

**G. V. Sonny Montgomery Weekly Radio Show**

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*Audio begins at 0:13*

Interviewer: This is Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington. A recent Governmental Accounting Office study was done on the readiness of National Guard combat brigades activated during the War, including the 155th in Mississippi. The report cited some deficiencies. You have now asked the GAO to study the readiness level of the Active Duty units that replaced them. What's your reasoning?

Montgomery: Well, it was only fair that if we have the General Accounting Office look at the National Guard brigades that were called up, and they pointed out some deficiencies. And, sure when you call a National Guard Unit up, any type of Unit you call up you'll find some deficiencies, but I think you need some comparisons of the active duty brigades that took the place of the National Guard Brigade, such as the 155<sup>th</sup> in Mississippi. And find out how ready they were. In fact, the two National Guard Brigades, in my opinion, were ready. There were some things wrong, and you'll have that, as I said earlier, every type of big unit you call to active duty. But these two active Army Brigades, one was a training school Brigade, had been at Ft. Benning Georgia for ten, eleven years. Far as I know had never been out in the field, to train, or run tanks. And then you had a unit from Ft. Hood, a Brigade that was being disbanded. Was being done away with, they turned in part of their equipment. They did not have the modern M-1 tank, or the Bradley vehicle. Which both National Guard Brigades had. So, I just wanted to get a comparison, I may find out that the active duty Brigades were ready. But let's take a look at it, and that was the point of having the General Accounting Office study whether these active duty Brigades were any better prepared than the two National Guard Brigades.

Interviewer: What's the status of military construction work in Meridian associated with the Air National Guard's conversion to the KC135 Tankers? Is that still on track?

Montgomery: That's right on track, that's one of the best projects that I've been involved in. And I want to congratulate Colonel Feinstein, who is the Commander of the 186<sup>th</sup> down there. We're converting them from F-4 reconnaissance planes, fighter planes, to KC135 tankers. We had total cooperation from that unit, this project is moving along so well, it's going to mean a lot of building and construction right down here at Key Field. In fact, in January we hope that some contracts will be led on the eight-story hangar that will be built, some say it's nine stories, but it's close to eight or nine stories maintenance hangar. That we built to take care of these KC135's tankers for maintenance. That will, start building that, I'd say, by the Spring of this year. Another great area, that's happening to us down there. Is, thanks to Colonel Feinstein and others, we're getting a simulator training. Every Guardsmen and Reservist, who will learn to fly

the KC135, which will be years to come, will come to Meridian, Mississippi and train on a simulator, that we're getting from Boeing cooperation. That will start in December, right away. And that means that a number of crews will be coming into Meridian, they'll do the simulator, and also, they will actually go to school there, and actually they will do some flight training actually in the tanker aircraft, so. That's one of the best projects I've ever been involved with, it's just right on track. That the KC135's will be there on time, and we'll be doing a job for our military defense.

Interviewer: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs set up a Blue-Ribbon Commission to look at the overall mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Commission made its report to your Veterans Committee this week. What kinds of things did it look at?

Montgomery: I thought it was a very good report. They said, "what type of veterans care will we need for veterans in the year 2010". And they pointed up that we might have to open the VA hospitals up more for veterans who are under Medicare or Medicaid. That recommending some more support, for our veterans coming into medical care, giving them a little better service. And they gave us a cost estimate of what that would actually cost to do these things. So, it's a good report we're gonna keep running our veterans' hospitals, and this report points that out

Interviewer: Thank you Congressman, this has been the weekly report from Washington furnished by Congressman Sonny Montgomery. Presented as a public service by this station.

*Audio ends at 5:16*