



**SMDC / ARSTRAT**  
Headquartered on Redstone Arsenal, Alabama



**CG Column**  
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Recently, there were two separate, tragic incidents that took place in our community in Northern Alabama. In the first, a 14 year-old youth was killed at a middle-school and in the other, three professors were killed and several injured on campus at a university in our town. Both incidents sent shockwaves throughout the community and shattered the bubble of innocence that normally surrounds schools. Our condolences go out to the families and friends of those killed and the fervent hope that the injured will recover fully.

Death is never easy. In the military we gird ourselves for the possibility of death. There is an on-going conflict for which we train hard and for which we hope our Soldiers will return safely, but we know sometimes that doesn't happen.

However, when our children and our loved ones leave home in the morning enroute to school or to work, we always expect them to return home safely that day. There is nothing any of us can say to lessen the hurt or the impact when tragedies like these happen.

It is up to law enforcement to determine the facts and the court system to deal with adjudication.

We are left then with how to deal with these types of tragedies. The Redstone Arsenal community came together Friday, Feb. 19, at a memorial to celebrate the lives of those killed and to draw strength from the fellowship that is resident in the community.

The president of University of Alabama-Huntsville stated at the memorial that these tragedies would mark them but would not define them. Others echoed similar comments.

I believe how we deal with tragedy says more about who we are than any other test. Tragedies test our values, they test our beliefs, and they test the resiliency of a community or an organization.

It is easy to stand next to your neighbor when the sun is shining and the economy is booming. It is another thing entirely to come together at a moment when the neighbor is hurting, or broken, or alone.

What I saw at the memorial on Friday was indeed heartwarming. It was a community that had come together in a moment of adversity to unequivocally demonstrate solidarity with a neighbor in need.

I am proud to be a member of the SMDC/ARSTRAT command that, with the entire Redstone Arsenal team, stood with our friends from the University of Alabama in Huntsville and with the citizens of Madison in their losses.

We will not be defined by these tragedies, but we will be stronger because of them.

*SECURE THE HIGH GROUND!*