

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Army dad makes it home in time for new son's birth

Tuesday, December 25, 2007

By DEBBIE HALL - Bulletin Staff Writer

Army Spec. John Brown and his wife, Brittany, took their newborn son, Noah Kale Brown, home on Sunday, just in time for Christmas. And that's fitting, they said.

The birth, coupled with the fact that Dad was home from the service, was nothing short of a Christmas miracle.

John Brown was stationed in Fort Hood, Texas, when he learned in early December that his wife was hospitalized and in labor with their first child.



Army Specialist John Brown kisses his newborn son, Noah, on Friday, while mom Brittany Brown watches. Noah, who was born while his dad is home on leave, weighed in at 7 pounds, 7 ounces and was 20 1/2 inches long.

It was several weeks before the baby's Jan. 6 due date, and "I was very concerned" that he wouldn't make it home in time for the birth, said Brown, who lives in Bassett.

He also worried his wife or child would need him before he could get home, and for a while, it was questionable whether he would get an emergency leave.

"We were waiting and waiting," Brown said, as the Red Cross worked to help him get home. At the time, "I was really impatient. I felt helpless because I couldn't do anything," Brown, 21, said. "It took an entire day" to get the answer, he said.

Brown relied on the self-discipline he gleaned since joining the Army in July 2004 and spending 12 months in Iraq.

Brown later learned the wait was worthwhile: His leave was granted.

He jumped on the first plane home, and his mother drove to Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTI) in Greensboro, N.C., in the middle of the night to meet his flight.

From there, he made a beeline to his wife, who was in Memorial Hospital in Martinsville. That was a week and a half ago, he said, and since then, Brittany Brown has been in labor "on and off."

By Thursday, the baby still had not been born.

To add to the couple's anxiety, Brown was slated to return to duty Dec. 26.

"At first, we thought the baby was going to come before (John) got here, and then, we didn't think the baby would come before it was too late" and his father returned to active duty,

Brittany Brown said.

But “I was determined I was going to be here for the birth,” John Brown said, and he and Brittany Brown set out to win the first battle of wits with their son.

The two devised a plan that assured Brittany Brown would receive plenty of exercise, which they hoped, in turn, would help induce labor. Besides, they were too restless to sit still. So “we walked,” John Brown said. “I’d have her out visiting family and friends and stuff. We walked at Wal-Mart. We walked at the mall. We just walked.” The two weren’t sure the walking would work until Thursday night, as they walked through the Belk store in Liberty Fair Mall.

“Her water broke in Belk,” John Brown said. Shortly after, Brittany Brown was again admitted to the hospital. Friday morning, at 6:37 a.m., their son was born.

“We were relieved and glad,” Brittany Brown said, adding her husband was in the delivery room “the whole time.” Baby Noah weighed 7 pounds and 7 ounces and was a little over 20 inches long, John Brown said. The baby also has black hair and blue eyes, at least for now. “They will probably change” color, John Brown said.

Even so, John Brown said he never will forget the moment he first looked into his son’s eyes and received one of the best gifts ever.

“It was amazing,” he said. “It’s one of those moments in life that makes you more mature.” And while the Browns do not know what the future holds, they are certain of one thing: Their first Christmas with baby Noah will be spectacular.