



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tennessee National Guard hosts reunion for bear attack victim and rescuers

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Aircrew from Knoxville’s Detachment 1, Company C, 1-171st Aviation Regiment are hosting a reunion for the family of a 17-year-old bear attack victim and the first responders who conducted the rescue, at McGhee-Tyson’s Army Aviation Support Facility, Dec. 1, at 1 p.m. local.

“This will be the first time the Park Rangers and the Tennessee Army National Guard medical flight crew will be able to meet with the family since the rescue,” said Lt. Col. Patrick Wade, Tennessee’s Deputy State Aviation Officer. “We are glad we were able to be there to help and are looking forward to meeting with the family and seeing how everyone is recovering.”

In the early morning of June 18, the victim was sleeping at a backcountry campsite 5.7 miles from the Maddron Bald Trailhead in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, when a bear attacked her. She suffered serious injuries and required immediate medical attention. Park Rangers responded to the scene and administered first aid. Due to the remote location of the attack, a Tennessee National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter was alerted to assist in the rescue. The crew flew to the scene, hoisted the victim into the aircraft, and transported her to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville.

The family will be meeting with the crew of the aircraft and Park Rangers as well as receiving a tour of the flight facility and the rescue helicopter.

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*****MEDIA COORDINATION INSTRUCTIONS*****

Media interested in attending the reunion must RSVP by calling (865) 336-3205 or email travers.hurst@us.af.mil. Escorts will meet media members at the McGhee-Tyson entry gate no later than 12:45 p.m. on Dec. 1. Imagery of the event will be available at <http://www.dvidshub.net> following the ceremony.

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

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