



Hoist Ortega Highway

February 22, 2017
Cleveland National Forest
2017-008

Written by Raymond Weden

RMRU was called to help a family of four who were stuck on the side of the hill just below The Lookout restaurant on the Ortega Highway. It was approximately 5:45pm when I received the call to head to Hemet Ryan Airport as the family had been located and we were going hoist them out. Upon arrival, the crew of Star 9 informed me this might be a "no go" as the overcast clouds were already pushing in from Orange County. I made a call to have a page go out to the rest of RMRU to be ready for potential technical rescue attempt from the ground if the weather held us back from hoisting. Cameron arrived at the open field on the corner of Grand and the Ortega Highway as this is where the Command Post (CP) was setup with Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) and where we would initiate a ground rescue if needed.

As we flew over the hoist area the Pilot, Deputy Calhoun, let me know we need to make quick work as the weather was closing in, but not here yet. I was dropped in to our missing family's location with 4 "screamer suits". When I arrived, there was an 8-year-old male, an 11-year-old female, and their parents. They went on a day hike hoping to hike to The Lookout Restaurant from the bottom of the hill. They were close as we could hear cars from the Ortega above but clearly ledge up. With it now dark, they decided it was too dangerous to hike down and called for help - this was the right call.

The mother was shivering uncontrollably when I arrived and was showing signs of mild hypothermia. I requested Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to be on standby and determined she need to go first as the rest of the family where in good health. I placed the screamer suit on her with a helmet and sent her on her way. While Star 9 was dropping her off at the field below where an ambulance from American Medical Response (AMR) was standing by, I suited the rest of the family up.

With the juveniles at the ages they were, I decided I was going to hoist with them. We did a tandem hoist with the 8 y/o male first and myself. We were taken to the CP and then I returned and did another tandem hoist with the 11 y/o female. Finally, I was back and sent the father up and then they sent the hook back down for me. Once I was up with

Father in the Helicopter we flew to the CP. We landed in the field to drop off the father and do a quick debrief. A quick flight back to Hemet Ryan and this one was in the books.

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickinson and Raymond Weden.

RSO Aviation: Pilot Mike Calhoun and TFO (The Other Guy) Eric Bashta.

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.