

## Man stranded on cliff that gave way

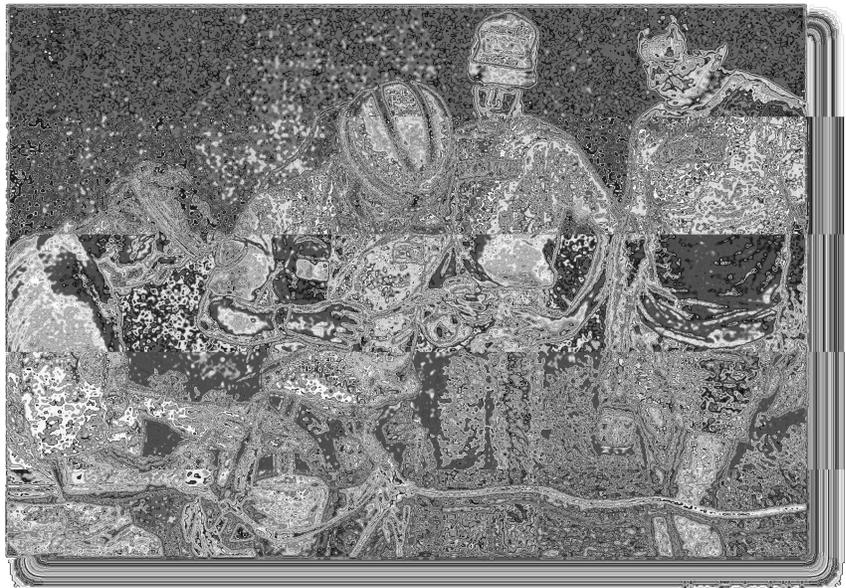
**September 6, 1981**  
**Hawley Quarry**  
**1981-026**

By Kevin Walker

At 8:30 the pager went off and interrupted an exciting episode of CHiPs. The voice at the other end requested that RMRU members contact Jim Fairchild at home, for a rescue in the Rubidoux area.

Normally us folks out in the San Jacinto area are the first to arrive at missions in the San Jacinto's, but not this time. I gathered my gear and had my wife, Patrice, drop me off at the rescue garage to pick up the No. 1 van. Then after picking up Walt Walker at home, we headed in the opposite direction (from the mountain) to Riverside. Jim had the No. 2 van, and directed us into Hawley Quarry.

Jim had been there for about 20 minutes and had already gathered information. James Black and Jon Chaney had decided to go hiking in the quarry in the early evening. James was walking along a narrow ledge approximately 200 feet above the bottom of the quarry when the ledge gave out behind him and collapsed. James found himself in a tough spot. He could not go on any further, nor could he go back. His friend Jon then went back and contacted the Riverside Sheriff, who then contacted RMRU.

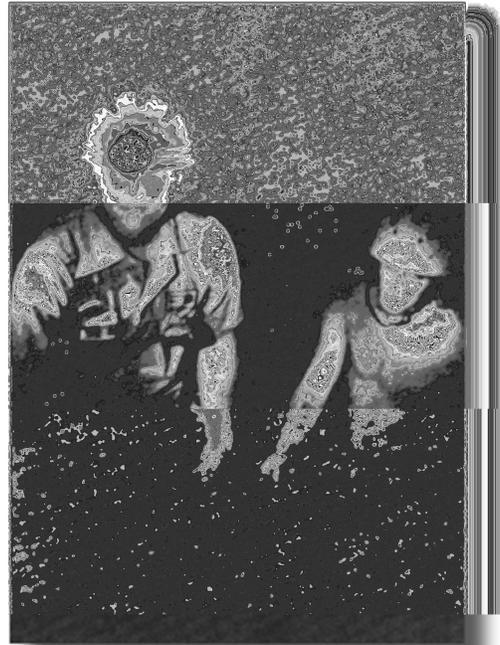


Jim Fairchild

**SAFETY CHECK - RMRU member Walt Walker double checks to see that Kevin Walker is tied in correctly to the lowering system, before starting down the rock face to stranded James Black.**

Jim said that he thought that we could lower someone down from above James, and then traverse over to him. So, we gathered up the necessary technical gear and hiked over (appr. 1/4 mile) to where the operation would take place. After deciding where the best spot was, John Dew and Walt started setting up the main anchors (with snow pickets), and Jim and Bob Attride set up the belay anchor. That left yours truly to be assigned to go over the side.

Once everything was set up and then re-checked (safety), I clipped into the rope. I was lowered about 75 feet to where I could traverse over to a very relieved James Black. While I put a sit harness and helmet on James (the rock fall hazard was extreme), the crew on top changed the system over to 3 to 1 mechanical advantage. With the system ready after a short wait, and James now tied into the rope just below me, we started across and then up the near vertical slope. Everything went smoothly except for a couple of near misses from hard ball size rocks that we dislodged as the rope slid along the slope. Shortly though, we reached the top. After getting James untied from the system, Bob walked James back to the road and his friends. The rest of us coiled rope and dug out some very stubborn pickets from the hard hillside.



2.5 Jim Fairchild

NEARING THE TOP - RMRU member Kevin Walker and subject James Black hold on to the rope as they are pulled to the top of the rocky cliff.

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.