

# Herald Democrat

## Soldier in Iraq sees his unborn baby's pictures

By Joyce Godwin  
Herald Democrat

A tiny examination room in Sherman bore witness Thursday afternoon that the strongest military force in the world cares about the intimate details of its soldiers.

U.S. Army Spc. Jared Therrien sat in a small room at Camp Taji in Iraq at 1:30 a.m. and saw his unborn baby's very first pictures and heard the heart beat in real time.

Dr. Stacey Thornton of Women's Health Associates performed the ultrasound on Taralyn Therrien, while her husband watched through a video-satellite hookup. "I'm pointing right to the crease between the legs," Thornton said. "I see three lines, one, two, three — I think you got a little girl, Buddy." The room in Sherman erupted in cheers from family and one "I told you so," from family friend Jennifer Harris.

Jared Therrien's reaction came through the screen, "Wow," he said. "I told you. You were wrong. I told you," the expectant father said with a jubilant smile.

Someone in the room asked Jared what the name would be and he said "Peyton." After a pause, he added, "Unless she changes her mind."

"You're the one who always changes his mind," Taralyn said.

Jared's reaction was heard in Sherman — "Whoa, whoa, whoa," and the room was filled with laughter.

"Tara, you just bought all kinds of boy stuff at a garage sale," Harris exclaimed.

"I know," she said and then shared the information with her soldier husband. "I just bought a bunch of boy stuff," she told him.



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This is the picture Taralyn Therrien saw of her husband SPC. Jared Therrien during a real-time transmission Thursday between Sherman and Iraq.

He put his face in his hand and, when he lifted it up again, he was laughing with a big grin. "What?" she said.

"I told you," he said through the laughter.

Even though Jared Therrien is in a war zone, the young couple, ages 20 and 21, got to experience an important life event together thanks to the Freedom Calls Foundation and the video technology of Bruce Huddleston, president of the ADA Business Computers company of Ada, Okla. Huddleston did all the work on the Sherman end but the Freedom Calls Foundation furnished the satellite network from the Freedom Calls facility in Iraq. The network was built by the foundation in cooperation with the Army and Marines to serve deployed military personnel and their families 24 hours per day at no cost to the troops or their families.

Thursday was the first time husband and wife have seen each other in more than two months. Spc. Therrien deployed Dec. 3. Even though the room was filled with family, medical personnel and news media, the couple conversed as if nobody else existed. "Taranoceros" is a nickname the soldier has for his wife and, it was clear, she enjoyed hearing it again as the expectant parents engaged in playful banter.

"You look good," he said.

"Well, thank you," she answered. "You look clean. Did you take a shower for this?"

"I took a shower and got a hair cut," and then he modeled his new do for the camera, making everyone in the Sherman room laugh.

He talked about starting 24-hour missions soon and she talked about going to New Hampshire in a few weeks to visit his family.

"Congratulations, Buddy, your baby is perfect," Thornton said. "Your wife's perfect also."

"Outstanding," came the soldier's reply and a few second later, "I already knew that."

Thornton, a 12-year veteran of the military having served in war zones himself, said later he's never been involved in a video transmission of this type. He didn't know anyone was providing this type of technology for the soldiers but he was proud to be a part of it.

Tara said her husband is in his second tour in Iraq. He joined the Army after high school graduation and he'll be finished in July 2007. She said he plans to be a pharmacist or an engineer when he is once again a civilian.

Little Peyton is due July 4th and Jared Therrien will get to come home to Denison for a two-week leave.

John Harlow, executive director of the Freedom Calls Foundation, said the organization is transforming a long-standing family communication paradigm by enabling soldiers in the war zone to attend and participate in milestone, family events like weddings, first communions, new births and more.

“Soldiers may now keep their commitments to their families at the same time they keep their commitment to their country,” he said. “The long-term vision of the Freedom Calls Foundation is that our war fighters will be able to come home from a day on the battlefield and spend virtual time with family every night using state of the art technology.”

He added that the contributions of community citizens like Women’s Health Associates and Huddleston who set up the local connection, enables the foundation to execute its mission.

He explained that the Freedom Calls Foundation is a public charity and also provides telephone and Internet services to enable the troops to stay in touch with families and loved ones at home. The foundation provides services to more than 30,000 soldiers and marines. The Army has requested that the foundation install eight additional facilities in Iraq and two in Afghanistan in the coming months. More information about the organization is on its Web site at [www.freedomcalls.org](http://www.freedomcalls.org).