

Hiker with possible broken leg

April 18, 1978
Tahquitz Canyon
1978-018

By Jim Garvey

The pager call came at 2 P.M. Tuesday for a possible broken leg in Tahquitz Canyon. I hurried home, Changed, grabbed packs full of equipment and set off. My destination was Ann Dolly's house at the mouth of Tahquitz Canyon in Palm Springs.

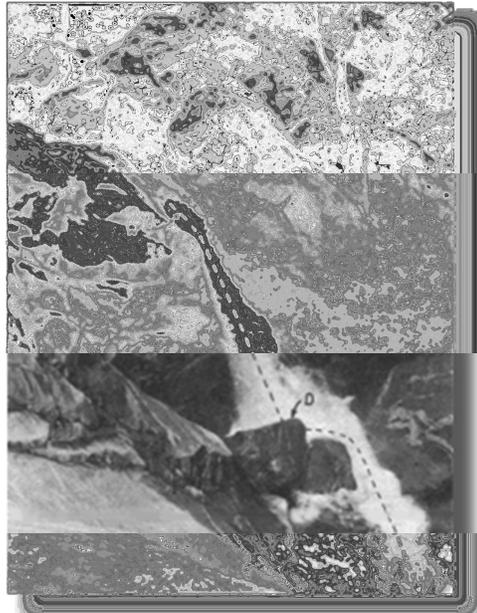
With midweek call-outs, there is always the possibility of the team's response being delayed due to the members work and school situations. With this in mind, I wanted to arrive at base as soon as possible to help get the mission underway.

Others had the same concern. There was a photo-finish at base with eight members arriving within minutes of Jim Fairchild driving the RMRU van.

Captain Canova from the Banning Sheriff's station was already on the scene interviewing the informants. According to their report, Nick Allegretti, 33, of Rancho Mirage had slipped over a waterfall in the lower reaches of the canyon. The captain had already called for a helicopter from Landells Aviation.

As base was being set up, team members continued to arrive. Boots were put on and field packs assembled as members scrambled to be ready for the imminent arrival of the helicopter.

With the arrival of Don Landells and his



Jim Fairchild

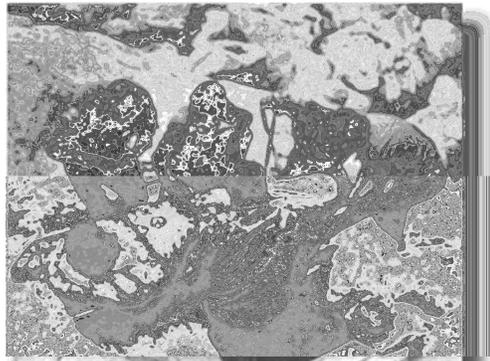
This photo shows the waterfall that Nick Allegretti slid down. The "X" is where he entered the water. The "W" arrow points to an area where the entire stream passes through a three foot wide spot. The distance from "X" to "D" was approximately 30 feet. He went around the large rocks and floated to the lower end of the pool of water.

powerful Jet Ranger, the mission became what could be called "a textbook example" of a medical evacuation. Jim Fairchild and Walt Walker flew in first with heavy first aid packs to initially treat the subject and assess the situation. Walt quickly radioed for additional equipment and men to help move Nick a short distance to our now standard heliport boulder in this part of the canyon.

After about 45 minutes, Nick's companion, who suffered a nasty laceration on his back from a fall he took while getting water for Nick, was flown to base.

In another 15 minutes, the mission was over. Nick was flown to the Desert Hospital with an inflatable splint on his leg. The team members in the field were transported to base. Everything secured, many of the team members went to dinner in Palm Springs, courtesy of the Sheriff's Office.

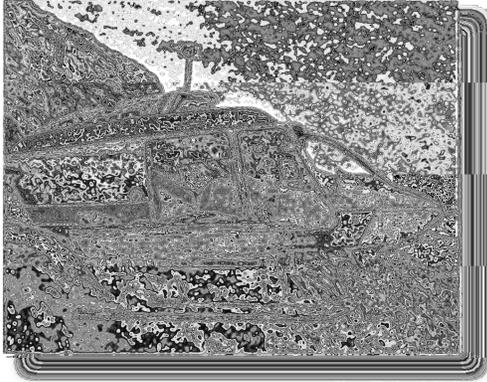
Post Script - The use of helicopters and expert pilots like Don Landells make it possible to successfully complete a mission like the one above in a relatively short time. It is often this saving of time that means the saving of lives.



After Nick was splinted, he was put into the rescue sleeping bag and the litter. John Dew, Steve Zappe, Ed Hill, Don Chambers and Walt Walker (back to camera) work at securing Nick into the litter.

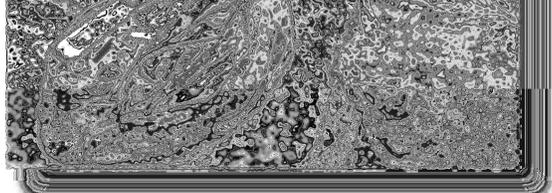
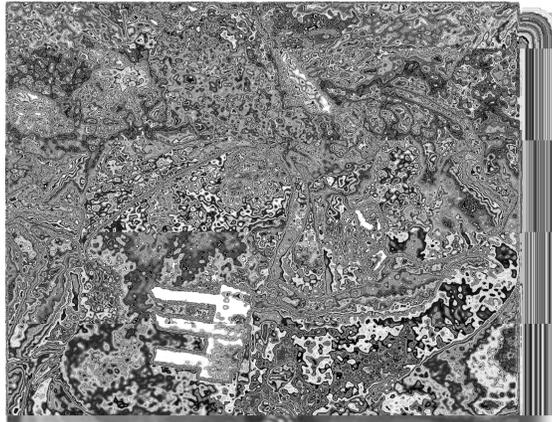


Nick was moved uphill to a regular helispot and John Dew placed a helmet and goggles on him for protection when the helicopter would arrive. Looking on were: Walt Walker, Steve Zapps, (John), Ed Hill and Don Chambers.



Jim Fairchild

Don Landells took off, from the helispot, after Nick had been loaded onto the fixed litter of "Chopper One." Walt Walker rode in the back seat as an attendant.



Jim Fairchild

Walt Walker puts the finishing touches to the dressing covering a 10 inch evulsion that was on Anthony Marino's back.

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.