

DRS Connects SPAWAR and Freedom Calls Video Link for Military Families

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Military families separated by thousands of miles are able to "share the same room" as a result of the collaboration between government, non-profit and industry. The Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center -- Atlantic (SPAWAR), Freedom Calls Foundation, and DRS Technologies combined their resources and technical skills to provide five military families a quality meeting experience using a high resolution satellite video link.

One of the service members, Sergeant First Class Philip Frazier of Bargersville, IN enjoyed the link from an undisclosed site in Balad, Iraq. "Philip doesn't always tell me how he really feels," Danielle Frazier said to the network providers during their brief introduction before the private session began, holding back her tears, "but with this clear picture I can read his body language." Later, she smiled and added that this type of video experience "enables Philip to see the kids as they cut up and make faces." All the family members expressed their appreciation to the sponsors for bringing them together. "We drove an hour and a half to get here and we'd drive even further to see Philip like this," said Mrs. Frazier. "This is wonderful!"

Danielle Frazier is one of a handful of families that were selected to connect to their loved ones through this invaluable service. Families of the deployed troops gathered before a 42" monitor and camera in the office of Congressman Dan Burton (R-IN) in Indianapolis.

"We are always looking for new ways to support our military families," said Mike Hartman, SPAWAR Program Manager for the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Internet Cafes from his office in Stuttgart, Germany. "We were excited to learn of the opportunity to join in this important undertaking."



Ross Williams in Balad, Iraq catches up with his wife, Angelina, at Congressman Dan Burton's office in Indianapolis courtesy of the Freedom Calls Foundation, DRS Technologies and The Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center - Atlantic (SPAWAR).

SPAWAR Atlantic, commanded by Capt. Bruce Urbon and located in Charleston, SC, provides quality systems engineering and acquisition services to rapidly deploy capabilities that enable knowledge superiority to Naval, joint, and national warfighters. SPAWAR established the Satellite Services contract in 2003 to provide a solid communications lifeline -- the MWR Internet Cafe Network -- from the troops to their friends and families. SPAWAR oversees the work performed by the satellite systems contractor, DRS Systems, Inc. The MWR Network consists of over 750 Internet cafes located in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Balkans and is the largest and most accessible troop support communications network in the world.

Freedom Calls Foundation, with over 10,000 video conferencing sites throughout the United States and 6 videoconferencing centers situated at military installations in Iraq and Kuwait, is a 501(c)3 charity based in Morristown, New Jersey. The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff recently presented the prestigious 2008 Newman's Own award to Freedom Calls Foundation for being the most innovative charitable program supporting military families. Freedom Calls' mission is to enable military families to share milestone events like births, weddings, and graduations, and to enable "loved ones deployed to the front lines to come home to their families at the end of the work day" via enterprise-class videoconferences.

DRS Technologies, headquartered in Parsippany, New Jersey, is a leading supplier of integrated products, services and support to military forces, intelligence agencies and prime contractors worldwide. The company employs approximately 10,500 people and currently has over 300 technicians serving in the field alongside the troops, many of them on the MWR program. For more information about DRS Technologies, please visit the company's web site at www.drs.com.

SPAWARSYSCEN-Atlantic's MWR network website: <http://oif.spawareurope.net>

Freedom Calls Foundation: <http://www.freedomcalls.org>