

Cyber security a concern

BY SAM HANNA JR.

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Major Gen. Glenn Curtis doesn't fear an enemy he can see, but cyber warfare concerns him.

Curtis delivered that sobering message, among others, Saturday night at the quarterly meeting of the Northeast Louisiana Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America. About 50 retired military officers gathered for a reception and dinner at the Hampton Inn off Interstate 20 in Monroe. Curtis was the guest speaker.

Curtis, Adjutant General for the Louisiana National Guard, also was recognized for his military service, which began in 1982 when he joined the National Guard. He was commissioned an officer in 1984.

Armand Breard of Monroe, a retired U.S. Coast Guard captain, was recognized for his support of the Northeast Louisiana Chapter of MOAA.

Curtis talked about the National Guard's responsibilities in Louisiana and the role the guard plays in responding to disasters such as hurricanes. He also discussed the role the guard would play in combating a biological or chemical attack if one occurred somewhere in the state.

On a more positive note, Curtis pointed out that Louisiana National Guard operates the Youth Challenge Program at Camp Beauregard. The program takes in 16-year-old to 18-year-old high school dropouts, educates them and teaches them discipline. Some 1,400



MAJOR GEN. Glenn Curtis (left), Adjutant General for Louisiana National Guard, and Capt. Armand Breard of Monroe display certificates of appreciation they received Saturday evening at the Northeast Louisiana Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America quarterly meeting.

youth will graduate from the program this year. Since its founding in 1999, more than 17,000 youth have graduated from the Youth Challenge Program.

"Our success rate runs 85 percent," Curtis said.

Curtis also was upbeat about a new program Louisiana National Guard has launched. It's a week-long summer camp for fifth-graders interested in STEM, or science, technology, engineering and math. He said his children graduated from the STEM program and described it as the best summer camp they ever attended.

Louisiana National Guard consists of 146 units spread out at seven installations and 76 readiness centers. According to Curtis, Louisiana National Guard has a \$500 million impact on the state's economy annually.

Roughly 11,000 troops under are under Curtis' command, including 9,800 soldiers and roughly 1,500 pilots and support person-

nel. On any given day, 7,400 guardsmen can be "mustered" into duty, according to Curtis.

Louisiana National Guard also has two F-15 fighter jets stationed at the Naval Air Station at Belle Chasse.

"They can be airborne in five minutes," Curtis said.

To combat a biological or chemical attack, a 200-man unit of Louisiana National Guard is on standby, according to Curtis. He described the unit as properly trained and "ready to go."

Curtis pointed out the state established a cybersecurity commission in December. Its job is to improve Louisiana National Guard's capabilities to combat cyber attacks on government and the private sector.

"It's another battle space," Curtis said. "We're serious about it, and we're going to continue to work on it."

"I don't worry about an enemy I can see because I can kill him," he said. "But cyber concerns me."