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Technology reunites Marine dad with son

Donated video call spans globe from Iraq

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Painesville- Kyle Morris has not seen his dad since Christmas, so there was a lot to share.

Forty things, in fact. All hand-scrawled on a list.

Penciled in at No. 21 was how much he missed his father, Master Sgt. Jason Morris, who is serving in Al Asad Air Base in Iraq. Wednesday, the distance disappeared for a bit, when his father blinked to life in a video conference call arranged through Freedom Calls Foundation.

"Hey, pal, how are you doing?" Morris said through teary eyes as he focused on his 13-year-old son, whose voice has changed while his dad has been fighting the war.

"This is kind of bittersweet," Morris said. "I love to watch how much he has grown, but it reminds me how long I've been away."

Morris, a Marine Corps radar technician, talked about the sandstorms and joked, "We're going through a cold spell here," with the temperature at 106 degrees at 8 p.m.

Kyle told his dad about the last day of school, his mother's graduation from Cleveland State University and the Indians season opener.

"He told me it was hard to find his bunk because everything is covered in camouflage. I thought that was pretty cool," Kyle said. "The best thing was when he said I was his pride and joy."

Freedom Calls Foundation, a nonprofit agency, offers video conferencing for free to anyone in the military serving in Camp Taji, Camp Fallujah, Camp Victory and Al Asad Airbase. Corporate and private contributors helped build the satellite network. The group hopes to expand to eight more Army camps in Iran and two in Afghanistan.

The Morrises were the first to make the connection in Lake County, with equipment from the Lake County Educational Service Center.

Dannette Grant, Kyle's mother, who is remarried, said the technology was a thrill for her son, who spends a lot of hours on video games.

"He's got a lot of fun things planned this summer, but this will definitely be the highlight," she said

Kyle said seeing his dad on the screen was amazing, but he would prefer the live version.

"I just want him to come home and be safe." Kyle said.

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