

Wing gets four saves during busy weekend

MAINTENANCE AND FLIGHT crews from Kirtland's 1550th Aircrew Training and Test Wing were credited with four saves last weekend in emergency rescue missions.

Wing spokesman Capt. Richard Mullery said that on May 13 at 1:20 p.m. air traffic controllers lost radar contact with a Cessna 310 airplane about 10 miles west of Zuni, N.M. The aircraft was flying from Orange County Airport in California to Tucumcari, N.M.

Captain Mullery said other aircraft in the area reported hearing an emergency locator transmitter signal over their radios.

"After Air Force assistance was requested," Mullery said, "an HH-3 'Jolly Green Giant' helicopter was launched from Kirtland at 3 p.m."

THE MISSION WAS flown by a crew of the wing's 1551st Flying Training Squadron. It arrived in the general crash area at 4:15 and picked up the locator signal and tracked it using direction-finding equipment, Mullery stated.

"All three people in the aircraft survived the crash but received serious injuries," Captain Mullery said. The pararescue team of MSgt. Jim Spears and Sgt. Tom Stone prepared the survivors for flight and in less than an hour the helicopter was on the ground at Gallup, N.M.

Cpts. John Mokri and David Charland piloted the HH-3. TSgt. Irv Stiffler was the flight mechanic and the ground recovery crew included SrA. Robin Aumann, TSgt. William

Hope, Sgt. James Jones and AICs Franklin Vaughn, Lavern Betts and Vaughn Remondini.

Bad weather in Albuquerque caused the 1550th crew to spend the night in Gallup, Captain Mullery said.

"THE CONDITION of the survivors had stabilized, but they required more complex medical care than was available in Gallup," he said. The helicopter returned with the patients to Albuquerque at noon Saturday, where two ambulances transferred them to St. Joseph's Hospital.

The 1550th flew its second rescue mission of the weekend Sunday afternoon.

An H-1N 'Huey' helicopter of the 1550th Flying Training Squadron took off at 4:55 p.m. for Hobbs, N.M. A 17-year-old girl had been seriously injured in an auto accident the week before. Her condition required more complete medical care in Albuquerque, Captain Mullery said.

The Huey crew returned to Albuquerque at about 10 p.m. with the patient and two nurses. An ambulance transferred her to St. Joseph's Hospital.

Pilots for the mission were Lt. Col. Patrick Helms and Capt. Al Kent. The flight mechanic was TSgt. Al Mathieson.

The maintenance launch and recovery crew included MSgt. Arthur Williams, Sgt. Ken Hall, and AIC Tim Mauch and John Parker.