

Over 100 Soldiers from 172nd Infantry Brigade arrive after a yearlong deployment

by **Pfc. AUDREY GLYNN**
172nd Infantry Brigade Public Affairs

In the early hours of a cold, wet morning, Oct. 12, nearly 100 family members and rear detachment Soldiers waited patiently at Grafenwoehr Physical Fitness Center.

Shortly after 2 a.m., 102 Soldiers from 172nd Infantry Brigade's Advanced Echelon, also known as ADVON, marched into the gym amid fog, loud music and a thunderous applause. After 12 months of deployment, the first group of 172nd Soldiers was finally home.

"ADVON is made up of Soldiers who are hand-picked from each unit to help the cadre on rear detachment prepare for the arrival of the rest of the brigade," said Lt. Col. Eric Stetson, 172nd Infantry Brigade rear detachment commander. "They assist in setting up the barracks, the arms rooms, and any other systems that are needed or required to bring everyone else back."

Deborah Cousino, with her sons in tow, Braiden, 7 months, and Noah, 2, waited for her husband, Sgt. Sean Cousino, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment.

"This was our second deployment together, I feel like it flew by compared to the other one," Deborah said. "We got to talk on the phone or Internet almost every day and he even made it home during the deployment for Braiden's birth."

She said the family had plans for a ski vacation in Garmisch later this year.

The ADVON will undergo a seven-day reintegration process, before it begins coordinating the redeployment of rest of the Blackhawks. The reintegration process includes updating paperwork, attending redeployment briefings, receiving immunizations and dental check-ups, and participating in a unit family day. Once reintegration is complete, ADVON Soldiers will take their place with their separate units and get right to work.

"The arrival of ADVON is crucial to our mission's success," Stetson said. "We need as much support as we can get to bring everyone else home safely."