



Medical mission sends carrier to the Dominican Republic



John Conde with some of the children of San Juan de la Maguana in the Dominican Republic, where he assisted at a medical clinic last year.

Wilmington, NC Branch 464 member John Conde already has an impressive résumé: two deployments to Iraq in the Army as an artillery platoon leader and again as signal corps leader with the rank of captain, winner of the Bronze Star, military medical training and civilian EMT certification. In April of last year, he added something new to his list of experiences by going on a medical mission to the Dominican Republic.

As an assistant in a women's clinic in the remote town of San Juan de la Maguana, Conde spent a week helping about 50 patients who had serious medical issues. He helped those visiting for outpatient treatment in a clinic and assisted in the operating room on roughly 30 major surgeries. He started IVs, sterilized instruments in an autoclave and performed other essential duties to keep the clinic and O.R. running smoothly, from preparing the clinic for the day, patient care, and clean-up. Conde's efficient work helped the medical staff to serve so many patients in such a short time.

"This experience allowed me to help provide quality health care using coordination and critical problem-solving skills," said Conde.

It wasn't Conde's first experience providing care under pressure. He won the Bronze Star in 2003 in part for saving the lives of two wounded Iraqis by taking charge immediately after they were hit by gunfire, administering first aid and coordinating their evacuation by air to a hospital.

Conde worked with a team of doctors from the New Hanover Regional Medical Hospital in Wilmington and Pitt Memorial Hospital in Greenville, SC, a team that included his wife,

Jenifer, a fourth-year Ob/Gyn resident at New Hanover. When Jenifer signed up for the mission, Conde decided to use the training he had received in the Army to help her and the other doctors at the clinic. "The supervisor said, 'As long as he has his shots, we could use someone like John,'" Conde said.

"The lines would start as early as 7 in the morning and patients were seen until 5 in the evening," Conde said. "Some of them would ride on the back of a motorcycle from many miles away, only to find themselves riding back after surgery the same day."

The hospitals coordinated their trip with Solid Rock Missions, a Christian organization. Solid Rock built the clinic and a school in San Juan de la Maguana, and it brings medical teams from the U.S. to the town to provide health care.

'Proud to serve'

Conde joined the Postal Service in March 2008 after leaving the Army. "I definitely appreciate the opportunity to serve the community—it allows me to share with those less fortunate. Working for the Postal Service continues to be a career where you can grow personally and professionally."

"We're basically a brand name. When people see the Postal Service, they know they're getting quality service," he added. "Mailmen are people you can trust. We carry people's money, their medication—the things they count on every day. I'm proud to serve."

Conde said he applies his military tradition stepping in to get things done under pressure to his job as a letter carrier. "Things happen every day," he said. "Issues happen that have to be taken care of. A lot of things we do aren't in a manual or a book. Letter carriers do that every day on the street. They save lives—we read about them in *The Postal Record*." ✉

Conde helps administer an IV to a patient with another volunteer at the clinic.

