

Hunter tumbled 200 feet

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Horse Canyon
1982-038

By Bruce Gahagan

At 9:30 the phone rang, and at the other end was Walt Walker. I was told of an injured man in the Anza Borrego area. With that, I called fellow member Glenn Henderson, to car pool to the road-head in Anza.

We met at the CDF station and then drove to the gate where the dirt road starts down Coyote Canyon. Information was as follows, William Marsden and several companions had been deer hunting up Horse Canyon which is a tributary to Coyote Canyon. While ascending a knife edge ridge, William slipped in the loose gravel and tumbled down nearly 200feet. In doing so fractured his leg.

To get to the base of the ridge, a two hour drive in with four wheel drives was required. Assisting RMRU was the Hemet team with several of their people in jeeps. Glenn had his Bronco, so with every one loaded we started out. It was a long and rough trip in. And not without casualties The Anza four wheel drive ambulance had started in before we arrived, and along the way had bent a rim which caused the tire to go flat. The CDF gave us a spare to take in to the ambulance. Also along the way one of the Hemet jeeps lost a tire. Never the less we made it to the hunters base camp. Talk about being ready to hike. After such a difficult trip in, it was good to get out.

With packs on we headed up the steep ridge. It was about a half hour hike/climb to where William had fallen. Field leader Bernie McIlvoy descended to the side of where William had tumbled earlier as the rock fall danger was extreme. After surveying the situation Bernie came to the conclusion that a technical raise was out of the question because of the danger to William and rescue members. We radioed out the info to Walt at base. The plan was to use a helicopter and sling load William out in a litter. It was only a short time and the word came back. Landells Aviation would be enroute at first light. We went ahead and sprinted Williams injury and made him more comfortable in a sleeping bag.

After spending a long night standing around a small fire to keep warm, it was indeed a nice sight to see the helicopter approach. On board was Walt, and late comers John Muratet, Joe Erickson and Kevin Walker who I think was late because he was afraid to scratch his jeep or get it stuck.

At this point things moved right along. Several of us loaded William into the litter and secured him and hooked up the horizontal rigging system. On the top the helicopter sling was readied, and in no time we were ready to go. Don lifted up and lipped over and maneuvered down the chute and above the litter to where we were waiting. Once in position Bernie hooked the litter to the sling. Don then slowly raised the helicopter up. Carefully, Don then moved back up to the ridge, and set the litter back down with a little help from the ground personnel.

We then loaded William into the back of the bird, and Don flew him out to Anza and the waiting ambulance. Don then returned and flew us and all the technical equipment back to the vehicles below. As Don headed for home we could not help but be envious of him as his ride home would be faster and a lot smoother than what lie ahead of us.

Editor's Note: Words can not tell of the skill and expertise needed to air lift a subject out, underneath the helicopter. This was only the second time in the teams history that this has been required.

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.