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Groom's Special Guest

Brother in Iraq gets to participate in wedding via video

By Amy Bartner

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Out-of-town guests: Connection Pointe Christian Church minister Danny Schaffner presides over the wedding of Daniel Leathers and Sara Caldwell at the Brownsburg church. On the screen over the groomsmen Saturday were video images of Army Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Everman, Leathers' brother, who has been serving in Iraq since December (upper left), and Everman's wife, Christina, in Texas. - JOE VITTI / The Star

Carla Leathers had an emotional day Saturday.

First, her second-oldest son, Daniel Leathers, got married.

And her oldest son, Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Everman, was able to participate in his brother's wedding, despite being in Iraq.

Everman has been serving as a communications specialist in Iraq since December.

He appeared during the wedding on a 12-foot video screen.

"You're very excited for (the couple) and excited for the event," Carla Leathers said.

"But then seeing Jeffery and knowing that he can participate and see, that's just something that you would never think could happen."

It was too much for the mother, who teared up before the wedding at the thought of seeing her son.

"I haven't seen him for months, and I'm just -- I get really emotional when I think about it," she said.

Daniel Leathers married Sara Caldwell at Connection Pointe Christian Church in Brownsburg. Before the wedding, Everman visited with his wife and two children via video for an hour.

He also spoke to the groom privately before the ceremony to "say whatever brothers say," Carla Leathers said.

The event wouldn't have happened without Freedom Calls Foundation, she said.

The free service enables soldiers overseas to connect home for major events. More than 30,000 soldiers have access to the program 24 hours a day at a Freedom Calls facility overseas.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Everman in Iraq visits with his children in Texas via Freedom Calls video conference prior to the wedding

"It's still hard knowing he's over there, and he can't be here," Carla Leathers said.

"It's a happy-sad, but I worry about him every day."

The family invited the media to the wedding so more people would learn about this program.

"It's great because it gives other people the opportunity to do this, because I would've never known," Carla Leathers said.

Call Star reporter Amy Bartner at (317) 444-6888.