

Man found alive two days after falling nearly 70 feet

**October 25, 1983
Box Springs Mountains
1983-034**

On October 23, 1983, Craig Richard Fredborg and two friends hiked up onto the Box Springs Mountain above the City of Riverside. It was later learned by the two friends that the trio had hiked up to celebrate Fredborg's birthday. They admitted to having alcohol with them, and also present was a small caliber rifle. Sometime on the 24th, Fredborg fell off of a 50 foot cliff on the mountain. Fredborg was alone as his friends had went down and home, apparently in a different direction.

On October 25, 1983, Fredborg's girlfriend, Jennifer Hernandez, apparently made contact with the two who had been up on the mountain to ask where Fredborg was. According to the friends, they went back onto the mountain where they found Fredborg laying head down on the hillside below the cliff. They stated that they turned Fredborg around and straightened him out. They started a small fire and waited.

In the early evening, residents below reported seeing a fire up on the mountain. CDF (California Department of Forestry) responded to the top of the mountain which can be accessed by dirt road. Once on scene it was found that emergency aid would be needed. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department was contacted, as was Goodhew Ambulance service. At 8:00 PM the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit was contacted and asked to respond.

Ten members initially arrived. Bernie McIlvoy and Cameron Robbins were sent down, approximately 500 feet from the top followed by Craig Britton who laid out a rope for the operation. Not long after Bernie radioed back up some very bad news. After doing a survey of the subject, it was learned that Greg probably had neck injuries. Fredborg had no feeling in his legs, and only some in his hands and arms. He had a small piece of wood impaled in his leg with ants crawling in the wound. With that news, Rick Pohlars guided one of the paramedics down to Greg.

A very important decision had to then be made. How to get a person with serious head and neck injuries out? Try and do a raise up 500 feet of large boulders and ravines, Wait till morning, and use a helicopter? Or try an air evacuation at night? Well, team doctor Bill Blaschko arrived and helped with the decision. No waiting till morning, something needed to be done soon. Operations Leader Jim Fairchild asked me to take care of helicopter support. This meant only one person could do the job. Quickly via radio telephone I was in contact with Don Landells. I explained

the problem to Don, and that we felt the only way to get Greg out was to airlift underneath the bird as we have done several times before. And to add to the obvious difficulties of night and steep terrain, was a Santa Ana wind condition. Don still agreed, and said he would be on the way shortly.

Bruce, Glenn and Bill took the litter and rigging down, everyone at the subject worked together to place Greg, who was already on a back board and immobilized, into the litter. As this went on Mel Krug and I prepared the helispot. Nothing was easy. The landing site was a short distance from one of the many 50 foot radio towers on the top of the mountain. We finished preparations at both ends, and waited only a short time when Don made contact with us. Soon he was on the ground. We helped him remove his door, hook up the 30 foot rescue sling and then all agreed on the plan of attack.

Once ready, Don lifted the machine up, and with the sling below the bird, he disappeared from our site up on top. It was only a short wait, but it seemed an eternity. At the site, Don positioned himself above, maneuvered the machine down, the litter was attached, and very slowly Don raised up, and soon was back on top. With radio and hand signals I guided him overhead and then down so we could unhook the litter. Don then set down, his door was reattached, and one back door was removed. The litter was then placed in the back, secured and one paramedic and I climbed in also to keep Greg still.

Once secure, Don lifted off and in a short matter of minutes we sat down on the helipad at Loma Linda Hospital. Greg, still in the litter was placed on a gurney and taken in by nurses to the waiting emergency room. Don flew us back, picked up his door and headed for home. A successful, but sad mission drew to a close a 1:30 A.M. on October 26, 1983.

To date of publishing Greg Fredborg is still in the hospital, and is paralyzed from the neck down. We send our heart felt sympathy to Greg and his family. We also want to thank the Riverside Sheriff's station personnel, C.D.F., two very professional paramedics, and to Don Landells for helping us in a major way, to save a life.

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.