

G. V. Sonny Montgomery Weekly Radio Show

Date: April 14, 1993

Audio begins at 00:01

Interviewer: This is Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington. The Department of Defense has decided against allowing a Mississippi National Guard helicopter to lift the Statue of Freedom off the U.S. Capitol dome here in Washington. What are the details on this?

Montgomery: About a year ago I went I see the architect of the Capitol, who runs the Capitol buildings, and I heard that he was looking for some type of group to help take the the Statue of Freedom which is the lady on top of the U.S. capitol dome, take take the statue down, put it on the ground, and refurbish it, work on it, it's in bad shape, it's been up there for 130 years so I told him the Mississippi National Guard helicopter group could do it right there in in Meridian, Mississippi and they've done something out in Austin, Texas the same type of mission for the Capitol at state in Austin, Texas. So, we thought we were gone get to do it, the architect liked the idea then along came Johnny Comelately, Oregon airlift company, and they said they could do it cheaper. And they just muddied the water and finally the Defense Department came out today and said this week and said well we're not gone let the Mississippi National Guard do it and that we'll let this private firm get the job. All that's doing is causing the taxpayers an extra 60 to 100,000 dollars. The Guard has the money to train, this could be a training mission, they could come right up here, do it where now they'll just lift logs out of the woods down there or lift concrete blocks up to practice so it wasn't a very smart decision by the Secretary of Defense. I'm very disappointed. It'll be a lot of coverage on on lifting the lady off the dome and I'm just kinda really kinda sick over the whole thing.

Interviewer: You led a Veteran's Committee Delegation to some military bases over the Easter recess to look at how the Montgomery GI Bill was being excepted by new recruits. What did you find?

Montgomery: Have a better report than I than I had on using the Mississippi National Guard helicopters on the statue on the dome. Montgomery GI Bill is doing very well. The Marines coming into the service are signing up 90% or more signing up for the educational benefits by coming into the service for 3 or 4 years. At Fort Jackson, South Carolina where we went and also that was at Paris Island where the Marines were at South Carolina, at Fort Jackson and also in in South Carolina and at Fort Benning in Georgia, those young Army recruits over 95% of them are signing up for these educational benefits so the bottom line we're getting good recruits and they they're signing up for these educational benefits so after they get out of out of the service they'll have an opportunity to go to college and get them a community college diploma or get a 4 year college diploma or either get a masters or PhD degree. We want to help educate these young Americans so they can help themselves in life where they can make more income, do better jobs for our country. So, they GI Bill is doing well.

Interviewer: Another focus of the trip was to see how the programs are working to help personnel who are leaving the service as result of the downsizing of the military. What's the story on this?

Montgomery: That's not bad. The we have what we call the TAP program, the Transitional Program, where a person who's going to be discharged in the service within the next 6 months goes into this program. They have to go into it and there they explain the veterans benefits, they'll learn how to make resumes to try to find out how they can some jobs. It's a wonderful program and it's working pretty well in certain states the State Labor Department of that state comes in and works with the military. So, we think if other states would adopt what the state of Georgia and state of South Carolina are doing we can find these people jobs who are being retired and also being pushed out of the military. It's a good program, it out to be used and we certainly need to help these fellows get jobs.

Interviewer: Thank you Congressman. This has been Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington presented as a public service by this station.

Audio ends at 04:43