

# The Jackson Sun

## Soldier dad sees son for first time via video

Freedom Calls Foundation helps soldiers, families 'see' each other

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Operation: Max William Hoesli

Satellite feed: From Iraq to Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, third floor, Labor and Delivery

Room No.: Classified

Subject line: Max wants to meet Daddy.

And he did. Well, sort of.

Using the marvel of modern technology, Max William Hoesli saw his father for the first time when a video image of Army Spc. Sheldon Hoesli was transmitted to his mother's hospital room at 2 p.m. Thursday.



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Jenny Hoesli holds her newborn baby boy, Max, as she talks to her husband, Sheldon Hoesli, who is serving as a Black Hawk helicopter crew chief in Iraq, on a video teleconference from her room at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital on Thursday in Jackson.

"This is amazing," said 24-year-old Jenny Hoesli, when she first saw her husband via the video feed.

Jenny Hoesli gave birth to the couple's first child at 11:46 p.m. Wednesday. Max William, who is named after his two grandfathers, measured 21 inches and weighed in at 8 pounds 6 ounces.

A Black Hawk helicopter crew chief, 25-year-old Sheldon Hoesli is a specialist in the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division stationed in Iraq. His service was supposed to be ending, but he was deployed May 7.

"He was part of the stop-loss program," said Jenny's mother, Karen Osborn, "or he would have been out in April."

Sheldon has been deployed overseas four times. He did one tour in Afghanistan. This is his third trip to Iraq.



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Jenny Hoesli holds her newborn baby boy, Max, as she and her mother, Karen Osborn, talk to her husband, Sheldon Hoesli, who is serving as a Black Hawk helicopter crew chief in Iraq, on a video teleconference from her room at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital on Thursday in Jackson.

A near life-size picture of him stands against the window of his wife's hospital room. A stuffed teddy bear with a balloon as a parachute sits in the opposite corner.

Sheldon and Jenny met when he was stationed at Fort Campbell, Ky. She was a student majoring in education at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville.

The couple has spoken nearly every day by cell phone or Yahoo! messenger since he left for Iraq.

But for Jenny, actually seeing her husband's face was - well - "More than I can imagine," she said, throwing her left arm across her chest while still lying in her hospital bed. "It was one of the happiest days for me."

The news media was not allowed in her room during the video conference, so the couple could talk in private. Jenny said their conversation centered on each other, and Max William.

"He said he's perfect," Jenny said.

The conference was set up by The Freedom Calls Foundation. The foundation is a nonprofit organization that tries to establish video conference calls for overseas service members and their families. The service operates by donations only.

Because of limited funding, the foundation can establish only 1-in-4 calls requested, Osborn said.

A foundation representative could not be reached for comment Thursday.

While Jenny Hoesli is grateful to Freedom Calls and the hospital for establishing the video link with her husband, she said seeing him is not the same as holding him.

"Physically he can't give me a hug, or hold my hand," she said, snatching a Kleenex from the box, "and it's emotionally draining every day, because he is missing out on so much."

Dealing with her pregnancy has helped the time away from her husband pass more quickly.

Still, Jenny remains fixated on the day Sheldon will return.

"I'll look at what time it is here, and then figure out what time it is there (in Iraq) and what he should be doing," she said.

Jenny Hoesli goes home on Saturday.

Max William will go with her.

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- Ned Hunter, 425-9641