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## Galva prepares to welcome home its National Guard unit

Thursday, March 17, 2005

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**BY DOUG BOOCK**

OF COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

**GALVA** - The decorations are out. The hosts and hostesses are ready. All that's missing are the honored guests - but that'll soon change.

The Galva National Guard unit is expected in town about 1:30 Saturday.

"I can hardly sleep. I'm too anxious," said Heather Wineinger of Galva, whose husband, Jon, is in the unit.

She's not alone. Saturday's arrival will bring what Galva soldiers and their loved ones have longed for since the Galva unit was deployed in November 2003.

In Wineinger's case, it'll be a re-uniting of newlyweds. She and her husband have been married just 19 months - the last 14 with Jon deployed.

Signs posted around Galva express similar sentiments. People can't wait for their loved ones to return from Iraq, where they've been stationed since March 2004. Family and friends of the Galva Guardsmen have been especially excited about the unit's return since Sunday, when the soldiers hit U.S. soil. Their flight from Kuwait, followed by a stop in Maryland, landed the troops at Fort Sill, Okla., in the wee hours of Sunday morning.

The troops will line up at the armory at 200 Morgan Road one final time in formation Saturday before being released to their families. And while the homecoming is expected to be emotional, it's not likely to last long. Galva Mayor Don Hagaman said that's been the experience elsewhere. A longer, grander ceremony is expected in 90 days, when the Guard returns to Galva for regular drilling. That's the wishes of National Guard officials elsewhere.

Hagaman said Galva police will escort the troops into town, entering from U.S. Route 34 East, with the police meeting the buses at Black Hawk East College.

"We're getting a lot of calls about people wanting to be in the

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procession, but really, the armory is kind of discouraging it, for two reasons," Hagaman said. "One, the buses are going to go through traffic signs as they want to. People following won't have that privilege, and if they fall behind and want to catch up, they won't be able to.

"The other thing is if they want to see the troops come in at the armory, (followers) won't be there in time."

Only family members and the media will be allowed inside the armory for the troops' final formation, Hagaman said. Otherwise, people will mill around outside the armory, waiting for the brief dismissal ceremony to end.

The road in front of the armory - Morgan Road - will be closed from North Center Avenue to Northwest Third Avenue, Hagaman said. In addition, the armory parking lot will be open only to soldiers' families. All parking areas at Galva Elementary School, which is across the street from the armory, will be open to the general public.

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