

TELEGRAPH

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When the troops came home to Dixon

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DIXON — A light wind blew from the north and temperatures hovered around freezing as a scattered drizzle fell on a foggy Saturday morning. But the weather wasn't enough to dampen the spirits of the several hundred people who gathered on the old Lee County Courthouse lawn on Saturday to wait more than an hour to welcome home local soldiers from their tour of duty in Iraq.

"Somebody should be here to welcome them home," said Linda Morrissey of Dixon who came to show her support for the Wittenauer family of Amboy. "(The weather) didn't stop them. They probably think this is mild."

Verna Forman of Amboy also came in support of "all the Amboy kids" who served with the Dixon unit, she said.

"Us getting wet isn't that bad," she said. She said she planned to yell "Thanks!" when the parade passed.

Diana Martinez of Dixon brought her 8-year-old son Mikey to watch the parade.

"We're just here to support our troops," said Martinez, who didn't know any of the soldiers or their families personally.

Mikey said he planned to wave at the soldiers, who were heroes.

"I think they did a good job for our country," he said.

As Saturday's parade made its way around the perimeter of the courthouse, the crowd got a closer look at the soldiers. They even saw a little entertainment as the driver and a passenger of the last Humvee stopped the vehicle to get out and switch places.

Cathy Lawson, of Dixon, a member of Operation Support which has been sending packages to the soldiers, along with other soldiers from other units who are deployed, said it felt good to be supporting the troops now that they were back in Illinois.

"I'm glad they're all home," she said. "I hope they know we appreciate them."

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