



Missing Male Corona

May 26-27, 2015

Grace Retreat Center Cleveland National Forest

2015-024

Written by Patrick McCurdy

RMRU was called out late on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 26th, to search for a 24-year-old Hispanic male who had been at a religious retreat in the hills above Corona and gone missing two days earlier. Family and friends had been searching for two days, with no luck. Members of RMRU arrived shortly after 5 PM and searched until dusk, before deciding to take it up again the next morning. At 7 AM on the 27th RMRU members, one searcher from (DSSAR), and one member of Riverside Search Dogs, took to the field along with the Sheriffs off-highway vehicle enforcement (ROVE) team to continue the search.

After several hours of searching Kevin and I noticed that our Star 9 helicopter which had been doing search patterns above us suddenly stopped and was in a low hover. We also noticed one of the ROVE team start running towards the area under the helicopter. Kevin and I immediately followed and the ROVE team who did a fantastic job of breaking trail through very a brushed-choked ravine to assist us in getting to the subject as fast as we could.



Heavy Brush in Search Area
Photo by Unknown.

The subject was face-down in the ravine, not wearing any pants or any shoes. He was semi-conscious and only somewhat responsive. His vital signs were stable and he had no obvious serious injuries, but he was unable to roll over or sit up. We quickly made the decision that a carry out was not an appropriate plan, and that a helicopter hoist was the best way to get this person to medical aid as fast as possible. I called Glenn on the radio informed him we would need a Stokes litter, c-collar, and backboard. Glenn from RMRU and Chris Stephen from DDSAR, who had both been searching another area, quickly brought in the gear needed for a hoist.



Patrick giving Subject water and Kevin
Photo by Unknown.

We applied cervical spine immobilization and rolled him onto a backboard. Once strapped to the backboard, he was then secured in the Stokes litter and we rigged the Stokes harness for a hoist. In short order we had the man packaged and Star 9 hoisted him out and flew him a short distance to a waiting ambulance.

Hoist Video

[Hoist Video](#) - Thanks to RSO for a great video!

What really impressed everyone on this mission was pilot Chad Marlatt (flying as Technical Flight Officer (TFO)) spotting this guy who was wearing black and lying face down in a very narrow ravine in dense foliage. It is very hard to see anyone from the air if they are not moving, but Chad did an amazing job in spotting this sick and injured man. Were it not for Chad's sharp eyes, the man very likely would not have lived. While we were rigging the litter pilot Eric Bashta landed and switched seats with (TFO- pilot) Chad Marlatt. Eric Bashta then became (TFO) for the hoist.

CBS News Story

[CBS News Story](#)

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickenson, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Kevin Kearn, Roger May, Patrick McCurdy, and Ray Weden.

Sheriff's Aviation: (Pilot/TFO - Eric Bashta) (Pilot/TFO - Chad Marlett)

Other Teams Involved: Desert Sheriff's Search & Rescue (DSSAR), Riverside County Search Dogs, Sheriff's Emergency Response Team, Sheriff's Off-Highway Vehicle Enforcement team (ROVE), CPL Todd Garvin (with his bloodhound Inge), and Deputies from the Elsinore Station.

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.