

AP Photo

Rescuers stabilize motorcycle rider Mark Mercado after they lifted him from a deserted mine shaft near California City, Calif., Sunday.

Authorities rescue boy, 12, trapped in old mine

CALIFORNIA CITY, Calif. (AP) — A 12-year-old boy fell 200 feet down an abandoned

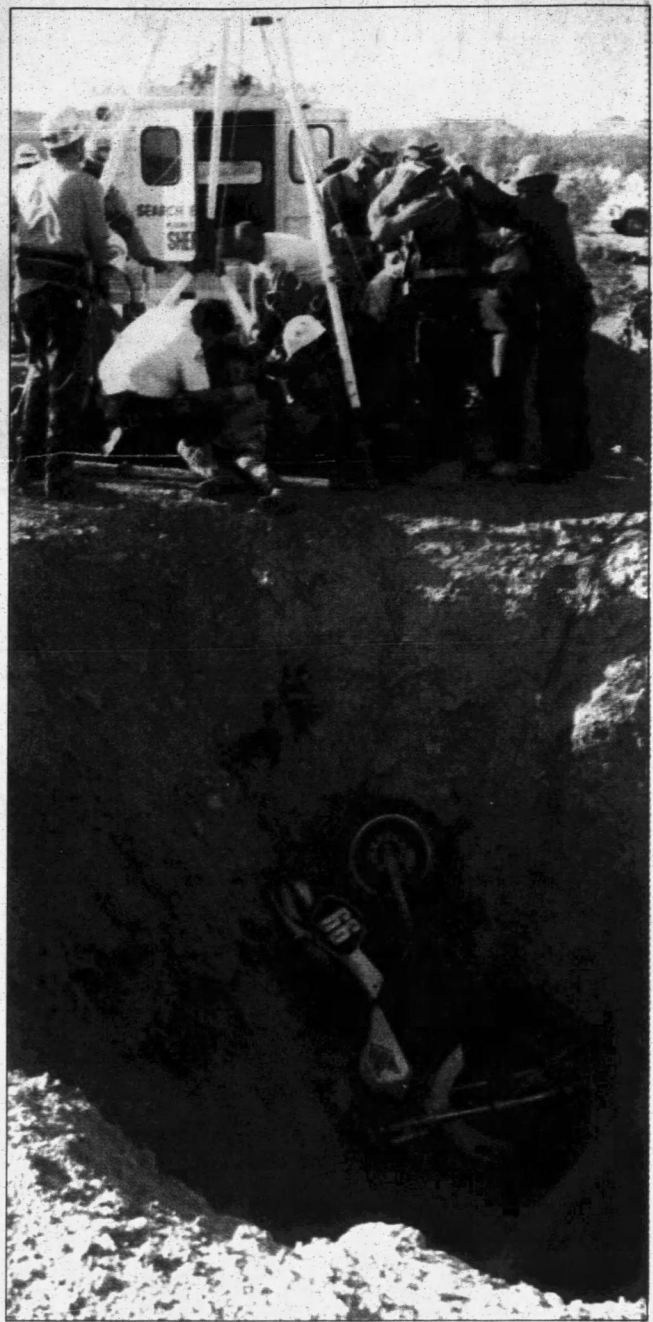
mine Sunday and remained trapped for almost four hours before fire officials rescued him.

Mark Mercado emerged from the ordeal conscious and without major injuries, said Kern County Fire Capt. Tomas Patlan. He was airlifted to Loma Linda Medical Center.

"He was conscious and he helped us out a lot. He's a brave young man," Patlan said.

The fire department was notified of the incident at 2:15 p.m. and succeeded in freeing the boy about 6 p.m.

Mark was riding a dirt bike with his family when he crashed through planks



AP Photo

Rescue personnel treat a boy after he accidentally rode his motorcycle into an abandon mine Sunday, near California City, Calif. The boy fell 200 feet down into the mine Sunday and remained trapped for almost four hours before fire officials rescued him. He emerged from the ordeal conscious and without major injuries, and was airlifted to Loma Linda Medical, said Kern County Fire Capt. Tomas Patlan.

covering the shaft.

"He wanted to lead, so I let him go ahead and lead," said Mark's father, Ron Mercado. "He came up over this hill, which he should know better than to do."

Abandoned mines are common in the northern Kern County area where the boy fell, near the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station north of Red Mountain.

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