



Contributed photo

Galva National Guardsman Tom Wallenfeldt (in blue shirt at right) enjoyed getting to spend time with family while home from Iraq the past two weeks. He's seen here attending First Baptist Church with (from left) sister-in-law and brother, Leslie and John Wallenfeldt of Las Vegas; sister Belinda of Portland, Ore; and mother and father, Cris and Carl, both of Galva. A sister, Brenda of Galva, was absent.

Family, friends top Wallenfeldt's visit

Guardsman touches many bases before returning to Iraq

By Jamie Theesfeld

Tom Wallenfeldt concedes he doing what I want to" and "going doesn't know what awaits him wherever I want."

when he returns to Iraq this week.

"I have no idea what to expect," said Wallenfeldt, who left Galva at first it seemed different ... a Tuesday to return to the National little weird, " he said.

Guard unit. He'd been home on leave two weeks.

"You never know what to expect. It's something you just have to cope with," he explained. "It's just wearing a leather coat while being interviewed despite temperatures to re-adjust to things, especially the weather," said Wallenfeldt.

One thing Wallenfeldt – 2002 in the mid-70s. Galva High School graduate - is certain of, though, is that he will never take for granted the freedoms he has here.

"There are so many rules over there and you expect that," he said.

"They tell you 'Don't go outside the wire.' It's like you're being a little kid again and being told 'Don't cross the road.'"

While home on his 15-day leave, Wallenfeldt said he enjoyed "just

"Just getting in my car and driv-

ing around has been great, although

"It's just so quiet and so slower paced (here). It took me some time

to re-adjust to things, especially

"After being where it is has been 125 degrees, it seems cold here," he said.

Driving around in his white

See "Wallenfeldt" on Page 3

Wallenfeldt

Camaro and "catching up on the news" with family and friends took up most of Wallenfeldt's time while home.

"Family comes first and then my friends," said Wallenfeldt, who spent a lot of time babysitting his sister Brenda's children.

A family reunion was held this past weekend. Brother John and sister-in-law Leslie came from Las Vegas and another sister, Belinda, traveled from Portland, Ore. His mother, Cris, and father, Carl, both reside in Galva.

"I spent the day with family, and friends at night." Wallenfeldt said. "I have a lot of high school friends from college I am going to see.

"Nothing big," added Wallenfeldt on Sept. 16. "I just want to enjoy my family and all my great friends before going back."

Although not looking forward to returning to Camp Victory, located near Baghdad, Wallenfeldt said it's a job he must do, and do it proudly.

"If you are over there doing your job, there's a better chance of nothing's going to happen over here," he said.

Wallenfeldt's unsure what his job will be when he returns to Iraq. He's had four jobs in the six-month stint there so far. Two weeks before his leave, Wallenfeldt worked on patrolling a zone in a Humvee.

"That's just one of many jobs I've had," said Wallenfeldt, who serves as a cook during his regular National Guard duties.

"People from the Philippines are doing the cooking, so they got us (cooks) doing other jobs," he said.

He has worked in several different platoons, including one with fellow Galvan Derrick Glisan.

Another job, perhaps the most interesting according to Wallenfeldt, was a surveillance task.

"I operated a camera on the top of one of the pal-

aces over there," he explained. "I watched from air to ground to make sure everything was okay.

"I had a radio next to me and they would call me if they had spotted something," he continued. "We had a map on the computer so we had things pretty well covered."

For relaxation on the base, Wallenfeldt said he just likes to spend time "talking to my friends on the Internet."

"I don't get involved in a lot of things," he said. "There's volleyball, softball and basketball but I'd rather just pop in a movie or two and relax, talk to my friends."

Wallenfeldt, an avid runner, has also participated in several races.

"I did well in them but kinda got away from running a lot," Wallenfeldt said.

He said the heat took a toll on him, along with his work schedule.

"I lost 10 pounds in three weeks. You just have to drink a lot of water."

Wallenfeldt knows he will have to re-adjust once again when he arrives in Iraq.

"One thing you know, though, is that things don't change," he said. "You're always going to have the conflicts."

Wallenfeldt says he's enjoyed his job so far.

"It's been a good experience so far," he stated. "I have met all kinds of people – from military to civilians. That's been the best part of it. That and you're doing something to make the world a lot safer. That's rewarding."

As for future plans, he's unsure.

"We'll see when the time comes" he said. "Right now, I want to enjoy my time here (at Galva). And then I have a job to do."