

## Video conference lets father in Iraq see newborn twins in Craven Regional Medical Center

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March 5, 2008  
Sun Journal

Cpl. Dakota Beckham met his brand-new twin sons today— while serving in the war in Iraq.

A video conference set up by Freedom Calls Foundation enabled him to see his wife, Megan, and sons, Ethan and Ryan, just hours after the boys were born at Craven Regional Medical Center.

They were born at 12:41 and 12:42 p.m. Monday and by noon today, their father had seen them, as a picture from a hospital laptop was shown on three TV screens in Fallujah. He also had a chance to chat with their 3-year-old son, Dalton.



Nikie Mayo/Sun Journal

Megan Beckham with her twins in Craven Regional Medical Center

“This is a lot more than we expected to have available to us,” Megan Beckham said. “We have a webcam at home and I thought he’d get to meet the twins when I got home with them and that the picture would be fuzzy and grainy. But what he saw, he said, was very clear.”

“It means a lot to have him be a part of this, especially from so far away,” she said. “I think this means even more to him, because this is a hard thing to miss.”

Freedom Calls Foundation sets up about 40,000 video conferences each year, said Kathryn Hudacek, the organization’s director of development.

“All it took was about an hour of technical service over the phone, because the tracks have been laid here before,” Hudacek said. “We’re definitely familiar with the folks at Craven Regional Medical Center.”

“New babies are just one of the events we do,” she said. “Whenever we can keep a military family in touch, we’re glad to do it.”

The Beckhams are originally from Oklahoma, but have been stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point for a few months, she said. Dakota Beckham, 22, was deployed to Iraq two weeks ago.

“He was able to be with me through most of the pregnancy, which is a big deal, because apparently, I can get pretty crazy,” she said, laughing.

Megan Beckham delivered her children by Caesarian section, the 24-year-old mother said.

Ethan weighed 5 pounds and 12 ounces and Ryan weighed 6 pounds and 12 ounces.

“They were a lot bigger than I thought they’d be,” she said.

Her doctor, John Tinga, made himself a memo about the boys, she said, laughing.

“He wrote a note on my stomach and told me to tell the nurses I had an urgent message,” Megan Beckham said. “My stomach says, ‘Remove both babies.’”