



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tennessee National Guard rescues hiker in National Park

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – During the afternoon of August 15, a medical flight crew from the Tennessee Army National Guard performed an emergency air evacuation mission for a hiker suffering a severe illness in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Shortly after 1:50 p.m., eastern time, the Tennessee National Guard and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency were notified of a sick hiker needing medical assistance and evacuation to a nearby hospital. The hiker was in a remote area of the park, roughly 1.5 miles west of Clingmans Dome.

50 minutes after being notified, TEMA approved the mission and Tennessee National Guardsmen assigned to the 1-230th Assault Helicopter Battalion, in Knoxville, assembled a flight crew, prepared a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, and launched to rescue the hiker.

The Tennessee Army National Guard flight crew consisted of two pilots, Chief Warrant Officer 3s Luke Hargrove and Daniel Backus, crew chief, Staff Sgt. Ryan McKnight, and two flight paramedics, Sgt. 1st Class Nolan Ogle and Tracy Banta.

The aircrew departed around 2:40 p.m., from McGhee-Tyson Air National Guard Base and arrived at the rescue site 12 minutes later. The crew quickly located the hiker and the park rangers from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, who were rendering first aid.

Shortly after 2:50 p.m., the aircraft crew chief, Ryan McKnight, lowered Nolan Ogle and Tracy Banta, the flight paramedics, to the ground by hoist to do a quick medical assessment and prepare the hiker for transport. After a few short minutes rendering aid, the hiker was connected to a rescue strop and hoisted into the Blackhawk helicopter hovering above. Banta and Ogle were also hoisted into the aircraft where they continued giving aid to the patient. The entire rescue took less than 20 minutes. Once everyone was onboard, the aircraft flew to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville.

At approximately 3:30 p.m., the aircraft landed at UT Medical Center where medical personnel received the hiker and rushed the patient into the emergency room. The entire rescue mission took less than an hour.

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Tennessee National Guard crew chief, Staff Sgt. Ryan McKnight, lowers the flight paramedic, Sgt. 1st Class Nolan Ogle, to a sick hiker during a rescue at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, August 15. (Submitted photo)



A sick hiker is hoisted into a hovering Tennessee Army National Guard Blackhawk helicopter during a rescue at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, July 27. (Submitted photo)

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