

- Thank you for allowing me to be with you today.
  
- For those of you who are visiting, on behalf of the 2.8 million citizens, I want to say thank you and welcome to Mississippi.
  
- The Reserve components make up over 50% of our nation's defense.
  
- Never before has the National Guard been a more integral part of our nations defense
  
- Last week we recognized with the rest of the country the anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

- When you received the call following those cowardly terrorist acts of 9-11-2001, you answered that call, not with hesitation but with courage and determination to defend our freedoms here at home.
  
- Today, the National Guard remains on the forefront of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle.
  
- Our Guard men and women have stepped forward, putting their lives on the line to protect our great nation and preserve our freedoms.

- This nation owes a deep gratitude to our men and women of the National Guard throughout this nation for their dedication and determination in the defense of our great nation and the democracy that we so richly support throughout this world.
- In times of war, there are those who see a hopeless end; I see an endless hope.
- America is the greatest nation in the history of mankind, and nothing will change that.
- America is not just a county, it is an ideal, it is a principle.

- Jonathan Lambert, a US Marine from Booneville who gave his life in Iraq, said it best in a letter he wrote to his hometown paper about the job our soldiers do:
  - “We know that this is more than a job, we do it for our children, grandchildren, friends and family.”
  
- I thank all of you for attending this conference to help shape the future of the greatest fighting force in the world. There are no greater citizen-soldiers in the world than ours in the National Guard.
  
- May God bless you, the State of Mississippi and the United States.