

50-year-old woman slipped while hiking

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By Kevin Walker

"Only 20 more minutes till lunch!" That was my exact thought when the telephone rang at work with word of a rescue mission in the San Jacinto Mountains. I was informed by RMRU day coordinator Jerry Muratet that a 50 year old woman had slipped while hiking in the Deer Springs area, and possibly fractured her leg. Jerry also told me that a helicopter had been ordered, and the rendezvous point would be the Banning Municipal Airport.

John Dew, my dad and I rode to Banning. Shortly after that Jim Fairchild arrived. We were met there by Capt. Ray Canova and Sgt. Weakly of the Banning S.O. The Capt. told us that Don Landells was on his way with his Bell jet Ranger, and that the Rescue Van was about 30 minutes out. Don arrived before the van did, so we decided to go in with first aid gear and a full leg air splint. John, Walt and I climbed in the bird, and Jim would wait at base for the van. Even though it was a warm day it did not take the powerful turbine powered helicopter long at all to reach the 8,000 ft. level and soon after that, we were circling Deer Springs. After making a few passes at the upper end of the camp, Don moved to the lower end of Deer Springs. It was soon after that Don spotted the camp out of the right side of the chopper. About a quarter of a mile below that was a fairly good sized meadow to land in. With the three of us let Off, Don started back for Banning.

It took about ten minutes to reach the parties camp. Upon arriving, we were indeed confronted by a possibly fractured ankle. The subjects name was Shirley Albertson. She, her husband, her daughter and daughter's boyfriend had hiked over from the tram on Tuesday. Approximately half a mile out of camp, Mrs. Albertson slipped on a wet log. At the time she could still walk (with help) but



Jim Fairchild

INJURED WOMAN Shirley Albertson looks on, while RMRU members, Walt Walker, John Dew (with back to camera) and Kevin Walker inflate air splint that had been put on her ankle.

soon after making camp her ankle swelled up, and became quite painful. Wednesday morning her husband started down for Idyllwild, and that is when RMRU came into the scene.

I was assigned to be first aider, so upon examining her, I found there to be nothing wrong with her other than the ankle injury. While I was doing the exam, Walt radioed back to base, and asked for the wheeled litter. It was the type of day that you could have just sat out in the warm sun and enjoyed the view for hours. Our quiet break did not last long, for soon after that we could hear the familiar sound of the turbine.

With Don waiting in the meadow, Jim and Darryl Hand brought the wheeled litter to our location. It then did not take long to wheel Shirley down to the waiting helicopter. After loading Shirley into the back, I climbed in to help steady her foot. With Walt and Don (the Lone Ranger and Tonto), in the front, it was a hearty hi-yo chopper, and away.

After being thanked many times while going into the Pass Hospital, we left Shirley in care of the doctors, and returned to the airport. Don then returned to the mountain to get John, Jim and Darryl. Once that was complete, it was thanks again to Don for his usual great flying, and see you next time. After finishing an early dinner, we stopped at the hospital to get the air splint and check on Shirley. Luckily it was only a badly sprained ankle, but the proper precautions had been taken on our part, by treating it as if it was a fracture. A happy ending for all concerned.



Jim Fairchild

WHEELED LITTER AND TURBINE HELICOPTER - RMRU's vor own wheeled litter and Don Landells Jet Ranger Helicopter came together in a meadow below deer springs. The 'wheel' and the 'chopper' were the means of transportation used to get Shirley Albertson to the San Gorgonio Pass Hospital.

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.