

**For Immediate Release**

October 3, 2003

**Contact:** Shannon McMullan

601-359-3227

## **Governor Musgrove Announces Mississippi National Guard Surpasses 10,000**

(Jackson, MS) –Today, Governor Ronnie Musgrove announced that the Mississippi National Guard has 10,008 soldiers, surpassing the 10,000 troop strength goal.

“Never before has the National Guard been a more integral part of our nation’s defense,” said Musgrove. “The national recruitment trend has declined while here in Mississippi our men and women are willing to defend America’s principles of freedom and justice.”

The Mississippi National Guard has 2,400 men and women, the fourth highest number in the nation, deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

“When our soldiers and airmen were called to serve, they stepped up to the task and are making Mississippi proud, said Maj. Gen. James H. Lipscomb III, the adjutant general of Mississippi. “I’m extremely proud of them, and I wish them all a safe and speedy return.”

When the National Guard Bureau assigned the Mississippi National Guard end strength at 9,595 soldiers, General Lipscomb knowing his professional recruiting force, said Mississippi could do better and established a new goal of 10,000 soldiers, 405 more than the assigned end strength.

Since Governor Musgrove took office in 2000, the Army Guard strength has increased by over 720 soldiers and the Air Guard is currently at 99% of their authorized strength. The Mississippi National Guard, as an organization, has an economic impact of nearly \$419 million in the State of Mississippi.

###