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Distance Doesn't Stop Family from Sharing Special Moment

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A Madison family has gotten a very special treat this weekend. Marine Lance Corporal Steven Miranda is serving his country in Iraq with the 3rd Battalion, 25th Regiment. His wife, Anna, had a baby in Jackson Friday. And Saturday, the whole family got together.

Anna Miranda just had one new experience, giving birth to her first child, Riley Leann, on Friday. Now, here's another first for her.

"It's just weird, having her in the world, and seeing daddy here," she said.

Riley's dad was on the TV screen. Marine Lance Corporal Steven Miranda can see, hear, and talk to his family.

"She looks like she has my haircut, but it's hard to tell," said Lance Corporal Miranda.

But it's hard to believe he's halfway across the globe, in Iraq .

"I've been on pins and needles for nine months thinking about this," he said.

This special family gathering in this St. Dominic Hospital conference room is made possible by a public charity called Freedom Calls Foundation. St. Dominic has linked to the New York-based foundation through the Internet. And the foundation has a satellite link to the room in Iraq where this proud dad peers in on his family. The hospital says the toughest part on their end was accommodating the early arrival of little Riley.

"We weren't expecting her for another couple of weeks, so when we heard this yesterday, we put all hands on deck and made it happen for her," said Keith Buchanan from St. Dominic.

While Lance Corporal Miranda is working hard in Iraq, he's now getting a taste for the tough job ahead for his wife.

"He heard her cry on the phone this morning, so he knows she can scream," she stated.

But for this marine, even a cry heard across thousands of miles may be the most peaceful sound in the world.

"Words can never explain what I'm feeling right now," he expressed.

Lance Corporal Miranda says he heard about the Freedom Calls Foundation through another marine who used the free service. The new dad says he expects to be home for good in October.

