



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 21, 2022

22-33

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Tennessee National Guard rescues hiker near Appalachian Trail

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – A medical flight crew from the Tennessee National Guard conducted an emergency air evacuation of a hiker suffering chest pains along the Appalachian Trail, Sept. 20.

Shortly after 12:30 p.m. EST, the Tennessee Military Department and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency were notified of a 56-year-old hiker suffering cardiac distress. The hiker was located at the Derrick Knob Shelter off the Appalachian Trail, near the border of Tennessee and North Carolina. Due to the severity of the medical emergency, the Tennessee National Guard was alerted to locate and safely transport the patient to the nearest hospital.

At approximately 1:00 p.m., a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter and crew assigned to the 1-230th Assault Helicopter Battalion, departed from Louisville and flew to Derrick Knob Shelter just outside of Gatlinburg.

The flight crew included Chief Warrant Officer 2 Daniel Backus, pilot in command, 1st Lt. Brandon Rodriguez, pilot, Sgt. Christopher Farrar, crewchief, and flight paramedic's Sgt. 1st Class Giovanni DeZuani and Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Banta.

Just after the flight crew located the patient at the Derrick Knob Shelter, Farrar lowered Banta and DeZuani from the aircraft by hoist. Once on the ground, the flight paramedics medically assessed and readied the patient to be hoisted into the hovering helicopter. Next, Farrar safely hoisted the patient, Banta, and DeZuani into the aircraft where they continued rendering aid to the patient as they flew to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville.

After, a 20-minute flight, the aircraft landed at UT Medical Center where the patient was rushed to the emergency room. The entire rescue mission took less than one hour.

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Sgt. 1st Class Giovanni DeZuani, a flight paramedic, is lowered from a UH-60 Blackhawk near Derrick Knob Shelter to rescue a hiker in distress along the Appalachian Trail, Sept. 20. The flight crew from the Tennessee National Guard conducted the emergency air evacuation mission after a hiker reported chest pains. (Courtesy photo from the Tennessee National Guard)



Sgt. Christopher Farrar, crewchief, lowers Sgt. 1st Class Giovanni DeZuani, a flight paramedic, from a UH-60 Blackhawk near Derrick Knob Shelter to rescue a hiker in distress along the Appalachian Trail, Sept. 20. The flight crew from the Tennessee National Guard conducted the emergency air evacuation mission after a hiker reported chest pains. (Courtesy photo from the Tennessee National Guard)



A medical flight crew from the Tennessee National Guard conducted an emergency air evacuation mission after a hiker reported chest pains while on the Appalachian Trail, Sept. 20. (Courtesy photo from the Tennessee National Guard)



A medical flight crew from the Tennessee National Guard conducted an emergency air evacuation mission after a hiker reported chest pains while on the Appalachian Trail, Sept. 20. (Courtesy photo from the Tennessee National Guard)

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