

Injured Hiker

February 15, 1977
Tahquitz Canyon
1977-005

Steve Zappe

I was in speaking to a professor Tuesday afternoon when my pager blared away, interrupting our conversation. I quickly explained what it was all about and excused myself to make the phone call. Jerry Muratet, the callout coordinator said there was a guy with a broken foot between first and second falls in Tahquitz Canyon and that Don Landells would be flying in to shuttle us in at 16:00 (4 p.m.). Unfortunately it was now 14:50 (2:50 p.m.), meaning I had only 70 minutes to zip home, change clothes, pick up the gear that was still drying out from the training up on San Geronio, and drive down to Palm Springs and still arrive when the helicopter did. As you might guess, there was an amazing number of CHP units on the freeway, but they were interested in other people than my unobtrusive flaming demon barreling down the road. I rolled up to Ann Dolly's house at 16:05 (4:05) and fortunately Don hadn't made it in yet. Jim was there with the van, and Walt, Kevin, and John Dew were assessing the situation. Pete Carlson wheeled in 5 minutes later, and it was decided then that Walt and Pete would fly in first, locate the guy and radio out what was needed in terms of manpower and additional equipment. Don swooped in a couple of minutes later, and they were picked up and flown up the canyon.

Fortunately, the injured man was found sitting under a tree only 75 yards from a big boulder which had been previously used as a helispot. Unfortunately, he was below it and couldn't scramble up to it due to his badly swollen foot, so Walt called down for two strong men without packs. I don't think I'd qualify as being stronger than average, but Kevin and I were the only ones available so we boarded the copter and were there in a flash.

Walt had already put an air splint on the subject's foot and all we did was help him up on Walt's back as he carried him piggyback up to the heliport. Nothing could have been easier ... for me. Walt was having some trouble negotiating some of those 12 inch steps, but Pete, Kevin and I were there to push, pull, and guide him and his cargo up the canyon. We radioed out for Don and the whole rescue was complete by 17:00 (5 p. m.) . . . just in time for dinner.

There's one footnote, however. Just as Don flies off into the sunset after dropping us off, who should arrive but Art Bridge, Larry Brown, and Charles Bujon in one car and Randy Morrow in the other. At least Randy had an excuse - he'd never been to Ann

Dolly's before. But I think the other three just drove down for the dinner. Come to think of it, it really was a beautiful evening to eat dinner in Palm Springs.

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.