

## Soldier, family virtually meet

By MAC McLEAN  
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**DANVILLE** - Chief Warrant Officer Jermaine Cadogan watched his son Alex run around a conference room at the Institute for Advanced Learning & Research Saturday afternoon.

"I'll bet that (Alex) is a ball of fire every hour of every day," Cardogan told his wife Andrekka Lanier as the two celebrated their son's first birthday together.

Cardogan has been stationed in Al Asad, Iraq since Feb. 26. He and Lanier were able to have this moment together through a special partnership between the Institute and the Freedom Calls Foundation.



Chief Warrant Officer Jermaine Cadogan, left, was able to see his wife, Andrekka Lanier, and his son, Alex, on Saturday through a free program offered by the Institute for Advanced Learning & Research.

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The program, known as Operation Hometown Link, provides Southside Virginia residents with an opportunity to have a free video conference call with their loved ones in Iraq.

"(My husband) doesn't miss as much," Lanier said after the call. "It's good to actually see him as opposed to just sharing e-mails and phone calls."

On a six-month deployment rotation with the U.S. Marine Corps, Cardogan was stationed in Iraq when Alex was born one year ago. Lanier said her husband was able to participate in the birth over her cell phone.

Cardogan didn't have a chance to see his child until May 15 of last year when Lanier made the Institute's first freedom call to Iraq. Since then, two other families have used the service according to the Institute's Fatima Tedeyeva.

Tedeyeva said Saturday that people could use the free service to reach loved ones who are stationed in Al Asad, Camp Cooke or Camp Fallujah.

"People get excited," she said, adding the closest place to the area that offers this service is the University of Virginia.

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