

This is a printer friendly version of an article from GoUpstate.com

To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Jan 29, 2008

Spartanburg Marine soaks in firsthand view of State of the Union address

[By Jason Spencer](#)

Published: Tuesday, January 29, 2008 | Updated: 7:15 am

ARTICLE OPTIONS

[Discuss](#)

[Email](#)

[Print](#)

[digg this](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Newsvine](#)



Susan Walsh/ap | [Order a reprint](#)

Marine 1st Lt. Andrew Kinard, seated at the far right, watches the State of the Union address with first lady Laura Bush, bottom left, Jenna Bush and Lynne Cheney on Monday evening.

In a House divided by partisan views, Marine 1st Lt. Andrew Kinard sat solemnly among the leadership of this country Monday night and represented something that they all could stand behind.

Kinard, a 25-year-old Spartanburg native who lost both legs in Iraq more than a year ago, was a guest of President Bush at the Capitol. As Bush gave his final State of the Union address, Kinard sat in the balcony with first lady Laura Bush, sitting directly behind her daughter Jenna Bush.

Kinard, in his Marine uniform, could be seen at various times on national television, with the camera giving a clear shot of him when Bush said he wanted "to speak directly to our men and women on the front lines."

And even though Bush did not recognize Kinard by name during his speech, the president made several statements that easily could have been about him - particularly when he talked about the war in Iraq and honoring veterans.

"We will not rest until this enemy has been defeated," Bush said. "We must do the difficult work today, so that years from now people will look back and say that this generation rose to the moment, prevailed in a tough fight, and left behind a more hopeful region and a safer America."

Kinard, in a phone interview around midnight from Walter Reed Army Medical Center, said as he looked over the night's guest list, he realized each person embodied different concepts that the president would address. And he realized he represented wounded troops.

"I'm just very honored to have been invited to represent these men and women who have been injured in combat, in this conflict and in conflicts in the past," Kinard said. "But I'm also proud to be able to represent them. It's with that pride that I could sit there and sort of be this representation. I didn't feel like I was out of place in that regard - more of a sense of honor."

To Kinard's left was Tatu Msangi, a 35-year-old single mother from Tanzania. Msangi is enrolled in a program to prevent the spread of AIDS from mother to child in Africa.

To Kinard's right was Staff Sgt. Craig Charloux, who led a raid into Baloor, Iraq, in September 2007 - sustaining injuries from two grenade blasts, but completing the raid and killing eight al-Qaida operatives, according to the White House.

"I was just taking in the whole experience, and the substance of the speech," Kinard said. "I was particularly impressed with President Bush's conviction in his delivery. I paid a lot of attention to the energy in the room, looking at a large number of the leaders of this country in one single place - the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Supreme Court, the majority of Congress, and the president of the United States. And I just enjoyed sitting back and watching it."

During his wide-ranging speech, Bush expressed gratitude to U.S. troops several times and said 20,000 of them will return home soon.

The president asked Congress to expand access to child care for military families, create new government hiring preferences for military spouses and allow troops to transfer their unused

education benefits to their spouses or children.

Kinard said that was the one moment that stuck out in his mind, where everyone stood and applauded in unison.

After the speech, Kinard had a private conversation with the president and first lady.

Kinard's parents, Mary and Harry Kinard, traveled from Spartanburg to attend an afternoon reception at the White House, where they remained and watched the speech on television.

"They feel really privileged to be able to do something like that. And it's also a symbol - I feel - of what kind of sacrifice he's made," said Courtney Kinard, 23, Andrew's youngest sister. "Everything that he gets to do will ultimately lead to something more."

U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis, R-S.C., said he called Kinard last week to invite him to the State of the Union, to which Kinard politely said he was already going.

"A number of people on the floor know his story, and so there were a lot of people waving to Andrew. I think he was the most sought-after wave in the balcony," Inglis said.

"It's such a great recognition for Andrew. He really does embody the incredible service that the military's giving the country. And ... people like Andrew are serving twice, really. At first, service in Iraq. And the second service is pushing all the boundaries, all the barriers that exist in medical science."

Washington Bureau Correspondent Kirsten B. Mitchell contributed to this report.

Earlier Stories

- [Kinard gets top State of Union seat](#)
- [Church pays tribute to Kinard's 'incredible journey'](#)
- [Kinard gets hero's welcome in return to Spartanburg](#)
- [Marine injured in Iraq to have homecoming today](#)
- [Wounded Marine progressing by leaps and bounds](#)
- [Audio slideshow: An update on Andrew Kinard's recovery](#)

More News

- [Spartanburg Marine soaks in firsthand view of State of the Union address](#)
- [Wofford students learn ups and downs of pro wrestling](#)
- [Sanford pushing for three reforms in 30 days](#)
- [Woodruff names Lane new coach](#)
- [Vikings land in Duncan Park, work out as crews prepare historic stadium for season](#)

Top AP Headlines

- [Romney, McCain: Tight Race As Fla. Votes](#)
- [Congress Unlikely to Buy Bush Proposals](#)
- [Nevada Had Top Foreclosure Rate in 2007](#)

- [Fed May Cut Interest Rates Again](#)
- [Bus Crash on Icy Road in China Kills 25](#)

Odd and Offbeat

- [Cops: Drunk Took Mower to Store in Snow](#)
- [W.Va. Mayor Uses Magazine to Prove ID](#)
- [Burglar Steals Crown From Bishop's Car](#)
- [Vt. Lawmaker Does Double Duty As Comic](#)
- [Brazil Carnival Star Eyes Surgery Record](#)

Related Video

