



Injured Hiker

**August 4th, 2004
Cranston Ranger Station
2004-015**

by Kirk Cloyd

RMRU responded to Cranston Ranger Station at approx. 0730 where Riverside County Sheriff Deputies and the aviation unit that fire officials had voice contact with a missing male that had a possible broken leg. The subject had obtained a three day pass from his parole officer in order to go backpacking. I deployed with the air unit (STAR 91) and located the subject just before sundown at the bottom of a box canyon on Lake Hemet Water District property. At this time I was lowered from the helicopter to evaluate the subject. The subject was found to be in reasonable condition. He had found an old sleeping bag stuffed with a can of beans and a bottle of cheese wiz. This along with the water puddle on the valley floor sustained the subject for the three days. The subject had lost his shoes over a cliff the first day out and the bottoms of his feet were like raw hamburger. I placed the subject in a full body harness. By this time, the sun had gone down below the western horizon. Due to the windy conditions, it was difficult to get the cable and hook to our location. I informed the subject to be ready to be rapidly hoisted when I returned with the cable and hook. I signaled STAR 91 to lower the hook up the hillside. I climbed to the hook, turned and slid down to the subject. As I slid down to him, I clipped into his harness and signaled STAR 91 to begin hoisting. The subject did not want to stand on his injured feet. As STAR 91 began to hoist, the subject lay on his back and began an uphill slide. I immediately grabbed the subject's legs and rotated him face down. He immediately stood up and was hoisted into the awaiting helicopter. It was now my turn. I climbed to the top of the nearby slope and clipped into the hoist. Once airborne, the wind shifted the helicopter forward about fifteen feet. I began to pendulum rapidly toward the silhouette of a large tree.

I stopped about two feet short of the tree and then started my swing in the other direction. As I swung under the air ship I looked up and realized that I was looking up at the opposite side of the helicopter. The hoist operator then stopped his raise. As the cable settled in the hoist, I dropped about two inches. In the dark night with the lights of the Hemet Valley a hundred feet below me it might as well have been ten feet.

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