



### 36th Rescue Flight makes 614th rescue

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7/3/2007 - FAIRCHILD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash. -- A crew from the 36th Rescue Flight here saved a 19-year-old woman June 30 after she was bucked off a mule in rough terrain near Sherman Pass, Wash. The woman sustained injuries that required helicopter evacuation to a Spokane hospital.

After receiving a call for search and rescue support from the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center based at Langley AFB, Va., the rescue flight crew left Fairchild in a UH-1N Huey helicopter and flew directly to the Sherman Pass location, said Capt. Mike Volkerding, aircraft commander for the rescue flight. The victim was at a 6,300-foot elevation, surrounded by steep inclines, rocky terrain and trees more than 100 feet tall.

"We were actually able to make a landing; we didn't have to use a hoist," said Captain Volkerding. "If the landing area had been any more confined, or the terrain slope had been any steeper where she was, we probably wouldn't have been able to land."

Once the Huey touched down within 100 feet of the emergency location, Tech. Sgt. Patrick Hunt, independent-duty medical technician with the 336th Training Group, covered the remaining ground on foot and coordinated with on-scene medics from Stevens County. The first responders had already secured the young woman onto a stretcher, but weren't able to transport her from the scene. With help from the county medics, Sergeant Hunt carried the injured woman to the helicopter.

"She was in extreme pain," Captain Volkerding said. "It was important to get her back as soon as possible."

The crew did, in fact, get her back quickly. The rescuers left with the young woman less than 20 minutes after landing and got her to a Spokane hospital just over an hour after arriving on the scene.

"We ran into very little, if any, complications; the flight went smoothly," the captain said, praising his team for their professionalism and ability. "We train for this regularly. The crew was experienced and did a great job, and the Stevens County authorities really had their act together. Everybody did their job perfectly."

"It is very rewarding to be able to use our training to perform rescues in the civilian community," the aircraft commander said.

Along with Captain Volkerding and Sergeant Hunt, the rescue crew included Capt. Seung Hak Lee, co-pilot, and Tech. Sgt. Matt Ryplewski, flight engineer.

The events of June 30 marked the 614th rescue for the 36th Rescue Flight, an Air Education and Training Command unit assigned to the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape School.



Staff Sgt. George Gonzalez practices water hoist procedures from a UH-1N Huey assigned to the 36th Rescue Flight at Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash. A crew from the 36th RCF rescued a 19-year-old woman June 30 after she was bucked from a mule in the remote wilderness of northern Washington. Local emergency responders were unable to extract the victim but the Air Force crew safely transported her to a local hospital for treatment. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Jacob Bragg)