



Two separated on day hike

May 20, 1985

Tahquitz Drainage, San Jacinto Mtns

1985-024

By Kevin Walker

As most Monday missions start, this one began with a call from the Sheriff at around noon. Respond to Camp Maranatha, Idyllwild for a search. Walt Walker, Rob Gardner, and I arrived within minutes of one another. Not long after Mike Donovan from Landells Aviation arrived with 40MC. The three of us gathered gear and climbed in. As we departed I saw more members arriving, and fellow member Gordon Lee started the sign-in process. As we flew towards the saddle Walt clued us in. We were going to look for Robert Denny, age 41, from Manhattan Beach. He and a friend Ernie Johnson had become separated the day before on a day hike from their established camp near Skunk Cabbage Meadow. Ernie hiked out early in the morning and reported Bob missing to the rangers, who in turn called the S.O. Upon reaching the saddle we started sweeping across from one end to the other of the Tahquitz drainage. The plan was to do this down to Caramba. If nothing was found, Rob and I would be let off to search for tracks and Walt and Mike would go back and get more members to be put out at various key locations. We were between Laws and Caramba when Walt spotted a person on top of some rocks waving a blue object. Upon a quick close check, the description matched and we had found our man. Now getting him would be a little harder. Because of the forest being so dense in that particular area Mike had to fly to the Tahquitz ridge about a half-mile away. There he put Rob and I out on a rock formation. It was a great day out and the hike down to Bob went far too fast. We soon linked up with a very relieved Robert Denny. After giving Bob a snack and some water we started back for the helispot. Along the way he told us that after he became separated he walked for a period of time and then realizing that he was lost, stopped and waited. We commented him for doing that, as most of the people we go out to look for, don't use that kind of common sense. Anyway a short time later we were back in position. Mike came back in, we loaded Bob on board, they flew out. Minutes later Mike was back for Rob and I, back to Idyllwild and the end of another successful and rewarding mission.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from

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