



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 28, 2023
23-17

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Tennessee National Guard rescues hiker in National Park

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – During the evening of July 27, a medical flight crew from the Tennessee Army National Guard performed an emergency air evacuation mission for an injured hiker at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Shortly before 7 p.m., eastern time, the Tennessee National Guard and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency were notified of an injured hiker, suffering head trauma, needing assistance and immediate medical aid and evacuation to a nearby hospital. The hiker was in a remote area of the park, near Inspiration Point, along Alum Cave Trail.

40 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 3's Andrew Redley and Daniel Backus, two crew chiefs, Staff Sgt. Allen Belcher and Sgt. Christopher Farrar, and one flight paramedic, Sgt. 1st Class Giovanni DeZuani.

The aircrew departed shortly before 7:40 p.m., from Joint Base McGhee-Tyson and arrived at the rescue site 11 minutes later. The crew quickly located the victim and the park rangers from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, who were rendering first aid.

Shortly after 8 p.m., the aircraft crew chief, Christopher Farrar, lowered Giovanni DeZuani, the flight paramedic, 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 put on a Skedco stretcher, a specially designed rescue litter, and hoisted into the Blackhawk helicopter hovering above. Banta was then hoisted into the aircraft where he continued giving aid to the patient. Once both were onboard, the aircraft flew to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville.

At approximately 9 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 and a half.

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Tennessee National Guard crew chief, Sgt. Christopher Farrar, lowers the flight paramedic, Sgt. 1st Class Giovanni DeZuani, to an injured hiker during a rescue at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, July 27. (Submitted photo)



Sgt. Christopher Farrar, a crew chief with the Tennessee Army National Guard, prepares to hoist an injured hiker, who is immobilized and protected on a Skedco stretcher, into a hovering Blackhawk helicopter during a rescue at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, July 27. (Submitted photo)



An injured hiker, who is immobilized and protected on a Skedco stretcher, 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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