



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Tennessee National Guard rescues hiker on Appalachian Trail**

**KNOXVILLE, Tenn.** – A medical flight crew from the Tennessee National Guard conducted an emergency air evacuation mission after a hiker became hypothermic on the Appalachian Trail, Jan. 18.

Shortly after 9:30 a.m., the Tennessee Military Department and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency were notified of a stranded hiker near Gregory Bald in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. The hiker was suffering from hypothermic conditions after becoming disoriented and getting lost due to heavy snowfall. 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 3 Andrew Ridley, pilot in command, 1st Lt. Justin Hyler, pilot, Sgt. Chris Farrar, crew chief, and Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Banta and Sgt. 1st Class Giovanni DeZuani were the flight paramedics.

Just after 10:30 a.m., the flight crew located the patient in a snowy ravine. Farrar lowered Banta on the helicopter rescue hoist to the patient for a medical assessment. Next, he hoisted DeZuani down to the patient to assist in the rescue. Shortly after 11 a.m., Farrar hoisted the patient, and both paramedics, into the aircraft. Once the patient was on board, the crew rendered aid as the aircraft flew to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville.

Approximately 11:50 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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Sgt. Chris Farrar lowers Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Banta, a Critical Care Flight Paramedic, to a stranded hiker on the Appalachian Trail, Jan. 18. The Tennessee National Guard conducted the rescue mission after being notified of a stranded hiker in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. (Courtesy photo from the Tennessee National Guard)



Sgt. Chris Farrar lowers Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Banta, a Critical Care Flight Paramedic, to a stranded hiker on the Appalachian Trail, Jan. 18. The Tennessee National Guard conducted the rescue mission after being notified of a stranded hiker in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. (Courtesy photo from the Tennessee National Guard)





Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Banta, a Critical Care Flight Paramedic, is hoisted to a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter after rescuing a stranded hiker on the Appalachian Trail, Jan. 18. The Tennessee National Guard conducted the rescue mission after being notified of a stranded hiker in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. (Courtesy photo from the Tennessee National Guard)

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