

## Sandy Men Survive a Drive Into Abandoned Mine Shaft

By Cornelia deBruin  
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

PROVO — Two Sandy men are lucky to be alive after their 1956 Jeep whipped around a corner, crashed through a fence and plunged about 50 feet down an abandoned mine shaft Sunday.

Mark Hoefnagle, 20, and Anthony Ballif, 23, were riding around in a remote area in Tooele County near the border with Utah County that is honeycombed with abandoned mine shafts at about 3 p.m. when the accident happened, said Utah County Sheriff's Lt. Ron Fernstedt.

Both men were trapped in the shaft until about 7:30 p.m. when some other people driving in the area heard their faint calls and whistles for help.

Kent Ashton, Midvale, and Greg Seybold helped the trapped pair to the surface by tearing out the remaining wire-mesh fence, and lowering it down the shaft so the trapped men could climb out.

In the meantime, three women

in the group drove to get help.

Seybold said Monday that when Hoefnagle climbed out he "came up and gave us a hug."

He was followed by Ballif who, Seybold said, kissed the bug guard on Ashton's four-wheel drive Ford truck that was anchoring the fence-ladder and said, "Oh, a Ford — I've never been so glad to see a Ford in my life."

Seybold and Ashton gave the men some sodas and put them in the cab of Ashton's truck until rescue crews arrived from Utah and Tooele counties.

The two men were taken to American Fork Hospital where Ballif was treated and released and Hoefnagle was admitted, suffering from internal injuries. He was in serious condition Monday, according to hospital spokeswoman Jill Owensby.

The Tooele County Sheriff's Office issued a warning Monday for anyone going into the Ochre Mountains between Stockton and Five-Mile Pass.

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