

Alabama Guardsman

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MP officer wins prestigious honor to the Commandant's 100

by Jamie Brown
131st MPAD

An Alabama Guardsman recently joined illustrious company as he was honored for his achievements in the Military Police branch.

Capt. Charles Priest of the 203rd MP Battalion in Athens was named to the Commandant's 100. The Commandant's 100 is a Military Police specific award established by Brig. Gen. David D. Phillips of the United States Army Military Police Corps Regiment Jan. 1, 2009. The Commandant's 100 is awarded to members of the United States Army Military Police Corps Regiment who distinguish themselves by meritorious achievement or meritorious service, while serving in any capacity within the corps to recognize greatness from the young Soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers in the regiment. The Military Police Corps Commandant chooses 100 of the top Military Police to receive this award.

Priest was excited about the honor. "I found out that Lt. Col. Mike Izzo, the 203rd battalion commander, had nominated me from Maj. Martin Abel, my



Contributed/image

The Military Police crest.

battalion XO," he said. "And he kept me up to date throughout the process. When the email finally notified Maj. Abel that I had, in fact, received the award, I was very surprised and honored. This is a difficult award to get because you truly have to stand out in a very large group of excellent Soldiers. To be recognized by the MP Corps is an enormous accomplishment!"

Priest credited his success so far as an MP officer to several things.

"My success as an MP Officer is directly related to my work ethic and drive,"

he said. "I have also earned great assignments, leading great MP Soldiers. Both company commands allowed me to work with extremely talented individuals that I learned so much from. I take those lessons with me to every assignment I have." One other factor that has contributed to Priest's success is doing something that he loves.

"What I like about being an MP officer is the versatility," Priest said. "In most instances MP's work in small groups for (Please see *HONOR*, page 6)

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On the Cover

Lt. Col. Mark Holland spends a few precious moments with family and his son Jack at a deployment ceremony for the 135th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), in Homewood, Jan. 12. The 135th will deploy more than 240 Alabama National Guard Soldiers to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and will be supporting 11 countries in its area of operation. It will provide operational level sustainment to corps and task force level and components during deployment, employment, sustainment and redeployment. (Photo by Tiffany Harkins).

Adjutant General

Meeting high military standards on and off duty



**Maj. Gen.
Perry Smith**

In today's world we often hear about individuals blaming others for their own actions. Part of what I love about the military is that we teach individuals to take responsibility. Often in leadership training,

Soldiers are told to make a decision and stick with it, accepting the consequences or rewards.

We each have a personal responsibility to conduct ourselves in a manner that is

fitting a Soldier or Airman, a member of the United States Armed Forces, and the Alabama National Guard. We must adhere to the Army and Air Force Values, not just while we are on duty, but always.

This includes the way we conduct ourselves as we go about our daily routines and the activities in which we decide to engage. AR 600-20 gives us some examples of behavior that is inconsistent with membership in the military: "Military personnel must reject participation in extremist organizations and activities. Extremist organizations and activities are ones that advocate racial, gender, religion, or ethnic hatred or intolerance; advocate, create, or engage in illegal discrimination based on race, color, gender, religion, or national

origin, or advocate the use of or use force or violence or unlawful means to deprive individuals of their rights under the United States constitution or the laws of the United States, or any State, by unlawful means." Membership in extremist organizations is inconsistent with military life. Respect is one of the Army Values – that especially pertains to respecting your fellow warriors, no matter their age, gender, race, or religious preference. This is our duty, which is another Army Value.

Obviously, we can understand how our actions in uniform can have an impact on the Alabama National Guard, but our actions out of uniform can also have an impact – positive or negative. Our friends, family (Please see *STANDARDS*, page 6)

State Command Sergeant Major

The honor, privilege and responsibility of becoming a non-commissioned officer



**Command Sgt.
Maj.
Eddie Pike**

Every month I sign and send every newly promoted sergeant (E5) in the Alabama Army National Guard a welcome letter, NCO Charge Certificate and

NCO Creed Certificate. Units should be having promotion ceremonies for these new non-commissioned officers where each new NCO signs both certificates and recites the NCO

Creed to the formation.

Once you, the new NCO in the Alabama Army National Guard, participate in this ceremony, you start a new chapter in your career in the National Guard. You are now a part of the noncommissioned officer corps in the profession of arms. The transition from an enlisted Soldier to a noncommissioned officer is a historical tradition that can be traced to the Army of Frederick the Great.

The journey from junior enlisted to junior NCO is complex. You must now transition from one that was cared for to one who cares for others and

from one who was taught to one that teaches, prepares for and supervises tasks. You might stay in the same section/squad or perhaps you will move to a different organization entirely. Either way, you will do the job you have been trained to do—lead soldiers.

An NCO's job is not easy. You must speak with your own voice when giving orders—don't show favoritism. This is especially true for your former peers. You must treat each Soldier the same and give him/her the respect he/she deserves, as you will expect to receive (Please see *NCO*, page 6)

Snap Shots

A look at some of the recent highlights from the Alabama National Guard



Tiffany Harkins/photo

Soldiers from the 781st Transportation Company out of Fort Deposit prepare to make an entrance at a homecoming ceremony, Jan. 18. The 781st deployed approximately 120 members to Afghanistan to conduct transportation support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Eric Roberts/photo

Capt. Johnnie Scott, commander of the 128th Military Police Company, out of Huntsville, speaks at a deployment ceremony in Huntsville, Jan. 5. The 128th will deploy more than 170 Alabama National Guard Soldiers to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The 128th will provide security forces support to units based there.



Tiffany Harkins/photo

A Soldier from the 781st Transportation Company out of Fort Deposit shares a homecoming moment with a loved one during a homecoming ceremony, Jan. 18.

From fraternal brothers to band of brothers

Three brothers, from a set of quadruplets, enlist together in the Alabama Guard

by Brenda Thomas
Public Affairs Office

We all know it takes a special kind of person to devote their life in a promise to serve their country. It is not very rare that siblings decide to make this journey, but what is rare is when triplets raise their right hand and take the Oath of Enlistment at the same time.

Joe, Frank and Tim Bellush, high school juniors, made this commitment together Dec. 14, 2012, one week after their 17th birthday. These three brothers are actually part of a set of fraternal quadruplets, with their sister Courtney.

Tim is a junior at Lyman Ward Military Academy. He spoke with local Alabama Army National Guard recruiter Sgt. 1st Class Marion Pruitt about what education benefits the Guard offers young men like himself. Pruitt explained that the Guard will help pay for education expenses, as well as pay him while he is still in high school by attending drill one weekend a month. Because he still has one year of high school left, Tim could “split train” and attend Basic Combat Training during the summer and then Advanced Individual Training, or career training, the summer following graduation.

Tim took this information home and explained to his family what opportunities the



Brenda Thomas/photo

Joe, Frank and Tim Bellush, three of a set of quadruplets, take the Oath of Enlistment together at the Military Entrance Processing Station in Montgomery, Alabama, Dec. 14, 2012.

Guard would give him. Joe and Frank, juniors at John Carroll Catholic High School in Birmingham, were both intrigued by the benefits their brother could obtain as well as the opportunity to travel and serve their country. They promptly arranged a meeting with Pruitt to find out how they too could reap the benefits of enlisting into the National Guard.

“When Tim told us what the Guard would do for him we said we want that too,” said Frank. “I want to be a doctor, and the Guard will help me pay for college to get my medical degree as well as give me some combat medical training.”

The three brothers scored 93, 94 and 95 out of a possible 99 on the Armed Services Vo-

ational Aptitude Battery (AS-VAB). This is a test that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military. This meant they could choose to enter just about any military job field they wanted. Tim expressed an interest in law enforcement, so he elected to join the Military Police Corps. Frank chose the medical field, and Joe chose the Infantry.

“I want to challenge myself,” said Joe. “I want to get out there where it’s rough, dirty and difficult. I want to do the tough job.” He explained how so many people his age have not established plans for the future. “A lot of them are just sitting around (Please see **BROTHERS**, page 5)

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larger forces. MP's bring a lot of firepower to the mission, and, when used properly, we can make a lasting impact. MP's are a true force multiplier."

According to Izzo, Priest was highly deserving of the honor.

"Captain Priest is a highly motivated Soldier that gets the job done," he said. "He is a go getter and a

self-initiated officer. There is no task too big for Capt. Priest to take on, he welcomes challenges with open arms and always meets or exceeds the standard!"

Priest is not planning on resting on his laurels, however, he plans on continuing to grow and develop in the MP ranks.

"My plans for the future include

commanding one of the Military Police battalions in the Alabama National Guard," he said. "But, in the near term, I hope to fill the role of an MP battalion S-3. I want to continue earning and growing with the Army National Guard. My greatest hope is just to contribute.....on a large scale."

(STANDARDS continued from page 3)

and neighbors know we are in the military – we should think about that as we conduct ourselves day to day.

We have an amazing group of people in the Alabama National Guard. We come from all walks of life and extremely diverse backgrounds, yet, we are all working toward the same goal. Respect, integrity and honor can be seen all around this organization and I am very proud to see it. By saying what I've said here, I don't

want to paint the picture that we have not lived up to those standards, I just want us to constantly reexamine ourselves to ensure our lives – on and off duty – are meeting the high standards of the Alabama National Guard and that we are living the Army and Air Force Values. I encourage commanders and senior NCOs to conduct officer and noncommissioned officer development sessions on Army and Air Force Values and conduct while wearing a uniform.

I am always encouraged when I am able to visit units and witness the caliber of young Soldiers and Airmen we are able to recruit and retain. Let's continue that tradition and continue to lead from the front!

*If you have any questions about discrimination or participation in activities in uniform, you should consult with your unit's Equal Opportunity Officer, Inspector General, or Staff Judge Advocate.

(NCO continued from page 3)

the same treatment in return. Remember that you are now responsible and accountable for your soldiers. The Army expects total commitment from those who are selected to lead, train and care for its soldiers.

Being an NCO is extremely

rewarding. It is an honor and a privilege to lead Alabama's finest men and women during peacetime and at war. Never forget this awesome responsibility.

Army values, the NCO Vision and the NCO Creed each

provide guidance and inspiration to lead from the front. Live each and every day by the NCO Creed and include it in your daily business. The NCO Creed will help you through tough times and situations.

(BROTHERS continued from page 2)

doing nothing," he said. "This is how I can get out of here and do something great with my life."

Even though these siblings have been together their whole lives, they are clearly individuals and are expressing their individuality even more through the military.

"They have always been together," said their father, former Marine, Jamie Bellush. "This is important to them to develop their own special identity.

This will help them gain discipline, teamwork, and self esteem by making them feel part of something bigger."

Pruitt devotes his time to help young people like Tim, Frank, and Joe find direction for their lives with the National Guard.

"It's a great opportunity for young people to be able to join while they're still in high school and start reaping the benefits now," Pruitt said. "These young men will have help paying for

college, as well as receive the training and pride the military offers."

This summer, Frank and Joe will be attending Basic Combat Training in Fort Benning, Ga. and Tim will train at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. They will return home to finish their senior year in high school, and, following their graduation in 2014, they will begin their Advanced Individual Training and the rest of their military careers.

State Safety Office

Get Ready.....Be Ready Winter Driving

There's nothing more beautiful than a fresh blanket of new-fallen snow. Unless of course, you're driving in it. Winter snow and ice pose special problems for even the most experienced driver. When you're prepared for winter driving emergencies, you'll be able to say "let it snow, let it snow, let it snow" – and mean it!

- * **Winterize your Car.** When the weather turns frosty, prepare your car for the season –get a complete tune-up. Ask your mechanic to test brakes, the battery, and the exhaust system. Check fluid levels, add anti-freeze, and switch to winter-weight oil. Install snow tires on drive wheels, and be sure to carry emergency tools in your trunk - sand, salt, shovel, chains, snow-scraper/brush, booster cables, blankets and a flashlight.



- * **What To Do If You Skid.** The primary problem faced by winter drivers is skidding on slick or icy roadways. If your car should skid, **do not brake**. Instead, take your foot off the accelerator and turn your car in the direction that you want the front wheels to go. Use gentle, steady motions when turning the steering wheel. Turning too much or too fast may cause your vehicle to flip or spin out of control.

- * **What to Do If You're Stuck.** An equally common problem is getting stuck in the snow – your wheels spin but your car won't move. This is when emergency equipment is most important. Don't continue to spin your wheels; you'll only wind up in a deeper rut. Instead, pour sand, salt, or gravel around the wheels to give them something to grab onto and improve traction. You can also shovel snow away from the wheels and out from under the car to clear a pathway.



- * **Some General Guidelines.** Whenever driving conditions are less than ideal, it pays to be cautious. Drive slowly, test your brakes frequently and **never tailgate**. Make sure that windshields (front and rear) are clear and that wipers and defrosters are in good working condition. Use low gears when traveling on slick surfaces (especially hills) to give added traction. Listen to weather forecasts, and if weather and visibility are hazardous, stay home!



Did you know that 70% of deaths during snow or ice storms occur in vehicles? It pays to carry blankets or sleeping bags, matches, candles, a snow shovel, sandbags, a flashlight, and non-perishable foods. Be prepared!

Get in the KNOW about your National Guard Retirement Program

Who should attend:

Soldiers with 18+ years of service
Soldiers and/or Retirees that have reached 58+ years of age

Where: 279th AFSB
2499 Johnson Road
Huntsville, AL 35805

When: 2 opportunities to attend in February.
2Feb2013 @ 0900
3Feb2013 @ 0900
Briefings last 3 hours, reps available for questions after the briefings.

Retirement Services offers a Retirement Briefing to put out information about the benefits associated with your National Guard Retirement. This briefing happens several times during the year at several locations throughout the state. This month, we will be at the 279th AFSB in Huntsville. Please join us to get in THE KNOW about YOUR RETIREMENT!

State Safety Office

Winter Driving Safety Tips

Driving in the snow:



If you find yourself driving in the snow, stay alert, slow down and stay in control. These are the three key elements to safe driving in the snow.

Here are a few other tips for driving in the snow:

- If you think you may be heading into snow or there is a possibility of driving in the snow, make sure you do a maintenance check on your vehicle before making the trip. Check the vehicle battery, belts and hoses, anti-freeze, oil, lights, brakes, heater and defroster and check the exhaust system for leaks which may allow carbon monoxide to enter the vehicle.
- Plan your route ahead of time and give yourself extra travel time. Make sure someone knows your travel plans.
- Wear comfortable clothing that does not restrict your movement while at the wheel. Keep warm clothing available for when you exit the vehicle.
- Always clear any snow and ice from all windows, lights, mirrors and the roof before driving. After starting the vehicle wait for the interior windows to clear of fog so you will have appropriate visibility.
- Make sure there is sufficient windshield washer fluid in the vehicle reservoir and that it is rated for freezing temperatures.
- It takes longer to stop on slippery surfaces, so add additional time to the three-second rule.
- Know the proper handling procedures for a skidding vehicle.
- Slow down in snow and icy conditions, make turns slowly, and make all starts slow and smooth.
- Remember that bridges and overpasses may freeze before the regular travel lanes of a roadway. Watch out for black ice, areas of the roadway that appear black and shiny and where your vehicle can suddenly lose traction. Slow down in these areas and keep your foot off the brakes.
- If you get stuck or stranded, don't panic. Stay with your vehicle for safety and warmth. Wait for help to arrive. If you have a cell phone and are in an area with cell phone service, try calling for help. Try to always know your exact locations while driving.
- Keep your clothing dry. Wet clothing can lead to dangerous loss of body heat.

State Safety Office

Winter Driving Survival Kit:



It's a good idea to keep a winter survival kit in your vehicle if you might be traveling into an area where you could encounter snow. Having essential supplies can provide some comfort and safety for you and your passengers. The following items are recommended for your winter driving survival kit:

- Ice scraper/snowbrush
- Shovel
- Sand or other type of traction aid
- Tow rope or chain
- Booster cables
- Road flares or warning lights
- Gas line antifreeze
- Flashlight and batteries
- First aid kit
- Fire extinguisher
- Small tool kit
- Extra clothing and foot wear
- Non-perishable energy foods, like chocolate or granola bars, juice, instant coffee, tea, soup, and bottled water
- Candles and a small tin can to hold the candle
- Water proof matches

Extra caution and planning will help you stay safe while driving in winter weather.

BLACK ICE

Winter driving conditions can be tricky for even the most experienced drivers. While a snow-covered road can be an obvious driving hazard, a road that just looks wet can also be deceptively slippery.

Black ice is a dangerous wintertime hazard because the icy road may not always be visible to the driver. Indeed, melted snow or ice that refreezes may still look deceptively like a dry road. Temperatures don't have to be below freezing for black ice to develop. Black ice can occur if temperatures are near the freezing mark--or even a few degrees above it.

While a shiny road surface indicates an obviously wet or icy road, a road covered with black ice will look a little different. Keep an eye out for pavement that is slightly darker and a little duller looking than the rest of the road surface-- this may indicate that black ice is present. Because black ice is so tricky to detect, a driver may not realize there is an icy road surface until his car begins to slide. Here are some tips on how to drive on black ice:

1. As soon as your car begins to slide on black ice, take your foot off the gas pedal. In fact, the last thing you want to do is give your car more gas. It is very important to slow down when you are driving on black ice or in any other winter road conditions.
2. While it may be a natural instinct to slam on your brakes, this will only cause your car to lose control and slide even more. Tap the brake pedal lightly instead of pushing down hard on it.
3. If you have an idea that there may be black ice ahead (if you see cars ahead of you sliding, for example), downshift to a lower gear before you come onto the black ice. The lower gear will force you to drive more slowly and it will give you better control of your car.
4. If your car does begin to skid on the ice, turn the wheel in the direction of the skid. This should help to steer your car back on the right track.

State Safety Office

5. Leave plenty of space between your car and the other cars on the road. When driving on black ice road conditions, stay well behind the car in front of you (at least a couple of hundred feet)--this is definitely not the time to tailgate. Even if you feel confident that you know how to drive safely on black ice, that doesn't mean the driver in front of you does. Be prepared in case other cars start to slide.
6. Don't think you're invincible just because you drive a truck or a big sports utility vehicle. While 4-wheel drive vehicles are great for driving in heavy snow, you're on your own when it comes to driving on black ice. In fact, 4-wheel drive vehicles have no advantage over regular cars when it comes to driving on black ice, so be sure to take the necessary safety precautions no matter what type of vehicle you are driving.
7. Other precautions:
 - Drive with your low beam headlights on even if it is daytime. This will make you more visible to the other cars on the road.
 - Make sure your tire tread is in good condition. Worn tires will make it much more difficult for you to drive on black ice. Make sure there is plenty of traction between your tires and the road surface.
 - Black ice is most commonly found on roads that run around bodies of water (such as lakes and rivers), in tunnels and in shady or rural areas. Use extra caution on bridges and overpasses, which are common spots for black ice to form. Even if you have been cruising down the highway with no problem, an overpass or bridge can be unexpectedly icy.