

## Baby makes TV debut

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### Video conference allows soldier in Iraq to see his wife, newborn son

COEUR d'ALENE -- Two days ago, the excitement level at Kootenai Medical Center was palpable. The hospital was going to connect a newborn son with his father serving in Iraq via video conference.

However, wars don't wait for children being born or the perfect family moment. A young Marine with a delightful Louisiana accent broke the news to Tami Nielsen that her husband, Jacob, was on a mission.

"That's how military life works," Nielsen said glumly. "I am used to it."

On Friday, KMC tried again. After some computer glitches and at least 10 phone calls, the TV screen flickered and there was Jacob, half asleep on the couch and another Marine dozing in front of a computer monitor. Jacob jumped up and saw his son, Isaiah, for the first time.

He couldn't stop grinning. He was positively goofy at the sight and sounds from baby Isaiah, who screamed at the top of his tiny lungs -- letting his father know that he missed him.

"Well, what do you think?" his wife, Tami repeated twice.



JEROME A. POLLOS/Press

Tami Nielsen holds her one-day-old son, Isaiah, while waiting for a video teleconference with her husband in Iraq to start Thursday at Kootenai Medical Center.

Still beaming, Jacob leaned closer to the monitor at the Al Asad Air Base in Iraq.

"I think he's adorable," Jacob said. "He's real cute."

At Kootenai Medical Center, more than 13,000 miles away, Tami held up their son to the camera, who opened wide and cried some more.

"Why don't you feed him?" Jacob said, giving his first fatherly advice.

"I tried, but he just can't handle it yet," Tami said. "But we're doing good."

The satellite video conference connected the Hayden family that had been separated by war for more than a year.

"So here we are actually able to see him, it's awesome," Tami said.

Lance Cpl. Jacob Nielsen is scheduled to return home in late April or early May. He has worked as a mechanic and assisted on military convoys.

"I am ready to come home," Nielsen said.

Isaiah Jacob was born at 7:14 p.m. Wednesday evening after an emergency cesarean delivery. Tami Nielsen endured 24 hours of labor. Doctors discovered the baby's umbilical cord had wrapped around his head.

"It was a good thing they went and got him," Tami Nielsen said.

Isaiah weighed 7 pounds and 6 ounces and was 19 inches long when he was born. Isaiah is Tami and Jacob's first child together. Tami has two other sons from a previous relationship.

The long-distance connection was made possible by the Freedom Calls Foundation and Kootenai Medical Center. Freedom Calls is a nonprofit organization that connects military families serving overseas with loved ones back home free of charge.

The video conference uses satellite technology and Internet connections.

"Soldiers no longer need be estranged from their families in time of war," said John Harlow II, executive director of Freedom Calls. "They can participate in milestone family events, such as births, school graduations and anniversaries from the front lines."

Freedom Calls has four facilities in Iraq that use 50 computers and 20 telephones. The organization is working to add more facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Information: [www.freedomcalls.org](http://www.freedomcalls.org)