



Corona Skyline Hoist

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Cleveland National Forest
2016-038

Written by Judy Spowart

During our return to the Hemet-Ryan airfield after the Pine Springs Ranch mission, the pilots received a call that four hikers who had been looking for the climbing ropes were now stranded on the Corona Skyline trail and needed assistance. The TFO asked if he could keep Glenn and me, since we were already onboard. We both said yes, and after a brief stop at the airport, we headed to Corona around 8pm.

It was now dark, but the pilots had been given the location of the hikers from 911. They also asked the hikers turn on their cell phone lights so it would be easier to spot them. This did the trick, and within a few minutes we were circling above. The challenge with this rescue was that the hikers were on a steep portion of the mountain and were surrounded by thick brush. There were no obvious places for the helicopter to land, so we quickly decided that a hoist would be required.

Since there were four subjects, it would take multiple trips to get them all out. We decided that Glenn and I would be lowered to the subjects first, each carrying our packs and two screamer suits. The wind had picked up by now, and the TFO informed us that this would not likely be a pretty operation. Glenn went first and landed very close to the hikers. My trip down was not as smooth as our practice hoists at the airfield. I tried landing on my feet, but quickly found myself on my back, due to the weight of my pack and the loose dirt I was attempting to stand on at such a steep angle. No worries though...as long as I was attached to the hoist hook I knew I wasn't going anywhere. I quickly got myself situated, un-hooked myself, and gave the hand signal to the TFO to let him know he could retrieve the hook.

Glenn started suiting up the hikers in the screamer suits and once we had the first one ready, we signaled the helicopter to come back for a pick up. I went with the first hiker so that I could exit with him and then stay on the ground to meet the helicopter and escort the hikers to the waiting deputy after each trip. It took three trips, but we got all four out safely. They were cold and hungry, but luckily no one was injured. After a quick check in with the deputy Glenn and I boarded the helicopter and we again headed back to Hemet

Ryan landing at 10pm.

RMRU Members Involved: Glenn Henderson and Judy Spowart.

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.