



Coming to the Aid of a Stranger

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Have you ever wondered what you would do if faced with a situation in which your actions could spell the difference between someone living or dying? I think most of us wouldn't hesitate to help if the life at stake was that of a family member, but what about a total stranger?

I remember a young YN3 from an earlier command who found himself in that position. While working in the backyard of his home, he heard a loud noise and turned around to find out what had happened. He looked up in time to see a late-model pickup truck airborne—just like a scene from the old “Dukes of Hazzard” TV show. The pickup was about 150 yards away and heading toward a pond.

Before entering the pond, the pickup landed on some grass and hit the cement housing of an overflow-water drain at the water's edge. The cement acted like a ramp and sent the pickup

airborne again.

By this time, the YN3 had kicked off his boots and was half-way to the edge of the pond. He watched as the pickup flew about 50 yards through the air, then splashed nose-first into the center of the 100-yard-diameter pond. Wearing nothing but a pair of running pants and socks, he dove into the frigid water and swam to the pickup. Inside was an unconscious man. The YN3 reached inside the driver's open window and unbuckled the man's seat belt, but his wet fingers prevented him from unlocking the door.

Meanwhile, one of the YN3's neighbors, who also had witnessed the incident, arrived to assist in the rescue effort. The neighbor reached inside the driver's window and lifted the door handle, which unlocked the door. Because the cab of the truck was filling quickly with water, the pressure was so great that

neither rescuer could open the door.

About this time, the driver regained consciousness and, unaware of what had happened, was surprised at his new surroundings. The YN3 urged the victim to get out of the truck, but, before he could escape, the truck slipped beneath the surface of the water.

Physically exhausted and unable to catch his breath, the YN3 started swimming for shore. Before he got there, though, the victim surfaced. The YN3 immediately sprang back into action and swam to the victim. Grabbing him with the expertise of a rescue swimmer, he dragged the victim to the side of the pond, where bystanders helped both men out of the water. Emergency-medical technicians then took over and started treating the victim.

This act of bravery got the attention of the local community, and one of the TV channels aired the story on the Sun-



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day-evening news. Thanks to the courageous efforts of these two men, who disregarded their own personal safety, a total stranger's life was saved.

When the author wrote this story, he was assigned to VP-30. The name of the YN3 was protected because he's no longer in the Navy, and we aren't sure if he would want his identity revealed.—Ed. ■