

# DENVERPOST

## An Internet introduction

Technology helps Sgt. Mitch Selco, on duty in Iraq, meet his new daughter and talk with his wife.

By Brandon Lowrey  
Denver Post Staff Writer



Post / Karl Gehring

A day after the birth of Sophia Selco, her family was reunited - kind of. Marine Reserve Sgt. Mitch Selco, serving in Iraq, met his daughter and talked to his wife, Sara, and niece Cynica Basquez via video link.

Sara Selco had never seen her husband smile like he did Saturday morning.

From Fallujah, Iraq, an awestruck Marine Corps Reserve Sgt. Mitch Selco peered through a computer screen into his wife's room at St. Anthony Central Hospital to see his daughter, Sophia, for the first time.

"I've never felt like this," he said, beaming. "I didn't think this was possible. It's amazing and crazy and awe-inspiring."

Sara Selco, a Denver resident, said she could see the pride spread across the 24-year-old military man's normally stoic face.

They were able to speak for the full 90 minutes the military had allowed Mitch Selco. The teleconference call was set up by Freedom Calls, a New York-based nonprofit group established for this purpose in 2003.



Post / Karl Gehring  
Marine Reserve Sgt. Mitch Selco at Camp Fallujah in Iraq

She contacted a military charity organization, who put her in touch with the group. She talked to John Harlow, the head of Freedom Calls, and it all came together, she said.

"I didn't have to do a whole lot on my part," she said. "Just show up and have the baby."

The scene in the hospital room was almost typical - family members surrounded the mother, who cradled the daughter she gave birth to just a day before.

Mitch Selco's uniformed shoulders and shaved head were visible on the screen. A camouflage-colored sheet draped behind him served as background.



Post / Karl Gehring  
Sophia Selco

Between private conversations involving only him, his wife and new child, family members popped in. At one point his 4-year-old niece, Cynica Basquez, peered shyly into his digitized face.

"Do you know where I am?" he asked her. She shook her head. He referred to one of her favorite movies: "I'm with Aladdin's lamp."

He was 10 time zones away, on his second tour of duty in Iraq. Family members don't expect him back until October.

Tears dampened Sara Selco's face as she struggled with conflicting emotions.

"I was so happy to see his face in real time," she said. "It was that and just kind of the sadness of knowing that he was not here."

Mitch Selco, a Burbank, Calif., native, met his wife at Colorado State University. They married 3 1/2 years ago. Sara Selco said Mitch plans on becoming a firefighter when he returns but will probably always be in the Reserve.

"He's a true Marine," his mother, Dianne Selco, said. "He'll do what they want him to do. I support him 100 percent, but it's just scary."

*Staff writer Brandon Lowrey can be reached at 303-820-1201 or [blowrey@denverpost.com](mailto:blowrey@denverpost.com).*