

# OpTac International News Bulletin

## Heroic Actions and a Younger Generation

Quite often veteran officers and supervisors comment on the lack of commitment from a "younger generation" of officers at their police departments. While occasionally there may be generational differences, the overriding issue with poor officer performance tends to be ineffective recruitment and selection of personnel. This edition of the **OpTac International News Bulletin** presents the heroic actions of two high school students: one who was shot and killed protecting two of his friends, and the other who risked his life to rescue a police officer from a burning car. Both, as teenagers, demonstrated the qualities sought in a law enforcement officer through their situational awareness, rapid response, and selfless actions.



In December 2015, Zaevion Dobson, 15 years old, shielded two friends with his body as multiple shots were fired from a passing car. One of the rounds struck his head, killing him on the scene. The friend that he saved stated, "If it wasn't for Zaevion, if he would have run off of the porch, me or her [referring to another person on the porch] would have probably been shot." Dobson had the opportunity to retreat and save his own life, but elected to protect others around him, thus making the ultimate sacrifice.

Knoxville, Tennessee Police Chief David Rausch emphasized, "Zaevion was a young man doing exactly what he should be doing, and he saved those two young ladies. It is amazing that he did that. But, that's what good guys and men of character do."



In November 2014, a Philadelphia police officer was involved in an automobile accident while responding to a call for a person with a gun; his patrol car started burning as a result of the crash. Joe Chambers, 17 years old, heard the crash and after calling for help, then pulled the officer through the driver's window to safety. The vehicle became completely engulfed in flames less than a minute after the officer's rescue. Chambers credits his father who passed away two months prior to the incident as his

inspiration to do great things. His father had always told him, "If someone needs help, help them. It doesn't matter what the circumstances are." While in the hospital recovering from his injuries, the officer told Chambers, "I can't thank you enough." Chambers responded, "You don't have to, it's fine. I would do it any day of the week if I had to."

Many similar acts of bravery are occurring in communities across the United States by scores of a younger generation. Every law enforcement agency has the obligation to identify these types of individuals through cadet/explorer, internship, and volunteer programs. Additionally, active recruitment and comprehensive selection processes can help attract the best our communities have to offer (while rejecting individuals not suited for a career in law enforcement) in order to improve policing across the country.

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