

# The Messenger

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## **Soldier brothers salute via satellite**

*By Matt Clower, The Messenger*

Satellite technology enabled a Troy University Army ROTC cadet on Friday to receive his first salute as an officer from his brother, who is currently stationed in Iraq.

Eric Sattelberg, 27, an Army ROTC cadet, received his commission as a second lieutenant in a special ceremony that joined him via satellite link with his brother, Ryan, an Army staff sergeant serving in Iraq.

Ryan delivered the traditional first salute from an enlisted person.

The salute was broadcast over the satellite network maintained by the Freedom Calls Foundation. Freedom Calls, based in New York, is a non-profit foundation that enables soldiers in the field to make direct contact with their families by video conference on special occasions such as weddings, birthdays and anniversaries.

Eric said when it came time to plan to for his commissioning ceremony, he wanted to make good on a promise to have his brother deliver the first salute.

“I had told him when I first came into the program that he would be my first salute. We had to find a way to make it happen,” Eric said.

On a screen above the stage, Ryan could be seen at his base in Iraq, watching on as his brother took his oath. Technical problems blocked any audio transmission, but the brothers were still able to talk over the phone. And the salute went off without a hitch.

The brothers' parents, Lavern and Sharon, both retired from the Air Force, watched the ceremony and said it was a source of pride to have two sons in the armed service.

“It really felt good to see them. It makes you very proud,” Lavern said.

Eric had not seen his brother in about year. He said he was glad to have his brother deliver the salute.

“This was a special day for me,” he said. “It's my goal as an officer to help as many soldiers as I can in my career - to be a mentor.”

Capt. Jim Holder, executive officer for the ROTC program said the salute was a historic event for the program.

“I’ve served three tours in Iraq, and I know that (Ryan) is just beaming with pride now for his brother,” Holder said. “This was a real special event and I was glad we could make it happen.”

Troy University's Army ROTC staff contacted Freedom Calls and, with the help of the University's information technology department, put the system in place to make the salute possible.

The ceremony also featured remarks from retired Gen. Gerald Dial, a member of the Troy University Board of Trustees and executive director of the Rural Alabama Action Commission. He thanked the ROTC cadets for their willingness to serve their nation.