

## Fallen climber injured head and ankle

**July 13, 1985**  
**Tahquitz Rock**  
**1985-032**

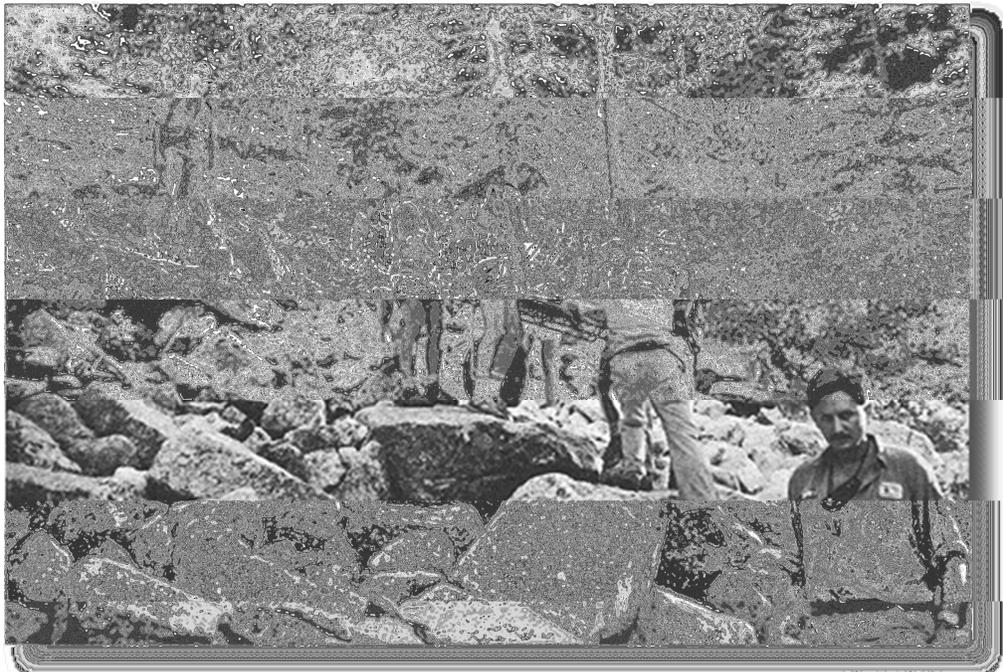
By Ray Hussey, M.D.

It was a hot July day. A soft breeze made our day at the top of Tahquitz Rock a bit more comfortable as we practiced high angle rescue techniques of stretcher and attendant raisings and lowerings, SEA (Self-Equalizing Anchors) placement and five-hundred foot rappels.

At approximately 4:30 p.m. we received a call from the Sheriff's Department regarding a fallen climber at the base of Tahquitz Rock. Most of the team had already "rapped" off and were at ground level. A hasty team was sent up with minimal gear to appraise the situation. They found a 23 year old male hiker, who had slipped

from a scenic view point falling approximately 12 feet, with a fractured ankle and head injury, with 10-15 seconds loss of consciousness. The man was in stable condition.

The main team then transported the Stokes stretcher with wheel,



Kevin Walker

**CAUTION IS USED** From left, RMRU members Gordon Lee, Walt Walker, John Muratet, Larry Roland, Colin Chambers, Ed Hill, Ray Hussey, and Rob Gardner cautiously guide the litter containing the injured climber down the long talus slope below Tahquitz Rock, while Jim Garvey finds the best route for the litter to be taken. It is difficult to see, but a belay rope was used as a safety factor because of the steep slope.

medical gear with IV fluids, a 150 ft. rope and lowering gear. The subject was found to be moderately dehydrated and consensus medical opinion was that considering the length of evacuation time and the possibility of head injury and ankle fracture, needing open reduction oral fluids were contraindicated. 1000 cc's of Ringers lactate IV solution were given to the subject while he was insulated, strapped carefully in the Stokes litter, head immobilization performed and a cervical collar secured.

RMRU members formed three teams - a belay team and 2 stretcher bearer teams, which traded off at timed intervals for the long talus-ridden evacuation route down to Humber Park. Despite the rough terrain the subject received a relatively smooth evacuation due primarily to good handling and Bernie McIlvoy's "big wheel" which we believe is the best stretcher wheel we have seen to date.

The subject was helicoptered to Loma Linda University Medical Center for definitive care and was in stable condition undergoing diagnostic test when we last called at 9:00 p.m.

On this mission RMRU had the luxury of valuable assistance from associate and former RMRU team members, as this was the day of our annual dinner reunion at Dr. Mellor's Sky Yacht mountain home located very near Humber Park.

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.