



Injured Climber on Tahquitz Rock

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Tahquitz Rock
2003-014**

By Phil Thompson

We got the call at about 11:57am for an injured climber on Tahquitz Rock. Debbiy Riegle was the first to arrive on scene and I arrived shortly after. When we got to Humber Park we found out that the fire department had already gotten to the victim. Other climbers had already gotten the subject down and splinted his badly broken leg and the fire department had packaged him into the litter. The fire fighters were calling on the Sheriff's helicopter to winch the climber out in the litter but the pilot said they would not do a winch operation without RMRU on scene to make sure the patient was safe and secure.

So Debbiy and I set out on the climber's trail heading up to the base of Tahquitz Rock. When we arrived we heard on the radio that several other RMRU members had arrived. We told them to stay behind to bring up gear in the event we couldn't use the helicopter and had to haul the patient out. Fortunately Debbiy recognized that, though he was in a lot of pain, the patient could stand with couple of shoulders to lean on. This was important since he could then be winched out using his climbing harness instead of the litter. The patient may not have realized it but this was a far better means of evacuating him since he would be able to get into the helicopter. When a victim is lifted up in the litter there is no way to get them inside the helicopter and they have to hang outside in the litter during the entire windy, loud flight. So by using the climber's own harness it was possible for him to be brought inside the helicopter and buckled in. The mission was complete at about 5:38pm.

After the helicopter had left with the patient securely inside we gave each other the usual high fives then returned the litter back to its normal place at the bottom of Tahquitz Rock to be used for the next climbing accident. Then we headed back down the trail to Humber Park. But the day wouldn't end until we were all eating lunch at our favorite post-mission restaurant, La Casita.

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.

