

**Missions**  
**July - December 2021**



# Thank You!

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

**Countless people owe their lives**



## OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS



**August 1 -December 31, 2021**

**BENEFACTOR CLUB \$1,000.00 +**

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## RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS



**Zane Anglin** - Menifee | **Thomas Blanke** - Oceanside | **Coby Brown** - Hemet

**Steve Bryant** - Alta Loma | **Pete Carlson** - Blue Jay | **Kase Chong** - Hemet

**Kirk Cloyd** - Hemet | **Blake Douglas** - Riverside | **James Eckhardt** - Riverside

**Corey Ellison** - Layton, UT | **Kaitlyn Ellison** - Layton, UT | **Gary Farris** - Anthem, AZ

**Matt Frenken** - Hemet | **Michael George** - Riverside | **Donny Goetz** - Idyllwild

**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 | **Tobias Moyneur** - Calimesa

**Robert Newton** - Hemet | **Shani McCullough** - Temecula | **Amber Prestegard** - San Diego

**Vinay Rao** - San Jacinto | **Steven Rider** - Oceanside | **Tyler Shumway** - Hemet

**Becky Templeton** - Murrieta | **Ray Weden** - Murrieta | **Richard Yocum** - Idyllwild

### Support Members

Joe Erickson | Kaylean May | Brad Scott | Ty Wittersheim

## MISSION REVIEWS

June - December 2021

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## President's Message

### Glenn Henderson

January 26, 2022 marks 40 years of active service with RMRU. It's been quite a ride and not over yet.

But, for over 20 years I've served at various times on the Board of Directors. I think it's time to slow down a little so I'm not running for the board again at the annual meeting in April of this year.

There are so many up-and-coming young men and women that are so qualified to lead the team that it puts me in a great position to step down from the Board of Directors.

The team has been doing a lot of PSAR (preventative search and rescue) specifically along the PCT (Pacific Crest

Trail) to advise hikers of the conditions along the trail. We have also been talking to elementary schools about how to stay safe in the wilderness.

We have ramped up our training schedule to help our new members get up to speed on technical rock, snow and ice and search and tracking skills.

This has been taking up the bulk of our time recently.

So, in this post (almost) covid times we are staying busy and ready for anything that may happen.

Yours in Rescue,  
Glenn Henderson

**On the Cover -**  
Tahquitz Rock - West Face  
from Star 9

Photo -  
Gary Farris - RMRU

**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

July - December 2021

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



## OES Missing Hiker

July 16, 2021

Upper Big Tujunga Canyon Road

Written by Blake Douglas

Los Angeles resident Jackson James Mohler, age 80, was last seen on July 5, 2021, and reported missing the following day by his employer after failing to come to work or answer his phone.

A welfare check at Mohler's residence showed no indication of foul play, but Mohler's vehicle was not located. Mohler was described as a person of consistent habits, but several days of investigation failed to locate him or his vehicle at any of the places he would typically be found. After about a week, calls from concerned citizens led to the location of Mohler's vehicle on Upper Big Tujunga Canyon Road in the Angeles National Forest, 30 road miles north of Mohler's residence. Los Angeles County resources, led by Montrose Search and Rescue, searched the vehicle's vicinity for several days before escalating to OES, at which time RMRU's assistance was requested.

James Eckhardt and I arrived for the 730 briefing, which provided further details on Mohler's unusual behavior. The vehicle had since been towed but was described as having been left in a carefully manicured state, and with several expensive pieces of hiking gear left visible.

*"We were given another drainage to search, continuing where we left off from the previous assignment"*

**RMRU RESCUER -**  
BLAKE DOUGLAS

Mohler had apparently taken his cellphone with him, but no backpack or water. There was no known or suspected reason for Mohler to have been here, as he wasn't near any major trailheads and most of the trails that did exist were unremarkable or overgrown. Montrose SAR was confident that Mohler was in the area, although after so much time we did not have high hopes for Mohler's welfare.

We were paired with the three

members responding from Desert Sheriff's SAR and designated the "Riverside team". Our first search area was a drainage, half a mile east of the vehicle, where we spent approximately two hours before concluding that the route would not have been attractive or feasible to an 80-year-old hiker.

We returned to the command post, debating the possible causes of Mohler's disappearance and how they could affect a search area. We were given another drainage to search, continuing where we left off from the previous assignment, but after finding no human tracks in the first mile we determined that this was not a high-probability route and returned to base. It was now noon and starting to get very hot on these exposed and shadeless slopes.

The DSSAR members departed, having several hours of driving ahead of them, and James and I considered doing the same, but we were willing to do one more, short assignment. We both felt that the area around the vehicle needed more attention, and after



## MISSION REVIEWS JULY - DECEMBER 2021

reviewing the track logs that had come in, we identified a shallow ridgeline south of the vehicle that hadn't been extensively searched. We requested and were given this area.

Our intention was to grid it as thoroughly as possible. On arrival we gained the ridgeline easily, finding tracks from the posse, and confirmed that the multiple searches in the area hadn't covered the slopes of this ridge, an area of about 500 feet by 1000 feet. Reaching the end of the ridge farthest from the vehicle, we decided that we would follow contour lines zigzagging back and forth until we reached the base of the ridge, and then ascend to start again in a new area. James headed west and I headed east.



The area the missing man was found.

About five minutes into my search, I noticed some top-sign, branches that had been broken in the direction of travel, and below it, a heel-strike footprint. Considering the number of people that had been in this area, I didn't take this to mean

much, but a few moments later, I caught the unmistakable scent of decomposition. I immediately marked the location and headed over the ridge to get James. We returned to my marked location and picked up the scent again. I sprinkled some dirt to get an idea of the wind direction, and we spread out and headed upwind, the scent growing continuously stronger. Within five minutes we located Mohler's remains.

We express our condolences to Mohler's friends and family.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Blake Douglas and James Eckhardt



#### 10 Year Old Runaway

August 13, 2021

Cabazon

Written by Eric Holden

We started traveling to the location. About 40 minutes after the initial page, the mission went "go", canceled as the subject was found.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Matt Frenken, Eric Holden, Caleb Milner, Vinay Rao, Steven Rider, Tyler Shumway



#### - Training Photo -



#### Rescue Tramway

August 18, 2021

Palm Springs Tramway –

Mt. San Jacinto

Written by James Eckhardt

On Wednesday evening, we got a call that a hiker near San Jacinto peak was possibly having a stroke. I was first from our team to arrive at the tram, however Palm Springs Fire, AMR and Cal Fire were already taking the tram up.

I worked on getting more information, and soon heard that the subject was hiking out with a tram employee. By the time the rest of the RMRU members had arrived, the subject had made it back to the tram, and Cal Fire confirmed the subject was just experiencing exhaustion from the hike rather than a stroke.

#### RMRU members involved:

Caleb Milner, Coby Brown, James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Pete Carlson



#### Missing Person

August 21, 2021

Desert Center, CA/

Written by Vinay Rao

The area around the eastern edge of Joshua Tree National Park where highways 62 & 177 meet is a common route for those going to the Colorado River, Lake Havasu City and Needles.

On August 20th, RMRU received a call about a person who may have gotten lost in the area on August 15th. Responding RMRU members were Ray Weden, Steven Rider, Thomas Blanke, Kase Chong



and Vinay Rao. RMRU met other search teams – Desert Sheriff's Search and Rescue (DSSAR), and Riverside County Search Dogs as well as a Riverside Sheriff drone team at 5:00am on the 21st to begin the search since the forecast was for hot temperatures during the day. The teams were briefed about three 20 year olds that had driven to the area early morning of the 15th.

Apparently two jumped out the vehicle they were in and the driver continued for an undetermined distance on a sandy road before the vehicle became stuck where he fell asleep.

Meanwhile, several hours later one of the individuals that left the vehicle called 911 approximately a mile NNE of the intersection of hwy. 62 & 177 and was rescued by a CHP helicopter. Unfortunately, he claimed he was alone and presented a vague story of how he was in the area.

Hours after this, the stuck vehicle's driver woke up and called for a tow truck. The driver informed the tow truck employee that there were actually two who jumped out but also vague about why the three were in the area and what may have happened. Given the significant lack of facts, the search teams were assigned to two areas.

With Kase assigned to run the SAR-Topo program at base, the remaining RMRU members were sent to where the vehicle was towed to look for footprints and to try and piece together what may have happened there.

DSSAR and the K-9 teams were sent to the area where the CHP rescue occurred. RMRU quickly found the vehicle track and tow point just west of hwy 177 and searched extensively for any footprints but found none.

The terrain was sandy and had anyone gotten out of the vehicle some sort tracks would have been visible. After searching for signs in the area from 6:30am to 10:30am the team returned to CP (Command Post) to re-group.

DSSAR had better luck and were able to find footprints coming SSE from the hills north of hwy 62 that matched the boots that the missing individual was wearing.

RMRU was sent to the area to verify the prints and was able to confirm what DSSAR found and, with a high degree of confidence, follow tracks to within approximately 100 feet of hwy 62 where the terrain changed and no further tracks were visible.

The area was relatively flat and an extensive ground search as well as an aerial search with drones showed no sign of a person down and all teams were called back to CP. With no further information, the search was suspended and all teams were released.

#### **RMRU members involved:**

Ray Weden, Steven Rider, Thomas Blanke, Kase Chong and Vinay Rao.

## **Missing Person – Search for Remains**

**August 25 & 28, 2021**

**Perris, CA.**

**Written by Eric Holden**

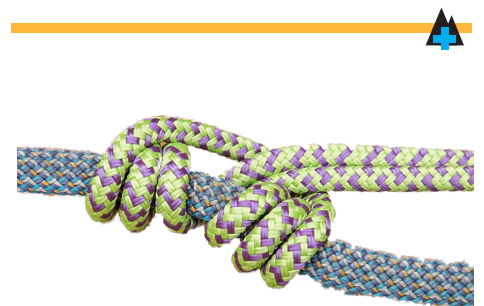
RMRU along with the Riverside County Search Dogs was called to assist in a search for human remains in the area of Perris. The search was started after a local ATVer had spotted some and notified 911. Several RMRU and Dog teams went out to try and recover the rest but unfortunately did not turn up anything.

8/28/21: The search continued expanding out and also concentrating closer to where the first remains were found by the ATV rider. After about 2 hours of searching one of the Dog teams located the rest of the body. The coroner then took over from there.

RMRU would like to express our deepest condolences to the family of the departed.

#### **RMRU Members Involved:**

Thomas Blanke, Steve Bryant, Shawn Dennstedt, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Kaitlyn Ellison, Matt Frenken, Michael George, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Caleb Miner, Shani McCullough, Vinay Rao, Tyler Shumway



**Prusik Hitch**



## Lost Hiker - Marion Mountain Trail

October 02, 2021  
Mt. San Jacinto, CA.  
Written by Editor

Sheriff's Aviation Unit asked us to have one person go to Hemet Ryan Airport to help with a hoist of a lost hiker. When RMRU got to the Airport Rescue-9 was already up looking for the lost hiker.

While this was going on the subject walked back to the trail head and their car. RMRU member went home as the mission was over.

**RMRU members involved:**  
James Eckhardt,

## Search Missing Woman

October 16, 2021  
Black Mountain Area  
Written by Vinay Rao

The Riverside Sheriff asked us to help look for clues in a missing persons case. As this is an ongoing investigation we will not provide details at this time.

**RMRU Members Involved:**  
Tom Blanke, Blake Douglas,  
James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken,  
Eric Holden, Tony Hughes,  
Shani McCullough, Vinay Rao,  
Steven Rider, and Tyler Shumway

## Snow Creek – Missing Hikers

October 23 - 24, 2021  
PCT Snow Creek Trailhead, CA  
Written by Matt Frenken

At approximately 2230 hours on 10/23, a callout was initiated via Mission Manager for members to respond to the Pacific Crest Trail Snow Creek trailhead in White-water, California for three missing hikers who were last heard from at 1545 hours that afternoon.



RMRU Team Members with  
rescued subjects

Members from Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit (RMRU) and Desert Sheriff's Search and Rescue (DSAR) responded to the trailhead and received updated information that three individuals from the San Diego area were hiking in the area and a Personal Location Beacon (PLB) was activated at 1545 hours with GPS coordinates. The Riverside Sheriff's department located a vehicle still in the area belonging to one of the missing hikers. A text message with GPS coordinates was also received by the father of one of the missing hikers and was provided to the search teams.

At approximately 0045 hours four members from DSAR and RMRU started hiking up the trailhead towards the last reported location

of the PLB. At approximately 0245 hours, DSSAR returned to the trailhead in case medical equipment was required. RMRU continued on towards the last known location of the PLB.

At 0300 hours, RMRU members left the trail and began travelling off trail down a steep ravine. After multiple callouts for the missing hikers, a verbal contact was made at 0315 hours. The four RMRU members split into teams of two, with two proceeding down towards the missing hikers and two remaining above to conduct a radio relay due to the terrain. Physical contact was established around 0330 hours where RMRU was able to find two tired and cold adult males fitting the description of the missing hikers. It was discovered that there was not a third member of the party as they had decided not to go on the hike. The two male subjects were not injured and were able to walk unassisted. Due to the unknown terrain in the west fork of Snow Creek, it was decided to bring the missing hikers back up the ravine to the Pacific Crest Trail and hike back to the trailhead. At approximately 0400 hours,

RMRU and subject were back on the PCT and after a quick food and water check began the return to the trailhead.

At approximately 0615 hours all parties had returned and were at the trailhead. The subjects gave a statement to deputies on scene and were released. All members debriefed and logged out of the mission by 0621 hours.



Takeaway: The subjects were travelling off trail in an attempt to reach some peak in the area, upon their return and with light fading; they were unable to find the trail to return to their vehicles.

At this time they activated a Personal Location Beacon to call for help and they stayed put and did not attempt to self-rescue. This allowed RMRU Team Members to safely locate all parties and return them unharmed to their vehicles.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Vinay Rao, Shawn Dennstedt, Matt Frenken, Thomas Blanke

### Hoist Rescue

October 30, 2021

San Jacinto Peak, CA.

Written by Glenn Henderson

The team received a call from Sargent Abbe that Rescue 9 was requesting 1 RMRU member to do a hoist rescue. I got the call from call captain, Gwenda Yates and rolled out to the Hemet Ryan hanger. A hiker had set off personal location beacon (PLB).

It seems that he had hurt his knee while hiking up to San Jacinto peak. We flew to the PLB location and ..... nothing. No one was there. We were looking for a man and woman so we started looking around the PLB area and found a man and a woman hiking down the trail.

They were desperately waving to us so I was hooked up to the hoist and lowered down to them. They were not the subjects we were

looking for but were totally lost. They went to the summit of San Jacinto but went down the east side and should have been on the west side. They were getting ready to call 911 when we showed up. I asked them if they wanted out and they did.

I hooked them up and we hoisted them both up. We flew to the Palm Springs tram where a deputy drove them back to their car. Meanwhile we got word that our hiker with the "hurt" knee had hiked to the tram. A miraculous recovery.

If you set off a PLB STAY PUT! We flew back to the hangar without other incidents.

#### RMRU Team Members Involved:

Glenn Henderson

### Helicopter Hoist Rescue

November 19, 2021

San Jacinto Peak, CA.

Written by Tom Blanke

While we were driving to Hemet Ryan Airport we received word that helicopter Rescue-9 and found and hoisted the subject out. We turned around and returned home.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Tom Blanke and James Eckhardt



Clove Hitch

### OES Orange County

November 24, 2021

Cleveland National Forest near Pleasants Peak, CA

Written by Ray Weden

At 1450 on November 24th, RMRU was called out to search for an overdue person last known to be driving the dirt roads in the Cleveland National Forest near Pleasants Peak. This call originated from the Orange County Sheriff's Department as the missing person was thought to have driven up from the OC side. Pleasants Peak is the dividing line between OC and Riverside County and we were asked to come up from the Riverside County side to see if we can locate the subject. As we were coordinating our response, OCSO Helicopter spotted the missing person on their side and OCSAR was responding to their location. We stood down at this point and OCSAR completed the rest of this mission.

#### RMRU Members Involved:

Vinay Rao, Ray Weden, Tony Hughes, Matt Frenken, James Eckhardt, Blake Douglas, Steven Rider

#### Other Agencies:

OCSAR, OCSO Aviation

### - Team Training Photo -



## Palm Springs Tram - 3 hikers

December 05, 2021

Palm Springs Aerial Tramway

Written by Glenn Henderson

After initial callout team drove to tramway. However, hikers were able to walk out on their own.

### RMRU Team Members Involved:

Coby Brown, James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Beth Jeffery, Caleb Miner

## Evidence Search

December 11, 2021

Hemet Lake, CA.

Written by Eric Holden

RMRU was asked by the Sheriff's department to assist in an evidence search around Lake Hemet. As this is an ongoing investigation no further details.

### RMRU Members Involved:

Donny Goetz, Eric Holden, Josh Gould, Michael George, Ray Weden, Steve Rider, Tony Hughes, Vinay Rao, Matt Frenken.

### - Team Training Photo -



## Search & Rescue - Skyline Trail

December 26-27, 2021

Mt. San Jacinto, CA.

Written by Ray Weden

Late in the afternoon on December 26th, we received a call for assistance for a solo male hiker who was reported to be stuck on the ice near the 7,000 ft level on the Skyline Trail wearing only shorts and a t-shirt. As we arrived at the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway we were informed that two more subjects who were not with our first subject were also stuck in the same area. Caleb, Beth, Josh, and Rob were the hasty team sent to the last known location and quickly located the party of two.

From there Caleb and Beth assisted them back up to the tram while Josh and Rob continued to search for our initial subject. When the two subjects made it back they gave us added information as well as cell phone pictures showing the area the solo subject was last seen.

We were able to get the geolocation from the cell phone picture to pinpoint the exact location. With that information Josh and Rob spent a significant amount of time in that area looking. Still not finding him, Josh and Rob headed down the trail back to the museum trailhead parking area. We moved our command post from the tramway to the museum parking lot in hopes that our subject was walking out on his own, back down the way he came, and we would find him there.

Our other hope was that Josh and Rob would also find him while hiking out. Several hours later, Rob and Josh arrived at the trailhead without our subject around 3:30am.

We had another team coming in at 6am the next day, 12/27. Dana, Blake, and Donny made it up the tram shortly after 6am with Donny and Blake looking to head back to the last known location during the daytime with Dana managing the command post.

After many hours searching that area as well as advising several other hikers in the area on how to safely travel on the ice we still could not find our subject. As plans were being made to expand the search, the Sheriff's Department dispatch received a call that our missing person was back at his hotel requesting medical aid. He had spent a very chilly night off trail. The next morning while our team was searching at his last known area again, he had walked out to safety.

### RMRU Members Involved:

Kase Chong, Shawn Dennstedt, Blake Douglas, Donny Goetz, Josh Gould, Tony Hughes, Beth Jeffery, Shani McCullough, Caleb Milner, Rob Newton, Dana Potts, Steven Ryder, and Ray Weden



Figure 8 follow through



## Skyline Trail Rescue

**December 28, 2021**

**Mt. San Jacinto, CA.**

**Written by Vinay Rao**

The end of 2021 brought the RMRU team a flurry of rescues on a popular trail that leads from the Palm Springs Desert Museum to the Upper Palm Springs Tram – the Skyline Trail (C2C).



**Vinay and Blake bringing the subject down the skyline trail.**

This rescue was the third consecutive day on that trail for us. Tuesday evening RMRU received call about a hiker that had reached the snowline at about 7,000 feet, felt unsafe and called his girlfriend who in turn called 911.

The team was initially headed to the Palm Springs Tramway when our call captain received word that the Riverside Sheriff Office (RSO) had managed to call the hiker and determined that he was not in any particular distress, and he had made the decision to hike back down to the Desert Museum where he had left his car.

We were re-directed to set up our Command Post (CP) at the Museum. During the hiker's descent there was periodic cell phone contact until approximately 7:00pm.

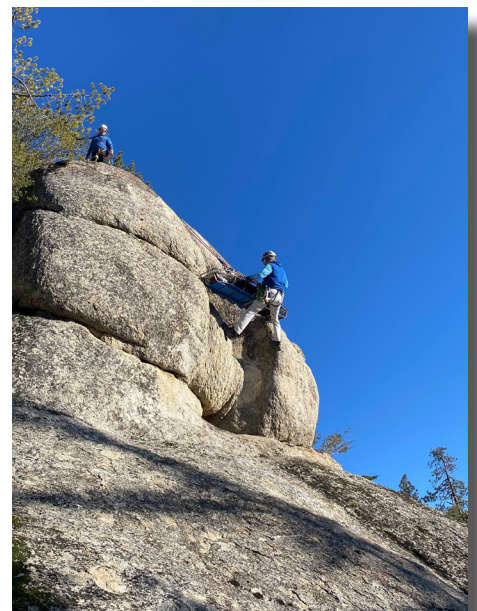
At that point, the team sent Tyler, Blake, and Vinay to try and reach the hiker. About 45 minutes into our climb, we saw a headlamp on a ridge a several hundred feet above our position and hoped that this was our hiker. After another ½ hour of hiking up, we met up with him and performed a basic medical assessment.

He was in good shape, so we all came quickly down the rest of the way to the Museum and safely handed him over to the RSO deputy who arranged for an ambulance crew who assessed him more thoroughly and released him. Overall, a safe and uneventful rescue!

### **RMRU Members Involved:**

Kase Chong, Blake Douglas, Glenn Henderson, Beth Jeffery, Caleb Milner, Vinay Rao, and Tyler Shumway

### **- Team Training Photos -**



### **- Team Training Photos -**





# 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**

## RMRU BOARD MEMBERS 2021 - 2022

**Glenn Henderson- President**

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

**Shani McCullough - Secretary | Blake Douglas - 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](http://rmru.org)



**Courage  
Commitment  
Compassion**

