



# Guard man goes extreme

By Sgt. David Landrum | Mississippi National Guard

**THE** bus was waiting on the curb when the limousine pulled up. The doors opened and the family got out of the back of the car.

“Move That Bus! Move That Bus!”

The crowd of more than 500 people yelled. Show host Ty Pennington huddled the family close and the bus started up and pulled away revealing a new source of hopes, dreams, and memories.

Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center and the City of Hattiesburg received a dose of Hollywood in Dec. 2009 as the ABC television show *Extreme Makeover— Home Edition* came to town to build a house for a local family.

Staff Sgt. Sherman Heathcock and his family were selected as the recipients of the new house. Sherman was deployed to Iraq with the 155th Brigade Combat Team.

Because of contractual obligations, neither Sherman nor his wife, Gina were allowed to talk about selection process.

However, Faye Heathcock, Sherman’s mother said her daughter-in-law was worried.

“Gina was beside herself, because they had told her that they were meeting with another family the day before,” Faye Heathcock said. “So in her mind, they were not going to be the recipient.”

Faye said she found about *Extreme Makeover* in the paper. She said she approached the rest of her family and asked if they wanted to nominate Sherman for the honor.

On the last day of nominations, Sherman’s bid went through.

“[Gina] wanted it so that when he came home from Iraq, he would never have to worry about looking at his watch, going to another job, making sure he’s in that job after working his regular job,” Faye said. “She wanted it so they could have time with him.”


Faye said, shortly after sending in the nomination, Gina received a phone call.

“Gina had to fill out a lot of paperwork. They did a background check on her and Sherman. They did credit reports, everything.”

Demolition on the house began on early in the morning on Dec. 6. By that evening, the foundation had been laid and the framework put up. Crews worked 24-hours a day to make sure the house went up within the 106- hour timeline.

Hattiesburg Mayor Johnny Dupree said the week would show how special Hattiesburg is. “Soldiers give all the time,” Dupree said. “You couldn’t find a better family, too, than one who is making sure we are able to do what we’re doing today.”

Construction was completed on the house Dec. 10. Faye said the family was surprised and honored to have strong support from the community.

“We knew that we loved Sherman and we knew that he was a kind, caring and compassionate person but we have found out, since they were nominated, that people have come forward and told us things that he’s done that we didn’t know,” Faye said. “We’re just blessed to be able to get this.” 



**Staff Sgt. Sherman Heathcock of the Mississippi National Guard and his family were recently selected as the recipients of the new house from the ABC television show, *Extreme Makeover - Home Edition*. Heathcock was deployed to Iraq with the 155th Brigade Combat Team.**