

# The Moultrie Observer

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## Soldier calls home via CNS

Freedom Calls program lets Weaver talk with family in Moultrie

**John Oxford**

MOULTRIE — There was a brief delay in getting everything going, but Ken and Kalea Weaver were able to spend about a half hour speaking with their son, Michael, Tuesday morning. This had been the first time the Weavers were able to see and speak to Michael since July.

Michael was able to see his sister, Mary Sue, and his 14-month old nephew, Parker, walking for the first time. Michael told his family that his friends said he and Parker bear a striking resemblance to each other.

What made this conversation unique is that U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Michael Weaver, 27, is currently stationed at Camp Al Asad just west of Baghdad, Iraq. He spoke with his family through a videoconferencing feed via CNS Television, set up at the Moultrie City Hall's conference room.

CNS Director Lance Arnett said this was the first time a family has been able to speak with a soldier stationed in Iraq through the CNS teleconferencing system. CNS has partnered with the Freedom Calls Foundation to allow families of soldiers to communicate with their loved ones using the system free of charge.

CNS will allow families to speak with soldiers from Camp Taji, Camp Fallujah and Camp Al Asad, but Arnett said the system is set up at only those three military bases. CNS will work with families in order for them to speak with their loved ones in Iraq whenever a soldier can come to one of those bases.

Anyone who would like to sign up for a time can visit customer service at City Hall. More information can be found at the City of Moultrie Web site at [www.moultriega.com](http://www.moultriega.com) or by calling the CNS office in Moultrie at 985-5400. Similar programs are also available at CNS locations in Thomasville, Cairo and Camilla.

Kalea Weaver said it was a really nice opportunity to see her son again and to speak with him virtually face-to-face. She thought he looked great and was so grateful her family had the opportunity to take part in the wonderful experience. The family said they hope to see Michael again soon, as he is scheduled to return home in February.

Ken Weaver said it was nice to see and speak to his son, especially around the Christmas holidays. This year will not be their first time without Michael around for Christmas. He spent the last two years stationed in Okinawa, Japan, before going to Iraq.

The American soldiers know they have a job to do in Iraq, Ken Weaver said, and while they want to come home, they won't leave there without finishing that job. He said Iraqi citizens there have been positive with the soldiers for the most part, as they do want to have their country back in their own hands but don't want the soldiers to leave without first setting a strong Democratic foundation.

Sgt. Weaver told his family that the war in Iraq is very winnable yet they will not leave without finishing their job, Ken Weaver said. The soldiers want to leave Iraq as a much better place than it was when they first arrived there, he said.