



THE BLUE LIGHT



February 2008

THE HONORABLE BOB RILEY
Governor

COLONEL J. CHRISTOPHER MURPHY
Director

LT. COLONEL F.A. BINGHAM
Assistant Director

MAJOR HUGH McCALL
Driver License Division

MAJOR ROSCOE HOWELL
Highway Patrol Division

MAJOR CHARLES ANDREWS
Service Division

CAPTAIN MARTY GRIFFIN
ABI Division

CAPTAIN HERMAN WRIGHT
Administrative Division

CAPTAIN TODD FULMER
Protective Services Division



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Graduation 2007-B

The Colonel's Corner



Lt. Col. F.A. "Bubba" Bingham, Assistant Director

I once read a quote — I don't remember who wrote it — that made a lot of sense to me: "When you expect things to happen, strangely enough, they do happen." Several months ago the idea came to me through another staff member that we ought to try to hire troopers on a regional basis, and offer them an employment opportunity to work in their home area instead of hiring a trooper in one end of the state and sending him or her, along with his or her family, to a distant location across the state. By hiring trooper recruits and moving them, we often place ourselves in competition with other employers, other school systems and other factors which conflict with the hiring process. Many families are two-income families. To require the new recruit to move usually causes the spouse to resign and seek employment at another location closer to the new jobsite. With the unemployment rate in Alabama below the national average, many well-qualified applicants simply cannot afford to move away from familiar surroundings and job opportunities.

The risks were enormous. What if no one showed up? What if so many showed up we couldn't process them all? What if we couldn't find a site suitable for the processing? What if the costs outweighed the results? What if? What if? What if?

After many weeks of meticulous planning, advertising, selecting personnel, and developing teams from DPS and State Personnel, we were finally able to communicate a plan to Col. Murphy and then to Jackie Graham, the State Personnel director. All agreed it was doable, and certainly worth the risks.

The logistical planning for this event was enormous. Not only did we not know how many applicants might show up, but we also didn't know what size staff it would take to process them. We initially had no idea where we might hold such an event. Capt. James Lyons reached out to Chief Norman Gamache with the University of South Alabama. He invited us down to the campus to show us what they could offer. It was perfect. We had plenty of classroom space, a track for the PT test, room for preliminary screening (eyes, fingerprints, etc.) and a quiet room for the initial ABI interview.

Lt. Karl Wade and Sgt. Tracy Nelson were charged with the recruiting and advertising in the Mobile-Baldwin county areas. Billboards and billboard designs were selected, and the recruiting effort began just before Thanksgiving. Within two weeks, we had almost more applicants than we could handle. Because of the phenomenal interest, it was decided to change messages on the digital billboard for the remainder of the advertisement contract, from a recruiting message to a safety message.

State Personnel's Jennifer Thomasson worked with our personnel manager, Cheri Cook, to coordinate the scheduling for those applicants desiring to take part in the event. Lists were compiled for applicants who needed to take the written test separately from those already on the State Personnel register in Band 1. By the end of the recruiting period, more than 125 were scheduled for processing each day. How were we going to process so many people?

Site visits and coordination meetings were scheduled to discuss in great detail who would do what, when and where. Supplies were listed and assignments made. Signs were to be printed and laminated. What about a copier, extra toner and paper? Every detail was listed and assigned so that nothing was left unattended. With the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays approaching, how could I be sure everything was covered? I had my doubts. Capt. Ed Odom and



Hopeful candidates take written test for trooper at the University of South Alabama.

Ms. Cook offered these words of encouragement, “Colonel, don’t worry about it. We’ve got everything under control.” I had visions of the Titanic!

We implemented the plan in Mobile on the University of South Alabama campus Jan. 2-4. More than 380 candidates were scheduled for the event. I am pleased to announce that we were successful beyond all of my expectations. A team from State Personnel, led by Ms. Thomasson, tested, scored, banded and placed on a register those candidates who passed the written test and scored well enough to be placed in Band 1. They were then turned over to DPS to continue the preliminary hiring process. First they were administered the physical ability test by our PT specialists from the academy.

Those who passed the stringent PT requirements were fingerprinted by James Potts and Chris Clark; they were photographed by Tommy Giles; and they were tested for proper visual acuity by DL Examiners Betty Rivers and

Debra Chunn. After that, a team of investigators from ABI conducted the initial interview.

The teams arrived early each day and worked as late as necessary, ensuring that every question was answered and that the processing was accomplished as smoothly as possible.

The hours were long and the work areas were quite cold (the first morning the temperature was 18 degrees), yet they never complained. The entire staff worked tirelessly throughout the days, ensuring that every qualified applicant was processed expeditiously and routed through the maze of requirements without delay. By close of business on Jan. 4, 192 prospective recruits were scheduled for polygraph examinations and the files were packaged to send out to field agents for background checks. My vision of the Titanic quickly vanished. What a success!

Others who contributed to the success of the event were Doretta Strength, Sherry Arrington and Ernestine Wigfall from the DPS Personnel Unit; Capt. Herman Wright, Capt. James Lyons, Capt. Ed Odom, Capt. Randy Byrd, and Sgt. Tracy Nelson. Assisting Ms. Thomasson from State Personnel were Heather Edwards, Amanda Mercado and Brandy Hicks.

I would be remiss not to offer a sincere “Thank You” to Chief Norm Gamache, the University of South Alabama Police Department, and Mr. Victor Cohen, facilities manager for the complex. Chief Gamache and Mr. Cohen could not have been more accommodating, and I am extremely grateful for their assistance.

A simple “Thank You” seems inadequate, considering the enthusiasm and professional performance displayed by the teams while testing the applicants. This is but one example of what cooperation and teamwork between state agencies can accomplish. An effort to hire quality troopers has never been attempted on this scale at a local level. The leaders of the Department of Public Safety and State Personnel Department can be proud of all of these employees.

Rivers and Chunn administer vision tests to prospective trooper candidates.



DPS Welcomes Class 2007-B

The Alabama highways today are just a little safer with the addition of 12 new troopers, as the members of Trooper Class 2007-B joined the ranks in a graduation ceremony Jan. 18.

The day was marked as one of celebration and triumph, as friends and family gathered to rejoice in the recruits' many accomplishments at the commencement at the State Capitol Auditorium. The commencement followed a 12-week abbreviated class comprising candidates with previous training in law enforcement, and built upon their APOST certification with a specialized trooper training program.

Capt. Randy Byrd, commander of the Alabama Criminal Justice Training Center, greeted those in attendance, including proud family members and friends, DPS directors and staff, and the instructors at the academy.

Tpr. Michael Britton presented the awards recognizing outstanding achievement in Class 2007-B. William J. Randall Jr., vice president of Class 2007-B, earned the Academic Award, for having the highest grade point average. Class president Thomas A. Brooks received the Highway Response and Driving Award, for demonstrating a high level of knowledge and ability in defensive and pursuit driving. The Firearms Award went to Scott R. Cooper for exhibiting the highest level of knowledge, skill, and safety in firearms training. Jimmy L. Harrell Jr. accepted the Physical Fitness Award, for attaining the highest level of physical fitness.

It was class chaplain Jerome L. White, however, who was bestowed the highest honor as the class's top overall performer, as he received the prestigious Commander's Award for exhibiting exceptional leadership, professionalism and dedication to the class and DPS, while also maintaining a high academic average.



*Tpr. Robbie M. Autery
Shelby County*



*Tpr. Thomas A. Brooks
Bullock County*



*Tpr. Chad D. Brown
Madison County*



*Tpr. Jon L. Brummitt
Chilton County*



*Tpr. Steven D. Chattin
Jackson County*



*Tpr. Scott R. Cooper
Autauga County*





*Tpr. Randal DuBose
Tuscaloosa County*



*Tpr. Jimmy L. Harrell Jr.
Cleburne County*



*Tpr. John L. Pert
Houston County*



*Tpr. William J. Randall Jr.
Marshall County*



*Tpr. Jerome L. White
Montgomery County*



*Tpr. Lawrence B. Wilson
Madison County*



“I was actually surprised I won the Commander’s Award,” said White. “I thought I might have been in the running for it, but our class had an incredible group of guys, and any one of us could have easily received that award. Everyone was pushing each other to do good work, and that made the whole of us just that much better.”

White, a 20-year veteran of the Montgomery Police Department, expressed his gratitude for the quality of education and his positive experience at the academy. “The academy has a tough program, no doubt, but the focus on discipline and the hands-on techniques they use give you the skills you need to survive. You just need to maintain perseverance, and success will find you. Attitude is everything.”

It was White’s success with the Montgomery Police Department that inspired Tpr. Bobby White to pursue a career in law enforcement. “I am very proud of my brother and his accomplishments, and I know it takes someone of extreme dedication, honor, and integrity to receive the Commander’s Award. The Commander’s Award represents tremendous prestige, support, pride, and dedication for an Alabama state trooper, and I am proud that my brother was awarded such an honor.”

The importance of family to the department also was acknowledged by DPS Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy in his graduation address during the ceremony. “Family is central to the department; our success is grounded in family. Today is a great day for family and a great day for the department, and today I welcome you to our DPS family,” said Murphy.

Murphy congratulated the troopers and told them Alabama “has extremely high expectations of you. Today, you are forging a new tradition of service. This job is a mission and a calling. We expect nothing less than the very best from you.”

Following graduation, the new troopers reported to their initial assignments in Highway Patrol, where they will undergo 10 weeks of additional field training under the close supervision of veteran state troopers.

Twenty-eight additional troopers are set to join the ranks March 21, upon graduation of Class 2007-C, currently in training at the academy.



Following Months of Anticipation, Mobile's New Post Surpasses Expectations

Murphy, Lyons and retired Capt. Oscar Kyles formally open the Mobile Post in a ribbon-cutting ceremony Jan. 30.

The cramped conditions at Mobile's 1960's-era building on Government Boulevard no longer challenge Mobile Trooper Post personnel. The Mobile Post now has a new address on Demetropolis Road that offers 6,000 square feet of space and houses post communications, offices, a briefing room, and eventually will accommodate communications engineering and fleet maintenance operations.

Furniture was delivered to the new building Dec. 10, move-in took place Dec. 12, and opening of the post was announced officially at a Jan. 30 open house and news conference hosted by DPS Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy.

Murphy termed the move "long overdue" and credited Gov. Bob Riley and Alabama legislators for making the relocation possible. Last February, Riley signed the lease on the new property after sending his chief of staff to view the conditions at the old facility firsthand.

"The old Mobile location had long ago become inadequate for supporting vital Highway Patrol operations," said Murphy. "Gov. Riley recognized that fact and took quick action to remedy the situation."

Capt. James Lyons, Mobile Highway Patrol commander, said, "Over the years, our old location served us well, but the building had long past given up its usefulness to us. This new post not only offers us room to breathe, but it also is more convenient, as it is centrally located to both ABI and Driver License offices," said Lyons.

"This much-needed new facility will increase our productivity and boost morale for those working at the post. I'm definitely excited," the captain said.

Post Lt. Lee Peacock said, "The people here are simply ecstatic about the new post. How could you not be when you go from 1,400 to 6,000 square feet? About the only complaint you hear around the post about the new facility is you have to walk farther to get to a bathroom, but that's OK, because there are five of them now."

Peacock touted added benefits: "We have a break room you can actually sit in, and our new bull room seems to be as large as the entire old post. The difference is truly night and day."

Central to the new Mobile Post is a state-of-the-art radio room, remarkably similar to the one installed at the new Opelika Post earlier in 2007. "The radio room is the hub of communication for the post, and ours is now among the best in the state," said Peacock. "I am thankful for everything we have here. It is really amazing how much your surroundings help to boost productivity."

Ward Brings New Perspective to Office of Inspections

The Office of Inspections has a new leader with a new goal: to change the outlook and understanding of the unit.

“My goal is to bring something new to the table, come in with a different perspective, and move the department forward,” said Capt. Charles Ward. “I want to portray the image that Inspections is here to help.”

“Ultimately, everyone at DPS has the same ultimate goal of accomplishing the mission of the department. Despite this, when a lot of people at this department saw the old SIU at their door, they got scared, because they knew something was very wrong,” said Ward.

“The Office of Inspections isn’t like that,” he said. “We’re only here to help streamline the process and see if we can utilize our resources better.”



Ward settles in at his new desk as commander of the Office of Inspections.

DPS Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy echoed and added to Ward’s comments. “I chose Capt. Charles Ward to command the Inspections Unit for two reasons,” said Murphy. “The first is his outstanding experience in the field, but the second, and most important reason for selecting Capt. Ward, is his heart. As colonel, I feel this unique aspect of Capt. Ward’s personality is a proper fit to better represent our transition from the badge of SIU to Inspections.”

Murphy also reiterated the importance of the Inspections Unit to Public Safety. “Inspections, under the leadership of Capt. Ward, is essential to the effective and efficient operation of our department. Any law enforcement agency without a top-notch inspections unit is doomed to a lack of professionalism and a lack of success,” said Murphy.

Ward acknowledged there are many differences between commanding the Dothan Post and working at Headquarters, but he said the transition is going smoothly. “Sure, the work is a little different than what I am used to, but I am like a large sponge taking in water: I enjoy figuring out the ins and outs of the job, and getting a better feeling of what precisely is going on,” Ward said.

Both Ward and Murphy believe his field experience is a vital asset for Inspections. “Capt. Ward had dealt with a broad array of difficult scenarios as post commander in Dothan, and his pure leadership ability has always shown through,” said Murphy.

Ward also said, “There is a lot to be learned from trial and error. During my career, I’ve dealt with just about every situation, and as a result, I have a true sense of where the department wants to go and a good idea of how to get us there.”

Although Ward is brand new to the job, he’s already assembled a policy review committee to evaluate and update the entire departmental policy manual. “My goal is to make this manual a living document, and ultimately, I would like to have the entire manual updated and on SafetyNet,” Ward said. “I want this process to be quick, but also thorough.”

The policy review committee includes a representative from each division, a representative from Legal, and two representatives from the Office of Inspections. Committee members are Sgt. Tracy Nelson, Capt. Agatha Windsor, Lt. Guy Rush, Sgt. Jessie Peoples, Capt. Todd Fulmer, Lt. Keith Jackson, Jack Curtis, Lt. Bobby Head, and Alice McMichael.



Take Back Our Highways 50/4: The Next Generation

Public Safety Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy announced the most recent version of “Take Back Our Highways” last week, and while the focus is more centralized, the purpose is the same.

“We are raising awareness within every possible means to reduce crashes and save lives,” said Maj. Roscoe Howell, chief of the Highway Patrol. “The various ‘Take Back Our Highways’ initiatives implemented in the past months attest to that fact. We learned a lot in the past two campaigns, and we are trying to use our resources in numerous different ways. ‘Take Back Our Highways: 50/4’ just so happens to be the newest way we do that.”

“Take Back Our Highways: 50/4” refers to a sweep of 50 additional troopers, for four days, in four key high-fatality areas across the state. Current highway fatality information indicates that areas in Mobile and Baldwin counties, Cullman County, Tuscaloosa County, and Chilton County have among the deadliest rural roadways in the state.

During 2007, Baldwin and Mobile counties recorded a total of 90 rural fatalities; there were 24 in Chilton County, 39 in Cullman County, and 31 in Tuscaloosa County.

“Using all of the resources that we have, we are targeting the causal factors for fatalities in four key areas,” said Howell. “We are also using our resources in many different ways. I am proud of the fact that this is the first time that we will run complete 24-hour, around-the-clock details in these four key areas.”

Howell noted that this second generation of “Take Back Our Highways” is the product of what has been learned from previous campaigns. “Back in August, we realized that potential bottlenecks occur when so much activity is going on on the roads. Our radio rooms weren’t equipped for that kind of traffic,” Howell said. “Now, with what we know, we can take our efforts and implement new and different things.”

Thanks to Task Force Zero, all four targeted areas will see aggressive DUI enforcement in the form of two separate sobriety checkpoints.

“Task Force Zero is a great example of what TBOH is all about,” Howell said. “TFZ started in Montgomery. If it works in Montgomery, why can’t it work statewide? Our purpose has always been promoting safety and saving lives. All we are doing is taking our resources to implement what we know works.”

Robinson, on the Road to Recovery, and DPS Extend Gratitude to Two Good Samaritans

Hughes (left) and Garrett (right) take time to be photographed with Robinson at DPS Headquarters Jan 18.



Two off-duty firefighters, Christopher Charles Hughes and Brett Alan Garrett, were commended by DPS Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy in a ceremony Jan. 18 for coming to the aid of Tpr. Cleo Robinson after he was struck by a pickup truck and seriously injured during what began as a routine traffic stop on Interstate 59 at 6:15 a.m. Nov. 3.

Robinson was walking to the window of a car he had just pulled over when he heard the sound of another vehicle driving along the rumble strips of the shoulder of the interstate. Robinson turned around to see what was causing the noise and spotted a pickup truck rapidly approaching the rear of his vehicle. The trooper instinctively leaped towards the roadway to avoid being crushed between his own car and the car he had just pulled over.

“At first I thought to leap away from the street and away from the car,” said Robinson. “Where I was, however, I could not leap away from traffic, so I leaped toward the interstate. There was hardly any traffic early that morning, and I knew being on the interstate was safer than being pinned between two vehicles.”

Although Robinson narrowly escaped with his life, he received serious injuries. In the crash, Robinson’s own vehicle rolled over his leg, crushing it and effectively pinning him under his patrol car. Hughes and Garrett, who were in the vicinity and immediately responded to the scene, also were worried that Robinson suffered head trauma in the crash.

“It looked like you hit your head on the pavement,” said Hughes to Robinson. “You had a cut by your eye, and you repeatedly kept asking what had happened. I did all I could to free you from underneath your car, but your car wouldn’t budge. We were finally able to free your leg by carefully rotating your steering wheel.”

Thankfully, head trauma was not the case, but both Hughes and Garrett stayed with Robinson, ensuring his safety until he was airlifted to the UAB Medical Center. There he stayed for five days, and when Robinson finally was released from the hospital, he worried how he would be able to move his family to a new apartment to accommodate a new family member on the way.

His DPS family was on hand to deliver, as both Birmingham and Tuscaloosa post personnel showed up at Robinson’s door to move his entire family. With the Robinsons in their new home and settled in record time, the trooper was all smiles, expressing his gratitude to all for their help.

Robinson’s crash left an impact on those people who responded to his aid, as well. Garrett, who was on his way to the fire department to work that fateful morning, immediately started several fund-raising efforts at work to assist the Robinson family with Christmas gifts.

“It’s the time of giving, and I gave what I could to help someone who needed it. I’m glad to do it, and I’m glad Tpr. Robinson wasn’t hurt any worse than he was,” said Garrett.

On behalf of the Department of Public Safety, Murphy officially commended Garrett and Hughes for stopping and providing immediate emergency aid and assistance to the fallen trooper, and for remaining on the scene to provide investigators with an eye-witness account of events leading up to the crash.

The DPS Tactical Teams were joined by Maj. Roscoe Howell, Capt. Marc McHenry, and Lt. Jack Clark recently at the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Firing Range to test new body armor acquired through a Department of Homeland Security grant. The equipment is designed for use in particularly dangerous or hostile situations.

The Dragon Skin armor is a unique type of bulletproof vest constructed with silver dollar-sized overlapping circular disks, resembling scales. The specialized manufacturing techniques used in making Dragon Skin result in a flexible vest that allows a greater range of motion and can absorb greater impact than standard military body armor. The individual disks used in manufacturing the armor are composed of silicon carbide ceramic matrices and laminates.

"The 48-pound armor is surprisingly flexible," said Clark. "The vest is weighted and balanced perfectly, and it definitely doesn't feel like nearly 50 pounds on your back."

Clark's remarks are echoed in the sentiment of the entire tactical teams, whose members unanimously declared a preference for the Dragon Skin armor. In addition to offering a greater range of motion, the vests offer greater protection across a greater portion of the body, including added protection for the neck and collar, shoulder, and groin areas.

"While it may take time to adjust to the subtle nuances of the Dragon Skin armor, the added benefits of this superior armor are so numerous, I doubt I can list them all," said Clark.

TACTICAL TEAMS 'GEAR UP' WITH NEW DRAGON SKINS



Kistler, Pruitt Win Emergency Service Challenge

Tprs. Billy Pruitt and Charles Kistler of the Huntsville Post were presented with a check for \$1,500 after winning the Emergency Service Challenge, sponsored by the Twickenham Auto Club of Huntsville and the Tennessee Valley Region of the Sports Car Club of America.

The Emergency Service Challenge included participants from the Department of Public Safety, Madison County Sheriff's Department, Huntsville Police Department, Huntsville Fire Department, and the HEMSI Ambulance Service. Each participating agency was represented by a two-person team, competing individually along a slalom course, and combining times.

Pruitt and Kistler had the fastest combined time on the course. Vehicles for the event were donated by Woody Anderson Ford. Checks were presented to Pruitt and Kistler by Shauna Barnett, chairperson for the event. The checks will be donated to the troopers' favorite charity.



ABI 'Rounds Up' Competition in Robot Rodeo

Heeschen, Barnes, and Snyder, with their robots, prove victorious at the Alabama Robot Rodeo in Birmingham.

Three members of the ABI Bomb Squad recently traveled to Birmingham to compete in the Alabama Robot Rodeo hosted by the Birmingham Police Department.

ABI's Cpl. Robert Heeschen and Lt. Clay Barnes, respectively, took first and second places at the rodeo. This event is held annually and provides an opportunity for civilian and military EOD units to network and show off their robot skills.

Teams compete with one robot operator and at least one spotter per course. The operator must navigate the robot through a course, while being judged on time and ability to complete certain tasks. The spotter's job is to ensure the robot is not damaged in the event of an operator's mistake. The spotter also serves as liaison between the judges and the operator during competition. Cpl. Thad Snyder served as ABI's spotter.

The course is designed to challenge the operator's ability to balance, maneuver and perform specific tasks with the robot. This year's course consisted of traversing steep obstacles; cutting a plank with a saw; removing a suitcase, a back pack, and a pipe bomb from a car; and pulling a club car.

This year's contestants were the Jefferson County Bomb Squad, Gadsden Police Department Bomb Squad, ATFE, 441 Ordinance EOD Company, 666 Ordinance EOD Company, and the ABI Bomb Squad. Both the 441 and ABI entered two teams in the contest. Heeschen entered the Foster-Miller Talon robot, and Barnes entered the Remotec Andros F6A robot. Both robots were purchased through Department of Homeland Security grants.

Barnes praised Heeschen's first-place victory, and credited his achievement to his dedication to training. Congratulations to both!



Hazardous Devices School Trains EOD Elite:

Barnes Recounts His Experience at Redstone Arsenal

The Hazardous Devices School — bomb techs call it “HDS,” for short — is where every civilian bomb technician in the United States is trained, and it’s located right here in Alabama at Redstone Arsenal.

What’s training like at HDS? Lt. Clay Barnes, Public Safety’s most recent HDS graduate, said it was the most challenging school of his 15-year law enforcement career. “The current Basic Class is six weeks, and most days begin at 6:30 or 7:30 a.m. and end at 5 p.m.

“It’s Monday through Friday, except that students are required to make up training on the weekends they may have missed during the week due to weather. The first day students are put into an 85-pound bomb suit and asked to perform a series of physical exercises,” said Barnes.

“This is the first of seven exams. Failing this first test results in dismissal from the school. The other exams — some written, some practical — all require a score of 80 percent to pass.”

The HDS is one of the most technically advanced training facilities available to law enforcement today, with a price tag of \$25 million. Barnes said he was most impressed with HDS organization, which is designed to make optimum use of student time. During their six weeks of training, Barnes said he and his 23 fellow students had virtually no “down time.”

“I was placed on a team with other students from around the United States and issued a response truck with all the related gear,” he said. “We ran real-world type scenarios in a mock city and trained on devices so realistic we couldn’t tell them from the real thing, until we disrupted them. Alabama is fortunate to have such a facility in its own back yard.”

The seeds for HDS were sown during the war in Vietnam, when the U.S. military’s explosive ordnance disposal personnel were strained. In March 1970, the concept of civilian law enforcement bomb technicians took shape, when then-President Richard Nixon ordered the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration to fund civilian bomb squad training for law enforcement.

The U.S. Army was given the responsibility for training, and in January 1971, the first three-week basic course was conducted at Redstone. DPS retired Capt. Fred Patterson was among the first graduates of HDS that year. The LEAA ended in 1980, and the FBI was assigned with funding and administering the HDS program.



Above, a bomb tech carefully works to disable a device in a training exercise in January. Right, Barnes receives a pin at HDS graduation from his wife, Loretta.



There are currently 471 bomb squads in the United States and approximately 2,400 certified bomb technicians. All bomb techs, including the six currently employed by DPS, graduated from HDS; and each one must return every three years to Redstone for a week to maintain “certified” status.

In addition to Barnes, current HDS-certified bomb techs at DPS include Cpls. Russell Foshee, Robert Heeschen, Al Mattox, and Thad Snyder, and Tpr. Darren Davis. Other DPS employees who have graduated from HDS are Capt. John Henderson, Sgt. Mike Junkin, Sgt. John Smith, and Cpl. Kevin Ingalls.

DPS Chaplains: Always Willing to Assist When Needed

The Department of Public Safety's chaplains make up a special class of heroes. Through the DPS Chaplains Program, pastors of various faiths volunteer to serve as non-denominational chaplains for the Department of Public Safety. These devoted individuals complete a 16-hour chaplain's seminar at the Alabama Criminal Justice Training Center, and are prepared to assist all members of the department in need of counsel.

The chaplains program is a support group of dedicated volunteers for the men and women who give themselves daily in service to the people of Alabama. It is their mission to take a leading role to share their spiritual values with those who so faithfully serve the department, at the risk of their own lives. Currently, there are 44 chaplains available statewide, volunteering their services to the DPS family.

All chaplains are invited to participate in post, troop or unit meetings, as well as departmental social functions. They also are able to ride with troopers on patrol. One of the biggest challenges facing troopers is delivering death messages to family members, and DPS chaplains are all available and willing to assist troopers in handling such difficult situations. Additionally, DPS chaplains aid in departmental funerals and provide confidential counsel for departmental members and their immediate families as requested.

As one of the most active chaplains in the state, Ray Weaver believes wholeheartedly in the program. "I take my work as a DPS chaplain very seriously. I work extremely hard to minister to DPS personnel in times of need, and to the families of the victims of fatalities," Weaver said.

Last year, Weaver assisted state troopers in delivering 13 death notifications, and works closely with both the Montgomery and Alex City posts. On occasion, Weaver also helps at the Opelika Post.

Part of what makes Weaver so effective as a DPS chaplain is his unique qualifications. "I have extensive law enforcement chaplain training, and I am highly qualified in critical incident stress management," said Weaver. Chaplains have required training programs scheduled quarterly to stay up to date with changes in the agency.

DPS Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy underlined the need for chaplains within Public Safety. "Our employees are only human and must go through the gamut of life's trials," said Murphy.

"Troopers, in particular, are called to respond to Alabamians in crises, ranging from the loss of a loved one in a traffic crash to a missing child or an elderly parent. As unfortunate as it may be, our troopers are often called upon to witness some of the horrific events of life," Murphy said. "For all these and the many other stresses of the mission of DPS, I am grateful to the chaplaincy program here at DPS. I very much appreciate the chaplains who volunteer their time and talent to this integral part of our family."

Weaver also expressed gratitude for Murphy's support and for the coordinator of the program, Sgt. Tracy Nelson. "I will have completed five years as an active chaplain in March, and they have been the best thing to happen to the chaplain program," said Weaver.

"I could not have a better departmental coordinator to serve under than Sgt. Nelson, and the personal encouragement I have received from Col. Murphy has been outstanding," he said.

What do DPS Chaplains Offer Me?

1. Chaplains act in an advisory capacity to troops and Headquarters on all matters pertaining to morale, morals, and religion as they affect all personnel and personnel performance.
2. Chaplains represent a visible, pastoral presence to all department personnel.
3. Chaplains make notification of death, injury, or other special situation in the company of at least one law enforcement officer, upon request.
4. Chaplains are available to counsel all department personnel and their families.
5. Chaplains are permitted to ride in patrol cars with troopers at their mutual convenience for firsthand knowledge of patrol procedures. This enables chaplains to become familiar with problems troopers encounter daily.
6. Chaplains assist in crisis situations, such as homicide, suicide, civil disturbance, barricade and hostage situations, upon request.
7. Chaplains assist department personnel in contacting appropriate community agencies for special needs.
8. Chaplains act as liaison between the department personnel and church congregations and/or religious bodies.
9. Chaplains assist other law enforcement agencies upon request when available and appropriate.
10. Chaplains visit injured or hospitalized employees and family members.
11. Chaplains attend or participate in funerals of active and retired employees of DPS.

Charter and Retired Members Day - 2007



Each year, on or around Dec. 5, DPS celebrates its rich heritage with an annual gathering of its Charter and Retired Members. Following a reception, the retirees gathered at the Golden Corral in Montgomery for a luncheon. The day was filled with warm stories and recollections of a proud department that was founded in December 1935, by Gov. Bibb Graves.



Trooper Bears Bring Smiles to Children's Faces at Christmas

Each year at Christmas, Department of Public Safety employees, together with the Alabama State Trooper Association, team up to bring cheer to children in hospitals during the holidays. For more than 20 years, these organizations arrange to give out state trooper bears to children who, due to illness or injury, are unable to be home during Christmas. The goal of the trooper bear campaign is to bring joy to each recipient, but the cheer doesn't stop there. As Tpr. John Reese noted, "Each year that we present the bears to children in the hospital, the nurses and other hospital staff are always left asking, 'Where is our bear?'"



Donaldson and Fails pose with a happy father, Roller, and his new baby daughter.

A Beautiful Day of Sunshine Brings a Beautiful Baby Girl:

Selma Post Assists in Second Roadside Delivery in 13 Months

Following a wretched rain storm the previous evening, Tpr. Chris Fails of the Selma Post was working what he considered a routine patrol the morning of Jan. 11, when he and Deputy Earnest LaRay Donaldson of the Dallas County Sheriff's Department responded to a frantic 911 call.

Fails suddenly was reminded that there is nothing routine about being a trooper. Still, Fails never expected he would soon assist in making a happy couple happy parents.

At 8:27 a.m., Fails arrived at the scene to find a couple stranded on Alabama 41, en route to the hospital in Selma for the imminent birth of their baby. Upon arriving at the scene, Fails and Donaldson both saw the mother was in labor, and immediately assisted in the delivery of a baby girl until paramedics were able to arrive. Once the paramedics reached the scene, all were transported to Vaughan Hospital in Selma; and the baby, mother and father were all reported to be fine.

Edward Roller and Tamika Harrison expressed their gratitude for the quick response of Fails, Donaldson and all of the emergency personnel in their time of crisis. Despite all the hiccups along the way, as proud parents they are thankful their daughter is here and safe.

Perhaps most surprising, this is actually the second roadside delivery troopers from the Selma Post have assisted with in little more than a year. In December 2006, Tprs. Kerry Horton and Steven James assisted in the birth of another baby girl.

"You see this sort of thing on TV all the time, but we're not doctors," said Horton. "Who would actually think that you'd ever get up, put on this trooper uniform, and deliver a baby?"

Donaldson, Roller, and Fails at the site of the roadside delivery on Alabama 41.





People You Know!

New Employees

Monica Chandler	12/03/07	DL Examiner I	DL/Selma
Richard Cole III	12/03/07	Warehouse Worker	DL/DL Services
Alice Free	12/16/07	Department Procurement Officer I	ADM/Purchasing
Crystal Jackson	11/16/07	PCO I	HP/Opelika
Gwendolyn Layton	12/17/07	PCO I	HP/Mobile
Dwight Maye	11/16/07	Auto Body Repairer	SER/Fleet Maintenance
Patricia Pritchett	12/17/07	Retired State Employee	DL/DL Services
Shannon Sears	12/01/07	ASA III	HP/Traffic Homicide
Christine Smock	11/19/07	PCO I	HP/Dothan
Jeffrey Standridge	12/17/07	Retired State Employee	SER/ACJTC
Jesse Thornton	12/01/07	Trooper	HP/Montgomery
Jackie Welsh	12/17/07	Retired State Employee	DL/DL Records

Promotions

Brant Barnett	12/01/07	Lieutenant	DL/Decatur Examining
Charles Bitel	12/01/07	Corporal	HP/Selma
Jason Burch	12/01/07	Corporal	HP/Selma
Vida Childrey	12/01/07	DL Supervisor	DL/Montgomery Examining
Vicki Clark	12/16/07	DL Examiner II	DL/Huntsville Examining
Artina Crenshaw	12/16/07	PCO II	HP/Montgomery
Cathy Dawson	11/16/07	PCO III	PS/Capitol Police
Eric Dowdell	12/01/07	Corporal	DL/Jacksonville Examining
Derek Gessner	12/01/07	Corporal	HP/Evergreen
Teresa Gray	12/01/07	DL Supervisor	DL/Tuscaloosa Examining
John Helms Jr.	12/01/07	Corporal	HP/Evergreen
Wanda Harrell	12/16/07	PCO II	HP/Montgomery
Michelle Holden	12/16/07	DL Supervisor	DL/Quad Cities Examining
Gina Irvin	12/16/07	DL Supervisor	DL/Opelika Examining
Karen Kimball	12/01/07	Photo Tech II	SER/Photo Lab
Terry King	12/01/07	Corporal	SER/ACJTC
Helen Knoebel	12/01/07	DL Examiner II	DL/Dothan Examining
David Lawson	12/01/07	DL Examiner II	DL/Birmingham Examining
Michael Martin	12/01/07	Corporal	HP/Birmingham
Terri McCall	12/01/07	DL Examiner II	DL/Birmingham Examining
Laura Phillips	12/16/07	PCO II	HP/Tuscaloosa
Marcus Rutland	12/01/07	PCO II	HP/Quad Cities
Frank Sazera	12/01/07	Corporal	HP/Montgomery
David Sizemore	12/01/07	Corporal	DL/Birmingham Examining
Dwight Thompson	12/01/07	Corporal	SER/ACJTC
April Walker	12/01/07	DL Examiner I	DL/Dothan Examining
Ray Wilson	12/01/07	PCO II	PS/Capitol Police

Transfers

Chad Blankinchip	12/01/07	Trooper	SER/ACJTC
Lonnie Burns	12/01/07	Trooper	SER/Cullman Aviation
Robert Clark	12/01/07	Criminal Analyst	ABI/Fusion Center



People You Know!

Transfers (continued)

Henry Cox	12/16/07	Trooper	HP/FAP
Phillip Faulkner	12/01/07	Trooper	HP/Dothan
Kyle Hobbs	12/01/07	Trooper	SER/Montgomery
Jackie Hornsby	12/01/07	Trooper	ABI/Investigative Operations
Adrian Leary	12/01/07	ASA I	PS/Capitol Police
David McGowan	12/01/07	Trooper	ABI/Investigative Operations
Matthew McKenzie	12/01/07	Trooper	DL/Fraud Unit
Alice McMichael	11/16/07	ASA III	ADM/Inspections
Brian Manley	12/01/07	Trooper	ABI/Investigative Operations
Shar'keia Renfroe	12/16/07	ASA I	ABI/Administrative Unit
Robert Rosser	12/01/07	Trooper	DL/Hearing Unit
Recie Puckett	11/16/07	PCO II	HP/Montgomery
Kenneth Ware	12/01/07	Trooper	DL/Fraud Unit
Herman Wright	12/01/07	Captain	ADM/Assistant Division Chief

Resignations

Shelia Champion	11/15/07	PCO I	HP/Mobile
Susan Knight	11/30/07	ASA II	DL/Hearing Unit
Mary Neilson	11/30/07	Executive Security Officer	PS/Dignitary Protection
Dennis Nichols	09/23/07	PCO I	HP/Birmingham
Amanda Nygard	12/21/07	ASA I	DL/Medical Unit
Nathaniel Salter	12/14/07	PCO I	HP/Montgomery
Stewart Upshaw	11/30/07	ASA I	DL/Medical Unit
Clementine White-Gilmer	11/30/07	PCO I	HP/Selma
Donna Wingard	12/13/07	PCO I	HP/Evergreen

Retirements

Trent Booker	12/31/07	Trooper	HP/MCSU
Gary Champion	12/31/07	Trooper	HP/MCSU
Kevin Claunch	11/30/07	Captain	ADM/Assistant Division Chief
James Fells	12/31/07	Sergeant	HP/Montgomery
Danny Hall	12/31/07	Captain	HP/Montgomery
Julius Hardy	12/31/07	Building Custodian I	SER/ACJTC
John Hughes	12/31/07	Trooper	HP/Tuscaloosa
Joseph Keith	12/31/07	DL Examiner I	DL/Mobile
Myra King	12/31/07	PCO II	HP/Evergreen
Jimmy Messick	12/31/07	Photo Technician II	SER/Photo Lab
Harry Nail	12/31/07	Captain	DL/Chief Examiner
Bly Panter	12/31/07	Trooper	HP/Hamilton
George Parris	12/31/07	Trooper	HP/MCSU
Curtis Petty	12/31/07	Trooper	HP/MCSU
Bobby Powell	11/30/07	Captain	HP/MCSU
Michael Roseman	12/31/07	Trooper	HP/MCSU
Albert Russell	12/31/07	Trooper	HP/MCSU
Mary Smith	12/31/07	DL Examiner	DL/Quad Cities
Jimmy Stone	12/31/07	Service Patrol Officer	HP/Birmingham
Regina Williams	12/31/07	Fingerprint Classifier II	ABI/Identification Unit

Alabama Department of



Public Safety

RSA Criminal Justice Center Montgomery, Ala.



CONTRIBUTING:

- Capt. Marc McHenry, HP
- Lt. Clay Barnes, ABI
- Lt. Karl Youngblood, ABI
- Tpr. John Reese, ADM
- Tommy Giles, Photography

EDITOR:

Ryan Godfrey

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

DPS.ALABAMA.GOV

Questions? Comments? Concerns?

STAY IN TOUCH WITH *THE BLUE LIGHT*.
PLEASE EMAIL ALL REQUESTS TO:

RYAN.GODFREY@DPS.ALABAMA.GOV

On Your Calendar

Tuesday, February 5

Mardi Gras

Monday, February 18

Presidents' Day

Monday, April 28

Confederate Memorial Day

Monday, May 26

Memorial Day

December 1, 2007

To Whom it May Concern:

I have recently moved to Atlanta from my hometown of Memphis, Tenn. Consequently, I travel frequently between both cities along Interstate 20. On Nov. 14, as I was traveling to my home from Memphis, I began to have car problems and had to pull onto the interstate shoulder. What would later be diagnosed as a "dead" transmission had basically stranded me in the midst of my trip. After sitting on the side of the road for approximately 20 minutes, I noticed an Alabama State Trooper car approaching behind me. He switched on his blue lights and pulled up beside my car to ask if I was having problems. I replied that I was. Tpr. Dodson offered me a ride to the nearest exit as my cell phone had no coverage on that particular stretch of highway. After gathering a few items from my car, I got into his patrol car and we proceeded to the nearest exit. Upon arriving at the exit, Tpr. Dodson, noticed there was no place I could comfortably wait for a tow truck to arrive. As a result, he insisted on taking me to the next exit because he knew there was a Waffle House off that exit that I could sit and wait for the tow truck. I gladly accepted the ride, and to this day I am very appreciative of Tpr. Dodson, and his generosity and professional courtesy. He is an outstanding example of the kindness and generosity of the people of Alabama, and should be commended on his service to the public. Thank you in advance for taking time out to read this letter and I sincerely hope that Tpr. Dodson knows that his efforts are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Terrance M. Perkins