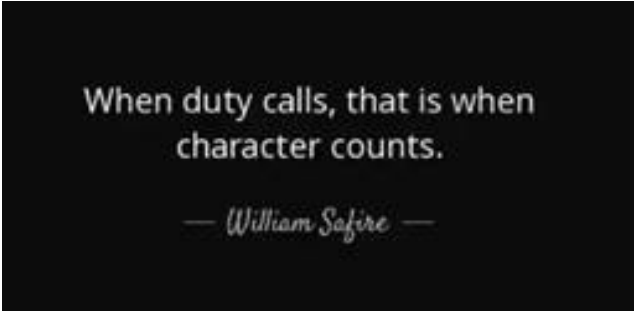


Stay Ready My Friends!

On a recent vacation to a popular theme park, my family and I boarded the shuttle bus from our hotel to the park where we stood sandwiched between other service members and their dependents. As we approached the park, someone at the rear of the bus called out, “Driver, you need to pull over and we need to call 911.”

The words that nobody wanted to hear instantly transformed the bus’s passengers from tourists into service members. Next to me, a couple with children in strollers looked at their travel companions as if to say, “Duty calls”, to which their friends replied, “Do you what you need to, we’ve got the kids.”

The couple, both nurses in the National Guard, made their way through the crowded bus to assess the situation while another passenger relayed details to a 911 dispatcher. Another service member calmly told passengers, “Anyone not involved needs to offload the bus.” There were no idle hands left on the bus to record the event for social media.



When duty calls, that is when
character counts.

— William Safire —

The individual in distress, a grandmother on vacation with her grandkids, was having a diabetic seizure. Another passenger, a teacher, stepped in and began playing games with the grandkids, drawing their focus away from their grandma, and allowing their dad to pay attention to his mother.

The Guardsmen called out for Gatorade, which was promptly rendered and quickly began to work its magic. By the time medics arrived grandma was sitting up and doing fine. The whole event lasted less than 15 minutes, and soon another bus arrived to whisk families off to the “happiest place on earth.”

What started out as a potentially traumatic event, turned out to be a thing of beauty thanks in large part to the decisive actions of a community well-suited to respond to the situation in a calm and professional manner.

This event reminds us that duty may call even in the midst of family vacation. Your training may be needed to save someone’s life, and your professionalism and calm demeanor may help prevent someone else’s trauma. Be ready to rise to the occasion.

- OODA thought “the loop” would come into use on vacation?! Remember, Observe, Orient, Decide, Act – these four admonitions can transform you from bystander into an effective actor.
- Know your skills, and keep them honed. Decide now that you will be ready to act effectively in the midst of crisis, and do what it takes to be ready...whatever the circumstance.
- Stay calm. Your professional demeanor in the midst of crisis increases the likelihood that others will act effectively, and decreases the likelihood of experiencing trauma.