



## Child fell off 80 foot waterfall

**June 18, 1981**  
**Gavilan Hills**  
**1981-020**

By Jim Fairchild

Late Sunday afternoon a call came with meager details. It was reported that a child had fallen off an 80 foot waterfall in the Gavilan Hills, sustaining possible spinal and leg injuries. Before long daughter Carol and I were driving the No. 1 van out Victoria Ave. toward the hills in question ... east of Lake Mathews, about eight miles southeast of Riverside.

Following considerable radio conversation to determine where to meet the Sheriff's Deputy, we found him, received directions, turned off onto an extremely dusty dirt road, and proceeded deep into the hills along a canyon to the scene.

The "scene" consisted of the recently landed Riverside Police Department helicopter, numerous California Division of Forestry vehicles and personnel, the Sheriff's Deputy, and distraught friends of the fallen and injured "climber." I tried to determine if anyone was in charge and had any information - no success. Then I asked a CDF man if he knew where the fall occurred, he pointed over to the canyon edge, and, upon looking down, I saw four men struggling and slipping with the litter, and adult aboard. I quickly stepped down thirty feet to take the uphill hand of the lead litter carrier. Soon we were up to the helicopter. After some rather "strong encouragement" from the writer, they turned the litter around so it would fit into the litter already lashed to the helo. I tried to ask the very serious woman with a clipboard nearby (the first aider?) about the victim's condition and was sternly told, "We got all that." So, Carol and I returned to the van and watched as the helo began its trip to the hospital. We later learned the man in the litter had sustained permanent spinal column damage at and below shoulder level.

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.