

Injured Hiker

October 17-18, 1976
Tahquitz Canyon
1976-042

Charles Bujan

The coals had just reached the right temperature and I was ready to start cooking dinner when the pager went off. After a few phone calls, I found out that we had a rescue in Tahquitz Canyon. As I was getting ready to roll, Larry Brown called to tell me to come over to his house so that we, along with Rich Quackenbush, could go to the trail head together.

The three of us arrived at the trail head at 2000 hours. We immediately went to the information board in the RMRU van to find out the details of the rescue. The board informed us that the first team of Fairchild, Dew, Fulkman, Aldrich and Zappe had just started to hike to the base of the second water falls in Tahquitz Canyon where the victim, Mike Everley (a man suffering from a bleeding ulcer) was last seen. As we finished reading the board Larry Roland, temporary operations leader, came to tell us that he had just finished questioning Mike's hiking buddy who had pointed out the sick man's problem, location and other pertinent and necessary information. From the conversation with the informant, Larry had found out that Mike was probably suffering from a bleeding ulcer. Our orders were to wait for Captain Canova to return with Maalox and cream, the temporary remedy for the illness.

While we were waiting, John Muratet arrived, whereupon Rich Quackenbush took over as Ops Leader because he had more experience than the rest of us, enabling L. Brown, J. Muratet, and I, to form a second team. It was 2033 when Captain Canova arrived with the Maalox and cream. We stashed it in our packs and started out immediately.

It was a beautiful night for a hike. The sky was clear, the air was fresh and it was warm. Actually, I should say hot, moving along as we were, by the time we were half way up to the second falls everyone was ringing wet with sweat. (By this time we were also taking bets as to whether the cream would turn to butter by the time we reached the subject!) At 2115 team one radioed to inform us that they had left a rope in place to help us get past a rock, known as the Belly Roll, which went straight up on one side and straight down on the other. By 2130 we reached the Belly Roll and the rope. As we were undoing the rope to take along with us after crossing the rock, another call came over the radio. It was to tell us and base

camp that team one had arrived on the scene.

When the first group made personal contact with Mike, they found he was alone near the stream in the canyon. Until about an hour earlier he had had the company of Spirit, a permanent resident of the canyon and known to all the team by just this name. Spirit had left Mike and hiked down the canyon and met team one hiking up canyon and had turned and hiked back in with them.

Part of the first group of Fairchild, Dew, Fulkman, Aldrich, Zappe immediately went into action. They began checking pulse, blood pressure, and other vital signs, while the others set up a radio-phone patch to Dr. Norm Mellor at his home in Corona with the help of the Riverside Amateur Radio Association who did an excellent job of making it sound as though Norm was there with the team. After a few minutes of conversation and exchange of facts, Norm agreed that the young man was suffering from an ulcer. An order of 2 oz. Maalox on the hour and 2 oz. cream on the half hour was given as anticipated. This was to continue through the night until the subject could be brought out.

At this moment we (the second team) arrived with the Maalox and cream. Despite its trip, the cream was still nice and cool, to Mike's enjoyment. Between servings, the plastic bottle of cream was kept submerged in the creek, almost to the neck, which kept it fresh.

At this point we decided who was going to take what shift during the night to make sure Mike got his Maalox and cream, as well as having someone making sure that he was okay.

While some of us were sleeping, others were being entertained with Spirit's story telling. Still others back at base were making arrangements for Don Landells to fly us out in his big bird. Quackenbush, with the help of Captain Canova, was able to guarantee us that Don would fly in at 0630 the next day.

On Monday, we awoke at 0530 to start getting ready for the arrival of Don. Our first priority was to find a landing spot for the bird. This was easier than we had expected, because right above the area we had been occupying was a giant rock big enough for the bird to land on. The next problem was to get Mike up on the rock. This proved to be easy too with a little team work and muscle. To make our whole morning complete, Mike was feeling well enough to get into the helicopter himself instead of having to be flown out tied in a litter.

Don was operating his bird in top form; within 30 minutes he had the sick man with Fairchild and Dew attending at the hospital and Muratet, Aldrich, Fulkman, Zappe, Brown and myself back our cars, hungry for breakfast.

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 people like you.