

# Redstone Rocket

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## Commanding general puts priority on keeping Redstone secure

*Work force gets praised for hard work, patience*

By SKIP VAUGHN  
Rocket editor

Maj. Gen. Larry Dodgen wanted to take some time to learn more about AMCOM after assuming command Sept. 10.

But then the unthinkable happened when the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history occurred the very next morning in New York and Washington, D.C.

Dodgen had to make important decisions regarding the security of the Aviation and Missile Command and Redstone Arsenal. Security increased at the gates; and workers had to adjust their reporting times.

On Thursday afternoon the new commanding general held a special town hall meeting to introduce himself to the work force, provide information about current efforts and answer questions.

"I thought it was important for us to clear the air and to share information about what has happened," Dodgen said in the filled Bob Jones Auditorium.

Security remained heightened but delays at the gates had decreased by that time. Workers were expected to resume their normal schedule this week.

"My first priority — and it will remain by first pri-

ority — is the security of everybody we have here on Redstone Arsenal," Dodgen said.

He cautioned that security will remain heightened because of the continuing national crisis.

"This is not over, this is going to be this way for a while," Dodgen said. "There's a lot going on, and there's a great reason for vigilance right now. And I don't think we're going to be standing down anytime soon."

Dodgen praised the work force for its talent, professionalism and hard work.

"The talent of this organization just shines through with me all the way," he said.

He assured the workers that there is a reason for any decision he makes and that he will not be arbitrary.

"We are secure, we're going to stay secure and we're going to get better," Dodgen said. "My concern is that we maintain that level of security and that we enhance it over the next few weeks."

Questions from workers during the 90-minute meeting included security measures, work hours and a few other issues.

"I want to thank you for all the hard work that's happened and your consideration and patience," Dodgen said. "It's not over yet. We're going to stay secure."



Photo by Skip Vaughn

**MAKING A POINT—** Maj. Gen. Larry Dodgen addresses the AMCOM work force during his first town hall meeting as the commanding general.

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## Missile school soldiers helping with increased gate security



Photo by Sgt. Sharon McBride

**CHECKING THINGS OUT—** Pvt. Hasahn Wright, assigned to C Company, 832nd Ordnance Battalion, checks under a vehicle hood during an inspection at one of the Arsenal gates. Soldiers like Wright are helping Department of Defense guards maintain security.

### *Students augment guards by inspecting vehicles*

By Sgt. SHARON McBRIDE  
Staff writer

Throughout the Army, servicemembers and civilians are seeing long lines at installation entrance gates because of tighter security measures after the terrorist attack Sept. 11.

To make the process go smoother here, soldiers assigned to the Ordnance Missile and Munitions Center and School, 832nd Ordnance Battalion have been tasked on a daily basis to augment the Department of Defense guards already on duty.

The soldiers are students who have recently graduated from basic training and are waiting to start class at OMMCS. Traditionally soldiers awaiting their classes are tasked throughout the Arsenal to perform a variety of details, including serving

on the post funeral team and performing ground maintenance in the student areas.

"Our soldiers are very excited about gate duty," Lt. Col. Craig Cotter, 832nd commander, said. "It's a proactive way to go above and beyond their normal training.

"As we go through this period of heightened security, it's a great training event for our soldiers. We are complementing and enhancing the robust security that was already in place."

"The soldiers are in place to primarily inspect vehicles," Maj. Brian Dye, 59th Ordnance Brigade operations officer, said. Dye has been in charge of coordinating the soldiers with the Arsenal security. "They are not trained or authorized to perform law enforcement activities."

And although most of the soldiers are new to the Army, they have proved to be professional and courteous while performing this duty.

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## ■ Heightened security to continue indefinitely

### Priority

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Among the many filing out after the meeting, John Kavanaugh of the AMCOM Safety Office pointed out that workers' concerns changed considerably

because of the world environment since the August town hall meeting.

"I think it was very positive," Kavanaugh said of Dodgen's presentation. "I think he responded very well to the questions that were presented to him and gave us information on current status to the extent that he could."

## ■ Soldier students tasked to inspect incoming vehicles

### Inspection

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"There have been multiple phone calls from retirees complimenting the soldiers at the gates for their professionalism," Cotter said. "That is great because there are some young soldiers serving out there and it's a reminder of the security that the military can provide for the community."

Soldiers are also being used to watch gates that have been permanently closed. If anything unusual or suspicious happens, they will be the first to report it.

"And although many consider the waits at the gates far too long, in many ways we have advantages when compared to other posts like Fort Bragg (N.C.) and Fort Hood (Texas)," Cotter said. He said there

have been reports of people having to wait up to four to five hours to gain access to their installations. "Our population is small," Cotter said. "The waits at our gates are minimal when compared to posts like those. And the soldiers don't mind the duty. And the installation has been very appreciative of the support."

"Yes, the waits at the gates are an inconvenience," Dye said. "It's a completely different environment on this post than even a week ago. As Americans we are used to our conveniences and freedom."

"We wouldn't ask folks to wait in line unless it was absolutely necessary," Dye added. "As an installation we have to protect our assets and our national security. It starts with our programs all the way down to each individual. Yes, it's inconvenient, but necessary."

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