

# Ledger-Enquirer

## Marine in Iraq witnesses birth of son in Mobile via video system

Associated Press  
3/27/2007

**MOBILE, Ala.** - When Marine Sgt. Chad Matthews was unable to get leave from Iraq to be with his wife, Cynthia, for the birth of their son in Mobile, he turned to his chaplain.

His chaplain turned to the miracle of video conferencing, arranged by the Freedom Calls Foundation.

The organization, which helps troops share important moments with loved ones back home, set up a video conference that allowed Matthews to watch from Iraq as his wife gave birth to Braxton Matthews at 9 a.m. Saturday at the University of South Alabama's Children's & Women's Hospital.

"It was breathtaking. It was very emotional," the new father told the Press-Register in a story Tuesday. "It was definitely an experience I'll take with me the rest of my life. It's not many times that you get to experience a life coming into the world while out here in Iraq."

It was special for the newborn's mom, too.

For about four hours until delivery, she was able to get encouragement from her husband, who was beamed into the hospital room to follow the last stages of Braxton's birth.

"I was talking to him the whole time," Cynthia Matthews said. "He was just watching. He would throw in a joke here and there, something to cheer me up and make me smile, a 'You did awesome, babe' and that kind of thing."

Braxton's video birth was a first for the hospital, spokesman Bob Lowry said.

But not a first for Alabama.

On Father's Day last June, Marine Cpl. Terrence Lambert watched from a room at Al Asad Air Base in Iraq while his wife, Jodilynn, gave birth to a daughter at Jacksonville Medical Center. Thanks to a video hookup arranged by the Freedom Calls Foundation, she could see her husband on a 50-inch television screen.

Chad Matthews, a Satsuma native, had kept closely involved in his wife's pregnancy after deploying to Iraq in January. The family was stationed at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, N.C., but Cynthia Matthews, originally from Mobile, and their older son, 3-year-old Chaz, moved back to Mobile so she could be closer to family.

His concerns were reduced with his wife back in Mobile, but he said nothing compared to being able to see with his own eyes that both mother and baby were healthy and fine.

"It takes a lot off the mind knowing there's some stuff you don't have to worry about. You can concentrate on work more not having to worry about your family," he said. "You know they are well taken care of because you can see it."