

New England District team responds to coworker's emergency

By Ann Marie R. Harvie, USACE New England

History has shown that team members of the New England District readily respond to emergencies anywhere, anytime. The situation could be an earthquake recovery all the way across the country, or it could be as close as a few cubicles away.

In the late afternoon on Aug. 15, a member of the Contracting team experienced a medical emergency that caused her to collapse in her work area.

"Nothing like this has ever happened to me before," said the team member. "Just a couple of minutes before, I was speaking with Julio (Hall) about some year-end work and I sent out an e-mail. Suddenly, I felt very unwell and the next thing I knew I woke up in the Emergency Room."

Not long after Hall and his coworker discussed year-end work and Hall returned to his cubicle, he heard noises. "I heard something strange and at first I was like 'what is that?'" he said. "When I heard it again, I went to investigate."

According to Hall, he returned to the team member's cubicle and found her passed-out on the floor.

Hall, who recently retired from the U.S. Army with 22 years of service, is trained in combat lifesaving and C.P.R. Although he said his adrenaline was high, he did not let emotions get in the way. He quickly cleared her mouth and stabilized her while yelling for someone to call 911.

Contracting Chief Sheila Winston-Vincuilla, also working late to meet year end deadlines, heard Hall's shouts for help and called 911. Hall's voice carried over to Information Management, bringing Chief Greg Lantz and contractor Steve Wall to the scene. Lantz dialed the emergency Concord Park Medical Response Team, bringing first responders George Claflin, Sheila Harvey, and Kane Turmelle to assist. Coral Silgato happened to be in the area and responded. Engineering Chief Frank Fedele also was on hand to watch for the paramedics and the Concord Police who were on the scene within minutes.

The team, most of who have been previously prepared to respond to an emergency, notified the guard on duty, Roudi Clerge, who raised the barriers for the paramedics and police.

Team members brought the AED, cleared the area in the team member's cubicle, kept all bystanders away and escorted paramedics and police to the patient. All the while, Hall kept her calm and reassured as she slipped in and out of consciousness.

"My adrenaline was high, when I heard 911 being called and the others coming to help, the stress went way down," said Hall. "Everyone was calm and the New England District team was prepared. The situation could have been worse."

"The efforts of the team contributed greatly to a positive outcome during this medical emergency," said. Lt. Col. Daniel Herlihy. "The impact of Mr. Hall's efforts and presence of mind cannot be overstated."

Col. William Conde, District Commander, assisted by Deputy Commander Maj. Sonny Avichal, held an awards ceremony for the response team, Sept. 5. "I wanted to give you my personal thanks for going above and beyond helping one of our family members at a time when she wasn't feeling well," said Col. Conde. "I know you would do it for anyone. On behalf of the District, thanks for what you did."

Hall received an Achievement Medal for Civilian Service for "exceptional service during a workplace medical emergency," read Maj. Avichal. "Mr. Hall's unhesitating selfless service and willingness to help his teammates sets an example for all to follow."

Winston-Vincuilla, Lantz, Harvey, Wall and Clerge all received Bunker Hill plaques in appreciation for their contributions to the successful response. Claflin, Silgato and Turmelle were not present at the ceremony, but also received Bunker Hill plaques.