



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tennessee National Guard rescues hiker in National Park

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – A medical flight crew from the Tennessee Army National Guard performed an emergency air evacuation mission for a hiker in medical distress at Cumberland Gap National Historic Park, June 28.

Shortly after 10 a.m., eastern time, the Tennessee National Guard and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency were notified of a 22-year-old 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, along a hiking trail, just north of the Tennessee border in Virginia.

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 aircrew departed shortly after 11:10 a.m. local time from Joint Base McGhee-Tyson and arrived at the rescue site 25 minutes later. The crew quickly located the victim and the park rangers from the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park who were rendering first aid.

Around 11:45 a.m., the aircraft crew chief lowered two 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 put on a Skedco stretcher, a specially designed rescue litter, and was hoisted into the Blackhawk helicopter hovering above, along with a flight paramedic, where additional aid was given to the patient. The second flight paramedic was then hoisted back into the helicopter, and they flew to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville.

At approximately 12:25 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.

The Tennessee Army National Guard flight crew consisted of two pilots, Capt. Brandon Rodriguez and Capt. Hulon Holmes, crew chief Sgt. Nicholas Kannard, and two flight paramedics, Sgt. 1st Class Giovanni DeZuani and Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Banta.

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An injured hiker and a Tennessee Army National Guard flight paramedic are hoisted into a Blackhawk helicopter during a rescue at the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park, June 28. (Submitted photo)



Sgt. 1st Class Giovanni DeZuani, a flight paramedic with the Tennessee Army National Guard, is hoisted into a hovering Blackhawk helicopter with an injured hiker who is immobilized and protected on a Skedco stretcher, during a rescue at the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park, June 28. (Submitted photo)

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