

Man slid down dry waterfall

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Fuller Mill Creek
1987-028

By Bill Blaschko

Guy Mike Baker, 32, of Indio and his friend, Paul Munsee took a hike uphill from the Fuller Mill Creek area on September 6, the Sunday of Labor Day Weekend. Guy and Paul had hiked up a trace of a trail off to one side of a very steep canyon. Upon returning the two chose to come down the center of the canyon rather than follow the trail. Guy encountered a 40 foot waterfall and tried to climb down it. Although the steep rocky slope was dry, the rock was water polished, and Mr. Baker slid down the near vertical slope landing on his right ankle. When Paul saw the fate of his hiking companion he chose a safer route to go and get help.

Mr. Munsee contacted the Pine Cove Volunteer Fire Department, the agency with jurisdiction for medical problems in that area. Volunteers from Pine Cove Fire Department were able to reach Mr. Baker and administer first aid, but they did not have enough manpower to extricate the victim. At this point, about 11 AM, RMRU was called out.

Bud White and the author were assigned as a bash team to assess what further materials would be needed to safely evacuate Mr. Baker. On our arrival the subject had a compound fracture of the right ankle that had been well splinted, some scrapes and bruises, but no other injuries. Mr. Baker lay at the bottom of a 40 foot waterfall with steep slick rock on three sides and another waterfall below on the fourth side. Under the author's direction paramedic Chuck Benson inserted an intravenous line and gave the subject morphine for pain.

Bud White meanwhile devised a plan for raising Mr. Baker and radioed out for the additional necessary supplies. With volunteers from RMRU and the Pine Cove Fire Department, Guy Baker was strapped into the stokes litter and raised out of the canyon bottom, and in stages, brought over to the narrow path he had hiked up. At numerous points the going was tight and steep, so other team members were repeatedly setting up anchors and belays to make sure there would be no further problems.



Jim Fairchild

CARRYOUT - RMRU members and Pine Cove Volunteers work together to evacuate injured hiker Guy Mike Baker back to Highway 243 and the waiting ambulance.

Using the wheeled litter Mr. Baker was transported to Highway 243 where a Pine Cove Fire Department ambulance was waiting. Mr. Baker was taken directly to Hemet Valley Hospital and underwent orthopedic surgery that evening. This mission demonstrated the benefits of good cooperation between agencies, each contributing its expertise.

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.