

TIMES HERALD-RECORD

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2008

RECORDONLINE.COM

CATSKILLS EDITION | 75 CENTS

Local soldier visits with his new baby via satellite

April 10, 2008

WARWICK — On April 1, Kari Tracy of Greenville gave birth to her first baby, daughter Ella Rayne, at St. Anthony Community Hospital's Kennedy Birthing Center. Tracy's childhood sweetheart and husband, Staff Sgt. Jonathan Tracy, missed the important event because he is serving his third tour in Iraq.



The TV at St. Anthony Community Hospital simultaneously displays a full screen view of Sgt. Tracy, watching a TV from a base in Baghdad, and his full-screen view of newborn daughter Ella, displayed in the corner of the screen at St. Anthony Community Hospital.

Kari Tracy found out about the Freedom Calls Foundation, a nonprofit organization, which could arrange for her husband to meet his new daughter free of charge via satellite TV. She asked the nursing staff at the Kennedy Birthing Center to make this possible. Numerous phone calls and visits later, St. Anthony Community Hospital and Freedom Calls came through. The hospital now plans to continue offering this service in cooperation with Freedom Calls.

On the morning of April 4, Eugene Nasuti, a Bon Secours Charity Health System telecom technician, placed a call to the Freedom Calls with a technician waiting in Iraq. Within moments, Jonathan, watching a TV screen from a base in Baghdad, appeared on the hospital's TV screen and had an opportunity to enjoy a real-time visit with his wife and new baby daughter along with other members of the family who had been invited to the hospital to share the happy event.

"She's the most beautiful baby in the world," he exclaimed.

Ella was born a month early, but her arrival was a welcomed one.

Kari Tracy, seated with her father and mother and her mother-in-law, told her husband, "Ella is the softest thing I've ever touched."

Freedom Calls offers servicemen and servicewomen an opportunity to participate in milestone family events such as births, birthdays, weddings and school graduations. For more information or to make a contribution, visit www.freedomcalls.org