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Search and Rescue

RESCUE

Mission No. 8531M

5-6 July, Fri.-Sat.

Tahquitz Rock

San Jacinto Mountains

By Bill Blaschko, M.D.



I was sleeping soundly when Bud White called with news that there was an injured climber on Tahquitz Rock. Bud, Gordon Lee and I met with two members of the Idyllwild Fire Department shortly thereafter to make an initial assessment of the situation while other RMRU team members were enroute.

Gordon maintained a base camp at Humber Park while the other four of us proceeded up towards the base of Tahquitz Rock with a litter. About halfway up we encountered our subject. Other climbers had been taking turns carrying him down on their backs. His only significant injury was severe pain in the left heel and ankle where he had landed when he fell.

Bud and I supplied fresh fruit and cool water to refresh the subject and the other climbers. We then organized the available personnel into a litter carrying team and proceeded downhill. Just before reaching Humber Park we were joined by the remainder of the RMRU team.

The subject was transported by private vehicle to Hemet Valley Hospital where he was diagnosed as having a badly shattered heel bone. • RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 8532M

13 July, Sat.

Tahquitz Rock

San Jacinto Mountains

By Ray Hussey, M.D.



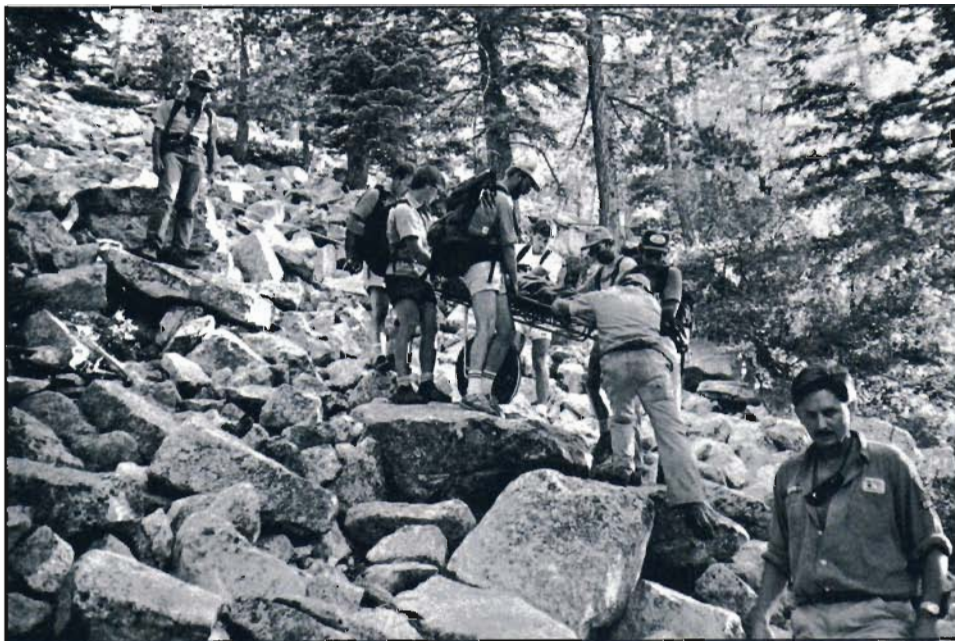
It was a hot July day. A soft breeze made our day at the top of Tahquitz Rock a bit more comfortable as we practiced high angle rescue techniques of stretcher and attendant raisings and lowerings, SEA (Self-Equalizing Anchors) placement and five-hundred foot rappels.

At approximately 4:30 p.m. we received a call from the Sheriff's Department regarding a fallen climber at the base of Tahquitz Rock. Most of the team had already "rapped" off and were at ground level. A hasty team was sent up with minimal gear to appraise the situation.

They found a 23 year old male hiker, who had slipped from a scenic view point falling approximately 12 feet, with a fractured ankle and head injury, with 10-15 seconds loss of consciousness. The man was in stable condition.

The main team then transported the Stokes stretcher with wheel, medical gear with IV fluids, a 150 ft. rope and lowering gear. The subject was found to be moderately dehydrated and consensus medical opinion was that considering the length of evacuation time and the possibility of head injury and ankle fracture, needing open reduction oral fluids were contraindicated. 1000 cc's of Ringers lactate IV solution were given to the subject while he was insulated, strapped carefully in the Stoke's litter, head immobilization performed and a cervical collar secured.

RMRU members formed three teams — a belay team and 2 stretcher bearer teams, which traded off at timed intervals for the long talus-ridden evacuation route down to Humber Park. Despite the rough terrain the subject received a relatively smooth



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

CAUTION IS USED — From left, RMRU members Gordon Lee, Walt Walker, John Muratet, Larry Roland, Colin Chambers, Ed Hill, Ray Hussey, and Rob Gardner cautiously guide the litter containing the injured climber down the long talus slope below Tahquitz Rock, while Jim Garvey finds the best route for the litter to be taken. It is difficult to see, but a belay rope was used as a safety factor because of the steep slope.

evacuation due primarily to good handling and Bernie McIlvoy's "big wheel" which we believe is the best stretcher wheel we have seen to date.

The subject was helicoptered to Loma Linda University Medical Center for definitive care and was in stable condition undergoing diagnostic test when we last called at 9:00 p.m.

On this mission RMRU had the luxury of valuable assistance from associate and former RMRU team members, as this was the day of our annual dinner reunion at Dr. Mellor's Sky Yacht mountain home located very near Humber Park. • RMRU

ABORT

Mission No. 8533A

17 July, Wed.

**Laws Camp,
San Jacinto Mountains**

During the mid morning we received a call from the Hemet station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a boy scout had been reported missing from Laws Camp, in the San Jacinto Mountains. The call out procedure was initiated, and while members were enroute to Idyllwild, the youth was located by leaders and the mission was aborted. • RMRU



Technical Rescue Practice and Team Dinner

**13 July, Sat.
Tahquitz Rock
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Rob Gardner



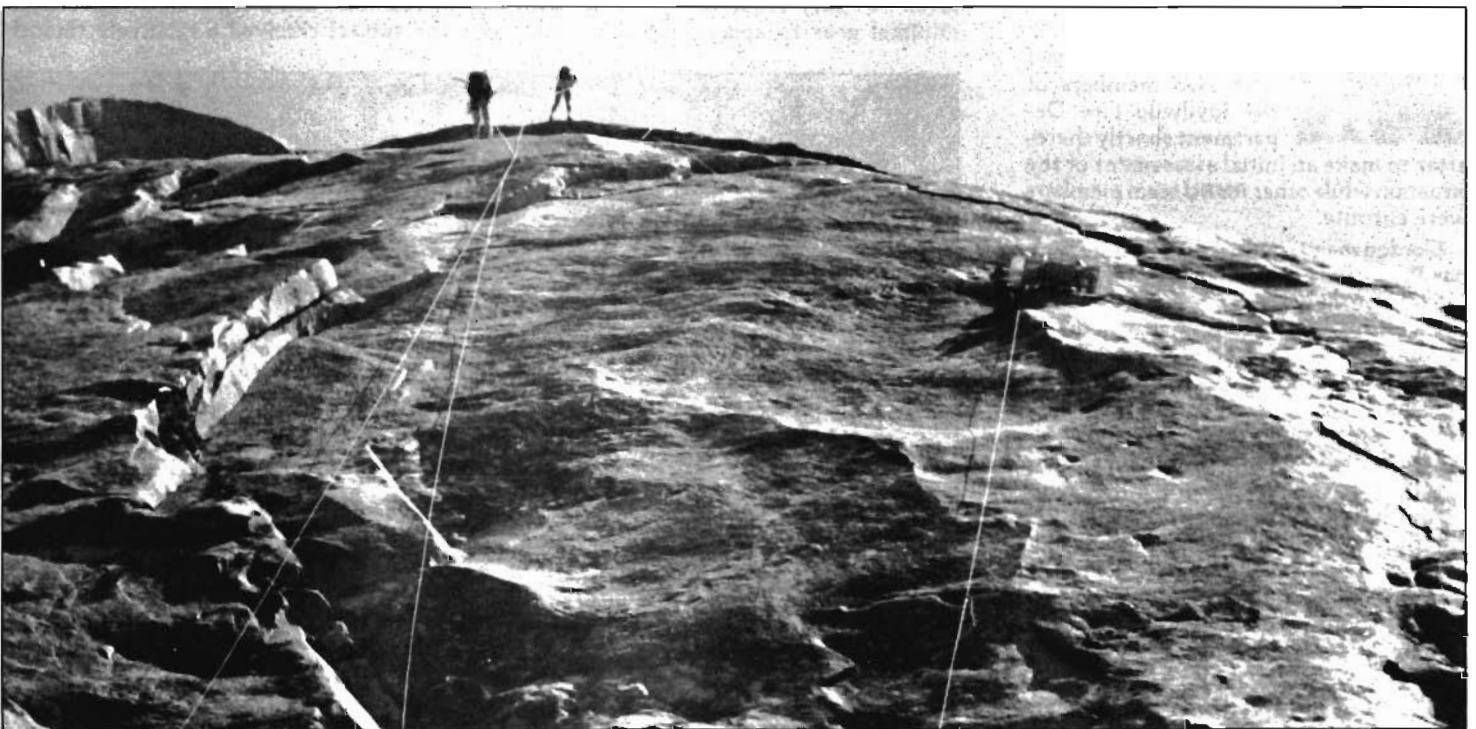
The weather was ideal and there was a good attendance of RMRU volunteers for a day of technical training at Tahquitz Rock. Technical gear was packed to near the top of the rock and members practiced setting up anchor systems and a lowering system. A volunteer was loaded into a litter as litter tie-in and litter rigging were demonstrated and practiced. The litter was lowered about four hundred feet

down the face of the rock. Exposure was also included in the practice. After three lowerings some rappelling was practiced. The training day was gainful and enjoyable.

As gear was being packed up and volunteers began to think about and discuss the steak barbecue planned for the evening, a man came around the corner and calmly advised us that a rock-climber had fallen and suffered trauma to the head and ribs. The man identified himself as a paramedic with an ambulance service in Los Angeles County. People were tired now and the day had become uncomfortably warm. Everybody proceeded over to the nearby accident site (see 8532M write-up for details of the rescue).

When the rescue was completed everybody went over to Dr. and Mrs. Mellor's Fern Valley cabin where the traditional July barbecue was held.

The feast began a few hours late, due to the rescue operation of the fallen rock climber. Interestingly, this traditional dinner is held in honor of the wives and girlfriends of RMRU members. The dinner is a thank you for understanding when team members rush off to Search and Rescue calls in the middle of the night, or just when a wedding is starting or in the middle of other family functions, just as happened this day. The families of the search and rescue volunteer are as special as the volunteer. • RMRU

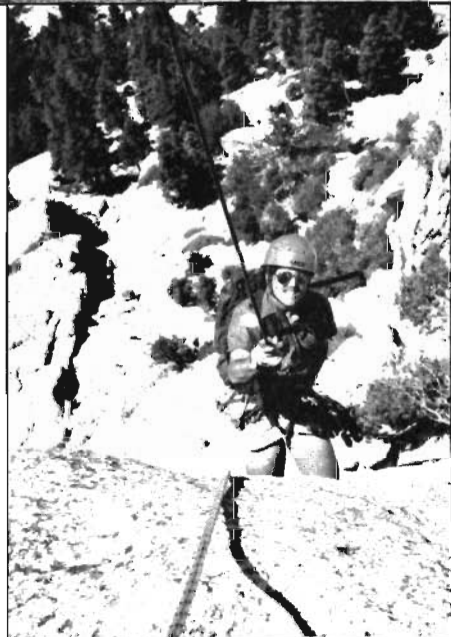
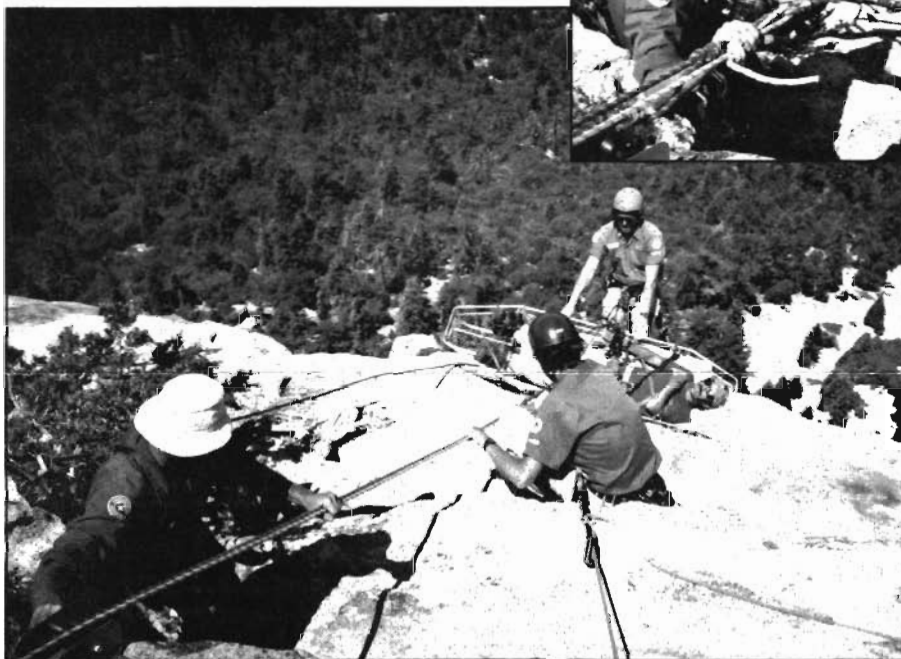


RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

THE VAMPIRE — RMRU members Kevin Walker and Mel Krug (on skyline) rappel down the Vampire route on Tahquitz Rock using the teams' 600 foot ropes. Watching to the right is fellow member Bernie McIlvoy suspended over the side in a lawn chair. Because of the large distance involved on the rock Bernie stayed in the middle for assistance to training members as the day went on. Also it was good entertainment for other climbers on the rock.

RMRU PHOTOS BY KEVIN WALKER

LOWERING OPERATION — With RMRU member Rob Gardner reluctantly in the litter and Glenn Henderson at the helm as attendant, Bud White and Bill Blaschko help ease the litter over the edge and allow Glenn to guide the litter down the face of the rock.



RMRU PHOTO BY MEL KRUG

HERO SHOT — RMRU member Kevin Walker stops and poses for the camera before rappelling down the Vampire on Tahquitz Rock.