

THE WICKER REPORT

By: United States Senator Roger Wicker



Wicker Focuses on Naval Readiness

New Bill Addresses Needed Reforms
in the Wake of Last Year's Fatal Collisions

Over the course of about 10 weeks last summer, two of the Navy's Arleigh Burke-class destroyers collided with two commercial ships in the Pacific. The first of those collisions involved the USS Fitzgerald off the coast of Japan, taking the lives of seven U.S. sailors. The second involved the USS John McCain near Singapore and took 10 lives. Repairing the extensive damages to these vessels is estimated to cost upwards of half a billion dollars. The tragic loss of life cannot be measured.

The Navy has conducted investigations into the incidents, concluding they were preventable. The collision report it released last November pointed to a lapse in operating procedures, inadequate training, crew fa-

tigue, and errors made by the ship's leadership. These are troubling findings, and they illustrate the tragic consequences of the stress put on our Navy in recent years. We are asking our sailors to do more with fewer ships and fewer training opportunities.

Shortly after the collision report was made public, the Navy released its Strategic Readiness Review, a rigorous independent evaluation of the entire fleet's operations and organization stretching back three decades. The review's recommendations for readiness included the need to meet supply needs, reform chains of command, and support a culture of continued learning.

Reforms to Match Recommendations

The Navy can take some administrative steps to

strengthen readiness and protect our sailors from avoidable accidents at sea. However, congressional action is necessary. Congress has a role in funding the ships and equipment that our military needs. As Chairman of the Senate Seapower Subcommittee, I have introduced a bill to match the Navy's readiness recommendations with the immediate implementation of reforms. The conditions that contributed to the USS Fitzgerald and USS John McCain must end.

More specifically, my "Surface Warfare Enhancement Act" would target maintenance practices, training, and personnel management. For example, surface warfare officers would need to meet certain training requirements before assuming critical posts on ships. In addition, the Navy would create more accurate projections for crew workloads and the maintenance of ships. Ship maintenance would have more oversight, and the Navy would have more flex-

ibility in the use of its maintenance funds. Chains of command would be subject to intense review.

Our Sailors Need More Ships

Efforts to improve naval readiness go hand in hand with efforts to modernize and expand our fleet. The number of ships has a direct impact on the ability of our sailors to fulfill their missions. These readiness challenges and the Navy's call for more ships led to the creation of the "SHIPS Act" that I introduced with Congressman Rob Wittman (R-Va.). Thankfully, Congress and the President recognized the urgent need to act now if we want to build a fleet capable of advancing our national interests amid growing threats. The "SHIPS Act" was signed into law last year, making it our national policy to meet the Navy's force structure requirement of 355 ships.

With only 281 ships currently in the Navy's fleet, we have a long way to go to meet even this minimum require-

IN AND AROUND LEXINGTON

BY LEONA (LENA) FIELDS

Lexington Alderwoman Celementene Redmond's son was funeralized Saturday, February 24 at the Multi-Purpose Building.

The seniors at the Seniors Citizens Feeding Center in the Multi-Purpose Building in Lexington had a short Black History program on Tuesday, February 27. Various seniors told about incidents that happened to them during the days of Civil Rights.

The fourth weekend in

February the Alcorn State University Alumni held its Mid-Winter Conference in Tupelo, MS. Several people from Holmes County attended.

The Holmes County city buses (Mississippi Valley State University transportation) have a new bus driver. Mr. Mitchell "Mitch" Truitt. I hope I got his name right. Mr. Arthur Runnels, the former driver, says his riders will still see him regularly.

ment. But the heartbreaking lessons of the USS Fitzgerald and USS John McCain are ones we must heed, recognizing the shortcomings

that exist in the training and resources available to our sailors. Their missions begin with preparedness here at home.

N.A.

open group meetings every
Friday, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at

New Roads Counseling

114½ Spring Street, Lexington 662-230-2682

Businesses and Services Directory



NO BONES ABOUT IT!

THIS SPOT COULD BE YOURS!

Call the **Herald** to find out how! 662-834-1151

\$16/WEEK

Three Months Minimum

D's Diner

51 Depot St. Lexington

(662) 450-8131



Monday - Thursday
10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday - Saturday
10 a.m. - 11 p.m. (May Vary)

WANT TO BUY LAND 100 TO 500 ACRES

IN CARROLL, HOLMES AND
YAZOO COUNTIES
ALONG THE DELTA-HILLS LINE,
TIMBER AND FIELDS.

CALL 662-227-5295

LEXINGTON home center

109 Carrollton
Lexington • 662-834-9007

**Do it
Best**

Locally owned
and operated!

**Do it
Best**
Quality Paints.

FRANKS CHEVROLET

www.frankschevy.com

sfranks@frankschevy.com
Office (662) 289-4611
Fax (662) 633-4400

STEPHEN FRANKS



1001 Hwy 35 N • Kosciusko, MS 39090

God's Corner Gardener

Floral
Crosses
Gardens

Donna Horrall, (Formerly of Hearts and Flowers)
Designer

662-792-4050 • 526 S Natchez St. • Kosciusko

Certified Pre-owned

2016
TAURUS
LEATHER
\$18,995

2015
EDGE
\$19,995

2015
FUSION
\$13,995

2014
F150 - S/CAB
4 X 4
\$27,895



HAMMETT MOTOR CO.

INTERSECTION OF
HWY. 12 W & 51 N

662-653-3141
DURANT

FIND US ON THE WEB AT:
www.hammettmotorco.com

Need help getting approved for
Long Term Care?

Let us guide you through
the application process.

Durant Healthcare, LLC

MON. - FRI. 9 A.M. TO 5 P.M. • 662-653-4106
15481 BOWLING GREEN ROAD • DURANT, MS

SCOTT PETROLEUM CORPORATION

www.scottpetroleuminc.com



KENNY JOINER
Division Manager

309 Depot St.
Lexington, MS 39095

Office: 662-834-1089
Fax: 662-834-6082
Cell: 662-299-7461
kjoiner@scottpetroleuminc.com

Visit us in Tchula, Lexington,
Durant, Pickens and Canton.

Jim Arnold

Attorney at Law



- Chapter 13 Bankruptcy •
No upfront fee except filing fee
- Chapter 7 Bankruptcy •
\$750 plus filing fee
- No Fault Divorces •
\$399 plus court fees

Call for an appointment 662-653-6448 or 601-656-6914