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## Trio of wives has shared support

### Excited about

### husbands' return

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By TAMMY BOULD

of The Register-Mail

### GALESBURG - Hooah!

The signs, red, white and blue ribbons and American flags tell the story.

"Foxtrot Battery F/202 ADA Well Done ... HOOAH!" is on one placed near the street in front of Kim Salter's Galesburg home. Her husband David returns home Saturday afternoon with the rest of the Galva National Guard after an 18-month deployment in Iraq.

He left home Oct. 12, 2003, the day before their wedding anniversary. He was home once, in November 2004, for a two-week leave.

Salter and Erin Matern, Monmouth, whose husband Ed also is in the Galva National Guard, are excited about their husbands' impending return. They became friends when their husbands left and, along with a third wife, Pam Sparrow of Galva, have supported each other during the past 18 months.

"The three of us go out for dinner, a movie, bowling, or eating pizza," Matern said. "We've been there for each other."

"When one of us was down, the others were usually up," Salter said.

Matern said because the three of them were going through the same thing, they understood each other's feelings.

And there were some rough times when events would remind them their husbands were gone.

Two of Matern's sisters were married and "Ed wasn't there to see that," she said.

For Salter, it was when she was putting up curtain rods. She was climbing up and down a ladder dropping things and became frustrated.

"That was my meltdown," she said. "That's when it hit me he was gone."

Salter said it could have been worse. With e-mail and messaging, she heard from her husband frequently. Matern said if the soldiers had their own computer, they were able to contact home almost every day. Those without computers had to use the computer cafes, but the lines waiting to get online were long.

Battery F was stationed just outside Baghdad, providing security on the road to the airport. Some members of their unit were injured, one seriously, but the group did not have any fatalities.

The two women will go to Galva Saturday along with family members. They plan to meet Sparrow for breakfast that morning to "celebrate making it through," Salter said.

Matern is planning a family party for her husband and a big party with friends later. He is looking forward to sleeping in his own bed. He also will be reunited with his golden retriever, Chalsea, and meet their new puppy, which he had ordered on the Internet while in Iraq.

Salter said her husband is looking forward to going to the Seminary Street Pub and having a Guinness beer. He also is eager to cook out and eat off of "real" dishes instead of plastic and paper.

Next month the Salters will take a vacation to Minnesota because "he misses the cold," she said.

David Salter, an officer with the Galesburg Police Department, will return to work. Ed Marten, who had worked at Maytag, will look for a job.

For Salter, her husband's time spent in Iraq was important.

"The day I saw those people over there crying after the election and holding up their finger to show they had voted, it made it all worth it," she said. "That's why my husband was over there."

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tbould@register-mail.com.

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