

San Antonio Express-News

Metro Edition

THE VOICE OF SOUTH TEXAS SINCE 1865

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Best man makes wedding from Iraq

09/17/2005

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Express-News

SOLMS — Andrew Galindo always expected his older brother, Teddy, to be the best man at his wedding. But it looked like that would be impossible when Teddy, an Air Force senior airman, was deployed to Iraq.

But there he was Friday evening, serving as a "virtual" best man. Through an Internet hookup, Teddy was able to see and hear the ceremony, and be seen and heard himself, on a six-foot screen right next to the couple.

"It has always been Andy's expectation that Teddy would be the best man at his wedding, but the war intervened," said the bride, Christy Meloches, before the ceremony. "We even contemplated putting off the wedding until he returns."

Christy and Teddy kept the plan secret from Andrew.

"It was my idea at the beginning, but they told me they couldn't get it set up," said Andrew, 26, a San Antonio Sonic Drive In manager. "Then they just sprung it on me today. I'm ecstatic. It's the best feeling in the world to know he is going to be here and take part in this."

Teddy waited patiently for the wedding to start, sitting in front of a camera at Camp Taji in western Iraq, where it was after 1 a.m. As the ceremony neared, family members took turns jumping in front of the camera at the Barn in Solms, and saying brief hellos to Teddy.

"I was pretty upset that I was going to miss it," he said. "It's a big deal for me."

The video Internet hookup was made possible by a nonprofit group called Freedom Calls Foundation. The foundation provides video conferencing to military personnel stationed overseas, enabling them to participate in milestone family events.

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