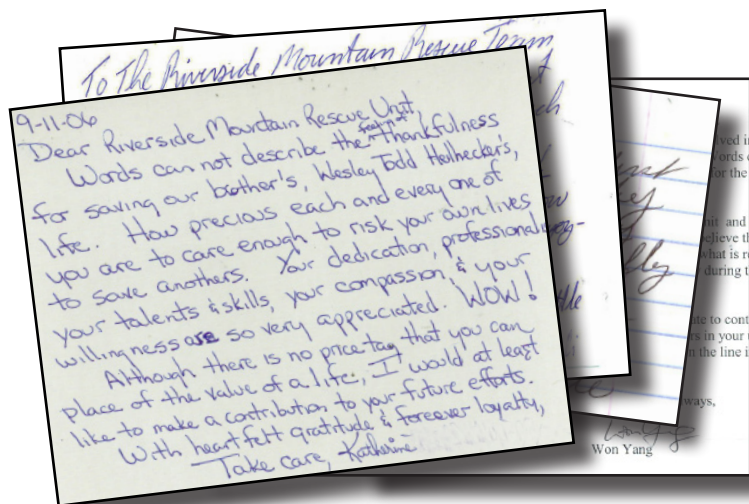
Steven and Shawn escorted the subject back to the CP where he gave a statement to deputies, was evaluated by medical personnel, and released. The subject said he was incredibly grateful and deeply sorry for any trouble his perceived absence had caused. All members debriefed and logged out of the CP by 1000 hours.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Shawn Dennstedt, Matt Frenken, Glenn Henderson, Beth Jeffery, Vinay Rao, and Steven Rider







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

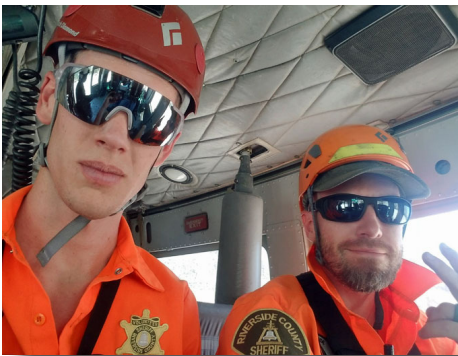
Missing Female Hiker

June 14, 2021

San Gorgonio Peak

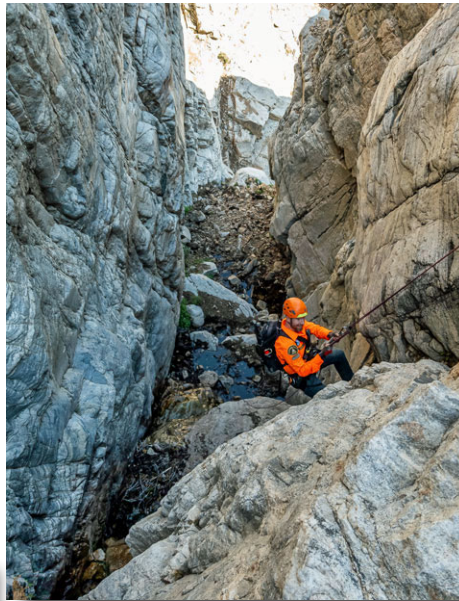
Written by Vinay Rao

On June 14th, RMRU received an OES (Office of Emergency Services) call for a lost hiker on San Gorgonio Mountain. At 11,503 feet San Gorgonio, the highest peak south of the Sierras, is an extremely popular hiking destination with multiple trails that lead to it from all directions.



James and Blake flying in.

The subject had begun her hike with a friend on June 13th via Vivian Creek. They hiked together until High Creek Camp, at approximately 9,200 feet, where the subject decided to take a break while her hiking partner continued to the peak. The last time they met each other was when the subject continued up and ran into her partner who had summited and was on her way down. Her partner descended to High Creek Camp and waited for the subject's return. While waiting, she talked to a small group of hikers who stated that they had seen the subject returning down the trail but were not exactly sure of where they met. As evening approached, the friend became sufficiently worried and called 911. Given that the subject could have taken one of many trails leading



Blake on Rappel

down from the peak, the search "went OES" from the beginning and many SAR teams became involved.

The initial RMRU group that responded – James, Blake, Kase and Shawn – were helicoptered in near the peak and were assigned to search drainage areas that lead south and southwest from the peak. The terrain was rough and, at least for James and Blake, involved a 20-foot rappel down a waterfall which had relatively low flow.

As night approached the day teams wrapped up their search areas and the remaining RMRU team members – Vinay, Steven, and Rob – arrived. The evening team was assigned to go up Momeyer Trail which starts in Forest Falls and goes north. This team searched until approximately 4:00am on the 15th and returned to base.

The search for the subject continued the morning of the 15th and

the subject was found in the early afternoon in an area known as the South Fork Cabin at approximately 7,100 feet. She was unhurt and grateful to be ultimately united with friends and family.

RMRU Members Involved:

Kase Chong, Shawn Dennstedt, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Robert Newton, Vinay Rao, and Steven Rider



Woman with Heat Problems

June 16, 2021

PCT near Anza

Written by Glenn Henderson

The team was called out to back up helicopter Rescue 9 with the rescue of two women hikers on the Pacific Crest Trail. They had called that they had run out of water and one of them was unconscious. We were called out in case Rescue 9 had trouble due to the terrain. As we responded we got the call that Rescue 9 had air lifted both women and were transporting them to a waiting ambulance. Unfortunately, one of them succumbed to the extreme heat. Our sincere condolences to the family and friends of the one that did not make it.

RMRU Members Involved:

Shawn Dennstedt, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Glenn Henderson, and Robert Newton



Figure 8 follow through

continued from page 3

MEMBER PROFILE - MIKE GEORGE

wouldn't sell the ascenders until I returned for a second meeting. At this point we didn't have any kids, and I had the support of my spouse, little did she know what she was agreeing to. Lol. I turned in my application to what I knew was a Well-Respected team. I didn't learn until later how well respected it was within our governing association, The Mountain Rescue Association.

During the last 26 years this team has grown into some of my closest family. Many of these longtime friends were there right after my sons were born. They grew up with this team. Sometimes they would accompany me for training at Joshua Tree or up at the tram. Up to about age 10 or so they participated in almost every 4th of July parade. At first it was riding in the litter during famous Litter Races. Later on Ian became part of one of the Litter Teams. One of the hardest things to consider personally, was the thought of moving out of state. I'd always wanted to, but in my mind, I would be leaving My Family. When I experienced my horrific leg accident some of these members were there for me every single day, I was in the hospital for my femur fracture and knee surgery. I had complications, putting me back in 3 more times and every day someone visited me or waited during surgery. I owe them my life. They helped me heal physically and mentally. Afterwards they regularly visited my family trying to help out at home. Along with my family they were the reason I made it through my recovery.



Mike - Lost Arrow /Yosemite

I have been on more memorable missions than I can remember. Not only my first one but two other rescues on the Skyline trail. One where we rescued 9 hikers trapped on an icy traverse. That took the effort of Riverside Sheriff and CHP helicopters to hoist everyone off the mountain. Couple of years ago Cameron and I were assigned the upper Skyline trail to search a lost overnight hiker. After descending 1000 ft through ice covered soft snow, among frozen trees we were notified of a small avalanche 2 canyons over. We post holed over and were fortunate to hear our subject shouting back. He had gotten off route, fallen and severely broke an ankle. Cameron quickly reassured him and splinted his leg. He was hoisted out and flown to awaiting medical personnel. After returning, we were hoisted up and flown out. Due to the limited cabin space, and me being last on board, we had to fly back with me sitting in the doorway, my huge winter pack strapped between my legs. That was too cool. Without having seen the avalanche from above I don't think we would have found

him in time. With recently fallen snow we had no tracks. I think we saved a life, and it was a really good feeling.

Another longstanding memory I have is hiking up one of our western approaches to the base of Mount San Jacinto. Paired with Cameron, (you really have to give him credit for putting up with me), we went looking for a group of 5 who radioed in being off trail. They weren't lost. They knew where they were within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. We hiked up this steep trail for 7 hours in the middle of a blizzard. We had visibility of maybe 100 ft at the most, at times with moderate winds. When we finally reached our group, they were relatively settled down next to a campfire and offered us a little coffee if I recall. Eager to get the heck out, we hurried back down the mountain without even a second cup.

The years I have been on this team have been the most amazing in my life. I gained two wonderful sons, who I have been able to share many rescue techniques with and helped increase their knowledge and comfortability in making do with very little. I have gained the unwavering friendship of many members who have become part of my family. I feel wonderful about having completed so many missions where our team has brought our subjects back safely and honored to be chosen to bring most of our lost ones back to their families.

Every year our team is reaccredited in one of our three disciplines, Snow & Ice Rescue techniques,

High Angle rock rescue and Search & Tracking. It was during one of our recent accreditations in Mammoth I remember the most. We were snowshoeing into our testing area in the beginning of a major snowstorm. About ½ through it really started coming down, where we were setting anchors and rigging rescue lines to raise a subject. By that time, it really started coming down and it was heavily snowing with low visibility. By time we got back to our vehicles it seemed like we had a foot of new snow. But those conditions and camaraderie always brings out the best in us. We train quite hard every month in each of these areas, and we play together often in our odd time.

From trips to the Sierras, to caving, to canyoneering, the ability to work together and think together allows us to think as one. We have so many long-time members who love introducing new ideas and techniques to our new ones. We have such a tightly knit relationship between one another, we have been recognized as being like a closely knit family where we recognize each of our weaknesses and automatically fill in where needed. With the regular training our members go through, we often end up trusting our lives to each without much thought. Often our families get together during the holidays for more bonding. There isn't anyone on this team I wouldn't trust my life to. A few times that have come to fruition.

We had a winter accident years ago that involved 3 members. If not for our extensive training the

outcome could have turned out much worse. Once we had an almost tragic medical emergency with another member one year, that with quick actions of our members, saved their life.

Couple off the more frustrating



Mike - Riverside County Fair

missions involved looking for a male subject out in Anza. Temperatures were close to 114. Our rescue van had overheated a bit at the time, and we had spent 6 hours searching for our subject. At the end of the day, we were informed that the subject had left the area, met up with some friends, and had gone to a bar. Where was our beer? I think were so well hydrated we couldn't have drunk anything more.

One of my earlier missions involved searching all night for a couple subjects. We tracked the subjects successfully through the night and by morning closed within I'm guessing a quarter of a mile of our subjects. We could smell the success of rescuing them, when one of the accompanying agency helicopters spotted them and swooped in, And picked them up. I know it was all teamwork that got us to that point. And the rescue was successful. But really? Multiple climber rescues on Tahquitz Rock come to mind also. All-night rescues undertaken by the

team to rescue injured or stranded climbers in the middle of the night, 500 ft of the ground were always exhilarating and often tested our repertoire of vertical skills.

Lastly, I remember being called out for some missing teens. We were up around the Candy Store area if I recall. We had gone out and found them.

I remember one young girl having a pretty twisted ankle. Possibly broken, but in an immense of pain. It was middle of night and no ambulances were on hand, so our aircrew decided to fly her to the hospital. I elected to fly with them, and during the course of loading her up she became pretty anxious that I maybe her parents were going to be angry with her. Any way I understood her anxiety and scared feelings and held her during the flight to the hospital.

It was the single most heartwarming experience I have experienced while on the team. It was really nothing extraordinary, but I was able to ease someone's pain and discomfort. The feeling of allowing someone to relax and calm down during their need has never left me. It's one of the reasons I joined Search and Rescue. To make a difference. I want to recognize my many other team members who have experienced the same thing in the last 60 years, whether rescuing a group of stranded and injured boy scouts at night in deep snow, to bringing home a toddler back home to his worried parents after an all-night search.

That Others May Live -
Michael George



ABOUT RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

FOUNDED 1961

MEMBER MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION 1963

GOVERNING BODY: RIVERSIDE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

MEMBERS: ORIGINAL: 6 | CURRENT MEMBERS: 38

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

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

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