

Presentations

You may now kiss the LCD monitor

Videoconferencing

By Julie Hill

You're in Colorado. Your fiancée is in Iraq. You would like to marry, despite the thousands of miles between you. Can it be done?

Yes, you can say "I do" with a little help from the Freedom Calls Foundation. The charitable organization devotes itself to helping U.S. soldiers serving overseas stay in touch with family and loved ones through a communications network that uses Wi-Fi, voice over Internet protocol (VOIP) telephony, videoconferencing and satellite technologies.



Staff Sgt. Shadow Evans, in Iran, repeats her marriage vows to Sgt. Rick Everton, in Colorado, during their videoconferenced wedding ceremony.

With the help of the foundation's videoconferencing equipment, U.S. National Guard Staff Sgt. Shadow Evans, stationed just north of Baghdad, was able to tie the knot in June with National Guard Sgt. Rick Everton, who was in Durango, Colo. The two had not seen each other in seven months, and Everton had just received notice of his deployment abroad. The "virtual" wedding was arranged to legally bond the couple in case one was injured while at war, ensuring that the couple would be allowed to quickly get together.

The Freedom Calls Foundation has also arranged for soldiers to virtually attend childrens' graduations and birthdays, and even helped one soldier be "present" when his wife gave birth to their child. More information on the foundation can be found at www.freedomcalls.org.

Originally published in the August 2004 issue of *Presentations* magazine. Copyright 2004, VNU Business Media.