

G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery Weekly Radio Show 01-26-1994

[Speaking starts 0:04]

Announcer: This is Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington. You held a Veterans Affairs committee hearing in Meridian last Friday to look at the Persian Gulf War illness issue. What was your assessment of the proceedings?

Montgomery: I thought it was an excellent meeting, hearing that we had in, in Meridian. We had seven members of Congress, including myself, that came from all over the country to participate in this hearing of these young men and women who had been affected by some type of sickness, that we're trying to find out if it was caused by their service in the Persian Gulf War and witnesses have been in both Iraq, Kuwait, and also in Saudi Arabia. We're trying to pin it down, how many chemicals were used by the American forces, whether it could have been a bacteria that had been picked up, a parasite even from the oil fires that were still raging and burning when these, these persons were in the, in the Persian Gulf. We looked into the birth defects of some of the children who had been born to the fathers of those who served in the Persian Gulf War. Thirteen out of fifteen children born in the last couple years to these fathers who served the Persian Gulf have had some type of, of birth defects. Then after we had the witnesses testify their sicknesses and the birth defects of the children, then we had another panel to talk to us that were made up of the experts. It really was a good panel from the government, from the Defense department, from the Veterans department, from the Center for Disease Control, from the state medical office in, in Mississippi. And, and what we're trying to do, from, from that, that testimony and with the second panel of witnesses from the government talking to each other, and maybe come up by May or June of this year, come up to pin it down more of what, what actually is causing these sicknesses and, and see what we can, can come up with. If we can find out that this was a parasite or a bacteria, we'll move ahead to treating, mainly trying to treat the patient, and, and get that individual feeling better. This is taken place all over the United States. These people both active and national guard reserves that served overseas. Now, some of them have come back with exotic sicknesses or syndrome type of sickness that we just having trouble pinning it down, but we can find out actually what's causing it, and then we can treat it. So that, that's the bottom line. And on birth defects, we'll have to figure out something if that, if that's caused it. We don't know whether that's caused these birth defects or not on these children. If not, we'll have to work out something on the compensation pension of these families.

Announcer: A tragic accident in the country of Honduras last week killed one Mississippian and injured more than 20 others. State and Federal authorities worked together after the accident to get information to relatives and arrange to bring the victims home. Situations like this in a foreign country sometimes make it difficult to coordinate things. Could you elaborate on what happened?

Montgomery: Yes. Our office in Meridian, Mrs. Lacy was, was working with the families and the church people in, in, in Rankin County in the Pearl area where this was put together, and it was just tragic about the loss of the, the young Boatner individual, wonderful young man as I understand it, and then the others were very seriously hurt. But, but it worked out pretty well as far as getting them back to the United States. In a foreign country you worry about the medical treatment, bringing remains back, but it all worked out, and I, I knew if I had to, I could call upon the president of Honduras, President Callejas, who's a graduate of Mississippi State University, and I went to his inauguration about two years ago down in Honduras, and he would have helped us also. But it's a sadness those things happen, and you go in a foreign country where it's very, very rural.

Announcer: Thank you Congressman. This has been Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington.