The background of the page is a full-page photograph of a mountain rescue scene. Three rescue workers are positioned on a large, grey, textured rock face. Two workers on the left wear bright orange high-visibility jackets and helmets, while the third worker on the right wears a black t-shirt and a red helmet. They are all looking towards the camera. Two ropes, one blue and one red, run vertically down the rock face in the foreground. The background shows a steep, snow-covered mountain slope under a clear blue sky. A single evergreen tree stands on the slope, and the sun is visible behind it, creating a lens flare effect. A jagged, snow-covered rock formation is visible on the left side of the image.

Missions
January - June 2023

Thank You!

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

Countless people owe their lives



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RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS



Coby Brown - Hemet | **David Bever** - Temecula | **Steve Bryant (MRA)** - Alta Loma
Pete Carlson (MRA) - Blue Jay | **Kase Chong (MRA)** - Pasadena
Blake Douglas - Riverside | **James Eckhardt (MRA)** - Riverside | **Matt Frenken** - Eastvale
Michael George (MRA) - Riverside | **Donny Goetz (MRA)** - Idyllwild
Josh Gould - Murrieta | **Beth Jeffery** - Murrieta
Glenn Henderson (MRA) - Hemet | **Eric Holden (MRA)** - Temecula
Jeffery Leisner - Orange | **Tobias Moyneur** - Calimesa
Robert Newton - Hemet | **Shani McCullough (MRA)** - Temecula
Amber Prestegard - San Diego | **Blake Rankin** - Twenty Nine Palms
Vinay Rao - San Jacinto | **Steven Rider** - Oceanside
Tyler Shumway (MRA) - Hemet | **Jessie Virga** - Temecula
Ray Weden (MRA) - Murrieta | **Richard Yocum (MRA)** - Idyllwild

Support Members

Thomas Blanke (MRA) | **Joe Erickson (MRA)** | **Gary Farris (MRA)** |
Brad Scott | **Becky Templeton** | **Ty Wittersheim**

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On the Cover -

Team Training

Suicide Rock - Weeping Wall

Photo - Eric Holden

Newsletter Editor -

Gary Farris



President's Message

James Eckhardt

I write this at the end of the summer season. Tomorrow the first snow flurries will fall on the peaks of Southern California.

I am reminded of how short a summer it has felt after one of the snowiest winters on record in California. The snow and rain of last winter brought with it many of the most difficult, treacherous rescues I have participated in.

This and other factors contributed to a difficult year that Eric Holden, our previous president, led us through with solid leadership.

While it was a difficult season, our team was recognized for its excellence in challenging situations. Tobias, Steve

and I were recognized at the Sheriff's Office Annual Awards Ceremony with the Distinguished Service Medal for a rescue in fall 2022. While this was the only rescue that was officially recognized, any number of rescues during the winter season were equally complex and worthy of recognition.

While the late spring and summer were quieter, we were able to use the time to train. It is essential that we stay up to date with ever advancing technology. I want to highlight two of these trainings.

We hosted both in and out of county agencies in a successful 48-hour field exercise during which we focused

on incident command and mapping during complex and fast-changing scenarios.

This training has already been paying off in our mission readiness and search planning.

Secondly, some of our members joined Riverside Sheriff's Aviation to be trained on the Petzl Lezard, a device that allows safer hoist insertion and extraction onto high angle terrain from Rescue 9.

We worked with SR3 Rescue Concepts and Petzl in a weeklong intensive course to become the first volunteer search and rescue team in the United States to be qualified in its use.

Continued on page 16

Mission Reviews

January - June 2023

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



Cliffed Out Hiker

January 05, 2023

La Quinta

Mission # 2023-01

Written by Tobias Moyneur

RMRU received a call to assist DSAR with a "cliffed out" hiker in La Quinta. Cliffed out is a term used when a hiker is unable to safely continue up, or down. It is always wise to ask yourself "can I go back down this part of the trail safely?" If the answer is no, you are committed to reaching the summit and are at high risk of getting cliffed out because the path ahead is unknown and retreating is no longer an option.

This was the case for today's rescue. The subject was hiking an unfamiliar trail that became steep and loose. Hoping the trail would ease up, they pushed through a steep section of the trail with loose rock.

Unfortunately for the subject, the trail worsened, and they found themselves stuck on a small ledge a few hundred feet from the peak. The subject was stuck, unable to

move up or down and was forced to spend the night on that ledge until he could contact emergency services.

RMRU Members Involved:

Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Donny Goetz, Eric Holden, Caleb Milner, Tobias Moyneur, and Richard Yocum

Missing Child

January 10, 2023

San Jacinto City

Mission # 2023-02

Written by Editor

We received the call at 11:30 in the morning of a missing child and the Sheriff wanted RMRU to help in the open areas around the home. While members were starting to respond we received word that the child had been located at 11:45.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Glenn Henderson, Jessie Virga

Evidence Search

January 21, 2023

Wildwood Canyon Road

Mission # 2023-03

Written by Shani McCullough.

The team was asked to help in an evidence search for an ongoing Sheriff's investigation in Yucaipa. We were given a steep slope to search but nothing was found. Since this is an ongoing investigation we cannot report any more details.

RMRU Members Involved:

James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Mike George, Shani McCullough, Tobias Moyneur, Vinay Rao, and Steven Rider



Prusik knot.

Injured Hiker

January 21, 2023

Strawberry Cienega

Mission # 2023-04

Written by James Eckhardt

At 4:00PM just as Shani and I were finishing the last few hundred feet of a search assignment on an evidence search, we got a call for a rescue. The two subjects had been hiking from Strawberry Junction towards Annie's junction when one had been hit by two large pieces of ice, knocking her off her feet and 150 feet down the hillside. She was able to crawl to a five by four-foot semi level area downslope of a boulder. The other hiker could not reach her due to the angle and iciness of the slope. We then heard that the injured hiker was becoming hypothermic. The winds were too high for use of a helicopter.



Subject in Thermo-wrap in sleeping bag on small ledge.

NOTE yellow sling goes to a harness on subject and is tied to a tree.

While driving to the command post, we heard that San Diego Mountain Rescue (SDMRT) was camped at Shangri La on a traini



James standing (Tied in) at end of small ledge behind rock.

ing, so we attempted to contact them. Their approach to the subjects required significantly less elevation gain than the approach from Idyllwild. When I arrived at the command post, we officially called for mutual aid. Due to difficulties communicating with the SDMRT, Tobias and I had already formed a hasty team and started hiking up Devil's slide before SDMRT was contacted.

We put crampons on once past Annie's junction. Tobias and I began our traverse and were soon hit by ice chunks falling from trees and rolling down the steep slope. I was hit in the knee, however thankfully received nothing more than a bruise. We encountered more falling ice, but safely reached the uninjured subject on the trail around 10:00PM.

He was located on a very short section of level trail which was protected from falling ice. We quickly assessed him, and since he was uninjured, in a safe location and

relatively warm we left and continued downslope to the injured subject. She was immobile, and, while not yet hypothermic, she was cold. While we were assessing her, the icefall increased. She was thankfully protected from most of the icefall from a rock and tree upslope. We anchored ourselves and the subject to a tree, dug a small semi-level platform, put the subject into a hypo wrap to rewarm and made hot chocolate.

Rime was coating all the trees on the steep slope for 1200 feet above us, and, as the winds were increasing, the icefall had become constant on both sides of us. We assessed the possibility of getting hit and knocked down the slope was too high to risk moving back towards the uninjured subject unless roped. But our rope was only 30 meters, a single rope length wasn't enough to reach the subject. I climbed to the end of the rope but was unable to find any suitable anchors. If I was hit by icefall and injured this would only complicate an already difficult situation. As such, I moved back to the relative safety of the tree and boulder to await more resources.

We notified the SDMRT and RMRU teams heading up behind us that there was significant icefall and that they needed to assess the risk and make their own decision on whether to proceed. Both teams chose not to continue to our location and camped at Annie's to wait until conditions improved.

(NOTE: It is no good for Rescue Members to put themselves in harms way getting to a subject.

This was one of those times and back country hikers need to remember that they may not be rescued if the conditions are unsafe for the Rescue Members.)



Rescuers with ice on trees that was blowing off in high winds

In the meantime, the command post had called for mutual aid from many Southern California MRA teams, and upon arrival, they began to hike up Deer Springs, a route that had reduced but not eliminated risk of icefall. Sierra Madre, Orange County, and San Dimas were first to arrive to our location at around 9:30AM.

They hiked in with our sled and technical gear. Once they arrived, they located and secured the uninjured subject and then began to build anchors above our location. When they finished the anchors, the icefall had lessened, but still hit their sled attendant as he was being lowered to our location. As we packaged the injured subject, the winds continued to drop, and the icefall almost completely subsided. From our location, we lowered the sled to the fall line, and the teams above us raised the subject around 150 feet to the trail. Due to the low winds, Cal Fire 301 was able to fly in, lower two medics and then hoist both subjects out around 2:30PM. We all then hiked

out via Deer Springs.

I want to extend my gratitude to all the teams that came to help us: Sierra Madre SAR, Winter SAR Ski Patrol, San Dimas MRT, Orange County Sheriff's Department MRT, San Diego MRT, Kern County SAR, China Lake SAR. All those involved in the raise voluntarily put themselves into danger; most if not all were hit by icefall. Thankfully, no rescuers received more than bruising. This rescue truly would not have been possible without our fellow MRA teams.



Subject on trail with Rescuers, (NOTE ropes used to raise subject up to trail.)

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Kase Chong, James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Michael George, Shani McCullough, Tobias Moyneur, Vinay Rao, Steve Rider, and Ray Weden

Other Mountain Rescue Units:

Sierra Madre SAR, Winter SAR Ski Patrol, San Dimas MRT, Orange County Sheriff's Department MRT, San Diego MRT, Kern County SAR, China Lake SAR

Other Agencies involved:

California State Parks, Idyllwild Fire, CAL FIRE, Riverside County Sheriff's Aviation Unit

Stuck in Snow

January 23, 2023
Skyline Trail Tramway
Mission # 2023-05
Written by Editor

At 1:50 just after lunch we received a call that a hiker was stuck in the snow on the upper Skyline Trail near the Tramway. The hiker was supposed to meet his Wife at 2pm at the upper Tramway. Sheriff's Aviation took off to fly over and see if they could find the subject, but it would be too windy to do a hoist. Rescue-9 found the subject back down at 2,000 feet hiking back down. Everyone driving to the Tramway turned around and headed home at 3pm.

(NOTE: This is one of the rare times when the subject did the correct thing and rather than continuing up to the Tramway, he turned around and hiked back down not having crampons and ice axe.)

RMRU Members Involved:

Josh Gould, Glenn Henderson, Beth Jeffery, and Richard Yocum



Suicide

February 3, 2023
Wildomar
Mission # 2023-06
Written by Matt Frenken

At 6pm the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit was activated to search for a missing person in the city of Wildomar. By 10pm a team was assembled to perform a search for a missing person in the hills above the reporting party's residence. It was also discovered at



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this time, that the missing person was despondent and for the protection of the volunteers searching, RCSD Deputies from the Lake Elsinore station were included on the search team.

An extensive search was performed of the areas surrounding the trail that the missing person was believed to have travelled; however, due to the darkness and extensive brush, the search was called off at 1am the next morning, Saturday.

The search would continue during daylight hours on Saturday. For the search on Saturday, additional resources were brought in to expand the search area. In addition to volunteers from RMRU, teams from RCSD Bloodhounds, Riverside County Search Dogs, SERT, and Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) all provided assistance in looking for the subject. By the end of the day, RMRU was able to identify an area of high probability and would resume the search on Sunday February 5, 2023.

On Sunday, RMRU was joined by Desert Sheriff's Search and Rescue (DSSAR), RCSD Drone Team, Riverside County Search Dogs and SERT to search the area of high probability, identified on Saturday. It was during this search, that the body of the subject was located and identified. With the assistance from RCSD Air Rescue 9, The subject was removed from the search area and returned to his family. Our condolences go out to the subject's family during this difficult time.

RMRU Members Involved:

James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Josh Gould, Eric Holden, Beth Jeffery, Vinay Rao, Steven Rider, Tyler Shumway, Becky Templeton, Jessie Virga, Ray Weden, and Richard Yocum

Other Units Involved:

SERT, DSSAR, Drone Team, Sheriff's Search Dogs, Aviation RSQ-9

Evidence Search

February 11, 2023

Poppet Flats

Mission # 2023-07

Written by Shani McCullough

The team was called out for an evidence search in Poppet Flats. We were given some steep slopes to search but nothing was found. Since this is an ongoing investigation we cannot report any more details.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Michael George, Glenn Henderson, Shani McCullough, Vinay Rao, and Richard Yocum

Lost Hiker Tramway

February 18, 2023

Palm Springs Tramway

Mission # 2023-08

Written by Raymond Weden

At approximately 2230 hours on we received a call for a single hiker reported lost at the top of the Palm Springs Tramway. The tram cars were not running at this time so we started preparing a team to respond at 0600 the next morning to take the first car up. At approximately 0200 we received a call

letting us know the missing person made it back to the top of the tramway and we no longer needed to respond.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Donny Goetz, and Richard Yocum

Overdue PCT Hiker

February 19, 2023

PCT Trail near

San Diego County Line

Mission # 2023-09

Written by Raymond Weden

At approximately 1330 hours on we received a call for a solo south-bound PCT Hiker. The hiker was supposed to contact their spouse at Warner Spring (In San Diego County) the night before. No contact was made, and we were asked to search for this hiker.

The last known point was about 3 miles north of the county line. We prepared our team to go to that location and hike south while coordinating with San Diego Mountain Rescue to prepare resources to search from their side. RSO Aviation Rescue 9 Helicopter was also on their way to search from above.

Prior to arriving at the starting location, we received word that the missing hiker had made it to Warner Springs safely but later than planned.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Donny Goetz, and Richard Yocum

Missing People

March 02, 2023

Sage

Mission # 2023-10

Written by Coby Brown

RMRU was requested to assist in helping detectives from the southwest division of the Riverside County Sheriff Dept in locating two individuals that have been missing for over a month. RMRU was accompanied by Riverside Search Dogs and Deputies/Detectives in a joint effort in locating the two individuals.

Upon arrival all teams were giving instructions and areas of search based on information given by RSO. The search area was finished in about an hour and it was decided to expand our search area to include Sage Rd where the missing individuals were found deceased.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Eric Holden, Beth Jeffery, and Steven Rider



Tramway

C to C Hiker Stuck

March 14 - 15, 2023

Tramway, Upper Skyline Trail

Mission # 2023-11

Written by James Eckhardt

At 6:00PM on Tuesday, we got a call for a hiker in need of help on the upper Skyline Trail section of Cactus to Clouds. The hiker was stuck in deep snow, cold and unprepared for the conditions. He had called 911 and so we had his GPS coordinates when he called. Forecasts were calling for up to two inches of rain on top of a deep

snowpack on San Jacinto in the next 24 hours. The rain was heavy as I drove from Riverside to the Palm Springs tram. Soon after I made it, Tobias and Vinay arrived. Tobias and I would form the hasty team, Vinay would run base, and Steve and Matt would follow us into the field with more warm gear and shelter.

Tobias and I started hiking at 8:00PM in steady rain and wind with temperatures just above freezing. We headed for the gully below Notch 2 and made it with minimal post holing. As we dropped down the gully, we soon began sinking past our knees and sometimes up to our waists in rain saturated snow. I quickly assessed the risk of a wet slide being much too high to continue in any steep terrain, especially gullies. Many of the risk factors for loose wet slides were in place including recent warming, rain, and the depth we were sinking. We then decided to try a different approach by a ridge. Based on slope angle shading on our maps, we knew the ridge would be steep.

As we hoped and expected, it was largely snow-free with a few traverses over snow, so avalanche danger was minimal. The ridge was difficult to traverse, sometimes brushy and often requiring Class 3 and 4 moves. We eventually came to a point where we would have to rappel to continue. We had brought a 30-meter static line and a 70-meter climbing rope, but we had no visibility of where we were descending due to the heavy rain and fog. In addition, there was loose rock, our layers were

already soaked through due to the bushwhacking, and if we needed to reascend the rope, we only had light technical gear making it difficult. Due to these factors, we made the decision to turn around. At this point, we called for mutual aid as we believed if we made it to the subject there would be a good chance for a carryout, and this would require many more people than we had available.

Aside from the ascent from Palm Springs up skyline, our only other option was to check the snow conditions at Grubb's Notch. Steve and Matt had brought extra avalanche beacons and probes for Tobias and me, and we were prepared to descend. The snow below Grubb's Notch had the same risk factors as the previous gully we tried to descend, so we again turned around. At this point, we notified the subject we would not be able to access him that night and advised him to hike down Skyline if possible.

We hiked back to the tram and arrived about 1:00AM. I called Richard to plan for the morning, as he would be joining and running base. After three hours of sleep, we were up at 5:00AM to take the first tram down where I joined Richard to plan for the day. While conditions were supposed to improve throughout the day, it was still raining, windy and cloudy above 4000 feet in elevation, preventing any helicopter operations. We were still concerned about wet loose slide risk, so we sent out a team of three (two from San Bernardino County and one from San Diego) to go up the tram

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and reassess avalanche conditions. They would determine if they could approach the subject from the ridge that Tobias and I had attempted the previous night in poor visibility. Meanwhile, Tobias and Steve would stage at the upper tram with a snow litter and additional tech gear.

After the teams had started their assignment, Richard and I relocated our command post to the Palm Springs Visitors Center. We discussed how we would utilize the next teams to arrive and decided to split our resources between sending more personnel to approach from the top and holding personnel for helicopter transport up Skyline as high as possible.

We were preparing to send a team of four to the top of the tram when we heard that a rescuer from the field team had slid down a snow gully and the team above had lost contact with him. The fallen rescuer was able to call 911 and notify us of his location and that he was injured and immobile. The two members of his team attempted to reach him via rappel, but due to the length of his fall, they were unable to. We requested further resources from both in and out of county resources. As they arrived, we sent them up the tram, holding some in reserve in case a helicopter was able to transport them up Skyline. The weather broke in Hemet long enough for both Cal Fire 301 and Rescue 9 to take off, and 301 began to attempt to fly through the broken clouds to locate the fallen rescuer. They were able to locate and lower a medic, but cloudy conditions forced 301

to leave the scene.

Meanwhile we received word that the original subject was walking down Skyline and was 1-2 miles from the trailhead at the museum. I sent a team to intercept him. They hiked him out the rest of the way, and he was transported to the hospital for treatment of minor injuries.

The clouds cleared enough for 301 to hoist out the injured rescue and paramedic. We were notified shortly after that a second member from the first field team was hypothermic after being soaked through and in the elements all day. Cal Fire 301 was again able to perform a hoist. Both rescuers were transported to the hospital.

It is essential that hikers understand the risk they are putting themselves and others in when they choose to hike unprepared in a major winter storm. Rescuers will do their best to reach a subject but can refuse any assignment. Helicopter assets are not always available. Snow conditions this year are currently unusually deep, leading to both difficult backcountry travel and localized avalanche hazards. Hikers need to understand this and be prepared for arduous hiking conditions and slower rescuer response times.

We would like to thank San Bernardino Sheriff Department Cave Rescue Team, San Bernardino Mountain SAR, San Diego MRT, Sierra Madre SAR, San Dimas MRT, Montrose SAR, San Bernardino SAR, San Bernardino Wrightwood SAR, San Diego Sheriff's Department SAR, SBSR, Los Angeles

SAR, RSO Aviation, and Cal Fire 301.

RMRU Members Involved:

James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Michael George, Joshua Gould, Glenn Henderson, Shani McCullough, Tobias Moyneur, Rob Newton, Vinay Rao, Steve Rider, Tyler Shumway, Ray Weden, and Richard Yocum

Other Agencies Involved:

- San Bernardino Sheriff Department Cave Rescue Team
- San Bernardino Mountain SAR
- San Diego MRT
- Sierra Madre SAR
- San Dimas MRT,
- Montrose SAR
- San Bernardino SAR
- San Bernardino Wrightwood SAR
- San Diego Sheriff's Department SAR
- Los Angeles SAR
- RSO Aviation
- Cal Fire 301,
- CHP60,
- Riverside County Sheriff's Office SERT
- ResQ9, and other deputies
- San Bernardino County Sheriff's Office
- Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office
- California State Parks



Figure 8 follow through

Hang Glider

April 12, 2023

Soboba, North Mountain

Mission # 2023-12

Written by Glenn Henerson

The team was called out at 8 PM for a hang glider that crashed into North Mountain above the city of San Jacinto. Since it was so close to Hemet we had team members on scene within 20 minutes. After arriving we were informed that Cal Fire had just gotten to the subject and that we were not needed.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Donny Goetz, Glenn Henderson, Tobias Moyneur, and Vinay Rao



Another

Overdue PCT Hiker

April 15, 2023

Palm Oasis – Windy Point Ridge

Mission # 2023-13

Written by Raymond Weden

At approximately 0200 hours on we received a call for a solo hiker in the Windy Ridge Area north of Palm Springs who was unable to find the route back down due to nightfall. As Matt and I arrived at the command post, we received word that the CHP's H60 Helicopter was able to locate the hiker and hoisted them on board. We watched H60 land before going home.

RMRU Members Involved:

Matt Frenken, Eirc Holden, Ray Weden, and Richard Yocum



Off-Road Biker with Broken Leg

April 22, 2023

Thomas Mountain, Garner Valley

Mission # 2023-14

Written by Richard Yocum

On 4/22/2023 James Eckhardt and I were out with RSO Aviation Unit's Rescue 9 helicopter, practicing hoist lowers and a "two-up" over the upper Skyline Trail, and doing reconnaissance of trail conditions of various areas, including Skyline Trail, San Jacinto Peak, Tahquitz Peak, and the PCT along the Desert Divide.

At about 2:40 pm, Rescue 9 was called to assist a subject with a broken leg in the vicinity of Thomas Mountain in Garner Valley. A decision was made to return to Hemet-Ryan Air Base to refuel and drop off James and have me stay on board as (a physician) backup for the rescue. We left Hemet-Ryan at 3:02 pm.

On the Thomas Mountain Road coursing along the Thomas Mountain ridgeline and not far from Tool Box Spring, we sighted two off-road motorcycles parked in the road. A CHP unit was on scene and three Fire vehicles were very slowly making their way up the curvy dirt road to the scene. The Rescue 9 medic lowered to the scene found a middle-aged man with a left leg break above the ankle already having been splinted by CHP. The patient was stabilized and packaged in a Screamer Suit, and then hoisted with the medic in a two-up back to Rescue 9.

Although having received some

medication on the ground, our patient was in considerable pain, especially with any movement. We flew to an LZ near the Paradise Valley Café and transferred our patient to a ground ambulance before returning to Hemet-Ryan at 4:12 pm.

RMRU Members Involved:

Richard Yocum



Hiker Injured Leg

May 4, 2023

Whitewater PCT Trail

Mission # 2023-15

Written by Coby Brown

On May 4th RMRU had a callout to the Whitewater area for a PCT hiker who slipped in a water crossing injuring her leg. It was a cloudy day raining off and on so air support was not able to fly and RMRU was called out. We had 7 team members assisting in this mission along with RSO personnel.

Our plan was to hike out to the subject assess her injuries and bring her back to Command Post on the wheeled litter.

We started up the trail with Richard and Rob as our hasty team out front and the rest of us bringing gear and the litter, about 1/2 mile in we were informed Rescue 9 was in route and going to hoist the subject out and land at the CP to transfer care to Paramedics. We waited until Rescue 9 flew over and then went back to base.

The subject was flown back by Rescue 9 and transferred to the

MISSION REVIEWS JANUARY - JUNE 2023

Paramedics on scene. Excellent work by all team members involved.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Donny Goetz, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Tobias Moyneur, Rob Newton, and Richard Yocum

Other Units Involved:

Riverside County Sheriff's, Aviation Rescue 9, Paramedics

RMRU sends its condolences to the missing person's family.

RMRU Members Involved:

Steve Bryant, James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Michael George, Steven Rider, Vinay Rao, and Richard Yocum

Other Units Involved:

Riverside County Sheriff's (SERT, Search Dogs, Mounted Enforcement), DSSAR, AND Riverside Mounted Posse

easily accessible on foot.

A brief time later we learned that Cal Fire had reached the location after a short walk and was managing a person who was found lying in the desert and severely dehydrated. We stood down.

RMRU Members Involved: (Richard Yocum)

Other Units Involved: (Riverside County Sheriff's (CERT, Aviation, Rescue 9), Cal Fire)

Missing Person

May 10, 2023

Riverside City Rural Area

Mission # 2023-16

Written by Vinay Rao

On Wednesday, May 10th, RMRU responded to a planned search in a semi-rural area of Riverside, CA for an individual that had been missing from a nearby residence for approximately four weeks.

The search areas consisted of two distinct terrains: 1) narrow overgrown canyons near residences and 2) relatively open areas and fields.

These two areas were divided into large acreage sections. The "ground" resources – RMRU, DSSAR and K-9 were assigned to the canyons and the equine mounted teams were assigned the more open areas.

Within an hour or so after the search teams had been deployed the missing person was found deceased and the Riverside County Coroner was notified.

Severely Dehydrated Person

May 13, 2023

North Palm Desert

Mission # 2023-17

Written by Richard Yocum

On Saturday, 5/13/2023, at the Hemet-Ryan airbase about a dozen RMRU members were wrapping up a helicopter training with the Riverside County Sheriff's Aviation Unit on a hot afternoon of >90 degrees when the call came in at about 1525 hours to respond to a person's call for help in an area north of Palm Desert.

Because the Rescue 9 helicopter crew was short by one member, I was asked to assist in the "catcher" position. The search location appeared to be in a wide-open and flat area near a residential neighborhood.

'As Rescue 9 was being refueled for the mission, a decision was made to delay take-off because other units were already going to the location, which was likely to be

Missing JT Hiker

May 19, 2023

Joshua Tree National Park

Mission # 2023-18

Written by Jessie Virga

On 5/18/2023, RMRU received a request for mutual aid to assist Joshua Tree Search and Rescue Team continue their search for a lost hiker. RMRU responded to the request and provided multiple rescue members to augment Joshua Tree's continued efforts that Saturday, May 19th.

All teams arrived onsite by 0500 for our briefing and we were divided into multiple search parties, pairing RMRU with JSAR and other teams rescue members.

During our briefing we were given information on our missing 25 year old hiker. We based our expansive search on Trammell's itinerary and where he could have possibly hiked in the park.

With a detailed description of our subject and a very descriptive list

of his hiking/backpacking items, we set out shortly after 0700 (sunrise).

After many hours of searching, all teams were unsuccessful in finding the missing hiker. We are deeply saddened by these results and hope that Trammell is found soon.

RMRU Members Involved:

Donny Goetz, Eric Holden, Vinay Rao, Jessie Virga, and Richard Yocum

Other Units Involved:

Riverside County Sheriff's K9 Team, Joshua Tree SAR, and other SAR Teams

Climber with Broken Leg

May 28, 2023

Northwest of Long Valley

Mission # 2023-19

Written by Richard Yocum

On Sunday, 5/28/2023, at about 2:15 pm Richard Yocum and Donny Goetz were hoist inserted by Riverside County Sheriff's Aviation's Rescue 9 helicopter on the upper portion of Skyline Trail to search for a rescuer's backpack that had been left behind during a mission in mid-March. That rescuer suffered major trauma in a fall of nearly 500 feet down a snow-filled couloir at about 8,000' elevation.

This season's very heavy snow had finally melted enough for a second search and after scrambling up a couple very loose dirt and rocky couloirs and a bit of rope work, they located the backpack and other items that were scattered about.

Almost immediately after their



Donny waiting for Subject to be hoisted into Helicopter
hoist extraction at about 5 pm there was a call for help by a climber who was bouldering in an area northwest of Long Valley. We immediately diverted our return flight to assist and were able to locate the person in need of help. A Rescue 9 medic was inserted by hoist, placed the patient in a hot seat, and he was brought on board where his ankle was splinted.



Subject with Ankle splinted with SAM splint

We were all dropped off at the Keenwild Helicopter base where the patient was transferred to an ambulance.

RMRU Members Involved:

Donny Goetz and Richard Yocum

Missing Climber

May 30, 2023

Tahquitz Rock, Idyllwild

Mission # 2023-20

Written by Donny Goetz

We received a call mid-morning about an overdue solo climber attempting a route on the north face of Tahquitz rock. Our rescue helicopter was first on scene to search the north face area. One of the deputies aboard Rescue 9 was in contact with me asking about specifics of the route and where they should focus their efforts.



Searching the base of Tahquitz Rock

The dispatch report mentioned the climber was on the "Lars Route" route. I knew of three routes with a similar name on the north side (East Lark, West Lark, and Hard Lark) and that the report was referring to one of these. I sent images from the guidebook detailing the location of the routes to the deputies on the helicopter so they could refine their search pattern.

Meanwhile, I was in contact with Richard, another member on the hill, and we worked out a hasty plan presuming that we would be asked to join the effort shortly. We were officially requested approximately 20 minutes later, and several members began the

MISSION REVIEWS JANUARY - JUNE 2023



James being lower out of Rescue-9

journey to the trailhead. Richard and I (team 1) were first on scene and organized our packs for a hasty search of the north face approach trail to the base of the intended climbing route. The helicopter had not seen our subject, so we knew we needed to start searching the base for clues (signs of travel, dropped gear, ETC). Five other members were on their way when we began our approach to the rock.

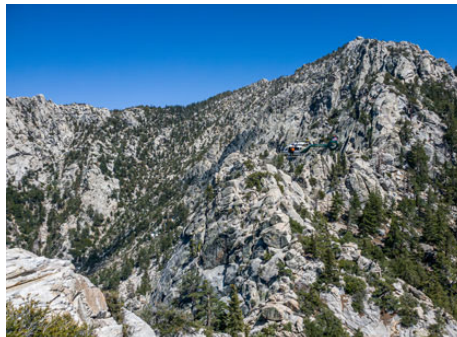
We recommended they deploy as two teams via the helicopter near the summit of the rock with each team then descending one of the two primary descent routes. We were hopeful our subject had finished the climb and was somewhere near the summit or on one

of these routes.

Richard and I made it to the base of the north face in good time while trying to be thorough in our hasty search of the approach talus field. Once at the base, we scanned the wall with binoculars but found no sign of our subject.

We continued along the base of the wall and around to the White Maiden buttress finding signs of other climbing parties but not our subject. The other two teams had been inserted near the summit and were beginning their search assignments down each descent route.

Soon, team 2 found our subject just beginning his descent via the North Gulley. He was uninjured and had overestimated the time it



RMRU member ready to be lower

would take to climb his route. In the end, he had climbed through the night without sleep and had spent approximately 21 hours ascending the route as a roped soloist.

Team 3 retraced their steps up the south side to the summit notch to rendezvous with team 2 and our subject. Both teams continued descending the North Gulley ren



RMRU members and Subject at Base

dezvousing with team 1 below the Y-Crack buttress. All teams completed the hike back to Humber Park together.

RMRU Members Involved:

Eirc Easterday, James Eckhardt, Glenn Henderson, Donny Goetz, Joshua Gould, Tobias Moyneur, Vinay Rao, Ray Weden, and Richard Yocum

Other Units Involved:

Riverside County Sheriff's (SERT, Aviation Rescue 9)

Lost Hikers on Marion Mt. Trail

June 01, 2023

Marion Mountain Trail

Mission # 2023-21

Written by Eric Holden

We received a call from two hikers that had gotten lost and disoriented in the snow around the junction of the PCT and the Marion Mt. Trail. Before we started heading up to the mountain two cell pings put the subjects on the trail, possibly heading back down.

Once we all arrived at the trailhead it was discovered that the missing hiker's vehicle was no longer at the trailhead. After speaking with two other people that were hiking

partners with the missing subjects, it was found that the subjects were on their way home already. Was a long drive, but glad the subjects are ok and it's always nice to take a drive up the mountain in the golden hour.

RMRU Members Involved:

Eric Easterday, Matt Frenken, Eirc Holden, Tobias Moyneur, and Jessie Virga



Lost Off-Roader

June 05, 2023

Banning

Mission # 2023-22

Written by James Eckhardt

At about 7:50 on Monday morning we received a call that Banning PD needed help locating a missing person. The subject had last been seen on Friday and had contacted his fiancée on Sunday that he was lost and needed help.

I was the first RMRU member to arrive on scene and started gathering information on the search. Soon after I arrived, officers located the subject's vehicle and identified tracks around it.

Officers sent me an image of the track, the clearest I've ever seen on a search, and it matched the description the fiancée gave.

I sent Matt and Glenn into the field to start tracking, and they soon picked up the track heading south. In about fifteen minutes, the command post received word that an off-duty officer had located the subject about a mile south of his vehicle. Matt and Glenn drove

to the location, quickly assessed the subject, and then headed back to the command post where we handed the subject off to the fire department and AMR.

RMRU Members Involved:

James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Glenn Henderson, and Steven Rider

Other Agencies Involved:

Riverside Sheriff's Aviation and Banning PD



Calimesa Search

June 11, 2023

City of Calimesa

Mission # 2023-23

Written by James Eckhardt

At 5:15PM on Sunday evening we received a call for a search for a missing minor in the Calimesa area. Due to the urgency of the search, Riverside County Search Dogs and DSSAR were also called. I arrived first and while gathering information and interviewing relatives, the subject was located at a nearby hospital.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Eric Easterday, James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Eric Holden, and Tobias Moyneur

Other Agencies Involved:

Riverside County Search Dogs and Desert Search and Rescue-DSAR



Clove Hitch

Missing Peak Hiker

June 21, 2023

Humber Park to San Jacinto Peak

Mission # 2023-24

Written by: Editor

At 6:50pm we got word of a missing hiker who had left Humber Park to hike to San Jacinto Peak the day before and had not returned home yet. So, he had been out overnight. He was an experienced hiker with food, water, and cold weather gear. His car was still at the trailhead at Humber Park.

A cell ping was done, and we were able to get a location near Willow Creek Crossing. Rescue-9 was searching and spotted the hiker and was able to hoist the subject out about 7:10pm. Team members had started driving to Humber Park and all returned home.

RMRU Members Involved:

Coby Brown, Donny Goetz, Eric Holden, Vinay, and Steven Rider

Other Agencies Involved:

Aviation Rescue-9



Overdue Hiker

June 24, 2023

Marion Mountain Trail to San Jacinto Peak

Mission # 2023-25

Written by: Eric Holden

We received a callout for an overdue hiker that had left the Marion Mt. Trailhead on the 23rd and was due to return the same day. When he was not home by the morning his spouse called 911. As we were in route to the trailhead the subject ended up walking into the Long Valley Ranger station.

He spent an unplanned night in the wilderness and was able to self-rescue once the sun came back up.

RMRU Members Involved:

Eric Holden, Tobias Moyneur, Vinay Rao, and Steven Rider

Tramway Carryout

June 25, 2023

Wellman's Divide to Tramway

Mission # 2023-26

Written by: James Eckhardt

At 5:30PM, we got a call for assistance from State Parks. A hiker coming down from the peak had injured his knee.

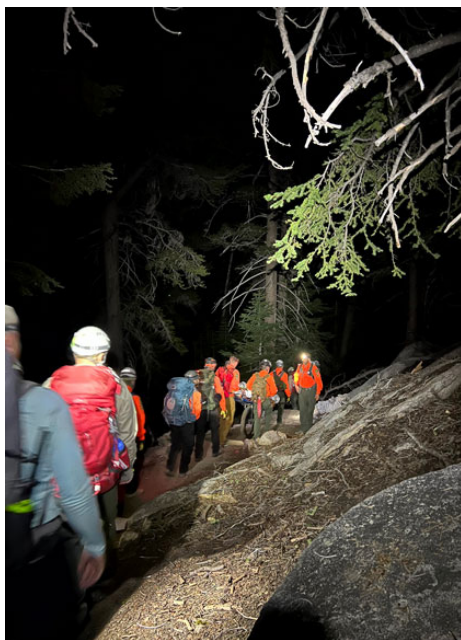
The wind was too high for a helicopter rescue, so we needed to perform a carryout to the tramway.

State Parks had already moved the subject to Round Valley from a location higher up on the trail, however due to issues with their litter they could no longer continue.

I was first from RMRU to arrive at the tramway, with many people from both RMRU and DSSAR close behind me.

We headed up the tramway with our litter, wheel, and handles. We were soon on the trail, and after a relatively short hike, I was with the first team to arrive at the subject.

I did a quick assessment on the injury and confirmed that it was unstable, and the subject would need a carryout.



Rescuer's doing carry out

With the large number of personnel on scene, the carryout back to the tram was about as quick and easy as a couple miles could be.

This was one of the few rescues I have been on where the subject had done everything right and experienced an unfortunate injury.



Subject Wrapped up for warm carry out

He was prepared with adequate food, water, light and insulation. He had other members of his party and had an inReach to contact emergency services.

While this didn't prevent injury, it greatly aided in the speed of the

response and the subject's comfort while waiting for a wilderness rescue. Being as prepared as this subject would prevent a great number of our other rescues and searches.

RMRU Members Involved:

Tom, Blanke, Coby Brown, James Eckhardt, Matt Frenken, Eric Holden, Shani McCullough, Tobias Moyneur, and Steven Rider

Other Agencies Involved:

DSSAR and California State Parks



Subject and Team at the Tram Station



Butterfly Knot

With this training, we can now have rapid and safer access to climbers on Tahquitz, Suicide and in any technical terrain.

I'd like to close by saying, in my time as president, I have seen how much work our members put into making the team run smoothly behind the scenes. From accounting, website maintenance, planning and conducting trainings, onboarding new members and the many other tasks it takes to run a mountain rescue team, our members put in a tremendous amount of effort so that when that next call for rescue comes, we can be prepared and ready to respond.

The mountains are calling and I must go....

James Eckhardt
RMRU President



Grapevine Knot

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

Mountain Rescue Association

mra.org



RMRU joined the MRA in 1961 and is a regular member.

The Mountain Rescue Association, established in 1959 at Timberline Lodge at Mount Hood, Oregon is the oldest Search and Rescue Association in the United States.

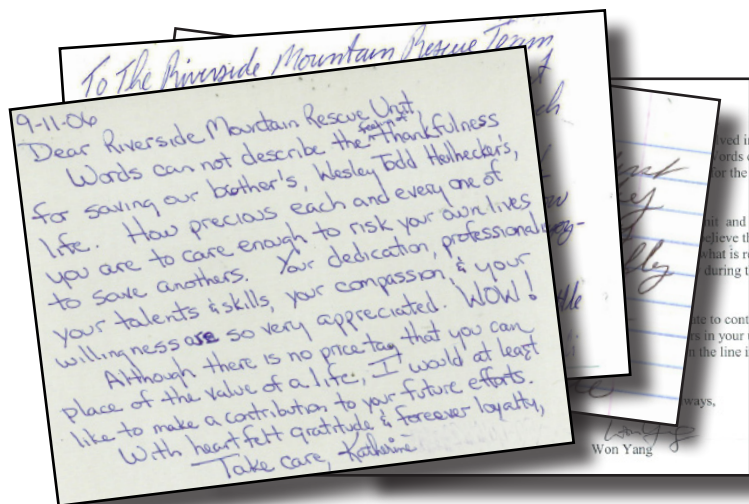
MRA is an organization of teams dedicated to saving lives through rescue and mountain safety education.

We do so by improving the quality, availability, safety of mountain search and rescue.

With over 100 government authorized units, MRA has grown to become the critical mountain search and rescue resource in North America.

MISSION AND TRAINING PHOTOS





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: 38

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

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

RMRU BOARD MEMBERS 2023 - 2024

James Eckhardt - President

Eric Holden - 1st Vice-President | Donny Goetz - 2nd Vice-President

Richard Yocum - Secretary | Ray Weden - 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**

