



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 8, 2021

21-35

CONTACT: Lt. Col. Darrin Haas

OFFICE: 615.313.0662

Darrin.w.haas.mil@mail.mil

Tennessee National Guard, local authorities conduct water rescues during Vigilant Guard exercise

LEBANON, Tenn. – The Tennessee National Guard teamed up with local agencies Thursday to conduct three simulated rescue missions in Lebanon and Smyrna. The simulated rescues were part of Vigilant Guard 2021, a week-long, statewide training exercise simulating a natural disaster and its effects on communities across the state.

Wilson County Emergency Management Agency, Nashville Fire Department, Tennessee Highway Patrol and the Williamson County Sheriff’s Office all worked in partnership with the Tennessee National Guard to perform the rescue missions.

National Guard members used a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter to fly the Nashville Fire Department’s Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team over Old Hickory Lake to rescue citizens stranded in the water. Williamson County EMA officials trained Guard members on proper water retrieval techniques. Guardsmen and Williamson County EMA members played the role of citizens being hoisted out of the water and lifted up 200 feet in the air into a hovering helicopter.

In a separate exercise, members of the Lebanon Fire Department acted as stranded citizens and were hoisted out of danger by the Tennessee National Guard and the Nashville Fire Department. The Wilson County Fairgrounds was used as the disaster site. These large-scale, inter-agency exercises provided a critical opportunity to practice for real disasters in Tennessee.

“Having all these different agencies working together is great,” said Capt. Tommie Lane, Project Officer for Vigilant Guard 2021. “When something real happens and we need to act quickly to save lives, we will already have good relationships that will help us respond to incidents.”

Over 600 Soldiers and Airmen from the Tennessee National Guard, along with 400 emergency professionals from 50 federal, state and local agencies trained alongside one another while responding to multiple emergency scenarios during Vigilant Guard 2021.

“Locally, we work with emergency personnel pretty much on a daily basis,” said Lee Bowling, Williamson County EMA Shift Commander. “The ability to incorporate the Tennessee National Guard, and all they can offer, makes us that much more effective in saving lives.”

To learn more about the Vigilant Guard exercise, please visit www.tn.gov/military/news.

- (30) -



Members of the Tennessee National Guard and the Nashville Fire Department's Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team take part in a rescue exercise, August 5, at the Wilson County Fairgrounds, during Vigilant Guard 2021, a large-scale inter-agency exercise simulating a dangerous hurricane impacting communities across Tennessee. (Photo by 1st Lt. Sarah Kohrt)



Tennessee National Guardsman work with members of the Williamson County Emergency Management Agency during a water rescue exercise, August 5, at Old Hickory Lake, during Vigilant Guard 2021, a large-scale inter-agency exercise simulating a dangerous hurricane impacting communities across Tennessee. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Cordeiro)



Members of the Tennessee National Guard and the Nashville Fire Department’s Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team take part in a rescue exercise, August 5, at the Wilson County Fairgrounds, during Vigilant Guard 2021, a large-scale inter-agency exercise simulating a dangerous hurricane impacting communities across Tennessee. (Photo by 1st Lt. Sarah Kohrt)



Tennessee National Guardsman work with members of the Williamson County Emergency Management Agency during a water rescue exercise, August 5, at Old Hickory Lake, during Vigilant Guard 2021, a large-scale inter-agency exercise simulating a dangerous hurricane impacting communities across Tennessee. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Cordeiro)

All Tennessee Army and Air National Guard press releases can be found at
<https://www.tn.gov/military/news.html>

###