Galva, IL - John David reports
Galva family prepares for happy homecoming this Veterans Day

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By John David

GALVA -- Veterans Day in Galva, Illinois, is a time to reflect and remember. But for Kelly Thomson, it's also a time to renew a relationship. She hasn't seen her husband, Nolan, in ten months. On Saturday, they will reunite in a two-week break from Operation Iraqui Freedom.

"I'm thankful that he's alive," she said. "Thankful that everything is going okay over there. Thankful he gets to be home for Thanksgivng."

As American Legion Post No. 45 salutes veterans on Thursday morning, Wayne Abbott, a Korea-era vet, reflects on his grandson's service and sacrifice with the 202nd Air Defense Artillery Unit based in Galva.

"I think about him just about every day," Abbott said. "When I watch television or read the paper or just sitting and thinking of him, yes."

Memories on this Veterans Day are more meaningful for the Thomson's because of the personal way it touches their family.

While Kelly joins more than 50 spectators for the ceremony in Veterans Park, Nolan Thomson phones her from Kuwait. He talks of enjoying simple things like KFC and Coke. It will really be a Thanksgiving season.

"I'm just thankful that I married a great guy," she said. "He's doing a lot. He may not think so because he says he's just doing his job. But he's doing a lot for everybody."

Thomson will return to Iraq on November 29. If all goes as planned, he could wrap up his tour and return to Galva in February.

Their two children, Jonathan, 5, and Leia, 3, will give their dad the best salute of all. This family will be ready for a happy homecoming that their hero can cherish.

'It's good being in a small town because you do get a lot of support," she concluded. "You need all the support you can get."