

MEMORANDUM

September 26, 2001

TO: Governor

FROM: John

RE: Mississippi National Guard mobilizations

I met today with Lt. Col. Tim Powell and Col. Shields from the Mississippi National Guard regarding the press about Mississippi units being called up to active duty.

The protocol for situations like the one we're currently in is as follows: The Department of Defense (DoD) has sole authority on any press releases regarding call-ups. The standard procedure is for the DoD to send an activation notice to a unit, then wait 19 hours to inform the media (to allow time to notify all members of a unit).

Unless and until the DoD officially notifies the media that a unit has been activated, Lt. Col. Powell cannot say anything to the media. This is where there's been some confusion in the past week.

The DoD has informed the media that the 255th Air Control Squadron (Gulfport) and the 186th Refueling Wing (Meridian) have been activated. At this time, neither unit has received an activation notice. The problem comes in that some members of the units might find out they've been activated by reading the newspaper.

According to Col. Shields, when a unit receives an activation notice, the commander is given some latitude in how he mobilizes the members of his unit. For example, the order for the 255th Air Control Squadron listed 260 personnel as being called up; the commander may only need 100 at this time, and he will ask for volunteers first. Should he need the full 260 personnel, he may order them to duty.

At the present time, the 186th is performing missions in support of combat patrols over Texas and as "air bridges" over the Atlantic Ocean. In the "air bridge" support, the KC-135 refueling planes assume a position over the mid-Atlantic to refuel fighter jets on their way to Europe. All missions of the 186th are still based out of Meridian.

It is also important to note that the National Guard is not operating on what would be called a "high alert" status. When the attacks happened, they went to what is known as "ThreatCon Delta," their highest alert status.