

Alabama - Adjutant General Mark Bowen

**Testimony to House Armed Services Committee - Terrorism, Unconventional
Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee**
May 25, 2006

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is an honor to be here to testify before this committee. I have appeared earlier this year before Representative Tom Davis' Katrina Review Committee and I understand the Government Accountability Office and many other groups have issued reports on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Today, however, I will present what we in Alabama did right, what we did wrong and the planning I have done for this year as the Adjutant General of Alabama for Governor Bob Riley.

What we did Right -

- 1. Response Time** - Our response was very quick but we can improve with an early declaration to place airman and soldiers on duty 72 hours prior to landfall. Approval of federal funds (Title 32) for P&A / O&M will further enhance the Guard's ability to respond much faster. With this declaration in affect we would be able to alert, mobilize and preposition troops and supplies well in advance.
- 2. JTF Organization (See Power Point - slide 4)** – Our plan consists of both Air and Army Guard units with full capabilities for Security, Communication, Medical, Logistics (internal and external), Engineering Assets, Maintenance, Power to critical infrastructure and Search and Rescue (SAR).
- 3. Title 32 status** - provides much better benefits (retirement, injury, disability or duty related death) for Guard members than State Active Duty.
- 4. Joint Communications** - Air Communications and Army MSE combined provide great communications.

5. Liaison Officers (LNOs) - I sent LNOs to Alabama EMA EOC and each affected County EOC as well as receiving LNOs from our State EMA and NGB.

6. Soldier and Airman Comfort - I sent sundry packages along with latrines and bath units to provide comfort for Soldiers and Airman. Gator-aide, Post Exchange items and personal services are needed for dirty and long duty.

7. Medical Packages - We treated military members only along with some limited emergency civilian medical care only. Civilian medical care provided civilian medical care.

8. Topographical Map Teams - AL Guard units created our own maps to determined routes, etc. There was a critical lack of maps in the devastated area.

9. EMAC - The Alabama EMA and Guard worked well with all EMAC states. This Compact is critical to allow the Guard states to assist each other with capabilities. With this system in place, the possibility of needing DoD forces is very remote.

What we did Wrong -

1. College Students - They need to be last for deployment and only if necessary.

2. Faxing EMAC Agreements - This was cumbersome and we will use scan and electronic versions in the future with copies to NGB and NORTHCOM.

3. Public Affairs Unit - This is needed with initial forces to manage press concerning logistics, safety and issues the public needs to know. We are strongly considering using embedded reporters with each JTF or TF. We also believe we must transport outside reporters into the affected area to insure accurate information.

Planning for 2006 -

1. Internal Planning. The Alabama National Guard conducted an internal exercise (Dragon Slayer). This exercise included state agencies. Exercise objectives were:

- Exercise the 122nd CSG as the JTF-South lead element.
- Exercise functionality of the JFHQ-AL JOC / Validate JOC manning document.
- Validate JFHQ-AL JOC SOP.
- Validate JFHQ-AL DSCA SOP. (Defense Support to Civilian Authorities)
- Exercise coordination with other states, state and federal agencies.
- Exercise 46th CST response capabilities in a civil support role.
- Test communication systems.

2. Regional Planning. The Guard in the Southeastern Coastal States began a quarterly hurricane conference to identify the following:

- Worst case scenario – ours is a CAT-4/5 moving directly into Mobile Bay. Probable affects would be storm surge of 20 feet which would flood most of the downtown. However, the water would recede within 8 hours.

- We also identified equipment shortages that could impact recovery operations. i.e., engineering equipment, fuel haulers and aircraft just to mention a few.

- We identified locations to preposition food, water and ice during recovery operations.

- Developed a possible CONOPS for Regional EMAC assistance.

3. Federal Coordination.

- The Governor of Alabama sponsored a table-top exercise which included all state and federal agencies.

- The state EMA has conducted numerous exercises with state, county and local responders.
- Many of my key staff members attend a local Commanders Summit at Maxwell AFB composed of the following: all the active military installations, state and federal agencies within the state. The purpose of the conference was to identify capabilities of each facility and insure they understood Alabama Response Plan and the role of the National Guard.
- I also attended a recent Adjutants General conference in Baton Rouge LA. The focus of the conference was hurricane preparedness. Topics included EMAC agreements between states, NGB's Role, and public affairs.

I am confident in the planning at the local, state and national level for the 2006 hurricane season.

4. RSOI and staging - Reception, Staging and Onward Integration. I have designated the 167th TSC to oversee RSOI operations in the event of a major disaster in Alabama. Also during Katrina, the need for overnight fuel and food by states traveling through Alabama to the disaster site became a resource intensive mission. Alabama Maintenance shops, Air bases and armories provided this support will continue to provide this service.

5. CONEX Containers - equipment for 500 military members (MREs, water, chain saws, gloves, goggles, reflecting vests, communication packet/radios, chemical lights, axes, flashlights and Rules of Force cards)

6. CST and 8 Communication Vans - I plan to use the communication equipment of the Civil Support Team and Communication Vans of the Alabama Dept. of Homeland Security.

7. Lack of Aviation - Alabama's 1/131 Aviation Battalion is deployed. Therefore, Alabama has no Blackhawk helicopters but some Chinook helicopters. EMAC / other states are key for aviation support.

8. MOUs for Law Enforcement - EMAC MOUs allow units to be used for law enforcement across state lines by agreements between Governors.

9. Disengagement Criteria – My staff develops a disengagement criteria based on the situation however, sometimes civilian authorities resist the National Guard departing. I am now training my JTF Commanders to engage with local leaders to insure they understand our system. Once a Wal-Mart and Waffle House open, the Guard is nearing a time to leave - we are last in and first out.

10. Congressional / VIP visits - Establish a Distinguished Visitor Coordinating Officer to coordinate VIP visits to the recovery area.

During Rita and Katrina, the Alabama National Guard supported the citizens of Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Louisiana with over 3,000 personnel at one time. We were **12%** of the total National Guard effort for Rita and Katrina relief and recovery. I am confident in Alabama's planning for the approaching hurricane season and especially note the federal and state coordination that has happened thus far. I will be glad to take your questions at this time.