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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD 859th DEPLOYING TO KUWAIT
Gulf Coast Cities Host a Flag Wave for Convoy of Buses on Highway 90
Join the Sendoff for “Hometown Heroes” This Saturday, June 29th

Pascagoula, MS (June 25, 2019) – The public is invited to join with area leaders and family members of the MS Army National Guard 859th Vertical Engineer Company as they depart Pascagoula this Saturday morning, June 29th. The group of 160 citizen-soldiers are flying to Ft. Bliss in Texas for training, then will deploy to Kuwait. The convoy of buses is scheduled to depart the Armory in Pascagoula around 9:00 am. (Route and Times listed below.)

The Company has been called up in Operation Inherent Resolve and is expected to be gone for 9 months. Mayor Dane Maxwell of Pascagoula has declared this Saturday, June 29th as “Hometown Heroes Day” in Pascagoula.

“We want everyone on the Gulf Coast to join us, as we line the streets of the bus route Saturday and wave flags and cheer these men and women on to a successful Mission and safe return,” he said.

Maxwell will be joined by Gautier Mayor Phil Torjusen and Army Guard officials from the Battalion and Brigade the 859th Company is a part of. The Patriot Guard Riders will be in attendance, and several law enforcement agencies will be providing an escort for the convoy.

The sendoff bus trip will be streamed live on the City of Pascagoula’s Facebook Page (City of Pascagoula – Government) and posted to YouTube (City of Pascagoula – look for the blue lighthouse seal) after their arrival at the MS Air Guard hanger in Gulfport. Weather updates will be live tweeted on Twitter at @pascagoulacity in the event of inclement weather.

Citizens participating in the flag wave are reminded to do so safely, especially when driving onto the shoulder of the roadway and exiting a vehicle. We remind everyone to arrive early, and please keep children under control at all times, please. (Pascagoula/Gautier – be parked by 8:30 am – Gulfport well-wishers should be on the route by 9:00 am.)

“This is an emotional experience for all involved, and we just want our soldiers to feel our love and support as they head off to the Middle East. They are our hometown heroes,” said Maxwell. “When they are gone, we are going to make sure that their families – the children, spouses, and parents – know that they are loved and constantly in our prayers,” he said.

-SEE NEXT PAGE FOR IMPORTANT INFO-

MS Army National Guard
Sendoff – FLAG WAVE
Saturday, June 29, 2019 – Page 2

THE ROUTE:

Around 9:00 am: From the Armory in Pascagoula, the bus convoy will head south on Hospital Road to Highway 90. They will proceed west on Highway 90 across the high-rise bridge and the causeway into Gautier. They will proceed through Gautier to Highway 57 at Ocean Springs/Gautier. The buses will proceed north on Highway 57 to Interstate 10 and head west to the exit in Gulfport for the Biloxi/Gulfport Airport (Highway 49).

BEST PLACES TO PARK AND WAVE:

If you're traveling from the east (Mobile, AL) – the best place to park and stand on the shoulder of the road will be anywhere along Highway 90, westbound, from Hospital Road to Pascagoula St. (BEFORE 8:30 am)

The entire Causeway (MLK Highway) west, after the high-rise bridge will have parking on the shoulder and a good view of the buses. Please exit/re-enter Causeway safely. (BEFORE 8:30 am)

If you are in Gautier or Ocean Springs, or travelling from the west, we recommend anywhere on the westbound side of Highway 90 in Gautier, as well as the northbound shoulder on Highway 57 across from the Sunplex.

There is NO STOPPING/PARKING ALLOWED ON INTERSTATE 10 unless you have an emergency.

If you are in Gulfport you can travel to Airport Road and see the convoy. The bus convoy will disembark at the MS Air National Guard facility, adjacent to the Biloxi/Gulfport Airport. Please be in place by 9:00 am safely on the shoulder of Airport Rd.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

We encourage everyone to SUBSCRIBE to our You Tube channel by clicking on the icon with the blue colored lighthouse. The more subscribers we have, the more we can live stream events like this in the future.

We will stream live on our Facebook page (City of Pascagoula – Government) and live tweet weather and updates @PascagoulaCity

Following the Flag Wave Sendoff, we will post the video to our YouTube Channel.

RAIN PLAN:

Safety first! Please bring ponchos or umbrellas in the event of light rain. If thunderstorms occur during the event, please return to your cars. Remember to always use headlights (no high beams) so you are visible to others, and signal your lane changes when exiting or re-entering the roadways, especially in the rain. Watch your children closely, please.

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA:

If your outlet wishes to cover this event from the media vehicle, please contact Lauri-Ellen Smith at 228-217-2824. This vehicle will not be stopping along the route. If you wish to cover a portion of the convoy's trip, we are happy to assist with placement in the convoy.

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