DCMA Employee Assists Mi

By Mark Woodbury, DCMA Public Affairs

It wasn't when he heard a sound that reminded him of a "clap of thunder" or when it continued on for more than 30 seconds. It wasn't even when the building shook beneath his feet for approximately the same amount of time. It was when the sound of ambulances raced past the building and the sight of the collapsed bridge could be seen through the dust-filled air that he realized his years of training were about to be invaluable.

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David Teske, Defense Contract Management Agency Twin Cities operations team supervisor, has been a volunteer cardiopulmonary resuscitation instructor for the past 24 years. It was on the final day of teaching a CPR and automated external defibrillator refresher course at the American Red Cross building — just one block north of the scene — when the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis, Minn., collapsed Aug. 1.

While trying to assess what had just happened, Teske said he was thrown into the severity of the situation when injured people began making their way to the Red Cross building located just one block north of the site. He, and others in the building, immediately did exactly what they had trained for over many years. Teske said their first priority was to organize and set up first-aid stations where the injured could be assessed and treated.

Moments after the stations had been set up, the children and chaperones who were aboard a school bus when the bridge collapsed started to file in. Teske said, "We immediately determined the more seriously injured and began treatment on them." It was during this time that he determined two of the children were seriously injured — a

The I-35W Bridge, Minneapolis, Minn., after its collapse Aug. 1 (Photo courtesy of istockphoto.com)

nnesota Bridge Victims

David Teske, left, a 24-year instructor volunteer, teaches a CPR class at the Twin Cities American Red Cross Headquarters building in Minneapolis recently.

six-year-old girl who had apparent internal bleeding and a 10-year-old boy who had signs of a concussion. Teske decided he needed to watch over these two children personally to make sure their injuries didn't evolve into more serious complications.

After taking the remaining children's vital signs, controlling any bleeding and stabilizing shock, Teske and the other responders divided the children into groups of five to six, with a chaperone watching over the children for signs of any delayed injuries and trauma. To help the children through the tragedy, Teske asked the children about their field trip to the wave pool earlier that day, made medical glove balloons, sang songs and raided the nearby snack machines with loose change gathered from everyone in the building.

About 30 to 40 minutes after the bridge collapse, emergency medical personnel made their way into the building and the on-scene doctors were able to prioritize transportation based on each victim's injuries. Once all the injured had been taken to other facilities for treatment, Teske was asked to help set up the rescue and recovery command center used by local and federal agencies to coordinate the rescue and recovery operations at the bridge site. Teske then manned a phone early into the morning where he logged calls from people around the world offering any assistance they could. It was hours later when it was determined the call center needed to be relocated to a larger facility and Teske was told to, "go home and get some well-deserved rest."

Teske said, "It is days like this one that help you refocus your life and remind you what truly is important." After finding out about his actions that day, some of his colleagues have called him a hero. Teske, on the other hand, claims, "It was simply a matter of being at the right place at the right time to assist." C

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