

*Remarks for the
C-17 Aircrew Training System Ribbon Cutting
November 12, 2003*

- Recognize
 - Rep. Chip Pickering
 - Adjutant General James H. Lipscomb
 - Chuck Schubert
 - Larry Sisco, the site manager
 - Boeing representatives
 - Men and women of the National Guard

- Want to begin by saying how proud I am to be here with you today

- As you all know, yesterday was Veterans Day
 - Celebrated by honoring veterans in Batesville
 - Past Sunday, participated in Celebrate America in Jackson
 - Honored veterans, Mississippi's Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, and our current soldiers

- Just want to say thank you to the soldiers here today
 - Thank you for your commitment to your job
 - Thank you for your dedication to our nation

- Great day to be here
 - To celebrate this milestone for the Mississippi National Guard
 - The 172nd is the only Air National Guard unit in America to have this training system
 - This will be the future home of the C-17

- Never before has National Guard been more integral part of our nations defense
 - Mississippi National Guard has over 2,000 soldiers deployed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom

- Men and women have answered the call
 - With courage and determination to defend our freedoms here at home

- This much I know for sure – when America needs the *very best*, the call is made to *Mississippi*

- Our soldiers are called on by our country because they have proven themselves time and time again
 - They have set a high standard for others to follow

- The impact of our soldiers example – and of the leadership of Major General Lipscomb can be seen throughout the National Guard
 - lead the nation in recruiting
 - since 2000, have increased by over 700 soldiers
 - strength of over 10,000 soldiers
 - soldiers working in our high schools to set an example for our young people
 - working to recruit soldiers from high school
 - the About Face Program and
 - the Youth Challenge Program

- Mississippi's National Guard is just one example of what we have to be proud about
 - Leading the nation in education
 - Leading in economic development and
 - Are competing and winning in the global marketplace

- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
 - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs such as Nissan, Howard Computers, Northrup Grumman and others
 - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their fingertips

- It's an image of global companies looking for a place to do business in the state

- It's an image of good schools, good jobs and good communities
 - An image of the only Air National Guard unit in America
 - To have a C-17 Aircrew Training System
 - And we are the future home of the C-17 Globemaster, the jewel of the Air Force
 - right here in Jackson, Mississippi

- Congratulations to Major General Lipscomb, Air National Guard, 172nd, and Mississippi's hardest working and best prepared soldiers in the nation