



VW rolled 600 feet

September 03, 1980
Near Radec Junction
1980-041

By Walt Walker

During our regular monthly team meeting the pagers, a whole chorus of them, notified us of a rescue mission. We quickly adjourned the meeting, made some quick plans, and off we went to pickup our personal gear.

It was reported that a VW van had gone off a backcountry dirt road, rolled down 1,200 feet, and that there were people trapped inside. We were all to meet one mile north of Radec Junction. Brian Hixson and John Dew, in the #1 van, were the first, RMRU members to arrive at the roadhead. Kevin Walker and I were next, quickly followed by Hal Fulkman and Jim Fairchild. There were a number of other groups, including Hemet Search & Rescue Team members, also at the roadhead. We learned that the van had gone off the road and rolled and tumbled 600 feet down. The driver, a 16 year old boy, had been ejected. He had been only slightly injured and had gone for help. His 12 year brother was pinned under the vehicle and was dead.

After discussing the situation, darkness, very steep terrain, loose rock, brush and a very high fire danger, it was decided to wait until morning to remove the body. It was also decided that Pete Boss and Lonnie Denny (HSAR) and Kevin Walker and I would help in the morning. Another agency had determined that the accident scene was in San Diego County.

The next morning, shortly before eight o'clock, quite a group had formed. There was a California Division of Forestry fire truck and rescue squad, a U. S. Forest Service fire truck, a California Highway Patrol four wheel drive and a deputy coroner from San Diego County, a four wheel drive with Pete Boss and Lonnie Denny and my four wheel drive with Kevin and I. Plans were made and we drove about five miles up a winding dirt road. Once at the scene we began to get our gear ready. Then the bad news came, upon carefully checking the topo maps, we discovered the accident scene was about one half mile into Riverside County. This information was radioed out and we began a rather long wait for a deputy coroner from Riverside County.

By the time the coroner arrived, we had a plan worked out and were ready to go. We led the coroner to the scene. He took care of the legal details and we shoved the van off of the body. The body was placed into a body bag, secured into the litter and the 600 foot raise started. About 20 minutes later, our part of the mission was completed. We loaded

up our gear and quietly headed for home.

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.