



Fairchild rescue flight saves woman

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7/3/2007 - **FAIRCHILD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash. (AFP)** -- A four-man crew from the 36th Rescue Flight here saved a 19-year-old woman June 30 after she was bucked off of a mule in rough terrain near Sherman Pass, Wash.

After receiving a 3 p.m. call for search and rescue support from Air Force Rescue Coordination Center officials from Langley Air Force Base, Va., the rescue flight crew left Fairchild AFB at 6 p.m. in a UH-1N Huey helicopter and flew directly to the Sherman Pass location, said Capt. Mike Volkerding, the aircraft commander for the rescue flight.

The woman sustained injuries that required helicopter evacuation to a Spokane hospital. The injured woman 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," Captain Volkerding said. "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 UH-1N touched down within 100 feet of the emergency location, Tech. Sgt. Patrick Hunt, an independent-duty medical technician with the 336th Training Group, covered the remaining ground on foot and coordinated with local 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," the captain said. "It was important to get her back as soon as possible."

After arriving on the scene at about 6:40 p.m., the 36th RQF team left with the injured woman less than 20 minutes later and got her to a Spokane hospital at approximately 7:45 p.m.

"We ran into very little, if any, complications. The flight went smoothly," said the captain.

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

"We train for this regularly," Captain Volkerding said. "The crew was experienced and did a great job, and the

Stevens Country 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."

This is the 614th rescue for the 36th Rescue Flight, which is a part of the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape School here and falls under the Air Education and Training Command.

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