

# The Huntsville Times

## Soldier meets his new son via video

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'Looks like a daddy's boy,' says Marine in Iraq

There was joy, of course, when Christian Ty Tipton entered the world at 4:11 p.m. Tuesday.

But there was sadness, too, because his father, Jackie Tipton, couldn't be there. A lance corporal in the Marine Corps, Tipton is stationed more than 6,000 miles away in Fallujah, Iraq.

Luckily, he didn't have to wait long to meet his son. On Wednesday, the nonprofit Freedom Calls Foundation arranged a free satellite video hookup between Tipton's base and his wife's room at Huntsville Hospital for Women & Children.

Relatives cheered when Tipton's grinning face popped up on the 42-inch screen. Tipton and his wife, Christy, talk by phone regularly but had not seen each other since he left for Iraq on March 30. Ty is their first child.

"Jackie, look at Ty. Isn't he cute?" Christy said.

"Looks like a daddy's boy," Tipton said.

His next comment would warm the hearts of Crimson Tide fans: Tipton asked why his son was wearing a hospital-issue striped stocking cap instead of an Alabama baby hat.

With that, hospital spokeswoman Pam Sparks darted downstairs to the gift shop and found a blue stocking with a Bama logo.

"That's more like it," said Tipton, who graduated from Lincoln County High School in 2003.

Then the young couple from Fayetteville, Tenn., just chatted. About Ty's shock of blond hair ("Looks like he's got a mohawk," Tipton said). About whose chin he got. About Tipton's

Mustang GT, the weather in Fallujah (120 degrees Wednesday), what it feels like to be a new parent.

"I don't guess it's hit, yet," said Tipton, 22, who is scheduled to be in Iraq until early November.

The Freedom Calls satellite network allows U.S. servicemen and women overseas to participate in family milestones back home: births, graduations, anniversaries. More than 2,000 soldiers a day use its free telephone, computer and videoconferencing facilities across Iraq.

The video was a little grainy Wednesday, so relatives rolled Christy's hospital bed closer to the screen. An aunt, Rita Jobe, held baby Ty just inches from the camera - his first close-up.

The chubby, 7-pound, 3-ounce newborn stirred for just a moment and then went back to sleep.

"I see an Alabama football player in the making," Tipton said.