

# THE WICKER REPORT

By: United States Senator Roger Wicker



## Wicker notes positive defense news from Mississippi

State Remains Trusted Partner for Armed Services, Defense Industry

Mississippi is no stranger to excellence in supporting our national defense, having earned a strong reputation for our National Guard and vibrant industrial base. Several recent announcements underscore the confidence that our defense leaders have in our National Guard citizen-warriors and our defense workforce.

The first is the decision by the U.S. Army to keep the AH-64 Apache helicopters in Tupelo, putting a resounding end to the Obama Administration's effort to take these helicopters from the Mississippi National Guard. Since 2014, our state's congressional delegation has fought to protect the Tupelo-based 1st Battalion-185th Aviation Regiment from this plan to restructure the Army. After the Obama Administration rolled out an ill-conceived plan to move all National Guard Apaches to the active-duty Army, I worked with Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) to establish a National Commission on the Future of the Army in the 2015 defense authorization bill. The independent commission's review concluded that the Army should retain the Apache helicopters in Tupelo. In the Mis-

issippi National Guard and elsewhere, these helicopters – and the talented Guardsmen who fly and maintain them – are critical to our military readiness.

### Success in the Golden Triangle

Mississippians are also good at building helicopters, such as the versatile, light-utility Lakota helicopters built by Airbus in Columbus. During an Armed Services Committee hearing last year, I urged then-nominee for Army Secretary, Dr. Mark Esper, to resolve the issues surrounding the Army's purchase of more Lakotas, as Congress directed. I am glad to report that the Army has issued a solicitation to buy the Lakota helicopters that Congress has funded. This is a positive first step toward addressing the Army's shortage of training helicopters. Lakotas are a smart use of taxpayer dollars as the military's most cost-efficient, non-combat helicopter. Moreover, the Airbus facility in Columbus – where U.S. veterans make up 40 percent of the facility's workers – has an impeccable record of producing Lakotas on time and on budget.

Other positive news for

Mississippi's defense industrial base is this month's announcement that the Air Force awarded a contract to the Boeing-owned Aurora Flight Sciences in Columbus. It goes without saying that the Golden Triangle and Mississippi State University are at the cutting edge of unmanned aerial systems development. This \$48 million contract for Aurora will only strengthen our state's pioneering work by funding further development of Orion. The Orion prototype of an ultra-long endurance unmanned aerial system set the world record in 2014 by staying aloft for 80 hours. The flight endurance capability of this unmanned aircraft will bring a powerful and persistent information-gathering tool to our military commanders and troops in the field.

### Mississippi Native Selected for Navy Post

Last but not least, the Trump Administration is not only turning to Mississippians to help equip our military but also looking to our state to fill critical defense leadership roles. President Trump recently nominated Phyllis Bayer to serve as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations, Energy, and the Environment. If confirmed, the Perry County native and Southern Miss graduate would play an instrumental role in overseeing the construction and maintenance of Navy installations worldwide and ensuring the safety of the men and women who serve there. Ms. Bayer has had an extensive public service career and multiple leadership roles that make her a well-qualified candidate for the job, including her position as chief of staff to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness.

I look forward to Ms. Bayer's confirmation in the Senate and our state's continued leadership in equipping our men and women in uniform for success. As these announcements reaffirm, Mississippi is ready to play an integral role in President Trump's plan to rebuild the military.

15th January

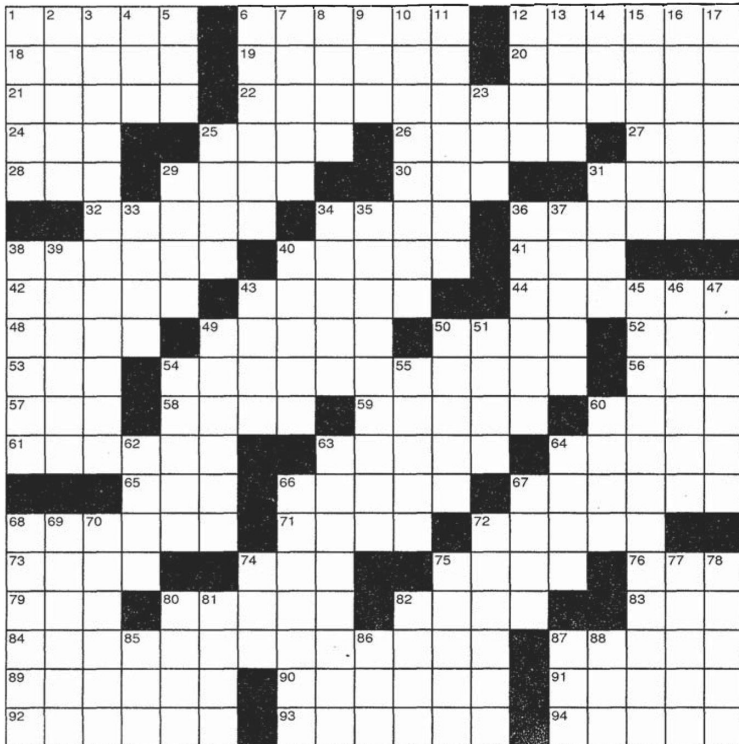
#### ACROSS

- 1 Dull surface
- 6 Bivalve beads
- 12 Partners of fits
- 18 Phoenix source
- 19 Implant firmly
- 20 "My Sister \_\_\_"
- 21 Like a bygone baguette
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- 48 Pawn
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- 50 Glued to the tube
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- 53 Consort of Shamash
- 54 Rhythm of the workplace?
- 56 Barrel
- 57 Caesar's language: abbr.
- 58 Hudson Bay tribe
- 59 Krupa portrayal on film
- 60 Right now, in the ER
- 61 Bacteria on or

- 63 Darns it!
- 64 Vine, in Hawaii
- 65 Kaline and Smith
- 66 Mamie's trademark
- 67 Wave catcher
- 68 1987 role for Mia
- 71 Grafted, in heraldry
- 72 Conservationist Adams
- 73 Got down
- 74 Opposite of syn.
- 75 Irish river
- 76 Hackney
- 79 Diminutive suffix
- 80 Chris Kattan character on "SNL"
- 82 Ditto
- 83 Platte River Indian
- 84 "Equal rights for all," perhaps
- 87 Novarro of "Mata Hari"
- 89 Like the flowers on a wedding cake
- 90 Tony Blair's

#### DOWN

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- 2 Sean of "Click"
- 3 Hayley Mills film about ancient Rome?
- 4 Complete: prefix
- 5 Nationality suffix
- 6 Small stone
- 7 Legislate
- 8 Timetable abbrs.
- 9 Purloin
- 10 Lamppost leaner
- 11 Took the helm
- 12 Bronze coin of Samoa
- 13 Current trend
- 14 Turpentine resin
- 15 NutRageous name
- 16 Flat dweller
- 17 Makes Z's in a comic strip
- 23 Monkey's uncle?
- 25 Flimsy
- 29 Pick-me-up for Frankenstein's monster?
- 31 Johannesburg money
- 33 Governor Winthrop, for one
- 34 Devastation
- 35 What "kippur" means
- 36 Cooper's hero
- 37 Poetic Muse
- 38 On \_\_\_ of (by proxy)
- 39 "\_\_\_ Scandal"
- 40 Irving Berlin song
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- 45 Beauticians' band?
- 46 Critter in a Williams title
- 47 Of choppers
- 49 Once again
- 50 Sunders
- 51 City on the Skunk
- 54 City near Gainesville
- 55 Faint trace
- 60 Paddock pop
- 62 Go wild
- 63 \_\_\_ talk (macho consultation)
- 64 \_\_\_ majesty
- 66 Cincinnati team
- 67 Stuart queen
- 68 Towed
- 69 Refer (to)
- 70 Nicotinic acid
- 72 National Guard headquarters
- 74 Tropical cuckoo
- 75 Consume
- 77 Bikini, for one
- 78 Partner of skin
- 80 Harris and Allen
- 81 Suit to \_\_\_
- 82 Western Union punctuation
- 85 Hitler's hope with men on: abbr.
- 86 Geisha girdle
- 87 British pilots: abbr.
- 88 \_\_\_, amas, amat



freedailycrosswords.com



### God has a plan

In the famous lace shops of Brussels, Belgium, certain rooms are dedicated to the spinning of the finest lace with the most delicate of patterns. These rooms are completely dark except for a shaft of natural light from a solitary window. Only one spinner sits in the room and the light falls on the pattern while the worker remains in the dark.

Has God permitted a time of darkness in your world? You look but you cannot see him. You see only the fabric of circumstances woven and interlaced. You might question the purpose behind this thread or that. But be assured, God has a pattern. He has a plan. The Bible says in Romans 8:28, "In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." He is not finished. But when he is, the lace will be beautiful!

Read more *Anxious for Nothing*.

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