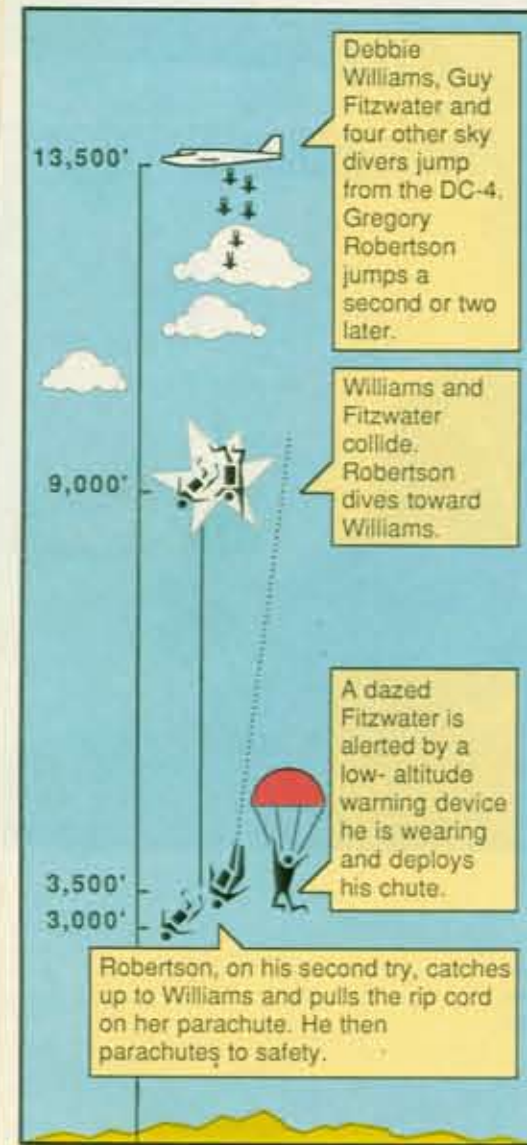


Debbie Williams was plummeting to earth unconscious when Gregory Robertson swooped to save her

# MIRACLE IN THE SKY



Lifesaver Robertson after the rescue



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**COOLIDGE, AZ** "I hope I can do this," is all Gregory Robertson recalls thinking as he rocketed through the air to rescue Debbie Williams. Falling faster than 100 miles per hour, Williams was unconscious, plunging to certain death.

He did it. Miraculously, Robertson reached Williams and yanked her rip cord seconds before she would have hit the ground. Only then did he pull his own.

Robertson, 35, an engineer for AT&T, had just jumped from the DC-4 that had carried him and six other skydivers up 13,500 feet for a simple formation dive over Coolidge, Arizona. Robertson, the last to leave the plane, was to hover over the group as they maneuvered into star formation. But as the divers scattered, Williams, a thirty-one-year-old fifth-grade teacher from Post, Texas, slammed into Guy Fitzwater and was knocked unconscious. "She slipped off his back, sort of rag-doll looking," Robertson says. "She passed under me and there was blood all over her mouth. It just didn't look like she was awake."

Pulling his arms to his side and extending his legs straight behind him, Robertson shot

himself in Williams' direction at 180 miles per hour as she flipped onto her back and fell. When he reached her, they were 2700 feet from the ground — ten seconds from impact. "She was out cold," Robertson says. He maneuvered Williams into an upright position and jerked down on her rip cord, opening her parachute and saving her life.

"Greg had to catch her and stabilize her so her chute wouldn't wrap around her, and then pull her rip cord," says William Ottley, of the United States Parachute Association. "And he had to get out from under her and open his own chute. It really is a miracle."

Williams is faring well, recovering from serious internal injuries she sustained upon her uncontrolled landing. Robertson is in fine shape, fazed only by the media blitz that followed the heroic rescue. "He's a very modest guy," says fellow skydiver Bob Kuhn. "He's been exhausted by all of this." **Lauren Tarshis**



ARND BRONKHORST/PHOTOS

Williams was seconds from impact when Robertson opened her chute.