



# After hell, high water holdouts pried loose



STAFF PHOTO BY MICHAEL DEMOCKER

Silas Walker, who left his home on Chef Mentour Highway, rides down Hayne Boulevard to shelter with members of the Oklahoma National Guard. There were no reports of what police and military authorities have promised since midweek: that soon, stern encouragement will shift to evacuation by force.

## Appeals for troops unheeded for days

By Jan Moller and Robert Travis Scott  
Capital Bureau

BATON ROUGE - As it became clear last week that the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina required far more help than state and local authorities could provide, Gov. Kathleen Blanco and other state officials began pleading for more help from the federal government.

But substantial active-duty Army deployments didn't arrive until a week after the storm, a fact that might turn out to be one of the enduring controversies about the state and federal response to what likely will be one of the deadliest and most costly events in American history.

This week, Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, who commands Joint Task Force Katrina, said search and rescue is the top priority for the 7,000 active-duty soldiers ordered to Louisiana by

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STAFF PHOTO BY ELIOT KAMENTITZ

Military personnel assemble in the Riverwalk parking lot before a whale mural, seemingly one of the few underwater scenes in the city that is fake.

## Few souls remain in shell of a city

*Water, fire start to abate*

By Bruce Nolan  
Staff writer

Troops continued to go door to door Thursday in New Orleans, urging the last of the stubborn, the skeptical and the eccentric to get out of a crippled, once magnificent city formerly filled with their kind.

As they did Wednesday, armed military and police pounded on doors and served notice that the last of an estimated 10,000 inhabitants now have to leave the wreckage of a city that two weeks ago contained 480,000 souls.

Some of those they encountered were tired, beaten and ready to come out. Many more apparently were self-selected survivalists: determined not to let go of what little was certain in their lives in exchange for so much uncertainty ahead.

"I got my own place," said a defiant Robert Thomas in the

city's historic Tremé neighborhood. "I ain't sharing it with no freaking body." If he agreed to leave the city, "where the hell I'm gonna be after that?"

"They are trying to get this neighborhood for the rich people," said a man calling himself Chief Al; he was sitting on a stoop at St. Claude Avenue and St. Philip Street.

Yet there were no reports of what police and military authorities have promised since midweek: that soon, stern encouragement will shift to evacuation by force.

Kansas National Guard Maj. Gen. Ron Mason said the National Guard helped bring out more than 650 willing people between Wednesday and Thursday morning from neighborhoods ravaged by flooding from Hurricane Katrina since Aug. 29.

In many ways, Thursday seemed to be a day of small victories: Water continued to drain away. Some downtown hotels struggled toward life. A weak but discernible commercial pulse began to beat in the city's suburbs.

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