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Scottsdale Healthcare Shea nurse manager Sarah Dent looks on as Liz Aguirre (right) is waiting to give birth to her daughter, Gabriella, as she shares a teleconference with her husband, Spc. Mario Aguirre, who is in Iraq.



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Liz Aguirre (right) shares a video teleconference with her husband, Spc. Mario Aguirre, who is stationed in Iraq. Liz was waiting to give birth to daughter, Gabriella, at Scottsdale Healthcare Shea on Monday.

## Dad in Iraq witnesses daughter's birth in Valley

Video teleconference allows parents to share arrival of 2nd child

By Ofelia Madrid  
THE REPUBLIC | AZCENTRAL.COM

**SCOTTSDALE** — When Liz Aguirre gave birth to her second child at Scottsdale Healthcare Shea earlier this week, her husband, Spc. Mario Aguirre, who is on active duty in Iraq, was able to be in the delivery room through a video teleconference.

It was the first time the hospital had used wireless technology to connect two parents thousands of miles apart in a delivery room, hospital spokeswoman Felicia Thomas said.

The Shea campus has had free Wi-Fi available for about year, Thomas said. The Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn and Thompson Peak Parkway hospitals also offer the wireless Internet technology.

"Before, patients had to bring in their laptops and modem and connect to a phone line," Thomas said. Now, even if a

patient doesn't have a laptop, he is able to connect to the Internet through the television and a keyboard in each patient's room, she said.

Liz, 28, was admitted to Scottsdale Healthcare Shea about 1 a.m. Monday, or 11 a.m. Iraq time.

She logged on to the Yahoo! Messenger site using her IBM Think Pad laptop with a small white camera attached.

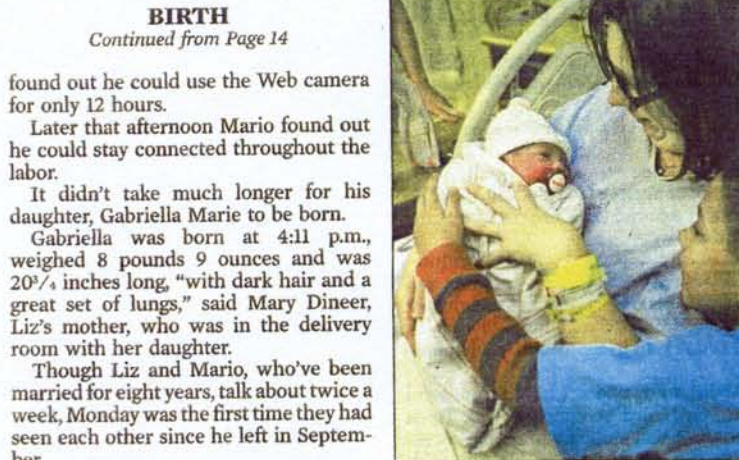
Mario, 29, was on the other side, wearing headphones and an Army T-shirt.

Liz and Mario, who live in Scottsdale, chatted throughout the morning. Mario would send her instant messages with smiley faces and jokes. Liz would laugh.

There was one concern.

Mario had reserved a 24-hour time slot at the Red Cross building at Joint Base Balad, a military installation about 70 miles north of Baghdad, where he could use an Internet Web camera to be teleconferenced into the delivery room.

But that morning, Mario, who is part of the 20-member 123rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment doing layout and design for the weekly *Expeditionary Times*,



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Liz Aguirre holds her daughter Gabriella while her son Jacob admires his new sister.

found out he could use the Web camera for only 12 hours.

Later that afternoon Mario found out he could stay connected throughout the labor.

It didn't take much longer for his daughter, Gabriella Marie to be born.

Gabriella was born at 4:11 p.m., weighed 8 pounds 9 ounces and was 20<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches long, "with dark hair and a great set of lungs," said Mary Dineer, Liz's mother, who was in the delivery room with her daughter.

Though Liz and Mario, who've been married for eight years, talk about twice a week, Monday was the first time they had seen each other since he left in September.

Mario is scheduled to return to Arizona for a two-week visit in May, and then for good in August or September. Gabriella joins 7-year-old brother Jacob.

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