



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tennessee National Guard rescues hiker suffering from severe illness

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – A medical flight crew from the Tennessee National Guard conducted an emergency air evacuation mission after a hiker suffered a severe illness on the Appalachian Trail, Mar. 15.

Shortly after 7:00 a.m., the Tennessee Military Department and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency were notified of a hiker who was suffering from a severe illness near Double Spring Gap Shelter in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The hiker was weak and unable to stand or walk. Once alerted, the Tennessee National Guard began preparing for an emergency rescue mission.

A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter from Detachment 1, Company C, 1-171st Aviation Regiment, based in Knoxville, prepared for flight and took off less than 30 minutes later.

The flight crew consisted of Chief Warrant Officer 2 Daniel Backus, pilot in command, Capt. Philip Webster, pilot, Sgt. Chris Farrar, crew chief, and Sgt. 1st Class Cassandra Antes and Sgt. 1st Class Giovanni DeZuani were the flight paramedics.

Just before 9:00 a.m., the flight crew located the patient near Double Spring Gap Shelter. Farrar lowered DeZuani on the helicopter rescue hoist to the patient for a medical assessment. Shortly after 9 a.m., Farrar hoisted both patient and paramedic into the aircraft. Once the patient was on board, DeZuani and Antes rendered aid to the patient as the aircraft flew to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville.

Approximately 9:22 a.m., the aircraft landed at UT Medical Center where medical personnel received the patient. The entire rescue mission took less than an hour and a half.

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A Tennessee National Guard flight crew arrives to rescue an ill hiker on the Appalachian Trail, Mar. 15. The Tennessee National Guard conducted the emergency air evacuation mission after being notified of a severely ill hiker in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park near Double Spring Gap Shelter. (Courtesy photo from the Tennessee National Guard)



A Tennessee National Guard medical crew arrives at UT Medical Center with a hiker who suffered a severe illness on the Appalachian Trail, Mar. 15. The Tennessee National Guard conducted the emergency air evacuation mission after being notified of a severely ill hiker in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. (Courtesy photo from the Tennessee National Guard)

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