



Hoist Box Springs

July 29, 2014

Riverside behind UCR

2014-033

Written by Eric Holden

"Have to get up at 3:30am to drive out to a mission tomorrow" I thought to myself as I headed to bed at 9pm. As soon as I lay down my phone goes off, but not my emergency call out notification, its Gwenda calling me. I figured she must be calling to tell me that tomorrow's mission has been cancelled. As soon as I pick up I hear "Eric, get out to Hemet-Ryan Airport, you have a hoist mission". Being I had packed everything for tomorrow I was out the door in 5 minutes. On the way to the Airport I got a text from Cameron, he was on his way to the airport as well. It looks like we will get to have our first hoist mission together. We arrived at the airport, (RSO) Riverside Sheriff Office Aviation, at the same time and quickly geared up. After a quick briefing with pilot Mike Calhoun and TFO (Technical Flight Officer) Ray Heirs, we were told 3 females (ages 15, 20 and 22) are stuck on the side of Box Springs Mountain. They had gotten into a location where they could no longer go up or down. We stowed away 3 screamer suits and 3 helmets and were soon air born heading towards Riverside.

As we approached the subjects' location we can see the light of their cell phone being waved. Two of the subjects were on a flat section of grass and one was clinging to the side of a cliff about 10ft down from the other two. Mike expertly positioned the helicopter and Ray lowered me down about 20 feet from the subjects. Next came our packs and finally Cameron was lowered down. Cameron proceeded to get the screamer suits read while I climbed down to Selena who was stuck on the cliff. This cliff is basically very loose dirt, big rocks, and long grass. She couldn't climb up any further as the dirt would just give way causing her to slide back down. After getting to her, I kicked some big foot holds in the dirt and with my help we got to the flat grassy section.

They had a few small scraps and scratches on them but were otherwise in good condition. We got them in the screamer suits and Cameron called the helicopter to come pick them up. Once again the aviation crew positioned the helicopter perfectly and lowered the hook. A few hoists later and two of the three subjects were flying to a nearby landing zone. We interviewed the third subject while waiting for the helicopter to return. Turns out that two of the subjects are sisters and other was a friend. They left at 6pm to hike up

the mountain and quickly lost the trail. They decided to head for a ridge line and in the process slid/fell multiple times, saw a snake, got stuck, and eventually called 911 for help. After a very emotional interview we heard aviation coming back and once again they plucked the last subject off the side of the mountain with surgical like precision.



Cameron, Eric, and 1 Subject
Photo by Eric Holden.

The pilot let us know that they were low on fuel and after dropping off the last subject would refuel and come back for us. Cameron and I got to spend some good quality time on the side of the mountain with the city lights providing more than enough illumination.



Cameron and City Lights
Photo by Eric Holden.

After all the excitement the scene turned quite tranquil. Shooting stars, coyotes and the rustling of grass were our companions till aviation returned. After a couple of quick hoists and a flight back to Hemet we were back to the airport at 1am. We had a quick debrief in which we all agreed that the mission went great and was just like training. We said our goodbyes and I headed home for my 90 minutes of sleep before the next mission. Big thanks to Mike and Ray with RSO Aviation for once again RSO Aviation performed flawlessly.

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickinson and Eric Holden.

RSO Aviation: Pilot Mike Calhoun and TFO Ray Heirs.

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.