

*Remarks for the
Welcome Home Ceremony – Task Force Rifles
May 4, 2002*

Thank you, General Lipscomb. Let me say it is great to be together again with the soldiers of the Task Force Rifles!

I was proud to be there when you left Camp Shelby last July. I was proud to visit you during training at Camp Shelby. And I was proud – prouder than I've ever been – to visit you in Bosnia.

When I spoke to you last July, I said that I had no doubt you would respond to your call to action responsibly and competently.

As I watched you train for your mission in the dust and heat at Fort Benning, I knew you would be setting the standard for others to follow.

That was confirmed on my trip to Bosnia when I met with General Steve Blum, SFOR 10 commander.

He told me he gave the toughest jobs to the guys from Mississippi, because he knew they'd do the job right, and do it right the first time.

You set milestones in the number of patrols and the territory covered, and you did it with the pride and determination we've come to expect from you.

Because of the work you've done, people are safe. Families in Bosnia welcomed you and in return, you gave them a peace of mind that had been missing for too long.

And while those families were welcoming you, your families here at home were missing you. But, they also knew you were doing important work.

To the families of the soldiers of the Task Force Rifles, I want to say a special “thank you.” Without your support, prayers and love for these soldiers, their mission would have been much more difficult.

I also want to commend General Lipscomb for his leadership. He has helped demonstrate to the nation and the world the excellence of the Mississippi National Guard. General Lipscomb, thank you.

I have something I want to read to you...

(read proclamation)

As soldiers in the Mississippi National Guard, as soldiers of the Task Force Rifles, as the greatest example of the true “citizen soldier,” you have made us all proud.

I’m proud to be here today to say, “welcome home!”