

TELEGRAPH

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What's next for these soldiers?

BY PHIL HARTMAN

SVN NEWS REPORTER

phartman@svnmail.com

GALVA — After the ceremonies were over, the greetings began.

Soldiers from the Foxtrot Battery 202 ADA unit of the Army National Guard were sometimes swamped by family, friends and well-wishers as they began the transition back into everyday life at their homes.

Sgt. David Rodriguez of Sterling said it felt great to be home.

"It's an amazing feeling," Rodriguez said.

The F/202's main job was basically to patrol the streets of Baghdad, Rodriguez, the son of Mary and Fernando Rodriguez, said.

"I'm looking forward to dinner tonight," he said.

Sgt. First Class Michael Kuba said he felt great.

"We've been over there for a year, so it's good to get out of a third-world country and into a first-world country," Kuba said.

Kuba said he would probably just spend his first night back with family and friends.

Spc. Brian Beckman of Dixon said the welcome was awesome.

"I'm going to Taco Bell as soon as we're back from Dixon," Beckman said.

Then, Beckman added, there would be a family cookout.

Sgt. Marc Stach of Dixon spoke about the response the soldiers received.

"You try to prepare yourself for what happens today, and I don't think you can prepare yourself for it," Stach said.

Unit commander Maj. Michael W. Kessel, who resides in Mahomet, spoke about the unit's time in Iraq.

"Everyone came home. It had its ups and downs, laughter and tears. We did honestly make a difference," Kessel said.

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