



Hang glider crash

October 20, 1981
Foothills above Elsinore
1981-034

By Kevin Walker

The phone rang at work just as I was finishing lunch (1300 hrs.). The voice at the other end was the dispatcher at the Elsinore Sheriff's office. She informed me that a hang glider had crashed in the foothills above Elsinore, and the pilot was seriously injured. Further more, information was passed out that the pilot was in the bottom of a narrow canyon and would have to be airlifted out on a sling by a helicopter. She said that Don Landells was on his way from Desert Hot Springs and would pick up my dad, Walt Walker, and myself at Arrow Printing (our place of business) in approximately 20 minutes. While Walt went and got the rescue van to pull out the necessary gear, I activated the rest of the team. The 20 minutes went by quickly enough, and within a couple of minutes of the estimated time, Don arrived in 40MC (his black and white Bell Jet Ranger). Soon after we were loaded up and enroute to Elsinore.

As we approached the city, the sheriff radioed requesting that we land at the office and pick up a sergeant. So we did, and then lifted off for Elsinore Mountain. The sergeant guided us to the crash site, Apparently the information had become somewhat twisted by the time it made it to the outside world. Because as we approached the "E" on the side of the mountain, we could see that the crash site was not in the bottom of a canyon, but was actually 100 feet below the summit of Elsinore Mountain. Also, the crash site was fairly close to a fire truck trail, and the CDF had been summoned to the accident. They had arrived first and had placed the injured man in a litter and was carrying him to the top when we arrived.

Don landed on the top of the ridge. We pulled the doors off and loaded the subject into the back, and then flew him down to the Elsinore hospital. Also the man's injuries were not as serious as they were thought to be. From the hospital, we flew back up to the ridge and picked up our gear and re-hinged the back doors, and then back to San Jacinto and the printing business. By the way, it sure is nice not to have to drive to a mission. All kidding aside, if the unfortunate pilot would have been as seriously injured as reported, that time might have helped to save a life.

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