

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

Date: February 21, 1996

*Audio begins at 00:17*

Interviewer: This is Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington. The Defense Department is in the process of reviewing 4<sup>th</sup> structure needs for the military for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And there's a question about the role the National Guard and Reserve will play in that picture. As the leading advocate for the Reserve components in Congress, what do you see coming out of this?

Montgomery: Well we're going to have to pull together, we who support the National Guard and Reserve to be sure that we're not hit that hard. Actually I'd like to point out to our listeners today, the National Guard and Reserve is a great buy for the taxpayers, it cost half as much to train a person to do a certain job in the National Guard, drive a tank, fly an airplane, mechanic, and and and pay them. It's it's it's half the savings that it cost to half 'em of active duty and then you have the big retirements for for active duty also so the taxpayers get a good deal and the National Guard and Reserve. I'm a Guardsman and I I like it and I see the job they can do. They're bringing down the forces, maybe we brought 'em down enough. I worry about that. But they wanna reduce especially the the Army National Guard and reduce some of the divisions that we have in the different states. We don't have a division there in Mississippi. Use to be the 31<sup>st</sup> division in Alabama and Mississippi but it was taken away. We have brigade down there. We'll just have to work with the Defense Department I think we've got a chance to compromise which we're not compromising anything else up here in Washington. But I think we have a chance to compromise with the Defense Department and work out something that we can keep these units in our state and across the nation. You know you have these these these big posts, air bases, and all the money goes into those bases like Fort Bennet, Pensacola, you can just name 'em. When you have the National Guard, you have an armory there and some of their defense money goes right into that little community there. They say it brings in 2 million dollars a year that circulates in the small community. So, by having the National Guard and Reserve you spread the money around you spend in defense, you get a better buy and you get the support of the military by having in these communities. So, we've got a fight on our hands, we'll have to take some reductions in the National Guard and Reserve, but I think we've worked pretty hard to protect what we've got in Mississippi. But we might lose a few armories.

Interviewer: Mississippi is one of the strongest National Guard and Reserve states in the nation and you've helped change missions and update equipment at these facilities. Will they be in good shape for the future?

Montgomery: I think so, look at our Air Guard units in in in Meridian. We've now gotten rid of the the old reconnaissance planes, the F-4 and we've got the KC-135, it's a great mission for the Air National Guard in Meridian. As we talked today, they're flying to Bosnia. They're out everyday Spain, Italy, Bosnia, Haiti, and and the same thing applies for Army National Guard.

We do have some special forces down in Haiti so so our our guard units are updated. Then we have the 172<sup>nd</sup> air lift unit over in in Brandon, Rankin county, or Jackson and we've gotten new airplanes, we've gotten the C-17s we're real proud of that. These new airplanes, the only new ones coming into the Guard and Reserve are going to Mississippi to that unit in Brandon the 172<sup>nd</sup> C-17s cost 200 million dollars a copy and we're we're so proud of that. We have in the Army Guard; we'll have a new weapons system called the Avenger. It's in 5 communities over in in the eastern part of this state. Now these units I've mentioned the Air Guard and and the Avenger unit it's a it's a weapons system, a Stinger Weapons System, mounted on a Hum-V that flies a low flying airplane. Those units will go into the system well into year 2000 or 2010 so we feel pretty good about that. They're not gone get rid of the Avenger System they're not gone get rid of the Air Guard Unit that are flying every day to help out military around the world. So, the Guard and Reserve are doing pretty good in Mississippi.

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

*Audio ends at 04:48*