



Two Climbers Fell

October 19, 2003
Tahquitz Rock
2003-026

Our sincerest condolences go out to the family and friends of David Kellogg and Kelly Tufo. The two climbers died climbing "The Step" on Tahquitz rock Sunday, October 19, 2003. The team was called out around 3:00 pm and was told that two climbers had fallen and one was hanging by a rope. Eighteen team members responded to Humber Park in Idyllwild. We found out that the helicopter that responded was called out by the fire department. The Sheriff's helicopter wasn't in the air that day. While we were gearing up we were told that they might both be deceased. Right before the first team left, we found out that there wasn't a Dr. present and that they may be alive. We started up the climbers' trail to the base of "Fools Rush". Once there we traversed to the right and had to climb 3rd. class rock to a ledge. We found David first. Our team doctor checked David's vitals and pronounced him deceased. Next we sent our doctor over the edge down to Kelly to check on his condition. Unfortunately his medical condition was the same. We were able to do the scene survey before darkness fell. We lowered Kelly first with a team member. Then once everyone below was out of the fall line, we untied their climbing rope from a boulder and proceeded to move David back from the edge of the ledge. While we were doing this we checked to see what gear was on the rope. Coiling the rope we discovered that there wasn't any gear on the rope. The only gear that was on or near the ledge was two Camelots, a carabiner, and a prussik attached to a cordalette. David was then lowered with another team member to the base of the rock. We placed both climbers in litters and prepared to carry them out when we learned that the Sheriff's helicopter would be available at first light. Leaving two members with the climbers the rest of us hiked out. We were back in basecamp around 11pm. The Sheriff's helicopter airlifted the two out at 7:30 am the next morning while our team members hiked out.

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.