



**EMT Seth Dyke**

# EMT's fire training good luck for victim

EMS personnel save lives every day. It's part of their job.

But usually, they're in control of the circumstances and at no risk themselves.

Easter Sunday was different.

Paramedic Carol Bowen and EMTs Seth Dyke and Connie Nix were working out of the Swansea station that morning but had gone to

South Congaree to refuel after a 3 a.m. run.

Deborah Johnson in Central Dispatch got a 911 call at 5:57 a.m. from a Fish Hatchery Lane address. The man was coughing and couldn't speak, so Deborah labeled it a Signal 90 -- unknown medical complaint --

and went looking for the nearest EMS unit.

The Cayce unit was on standby at a structure fire, so Deborah dispatched Ms. Bowen's crew and a sheriff's deputy.

Since the nature of the call was unknown, "they told us to use our own discretion about going in," said Dyke, 28. "But the only indication that anything was fishy was that the guy wasn't talking."

When they arrived at the house minutes later, "we could smell smoke right away and see it coming out of the eaves," he said.

They radioed for fire equipment, but they could hear the man still coughing inside. Dyke decided it was time to put his 10 years of experience as a Sumter County volunteer firefighter to work.

Attempts to get in the back door were foiled by a padlock, but Dyke said crew members could hear the man coughing near the door. At the front door, they broke in through a pane of glass as the seconds ticked away.

With the door open, the smoke cleared out a little and Dyke could see a light inside, which he thought might have been

the victim trying to signal with a flashlight. He also could smell the cyanide gas coming from a smoldering couch in the living room.

After several gulps of fresh air, Dyke plunged through the smoke toward the light about six feet inside. It turned out to be a night light, but by then he could see the victim lying on the floor in the next room.

The man was conscious enough to put his arms around Dyke's neck and Dyke crawled with him back through the living room -- past the couch -- to safety, just as fire and law enforcement units arrived.

Dyke, who's been an EMT about a year and a half, said he's been in situations like that as a firefighter, but always with air packs and masks.

"This time it was just me alone," he said. "But something just kind of took over. It didn't matter that I didn't have equipment or that his weight made it awkward to crawl."

The 51-year-old victim was treated at the hospital and released the next day.

It was an Easter Sunday neither he nor Dyke will ever forget.