



## Climber with femur fracture

**July 1, 1982**  
**Tahquitz Rock**  
**1982-024**

By Kevin Walker

Time ... How important time is. On this particular Thursday afternoon time would play a major factor. To begin with, RMRU was contacted at 1555 hours (3:55 p.m.) for a technical rescue on Tahquitz Rock, a climber had fallen and was reported to have a fractured leg.

First to arrive at Humber Park were RMRU members Glenn Henderson, Walt Walker and myself, closely followed by Mary Bowman, now 1630 hours. After speaking with Allen Brandt, an informant, we learned that a man in his early twenties had fallen and injured his left leg on 'Dave's Deviation' (a climbing route) sometime after 1300 hours. Glenn and I loaded up our packs with first aid equipment, and some of the technical gear necessary for the mission, and then started out up the steep climbers path to the rock. Upon reaching the base of the climbing route (1836 hrs.) we were met by several climbers who had heard the calls for help earlier and had stayed at the base in the event they could assist (which they were able to do for the slow roll out later). There were two ropes dangling from above, both were fixed lines for jumaring on, both placed there by sport climber and friend of RMRU, Ralph Glenn. On one I tied my pack, which was hauled up the face, and on the other I clipped my Jumars in and started the 150 foot ascent up the near vertical rock face. At 1850 hours I reached the injured subject, Mark Vader. Along with Mark on the small ledge was his climbing partner William Volz and Ralph Glenn.

As the rest of the team hiked in with the rest of the necessary gear, I did a survey of Marks injuries. Marks only injury was a fracture of the left femur. It was a closed fracture, but the bone ends could be seen pressing just underneath the skin. Mark was sitting in an upright position with his legs dangling over the edge of the rock. The weight of his own leg was helping to apply a little traction to LILC injury. As I monitored Mark's vital signs Ralph helped out by locating and placing anchors for a lowering and belaying system. With members at the base (1915 hrs.) work was started in readying the litter to be pulled up the face. As that went on Bernie jumared up to the ledge with the Hare traction splint. With the help of Ralph, Bernie and I placed the splint on Mark. The operation was quite hard, as Bernie had to go out onto the face to be able to slip the splint up Mark' s leg. Nevertheless we got it applied, and traction was applied to the leg. Next we got Mark up completely on the ledge. Ralph and William pulled the empty litter up the face and onto the ledge. At 2021 hours we had Mark in the litter. And then

as Bernie finished setting up the lowering system I tied Mark into the litter and hooked the horizontal lowering rigging to the litter. The sun had been down for some time now, and the reason for being concerned over time now came into play. We now had a night time technical lower to perform. At 2053 hours I was stepping out onto the face with the litter as Bernie manned the lower and Ralph maintained the belay. To make things more difficult than they already were, when I was about 10 feet down, the rigging on the litter caught on a tree limb sticking out of the rock. I was unable to do anything about the problem because I had to keep the litter and Mark's injured leg away from the face of the rock. So, that left Bernie. After tying off the lower, Bernie came down on a tail of another rope to where the litter rigging was stuck, and then with some effort, was able to free the litter. Luckily for the subject, and my arms, that was the only problem we would face. With Bernie back at his station we were off and lowering. Within a couple of minutes I was down to where a second lowering station had been set up. The members at the second ledge changed the system over, and under the new guidance of Rick Pohlers and Pete Carlson, Mark and I were lowered to the base (2120 hrs.). As we took the systems apart and coiled ropes, RMRU member and paramedic Jack Schnurr surveyed Mark's injuries. At 2215 hours we started down from Lunch Rock with the RMRU wheel attached to the litter. At 2335 hours we reached Humber Park and the waiting ambulance. With that a tired group of members put gear back into the vans and then headed down to Hemet for a quick breakfast and then to help the Hemet team with a search in the North Fork (see Mission No. [1982-025](#)). It is missions like this that make all the practice on trainings worth while. I say this because this was the first mission I was left to tie the subject in, attach the lowering ropes and double check that it was right. Thank you RMRU veterans, it is a real good feeling.

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.