



## Hiker Down With Compound Fracture to Leg

**May 27th, 2007**  
**Wellman's Divide**  
**2007-010**

by Glenn Henderson

Team President Gwenda Yates and I were at our new training tower getting ready to practice jumaring up ropes and had just finished setting up the ropes when Gwenda's phone rang. Sure enough, it was dispatch calling about a hiker with a broken leg near Wellman's Divide. Gwenda asked me, "Do you want to fly?" Star 9, our Sheriff's helicopter unit, made the call and wanted one RMRU person to be inserted via winch to assist the Park Service personnel that were almost on scene. RSO had talked to them and State Parks said they would have our victim, Julie Hennes, packaged and ready for transport when we got there. Since I already had my harness and helmet on plus my rescue pack was with me I took off for the hanger at Hemet Ryan Airport. It took about 15 minutes to get there and pilot Tony Bowen and observer/winch operator, John Irish were almost ready to go. It was almost 7:30 p.m. and we only had about 40 minutes of daylight left. We lifted off and were on scene in about 15 minutes. John hooked me to the winch and lowered me into a small clearing and then sent down the litter. Tony then gained altitude and circled while I and State Parks personnel carried the litter about 100 yards down the trail to Julie. Her ankle had a really bad compound fracture that they had already splinted. We rolled her onto the litter, strapped her in and carried her back to the small clearing I had landed in. I have to admire her, she never complained even though I know she was in great pain. Tony flew back and John lowered the hook down again. I hooked her up and they lifted her to the helicopter and flew her to Desert Hospital in Palm Springs, about a five minute flight.

The PLAN was for them to fly back to Round Valley where they could land and then pick me up to fly home. It is a 30-minute hike to Round Valley so the State Parks and I took off immediately. At Round Valley, they said their good bys and left for Long Valley and home. I figured about 30 minutes for them to fly back. It was a spectacular evening to be in the mountains, no wind, a little cool; the moon was rising bright enough that I could see deer moving across the valley.

I waited another 30 minutes, then another 30 minutes, then another 15 minutes when I decided they weren't coming back for me. Oooookay, I guess I'll hike out to the upper Palm Springs Tram, catch a tram car down and call for someone to come get me. It's about a 2-mile hike and mostly downhill so it would not take long to get there. About 15 minutes down the trail I heard the WHAP, WHAP, of the helicopter coming back. Just my luck, too far to go back before I knew they would take off again when I didn't meet

them. I was using their radio, as I did not have mine with me. I called them but no answer. They did take off and began searching for me along the trail calling me on the radio. When I answered, no response. My radio would receive but would not transmit. I knew that they knew I was hiking out but I wanted to assure them I was ok but this piece of \_\_\_\_ radio would still not transmit, even when they were right over me but couldn't see me because of the trees. They continued calling so I picked up the pace to get to the tram as fast as possible. After a while I could not hear the helicopter any more but could still hear them calling me on their radio. I knew then that they had landed on top of the upper tram station and were waiting. I quickly met them there and complained about the radio and that I was glad to see them. I thought they had been called out on another call but they were stuck at the hospital waiting to get the litter back. They never did get it back and left without it. We lifted off and flew back to the hanger. My thanks to Tony and John for a great job of flying and to the State Parks Service, they did a great job of having Julie ready when I got there. It really was an easy mission for all except Julie. We all hope for her speedy recovery and will someday see her hiking in the San Jacintos again.

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.