



Climbers Stranded on Tahquitz Rock

June 3, 2007

Tahquitz Rock, Idyllwild, CA

2007-012

by Kevin Walker

At approximately 11:00 p.m. Sunday night I received a call from Glenn Henderson. The Sheriff was asking for one RMRU member to ride along with their helicopter to do a night fly over of Tahquitz Rock. Three climbers had called for help just before nightfall while attempting to complete the Sahara Terror route on the rock.

I responded to S.O. Aviation at Hemet Ryan Airport. Chief Pilot Tony Bowen and Flight Officer John Irish were standing by with the helicopter prepared for night flight. We lifted off shortly after my arrival and flew towards the San Jacinto Mountains. With the aid of specialized night goggles (even me), we were able to see the mountain with extreme clarity and depth. Within minutes we arrived at Tahquitz Rock. John spotted the three moving slowly, but nearing the end of the climb. Using the loud speaker, John told the climbers to stay put on top of the rock and that they would return with sleeping bags, food, water and flashlights.

We flew back to aviation and shut down. We rigged a large duffle bag with the stated supplies. Tony and John fired back up and flew back to Tahquitz Rock with the rescue items on board. I headed home for a few hours sleep. Once back at Tahquitz Rock, the duffle was lowered down to the climbers who were now on top of the rock. Also in the duffle were instructions telling them to spend the night up on top and not attempt to make their way down in the darkness, and that the rescue team would be hiking in at first light.

Next morning several of us responded to Humber Park to hike in and aid the climbers in descending the third class (hiking) route down from Tahquitz. Our people were only a short distance up the steep trail when they met up with the three men hiking down. The grateful party was soon back at the road head. We were cleared and headed home and back to work.

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.

