

Telemedicine connects troops in Iraq with family

By Dave Jones
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The UC Davis Health System recently put its "telemedicine" equipment to work for the good of a Marine in Iraq and his wife in the states, bringing together the couple by video.

The couple, Jeremiah and Audrey Isbell of Loomis, Placer County, carried out their live video conversation on April 23 — which happened to mark the anniversary of when they met.

The UC Davis Center for Health and Technology provided the equipment for the Sacramento end of the conversation.

The equipment is normally used to connect physicians and other specialists with hospitals and doctors at more than 80 rural sites throughout California, for the purpose of sharing information and knowledge for patient diagnoses and treatment. The Center for Health and Technology also encompasses education programs via the video teleconference system, several emergency preparedness projects, and a database for biomedical information and research services.

"We're extreme proud to be able to connect our troops overseas with their loved ones back home," said Thomas Nesbitt, the center's director.

"It's an honor to help bring together Lance Corporal Isbell and his wife, and we hope to offer this important service on a regular basis to other Sacramento area residents who have family members serving in Iraq," said Nesbitt, adding that his staff has been eager to volunteer.

The connections are arranged and financed by the nonprofit Freedom Calls Foundation. The 2-year-old foundation provides links between the states and three military bases in Iraq: Camp Fallujah, Camp Taji and Al Asad Air Base.

Charlie Casey, a public affairs officer for the UC Davis Health System, said Freedom Calls is trying to arrange a video conference between Sacramento and Iraq on Father's Day, June 16, for multiple families.

People in the Sacramento region wishing to participate are asked to contact the Freedom Calls Foundation. John Harlow, executive director of Freedom Calls, pointed out that the soldiers or Marines on the other ends of the conversations must be able to get to one of the three bases where Freedom Calls is up and running.

For more information

Contact Freedom Calls online, www.freedomcalls.org.



Jeremiah and Audrey Isbell are pictured during their April 23 Freedom Calls video chat, made possible partly with 'telemedicine' equipment provided by the UC Davis Center for Health and Technology. For her part of the conversation, Audrey Isbell went to the UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, where a camera and microphone captured her image and words for transmission to Al Asad Air Base in Iraq. There, Freedom Calls arranged for similar equipment so Lance Cpl. Jeremiah Isbell could see his wife and talk with her. (courtesy)

