

*Remarks for the
1687th Transportation Company Announcement
October 28, 2002*

Thank you, Major General Lipscomb. (recognize Rep. Jennings, Mayor Greg Davis)

I want to begin by saying how proud I am of the Mississippi National Guard, and the men and women who serve their state and their nation in the Guard.

It has been a busy year for the Guard. In early September of last year, members of the 155th Task Force Rifles finished their training and deployed to Bosnia as part of a peace-keeping mission.

They served their tour with distinction, and I had the privilege of visiting them right before Christmas.

It was an honor to be there with them and see first-hand the sacrifices they were making for their country, away from family and friends during the holiday season.

Right after the Task Force Rifles shipped out, we were hit with the attacks of September 11. Again, the men and women of the Guard were called to action – serving as security in our airports and hundreds were deployed across the globe in support of the war on terrorism. They are still serving – and we must remember them in our prayers.

The Guard does great things for Mississippi, and it does great things for those who serve. The Mississippi ARMY National Guard has a strength of 9,700 soldiers – 415 more than it had in July of 2000 when Major General Lipscomb took command. For the second year running, the strength of the Air National Guard stands at 102 percent of its authorized strength. Our Guard personnel are working together to make the Guard in Mississippi stronger than at anytime in recent history.

This is good news for Mississippi – and today we're here to share some more good news.

I am proud to announce the newest unit of the Mississippi Army National Guard that will continue this growth will be the 1687th Transportation Company that will be located here in Southaven. This unit will play an integral role in the movement of Guard units and material, transporting cargo, and supplies to support forward area units.

The economic impact of this unit will be strong. Initially three full-time employees will serve here, and the unit will have strength of 166 soldiers, both men and women, with an annual payroll of nearly \$675,000.

The 1687th will also offer its personnel tremendous training, particularly for this area. The Desoto County and Memphis areas are well known for their commerce, particularly ground transportation moving along the I-55 corridor.

With 60 brand-new semi-trucks and 120 flatbed trailers, the personnel serving in this unit will gain tremendous skills that can be applied in the civilian sector in this area.

The citizen soldiers of the Mississippi National Guard are setting up shop in Southaven – and that's good news for all of Mississippi.

Thank you.