



## ***Military Families To Talk Live Via Satellite To Loved Ones In Iraq***

***By Connie Leonard***



**(LOUISVILLE, December 17th, 2004, 6 p.m.)** -- During Saturday's dream game between Louisville and Kentucky, Iraq and Louisville will come together for what's being dubbed as "Freedom Calls At Freedom Hall." That's where 20 Kentucky families will get a chance to see and talk with their soldiers from Camp Fallujah and Camp Cooke via live videoconferencing. WAVE 3's [Connie Leonard](#) reports.



For Kentuckians, it has become a holiday tradition: the Cards vs. the Cats. And this year the annual dream game truly is for everyone, even those serving our country thousands of miles from their Old Kentucky Home.

Marine Mom Jenny Perkins is among the 20 proud Kentucky families who have been invited to Freedom Calls At Freedom Hall via satellite and Internet. "All I want to do is see him," she said.



Each family will get a 15-minute private video conference with their soldier from Camp Fallujah and Camp Cooke. The soldiers also get to watch the game live on ESPN.

Rick Pitino says he thinks "it's an unbelievable thing for the soldiers -- anything we can do to distract them and entertain them in any small way I think is awesome."

For the first time since June, Jenny will see her 25-year-old son David ... live.

Jenny says "it has really, really been hard, he's stationed in Fallujah, and as you know, the last month in Fallujah has been real rough."

David's phone call to his sister on Thanksgiving is one of the reasons why the family wants to actually see him so badly.

"They were laughing and all of a sudden she says, 'OK goodbye, I love you.' And what she had heard was gunshots, and had to get off the telephone quickly. Well it just devastated us."

Rob Sprang and his crew from Kentucky Telehealth Network were busy testing the system Friday. It's work he's glad to do. "We have some troops that have not seen children that have been born and this will be the first time they get to see their kids, so it's been a pretty touching time for all of us."

Sprang let us try out the video call with Gunnery Sgt Mike Hanson, the Marine who ran down all 20 Kentucky soldiers and set up the feed in Fallujah.

There's a reason Sgt. Hanson has been putting in long hours for this mission. "Looking at you right you right now, on this big screen TV, I feel like we're right there. And for them to be able to see their family and feel like they're right there, it's just a huge, huge blessing for them to get them through these holidays."

Jenny says that with her son gone this time of year, "it's almost like, well, a big part of your heart is missing. This will give us a piece of our heart back."

Jenny's son, Marine reservist David Perkins, is with MP Company "A" based out of Lexington. His dad, sister and pregnant wife will also be at Freedom Hall for the video conference.

Freedom Calls is a non-profit organization that helps pay for soldiers' e-mail, and phone and video calls to their families. If you'd like to help, visit: [www.freedomcalls.org](http://www.freedomcalls.org).

*Online Reporter: [Connie Leonard](#)*