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Students' bravery noted



BHS AJROTC (from left) Cadet Major Sergeant Joseph Miller, Cadet Staff Sergeant Kenneth Brier and Cadet Sergeant Richard Peace stand in front of the Army Jr. Reserve Officer Training Corps banner at Bell High School. These three young men were recognized for their heroic service to a stranger. Photo Provided

By Jeff M. Hardison © April 8, 2016

GILCHRIST COUNTY -- Three members of the Army Jr. Reserve Officer Training Corps unit at Bell High School recently were recognized in a letter from a gentleman who felt they earned it.

Attorney Mark Feather sent a letter on March 24 to BHS AJROTC Col. (Ret.) Dennis R. McGill and First Sergeant (Ret.) Jon Meinholz in regard to an incident on March 16.

Feather and his 11-year-old son were on the Suwannee River near the Hart Springs Boat Ramp when the jet ski they were riding stopped working. It began driving down the river with no power, Feather said.

It went passed the boat ramp.

"Apparently," Feather wrote, "some people on the shore noticed our predicament and began to holler, 'Do you need help?' At that point, three young men, Richard Peace, Kenneth Brier and Garrett Clark, came running down the dock, dove into the water and swam to our jet ski to offer their assistance."

The cadets paddled the jet ski to shore at a residence on the river which is downstream from the boat ramp, Feather noted. The boys stayed with the father and son to assist with taking the jet ski back upstream and onto its trailer, Feather wrote.

Joseph Miller, another cadet, drove up to the scene and lent his assistance as well, the man wrote.

"These fine cadets with Garrett Clark stayed until the jet ski was safely returned to the Hart Springs Dock," Feather wrote. "I want to assure you that the behavior of these young men was exemplary. They saw someone they believed to be in need and wet to their immediate aid with no thought for themselves. I believe the impression they made on my son will stay with him for a long, long time."

Feather noted his appreciation to the AJROTC teachers "...for the wonderful training and examples that you are providing for leadership and the willingness to be of service to one's fellow man."