

Hikers unable to walk out

October 20, 2001
Cabazon
2001-019

By Brad Scott

The evening of October 20th at 21:00 the pagers went off for a mission south of Cabazon. I arrived at 21:40 where Jim Fairchild and a Riverside Sheriff deputy were discussing the search circumstances. Three hunters had become stuck on a ledge coming down from Black mountain. The subjects had called family members via cell phone to inform them of their problem. Darrell Bell, Michael George and Phil Thompson also responded. At 22:30 it was decided to wait until morning to continue since the weather was fair and no injuries had been reported.



Darrell Bell
Brad Scott waits for loading "OK" from Pilot.

The team reassembled at 06:25 and waited for Star 80 to arrive. We were surprised when Star 80 arrived at 06:52. With radio contact from RMRU to the helicopter and a cell phone from the subjects family, Star 80 soon spotted the three stranded hunters using there location via cell phone to their family member and that information was then passed onto Star 80 via RMRU radios. After locating the subjects Star 80 landed near the command post and asked for one member of RMRU to assist them with the rescue. Brad Scott was sent to meet with the aircrew and was briefed on how they were going to rescue the stranded hunters.

After being briefed by the flight crew we flew up the canyon and located the subjects. The first person was an elderly Asian man who spoke no English. Star 80 hovered over some rocks above the subjects while I sat on the floor of the chopper and waited for the "OK" to jump over to the rock. Once I got to the rock star 80 left the area while I went to the subject and checked on his status. Once I was able to get the subject back to the top of the rock we knelt down and waited for Star 80 to return to our position. The subject not knowing English had serious doubts in his eyes for what we were about to do. Once again Star 80 hovered in front of us with the Crew Chief strapped to the side. He reached for the subject and pulled him on board. Once he was safely on board it was my

turn to reach for the Crew Chief and I was pulled onboard also. We took the subject back to base where his family awaited him. He had been able to go further than his Son in Law and the Guide so we had to fly to a different position for the other two subjects.

Once again we flew back up into the canyon to a different ledge where the other two stranded hunters waited. Again we hovered over the rocks and I jumped off the chopper. I went to the subjects and checked on there condition. There were "OK" except for some scrapes and complaints of being weak and cold. Once I had their packs and hunting rifles secured Star 80 returned for the removal process. After both subjects and their gear was safely aboard I was assisted on and we flew back to the Command Post. Sgt. Dennis Keene interviewed the subjects. The mission was over by 07:40 and the team had breakfast in Cabazon then fueled up and went 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.