

Star Bulletin

Baby meets dad via satellite

By Pat Gee

pgee@starbulletin.com

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First Lt. Clayton Cole couldn't keep his eyes off newborn daughter Jill even though he was half a world away in Iraq.



CRAIG T. KOJIMA /
CKOJIMA@STARBULLETIN.COM

First Lt. Clayton Cole, who is in Iraq, got his first look at his newborn daughter, Jill, through a video link-up to Hawaii. His wife, Nicole Foley-Cole, smiles as she holds her baby.



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CKOJIMA@STARBULLETIN.COM

Emma Cole, held by her mother, Nicole, is the 4 day old daughter of 1st Lieutenant, Clayton Cole, stationed in Iraq. She got a lookover from dad during a video link-up between Hawaii and Iraq.

"Oh, my God! ... She's gorgeous!" were Cole's first words yesterday upon seeing Jill, born just four days before. "Wow! That's a lot of hair!"

Wife Nicole Foley-Cole replied, "You make cute babies!"

A videoconference hookup at Schofield Barracks showed Jill in Foley-Cole's arms and 4-year-old daughter Emma.

Cole has two more weeks before he sees his family in person during two weeks of leave. He has been deployed since December 2006.

This is the second time the Colorado couple has used videoconferencing -- provided free to military families through a private satellite network. The nonprofit Freedom Calls Foundation offered the

service to help families share "milestone moments." But with expenses topping \$23,000 a month, the foundation is in danger of shutting down at the end of the month, a release said. (Visit www.freedomcalls.org.)

The Army Community Service Center's computer labs usually schedule videoconferences in the evenings and on weekends about 30 minutes long for several families at a time. But a special effort was made to arrange the hour-long reunion at noon yesterday to celebrate the coming of a new baby, said Mike Owens, computer technician.

"There are so many Hawaii soldiers up there, we try do as much as we possibly can," he said. Even if it's just for half an hour, "we try to bring them home."

Foley-Cole said, "It was just real wonderful to see his reaction (to Jill), for him kind of to meet her a little bit ... He got to see Jill and Emma interact directly -- it makes us feel a lot closer."

She had sent pictures of Jill before this, but "e-mails just aren't the same," she added.

Cole said to his wife, "It doesn't get any better than this, huh, Nicky?" "We're the two luckiest people ever," she responded.



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Jill Cole, older daughter of 1st Lieutenant, Clayton Cole, gives the screen an excited hug during a video link-up from her father in Iraq.



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Nicole Cole, in Hawaii, holds up 4 day old daughter, Emma, so her husband, 1st Lieutenant, Clayton Cole, stationed in Iraq, can see her on a video link-up. Jill, another daughter, bit her fingers with excitement.

Emma couldn't restrain herself and soon ran up to the screen to kiss her dad's face and touch him. He reached out to hug her, made silly hand motions and faces, and told her a story, asking her if she still listened to his prerecorded bedtime stories.

Emma told him a "knock-knock" joke, and practically did cartwheels to capture his attention. She cried when she had to say goodbye.

A hands-on dad, Cole asked about the baby's burping, her "poop" habits, and her fractured collarbone (a common occurrence during delivery). He even got to see Jill being breastfed -- "ALL RIGHT!"

Foley-Cole said she didn't feel like she had to bear her pregnancy without her husband because they had "good contact back and forth. I still get his feedback and he feels a part of it."