

Webcam Puts Marine In Iraq At Wife's Side After Birth In St. Pete

By [CARLOS MONCADA](#) | The Tampa Tribune

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ST. PETERSBURG - Lance Cpl. Greg Entrekin is serving on the front lines of Iraq, but he saw his newborn daughter for the first time at 11:15 a.m. today at St. Petersburg General Hospital.

Thanks to a satellite link provided by the nonprofit Freedom Calls Foundation, Entrekin was able to gaze into a laptop and see and hear his daughter, Aislyn, and wife, Erin, from half a world away.

"She's got a lot of hair," the 20-year-old Marine Corps reservist said of the sleeping baby cradled in her mother's arms.

"She looks just like you," said the smiling but weary mother, who delivered the 6 pound, 8 ounce girl about 17 hours earlier.

Several reporters surrounded Erin Entrekin in her hospital room to witness part of the 90-minute live communication, a first for the St. Petersburg hospital.

"It's amazing," the 21-year-old mother said shortly before the teleconference began. "I'm so glad he can see her at a day old instead of 3 months when he gets back."

The couple have been married since November. He grew up in Floral City; she grew up in St. Petersburg, attending Northeast High School.

At one point, she held up the 20-inch baby, eyes still closed, to the Webcam for a few moments, affording her husband a better look.

"I'd give anything in the world to hold her," said Entrekin, a driver who has been in Iraq since February. "She needs to wake up. I want to see her."

Through the Freedom Calls Foundation, troops in war zones can participate in births, weddings, graduations and other milestones that those in generations past were forced to miss.



Erin Entrekin shows her one-day old baby Aislyn to her husband, Lance Corporal Gregory Entrekin

The Morristown, N.J.-based foundation, run on private and corporate donations, provides about 2,000 video conferences a month, including about 250 birth conferences, said founder and Executive Director John Harlow.

Harlow said he started the foundation in 2004 after seeing a TV news story about a National Guard soldier who racked up a \$7,000 phone bill staying in touch with loved ones.

"They wouldn't give him a break," Harlow said.

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