



From Iraq to New Hampshire, a father greets his new son

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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PETERBOROUGH – Far away in Iraq, Army Col. Jim Close was able to see his 2-day-old son yesterday, thanks to an hour-long videoconference set up by an organization between his base and the hospital where the boy was born.

It had been eight months since Close had seen his wife, Kerry, and children Megan, 10, and Connor, 4. The latest arrival -- 9-pound, 7-ounce Ryan -- was born Wednesday at Monadnock Community Hospital. Close helped his family come up with the name yesterday.

Ryan slept through the whole thing.

Kerry Close said her husband "was happy to see us all and was excited to see that everyone's healthy and his kids are getting bigger. My daughter was holding Ryan."

Later, Megan played an Elton John tune on her saxophone for her dad and Connor showed off his toy light saber and some karate moves.

The visit was made possible by a group called Freedom Calls Foundation, which sets up the video conferences between troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and their loved ones back home. The foundation provides services to the soldiers for free. The foundation is supported by donations.

"The connection is just unbelievable, and it's more than you can really explain," Kerry Close said. "This is something that really helps the family members, providing a service."