

Hoist Fuller Ridge

July 31, 2014
San Jacinto Mountains
2014-035

Written by Eric Holden

Wow, Seems I like missions. Anyways here is the last of 3 in a row mission write ups. First solo hoist mission, done at night, 120ft lower to the ground. Good times!

I get the text and it looks like there may be a mission out of the Tram tonight. I had to make work in the morning and knowing that once you go up the tram you don't get back down till 7am meant that I probably wouldn't be going on this one.... or so I thought. About 10 minutes later I get a phone call, "Ready to do a hoist?" This would be my second hoist in less than 48 hours, so out the door I go heading toward the Hemet Ryan Airport.

I meet up with Chad Marlat and Ray Heirs at the hanger and get the information, two missing hikers out of the tramway and we have GPS coordinates so hopefully this will be a quick run. We gear up and head off in the night towards San Jacinto Mountain. About 10 minutes later we are able to pick up the subjects light. Unfortunately they are not located in a good location, lots of high trees. Through the expert skills of Ray and Chad they were able to lower me 120 feet through the trees to the waiting ground below. As the helicopter takes off I quickly located the two subjects, Ali (23) and Phuong (25). Both were cold but otherwise in good condition. I get them warm jackets, water, and quickly started to suit them up in screamer suits. Unfortunately the location that I was lowered into would be difficult to hoist us all out. Chad radios that he found a spot a few hundred yards up the mountain that would only be a 50 foot hoist.

We start making our way up but unfortunately we are met with a lot of dense thigh high brush. After some bushwhacking and a few scratches we make it to the helicopter pick up spot. I signaled that we are good to go and Ray lowers the hoist. First up was Ali. Chad radioed down to let us know they needed fuel and would drop off Ali and be back shortly. Over the next 30 minutes I was able to speak with Phoebe about how they got lost. Turns out they left the Palm Springs Tramway at 10am and made the peak at 5pm. From there they took a "Shortcut". With no map, water, or warm clothing this proved to be the big mistake. They ended up about half way down Fuller Ridge at 33°49'02.4"N

and 116°42'01.8"W. At this point they knew they were lost and called for a rescue.



Eric and Phoebe
Photo by Eric Holden.

We were soon greeted by the sound of rotors and within a few minutes Phuong was on her way up the hoist. A minute later the hook came back down and as I was being raised the helicopter drifted slightly and I was about ready to take a big pendulum swing. Quick acting Ray lowered me back down and after a quick reset back up I went. We returned to Hemet Ryan and I said my goodbyes as they decided how to get the subjects back to the tram station.

RMRU Members Involved: Eric Holden and Les Walker.

RSO Aviation: Pilot Chad Marlat 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.