



# OTTUMWA COURIER

MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2007

# FAREWELL

## 833rd company leaves in emotional ceremony

"Everybody here understands what patriotism means."

"Thank you for being the role models we are looking for."

**BRIG. GEN. MARK ZIRKELBACH**

**BY MARK NEWMAN**  
COURIER STAFF WRITER

OTTUMWA — With the roar of a motorcycle escort, the buses carrying the 833rd Engineer Company were gone.

"What lies ahead is in large measure unknown to us and unknown to those who serve," said military Chaplain Jim Luder during a Sunday send-off ceremony for the latest Iowa National Guard unit to ship off to Iraq.

"We just did this a couple years ago," said another speaker, Brig. Gen. Mark Zirkelbach, the deputy adjutant general of the Iowa National Guard, talking about the time — over a year — this unit had already spent in Iraq. "Here we are a year-and-a-half later calling them back again."

These soldiers, and their families, are real patriots, and especially prove that during tough times like this. Because there do exist citizens who are patriots only when it's easy to be one, he said.

"I don't see any 'summertime soldiers'... in this formation. Everybody here understands what patriotism means," he said. "Thank you for being the role models we are looking for."

The number of people in attendance, said Lt. Col. Greg Hapgood — over a thousand to see off 120 troops — showed incredible support.

The main point of the ceremony, said Hapgood before the buses pulled out, is that soldiers see the support from friends and families, but also people they may have never met who show up to show their appreciation.

This was a day the soldiers could see, he said, "we care about you guys... not politics. Not whether we should be in Iraq. We're here for you."

Rep. Dave Loeb sack echoed those sentiments after the ceremony.

### MORE 833RD COVERAGE

■ See video of the 833rd send-off ceremony at [www.ottumwa.com](http://www.ottumwa.com)

■ More photos of the ceremony can be found on Page B10.

"I'd rather we not be there, but we are there," he told the Courier.

He said there is no contradiction in not wanting a war in Iraq but caring about our troops; these are the people being sent to fight that war.

"I'm here to support them," he said as he went to talk to individual soldiers.

When he spoke at the podium, he pledged his support to the members of the 833rd and their families.

"Contact me if there are any services or resources my office can provide," Loeb sack said. "I look forward to welcoming you home."

Another promise of support came when Iowa's executive director of Veterans Affairs, Patrick Palmer-shelm, read a statement from Gov. Chet Culver.

Culver wrote his administration has made a priority out of helping military members and their families transition back into civilian life after a deployment.

In fact, most speakers spoke of the sacrifice being made both by soldiers and their families.

"Military families are tough, resilient, organized and they look out for one another," said Zirkelbach.

But, Hapgood pointed out the community can especially help soldiers by remembering their families.

"One way to do that is contact the Family Readiness Group through the local armory," he said.

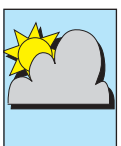
Representatives often know which military dependents are in need of assistance. Hapgood said,



Spc. Mark Wilson of Ottumwa gives his 3 1/2-week-old daughter, Grace, a kiss goodbye before boarding a bus with the 833rd Engineer Company after a send-off ceremony Sunday at Hellyer Student Life Center.

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### TODAY'S WEATHER



It will be a dry, warm day today with partly sunny skies, a slight chance of showers and a high near 85. A few clouds move in tonight with a low around 62.

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## Soldiers, families prepare for another tour

### Saying goodbye is never easy

**BY SCOTT NILES**  
COURIER STAFF WRITER

OTTUMWA — The absence of a loved one can be a hard thing.

Many tears were shed Sunday morning by mothers, wives, children and family members as they said goodbye once again to their loved ones who were deployed. The 833rd Engineer Company left for its second journey to Iraq and most said it would be harder this time.

"It never gets easier saying goodbye to your family," said Spc. Marty McDaniels.

Since the company's return almost a year-and-a-half ago, McDaniels has started his own family and now has three "little ones."

"It's especially hard saying goodbye to the kids," he said. "They don't know what's

going on. All they know is daddy is going to the desert to fight the bad guys," said his wife Alesia McDaniels.

McDaniels said it is hard on everyone. Though the soldiers know somewhat of what to expect overseas, leaving is the hardest thing to do for them.

Spc. Corey Sallee said it will be intensely difficult for him also because he is going to miss the first 10 months of his baby's life.

"It will be hard without him here," said his wife, Heidi Sallee.

"We were just starting to get settled. We got married bought a house and now we have a baby on the way and I have to leave again," he said. Corey Sallee said it was an



The 833rd Engineer Company salutes after entering the Hellyer Student Life Center Sunday for their send-off ceremony.

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