

Remarks for the
113th Homecoming
August 24, 2003

- Recognize Mayor Roe Grubbs, General Lipscomb, members of the 113th, and their families and friends
- Glad to be here today to celebrate the homecoming of the 113th / one of the favorite parts of my job
- Elmer Davis once said, “This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave.”

■ And, we are here in the middle of the home
of the brave-right here in Mississippi

■ Our men and women and their families
sacrifice a great deal in order to protect us

- Journey to foreign lands

- Absence from family/ loved ones/
friends

- Risk injury/ death

- We are thankful to God that of the 140 soldiers deployed with this unit in January, that all 140 of those soldiers are back home today

- These soldiers have spent the past seven months in the highly volatile areas of Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan
 - Yet, not one soldier has been seriously injured or killed

■ Because of their decision to don the uniforms of our armed services, we are all able to be here today as a free people in a free land

■ Recent months have been difficult for America

- We are fighting a war on terrorism/

 - trying to bring stability to Iraq

- In the process American soldiers are dying

- Stark reminder of the sacrifices they have made

- You soldiers have answered the call that demands the ultimate test of will, strength and endurance
- Because of you we are a free people in the free land of America
- You all are our heroes, we are proud of you and we are happy you all made it back home safely