



**First Armored Division "Welcome Home" Ceremony  
and Dedication of the Fallen Soldier's Monument  
October 7, 2004**

**Ambassador Coats**

Minister-President Koch,  
Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz,  
General Schoomaker, Mrs. Schoomaker,  
General Jones, Mrs. Jones,  
General Bell,  
Command Sergeant Major Gravens, Mrs. Gravens,  
State Secretary Biederbick,

Minister-President Koch, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the good people of Hesse for their support of the soldiers of the 1st Armored division and their families - and for all the American military who have lived and worked in Germany since the end of World War II. The more than 13 million American soldiers and their dependants who have served and lived in Germany have fond and lasting memories of their time here and the friendships they made. It is truly a unique relationship of friendship and support, unlike any other in the history of our two nations.

Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz, welcome to Germany and thank you for your service to our country.

General Jones and all those that lead, thank you for your leadership of U.S. Army Europe. It has been a pleasure to work with you.

Lt. General Sanchez, Major General Dempsey, CSM Bush, welcome home. You responded to the call of duty at a most difficult time. Thank you for your commitment and leadership.

Soldiers of the 1st Armored, on behalf of the US Embassy Mission to Berlin and the 112,939 American citizens living here in Germany, it is an honor and a great pleasure to welcome you back home after 15 months of tough duty in Iraq. Throughout history "Old Ironsides" has epitomized all the best traits of our nation's soldiers -- the civic and military values of patriotism, discipline, readiness, self-sacrifice, decisiveness, and generosity in victory.

You have worked for the cause of liberty and for the peace of the world. The people of Iraq who suffered for 35 years under one of the worst tyrants in modern history have been given their freedom. You have helped make the world a safer place.

You and your fellow soldiers in Iraq are in the process of changing the course of history in the Middle East. Decades of dictatorship and misrule in that part of the world have brought terror and tragedy to the United States and to freedom-loving people throughout the world.

The mission in Iraq has been and is a major challenge. I realize that we will never fully understand how difficult this deployment was for you. I also know that we can never thank you enough for all you did to help us accomplish our critical mission.

To the families whose support has never wavered; to all those who toiled and

sacrificed in service to our nation and the cause of freedom. Congratulations and great thanks for all you have done.

Today is a celebration, a coming home. We rejoice in this moment but we also remember your fallen comrades and your fellow Soldiers who remain in harm's way.

God bless each of you and your families. God bless the United States of America.