

OFFICE OF THE
SHERIFF
INYO COUNTY, CA



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"A Professional Service Agency"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 10, 2019

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UPDATE- Search for Marine Corps Lt. Matthew Kraft Continues

Yesterday seven Inyo Search and Rescue volunteers searched the upper sections of Onion Valley Road west of Independence, attempting to locate any sign of Lieutenant Matthew Kraft. Onion Valley Road is currently closed for the winter and impassible due to heavy snow and rock fall; in order to access the search area a snowcat was utilized to transport the team.

The team reached about 8,000 feet, approximately two miles from the Kearsarge trail head, where recent avalanche debris was observed covering the road; other smaller avalanches were also observed in several chutes across the road. Due to avalanche concerns, the team decided that it would be too risky to proceed. In addition to yesterday's ground search, aerial reconnaissance was provided by Fresno County Sheriff, CHP H-80, CHP H-40, and Air National Guard. Aerial search crews noted several significant avalanches throughout the Sierra backcountry and along the Sierra High Route.

Today, searches will be primarily air-based. Ground searching has proven to be too dangerous due to snow instability and avalanche concerns. In addition to the above noted aerial support, Sequoia and Kings National Park will also be providing a helicopter. The boundary of Sequoia and Kings National Park begins at the top of Kearsarge Pass and extends for approximately 70 miles of the Sierra High Route.

Lt. Kraft's itinerary was the Sierra High Route, which included hiking out of Kearsarge Pass on Feb 24h and hiking out near the Twin Lakes area by Bridgeport on March 4th or 5th. On March 4th Lt. Kraft's father contacted Mono Sheriff after not hearing from his son. Mono County Sheriff's Office began checking trail heads in the Bridgeport area on March 4th; cell phone forensics initiated by Mono Sheriff showed that his last phone activity was in the Independence area. Inyo County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue began a search on March 5, 2019. Winter storms in the Sierra have made search activities extremely difficult. Matthew Kraft's vehicle was located by Inyo Search and Rescue at 9:00pm on March 8th near Lower Grays Meadows (above Independence CA).

Additional agencies assisting in this search along the Sierra High Route include Marine Corps, Mono County Sheriff, Mono County Search and Rescue, Inyo County Search and Rescue, Inyo County Sheriff, Madera County Sheriff, Fresno County Sheriff, Sequoia and Kings National Park, Yosemite National Park, CHP H-80, CHP H-40, Air National Guard, and California Office of Emergency Services.

Individuals with any information regarding Kraft's whereabouts should immediately contact Inyo County Sheriff's Office at (760) 878-0383/ option 4; Mono County Sheriff's Office at (760) 932-7549/ option 7; or Fresno County Sheriff's Office at (559) 600-8400.

For additional inquiries, please contact the 1st Marine Division press officer Capt. Paul Gainey at (760) 725-9226 or email paul.gainey@usmc.mil