



Country music artist Chely Wright sings to an audience at the Camp Victory Sports Oasis dining facility concert stage Feb. 28. The Wellsville, Kan., native is on her third tour to Iraq. Wright publicly made a promise that she will continue to entertain the troops as long as they are in Iraq.

Lighting up the night

Wright puts on show for Victory troops

Story, photo by

Spc. Laura M. Bigenho

28th Public Affairs Detachment

She may not have come to Iraq to gain more fans or fame, but country music artist Chely Wright left Camp Victory with more than a few new fans following her performance here Feb. 28.

Her third trip to Iraq was made possible by Stars for Stripes, a non-profit organization headed by Judy Seale and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

Energetic and personable, Wright charmed the audience with her music, jokes and sentiment for the troops and their service during a 90-minute concert.

"I am so honored and thrilled to be here with you guys and gals," Wright said. "I have a better time performing when I know my audience, so you're going to know a lot about me, because I'm a woman and I talk a lot."

After opening with her hit "Shut Up and Drive," Wright acknowledged not everyone in the audience knew who

she was.

"Who here doesn't like country music, but I'm the only show in town tonight, so you showed up?" she asked.

In addition to singing hits "Single White Female," "Jezebel" and "It Was," Wright tested unreleased songs on her audience and asked them to be the "Simon Cowell of Baghdad." Other highlights included a giveaway of signed guitars and a Soldier singing onstage with Wright.

Wright also sang "Bumper of My S.U.V." — a response to an altercation she had with an irate woman who noticed a Marine Corps bumper sticker on Wright's car.

She wrote it in June 2003 with no intention of recording, but changed her mind after playing it for the first time for troops in Afghanistan 16 months later.

"It has been good for my career, but more importantly, it has very special meaning to me," she said.

During the song, a tearful Wright paused to regain her composure as the audience applauded and encouraged

her to finish singing.

Sgt. Terry Farr, operations center force protection NCO, Kansas Army National Guard, said her performance was a genuine tribute to everyone serving in the military, past and present.

"To see her get emotional while singing 'Bumper of My S.U.V.' showed what a true patriot she is," he said.

Sgt. Michele Adkins, administrative NCO, Inspector General Section, III Corps, has been a fan for more than 10 years and respects Wright for waiting to release the song.

"(Wright) said she did not want it to be blasted across television, and I respect her on that," Adkins said. "There are a lot of people who are just money hungry, but Wright actually shows her heart on her sleeve."

Before leaving the stage to meet the audience, Wright made the troops a promise.

"I am committed to coming here as long as we have troops in Iraq," she said. "The folks back home pray every day for you, and I just want to thank so many who have asked me to come

Commentary

Motivation should not be held back

Sgt. 1st Class VeShannah Lovelace
MNC-I Public Affairs

What does it take to get you through the day? How often have you gotten out of bed, only to realize you woke up on the wrong side? Is every day a glorious one that makes you revel in another opportunity to wake up in beautiful Baghdad? If you're anything like me, it usually takes a little something extra to get you excited about the job you're doing for your country, the job that takes you thousands of miles away from family and friends for 365 days or more. When I walk up to the Sports Oasis for breakfast and hear the boisterous chants of the security duo who have become affectionately known as the Hooah Boys, I am instantly rejuvenated. Their motivation instantly overshadows whatever funk I walked up to the DFAC with.

I admit when I first arrived I thought their enthusiasm was a bit much that early in the morning. But as weeks passed by, they had drawn



Lovelace

me into their web of fervent epithets. After a month, I noticed I began to look forward to entering the Oasis and exchanging hooahs with the dynamic duo. So it saddens me to see how those two boisterous voices have been silenced.

As a recruiter, I know there are over 200 military occupational skills in the Army. Everyone who joins chooses the job they want and is afforded the opportunity to go to AIT to learn how to do that job. I also know that none of those jobs are entitled security guard. Soldiers don't join the Army in hopes of standing guard outside a dining facility or inside a palace checking IDs in a war-torn country. So the mere fact that the Hooah Boys can do that job with a smile on their faces and joy in their hearts is inspirational to me.

As a recruiter, I pride myself in honesty. When future Soldiers and their parents ask me if they will be forced to do a job other than the one

they choose I have to tell them yes. I have to tell them that some times missions will require Soldiers to perform duties or tasks outside of their prescribed job title. Then, I have to reinforce the fact that all those duties are mission essential and we could not be successful without them.

In 2004, I was asked to volunteer to deploy to Iraq with my unit as a provost marshal because public affairs Soldiers were not needed. I quickly let it be known that if I wanted to deploy as a provost marshal, I would have joined the Army as one. I was given a choice and no one rebuked me for the one I made, but I have often wondered how others would react in that situation if not given a choice. Would they come over here begrudgingly and do things to make their bad situation worse? Through their duty, the Hooah Boys have shown me the definition of selfless service.

I say hooah to the Hooah Boys! I say take the muzzle off! I say let's put them back out front and let's get Camp Victory excited again!

Chaplain's Corner

Looking for God in the wrong places

Chaplain Robert F. Land
MNC-I Chaplain's Office

Did you ever play the game Hot or Cold? The object was to find a certain object, hidden by one person.

The person would call out "Hot!" or "Cold!" depending on how close the searchers were to the hunted item.

While lacking the mental challenge of chess or the intrigue of Clue, it did pass the time for the how-did-we-live-

without-video games generation!

Let's play that game now. The sought-after object is God.

Some are searching for God in the big events of their lives. They seem oblivious to His presence during the routines of life, but when someone is sick, or there is a financial crisis, the search is on!

They approach Him like the Kentucky Derby. God must win, place or

show.

The crisis must turn out as they want it. If it does not, they angrily tear up the ticket. They give up the search, concluding that God is cruel, powerless or nonexistent. God really is there during such times, but they are looking in the wrong direction.

Cold!

Others hope to stumble over God

See PLACES, page 5

Correction

Last week's front-page story, "Proper weapons practices key to ending negligent discharge incidents in Iraq" stated an incident ended in death in Baquba. The incident referred to was at Camp Cropper. The Phantom News regrets the error.

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Paul Brinkley, deputy undersecretary of defense for business transformation, discusses a plan to revitalize Iraq's industrial base with assembled members of the media during a press conference at the Joint Visitors Bureau March 3.

Defense undersecretary discusses Iraq's economic future with press

Story, photo by
Spc. Stephanie Homan
MNC-I Public Affairs

The deputy undersecretary of defense for business transformation held a press conference at the Joint Visitor's Bureau at Camp Victory March 3.

Paul Brinkley, who spent a week traveling to different areas of Iraq with a group of international businessmen, talked about the second stage of a plan to help revitalize factories in Iraq.

Brinkley and his associates were the largest group of businessmen to travel to Iraq in the last nine months.

The task force was created to reopen Iraqi factories, drive demand to the able factories, and help re-employ the Iraqi people.

"I am here today with a group of American and international businessmen ... with an effort to revitalize both public and private industries," Brinkley said. "The efforts are to col-

laborate with Iraqi ministries, connect Iraq's economy with the international economy, and create opportunity and prosperity for all the Iraqi people."

Iraq's government will financially support itself through the implementation of the plan, he said.

The U.S. government is paying for the cost of bringing industry expertise to Iraq from the international business community, but the goal is to have Iraq itself invest in its own country to jumpstart its industry, Brinkley said.

Contracts with organizations worldwide are being created to give Iraqi businesses a chance to compete for them. The United States is trying to open the door for Iraqi companies.

"We have registered hundreds of Iraqi private companies who are competing for U.S. government contracts and who we are directing increasing amounts of U.S. government contracts to," Brinkley said. "We are offering connection to the outside international

economy as well."

Re-employing the Iraqi people and allowing them a better chance to provide for their families is the primary goal of this task force.

Morlan Warner-Harrell, chief of strategic communications and political affairs for the task force, said statistically that every American breadwinner supports about 4.2 dependents, while some people in Iraq support as many as 13.

"Honor is very important to these people," Warner-Harrell said. "The goal is to give them more opportunities to help themselves."

The Department of Defense is working to move this effort along quickly.

"We are connecting them to the global economy wherever we can with expertise and technical exchange, positioning them to be competitive in the long term, and to offer a bright economic future for the Iraqi people," Brinkley said.

Listening in



Photo by Sgt. Curt Cashour

Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, Multi-National Corps-Iraq commander, listens to a brief on security conditions at the Doura Market area in southern Baghdad Feb. 21. An increased presence of coalition and Iraqi forces has brought businesses back to the market, which was defunct two months ago.

Interpreter works to improve his country

Cpl. Jess Kent

MNC-I Public Affairs

Iraqi interpreters who work with coalition forces have different reasons for putting their lives on the line each day. Many do so because they have visions of freedom and they are willing to sacrifice for it.

Mohammad, an interpreter for a transition team, was in college studying to be an engineer when war escalated in Basra in 2003. Many students and teachers were killed, while others fled. Mohammad's goals changed in the face of violence.

He left college early with an ability to speak English, joined the new Iraqi Army and served as an intelligence officer. After losing family members in an explosion, he joined coalition forces and works as an interpreter in hopes of securing Iraqi freedom.

"In the past, the government took everything. I came from a Shia town and Saddam did not care about them. He cared about people in Tikrit. With the new security plan, people think the government starts to care about them," he said. "Now a lot has changed. We have streets we can drive on, new schools and new hospitals."

Despite positive differences, one aspect of life that has not changed is war. Before Saddam Hussein was removed from power, Iraqis faced many conflicts.

"Saddam made war all the time. In war with Iran, more than a million Iraqis died just from my town. After that, he went to Kuwait and a lot of people died," Mohammad said. "Then Shia people tried to kill him, so he killed a lot of innocent Iraqis."

While coalition forces help rebuild Iraq after Hussein's reign, Mohammad said the war continues because outsiders are funding an insurgency to stall progress.

"There are some jobs now that give better futures," he said. "But others try to kill Iraqis and American Soldiers. The Iraqi people should stay and make Iraq better."

With the recent troop surge, Mohammad said life can improve for Iraqis. Children play near the streets and sectarian violence has dropped significantly. Mohammad is grateful for the American and Iraqi families that sacrifice for any freedom.

"I want to thank the families that lose a son or daughter in Iraq and tell them we are sorry. And I'm sorry for the Iraqi people that get killed," he said.

Mohammad has had a few close calls himself. He remembers the day a Soldier was killed by an exploding mine. On another occasion, an American Soldier saved Mohammad's life when his convoy was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade.

The interpreter's life remains dependent on coalition forces as they fight Operation Iraqi Freedom. He has faith in them, because if they were to fail, Mohammad said he would not stand a chance.

"They have to do the mission — Iraqi freedom — because if they don't and they leave, we will get killed. Everybody in Iraq, it will be civil war, and women and kids, everybody will die," he said. "They have to do the mission or we will die."

As an interpreter, Mohammad's future is not clear. Right now, he lives from day to day and dreams of freedom for all Iraqis.

Flag program provides unique memento for deployed troops

Story, photo by

Spc. Beatrice Florescu-Vila Verde

MNC-I PAO

Everyone at Camp Victory has the opportunity to have a United States flag flown over the camp and folded according to military customs.

The Multi-National Corps-Iraq Commandant Cell can arrange for self-purchased flags to be briefly flown at Al Faw Palace, said Sgt. 1st Class Barry Toler, commandant, MNC-I Commandant Cell.

The flag is accompanied by a certificate attesting the date with signatures from Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola, MNC-I command sergeant major and Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, MNC-I commanding general.

Though the program was not initiated by III Corps, they have seen it grow in popularity.

"V Corps had this program and we picked it up from them," Toler said. "We had 164 requests in the first week since we started this program. In the second week, it surpassed 200 requests."

Flags can be purchased from post exchanges.

A form must be filled out with the name, rank and branch or place of em-



A member of the flag detail folds an American flag according to military custom as part of the flag program offered by Camp Victory's Commandant Cell.

ployment of the person requesting the flag be flown. On the same form, the requestor can specify the name of the person the flag is being flown for and a brief statement.

"I have had flags flown for my friends here in Iraq," said Spc. Julian Siler, a generator mechanic with III Corps Joint Fires and Effects Cell, who works on the detail. "What I like about my job is knowing I am helping Iraq and helping my home country."

The flag will be ready for pickup with the certificate at the Commandant

Cell in the palace the next day.

A message of thanks or gratitude for support can be placed on the certificate. The message cannot be too long.

"This detail is interesting because at times you get a chance to see people you may not normally see on a daily basis," said Staff Sgt. Rachael Schneider, a tank mechanic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, III Corps, who works on the flag detail.

She said she had flags flown for her family members and friends and they were happy to get them.

PLACES, from page 2

through some hidden knowledge finally exposed! This is behind such books as "The Da Vinci Code." Using the guise of a novel, the author takes historic works and figures and weaves an imaginative tale of conspiracy and duplicity that challenges the foundational truths of orthodox Christianity. Another is "The Bible Code." The author implies that God placed hidden messages in a code in the Hebrew Scriptures that waited until the dawn of the computer age to be discovered. Many believe these dubious truth claims, but can God be found in lies? I do not think so.

Cold!

Those who take the time see God in the world in which we live. They consider the delicate details of a flower, the oxygen-carbon dioxide relationship between man and the plant world, and the amazing animal and insect kingdoms. They look out and stand in awe of the vast universe in which we find ourselves. Considered all together, we see

order and design. These observations are the foundation of scientific inquiry. One cannot prove a theory in a world of chaos.

Warmer!

I am not a scientist, but is it reasonable that a world of such obvious design on both an atomic and universal level happened by chance, or by some big explosion? I have heard it likened to a blast in a bowl of alphabet soup resulting in the dictionary! Can you not see the hand of the Master Craftsman in the world in which we live? The Apostle Paul could see God in creation "For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made," according to Romans 1:20.

Warmer ... WARMER!

Would you like me to give you a clue? Here it is: Check out Matthew 11:25-30 and you will be on the right path to God!

HOT!

In the cards

Marine remembers heroes in own way

Story, photo by Cpl. Jess Kent

MNC-I Public Affairs

Service members usually learn about their enemies during briefings, but a Marine at Camp Victory has a different way of learning about his foes.

Col. Orpheus Garrison Jr., officer in charge of the joint operations center for Multi-National Corps-Iraq, collects card decks filled with faces of Iraq's Most Wanted.

He also collects hero cards and asks service members to sign them. This is because he feels that every Soldier, Sailor, Marine or Airman here is a hero, and signed cards are a good way to remember them.

"The first time I was in Iraq in 2005, I got people to sign their units and write whatever they wanted to on the cards. It was a way to express themselves, and I got to talk to them about where they're at and how they're contributing to the effort," he said.

Throughout five deployments to the Middle East, Garrison has collected more than 50 decks of signed cards. They bear signatures from heroes of differing circumstances, including civilians and service members from the United States, Australia, Great Britain, El Salvador, Afghanistan, Qatar and Iraq.

"They are all heroes, but some get into an everyday routine and forget they had a choice to come here or not," Garrison said. "Some write that they don't really want to be here and they want to go home. A lot of times they take a lot of thought and completely cover a card."

Regardless of what is written on the cards, Garrison enjoys opportunities to talk to service members.

Collecting signatures is an excuse to meet heroes.

"I think everybody here is pulling to do the best they can to try to make the outcome the way we want it," Garrison said.

One Soldier noted this on a card



Col. Orpheus Garrison Jr., officer in charge, Joint Operations Center OIC, Multi-National Corps-Iraq, shows cards and signatures he collected during a previous deployment to the International Zone. Collecting signatures on playing cards is Garrison's way to meet and remember troops.

bearing Al Duri, one of Iraq's Most Wanted.

The Soldier noted that his unit spent months looking for Al Duri during his first deployment. Most of the others listed on Iraqi Most Wanted cards have been brought to justice, including Saddam Hussein.

Card quotes include "Freedom has a taste the protected will never understand," and "Never Forget," followed by "God Bless America" and "Living the Dream." Others state "Defending those that defend America" and "Great times, history being made."

One of Garrison's favorite quotes is a well-known verse, "For evil to succeed, all that is needed is for good men to do nothing." Garrison believes this wholeheartedly, and it is another reason he believes service members here are heroes, especially those he works closely with.

"People in the Joint Operations Center spend long hours and work through a lot of problems," Garrison said. "They're doing the best they can for the command information center."

One aspect of working at the command center, Garrison said, is not getting outside the wire. When he encounters a visitor in the Al Faw

Palace rotunda wearing a red badge, he sees an opportunity to speak with a service member from another forward operating base.

"We're all stuck here on base, but some of these guys come from other FOBs, doing convoys, and they can tell you what it's like out there," he said.

Sometimes Garrison is lucky enough to meet a particular service member twice over the years. This was the case regarding Lt. Col. Robin Stuart, future operations intelligence chief, joint operations center, MNC-I, who met Garrison when he asked him to sign a card in Qatar in 2004. Now the two work together again.

"The card was the beginning of the work relationship, and I think we keep following each other around," Stuart said. "It doesn't really matter if we're Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines, we all have our own experiences and bring expertise to the table. The card was just a neat way to meet and remember people."

When he returns to the United States after 25 years of service, Garrison plans to resume his civilian career in property maintenance and management and continue his card collection, meeting more heroes along the way.

Announcements

Tax help at education center

The MNC-I legal assistance office has set up two computers at the education center to allow Soldiers to file tax returns. Anyone with questions can stop by the Legal Assistance Office, Bldg. 133, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Knights of Columbus meetings cancelled in March

The VBC Knights of Columbus Roundtable will not hold meetings in March while its leadership is on R&R leave. Meetings will resume in April on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month at 7 p.m. in Bldg. 24F.

Registration for runs open

The Desert Warrior Race, a 6.7-mile run, will be held April 7 at Camp Victory. The Indianapolis Mini Marathon-Baghdad Edition will be held May 5 here. Events include a 13.1-mile run and a 6-mile fun walk. Registration for both events can be found at vbcroadrunners.com.

Mayor's Cup

The 2007 Camp Victory Mayor's Cup, a 14-event, unit-level sports competition, begins in March. There is a mandatory coaches' meeting today at 6 p.m. in Area 51. For more details, call 822-5501.

Local SkillPort CBT Server

The Local SkillPort CBT Server has been made available to those interested in the IT field or those who want to know more about particular software products. Go to <http://training.iraq.centcom.mil/skillport>. For more information, contact Ed Tyler at 822-4871.

Soccer league starting

A six-on-six soccer league is forming at Camp Victory. A mandatroy coaches' meeting is March 14 at 5:30 p.m. at Victory Gym. For more information, contact Spc. Chris Christian at chris.christian@iraq.centcom.mil.

CIF closed

The Victory Base Complex Central Issue Facility will be closed for all but emergency issue March 12-14 for inventory.

Women's History Month observance

A Women's HHistory Month observance will be held Tuesday from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Al Faw Palace rotunda. MNC-I Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola will be the guest speaker. The event will be followed by a dinner in the ballroom.

Operating Hours

Coalition Cafe
Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner 5:30 - 8 p.m.
Midnight Dining 11 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Sports Oasis
Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner 5 - 9 p.m.

Education Center
Open 24 Hours

Camp Liberty Post Exchange
8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Fitness Center
Open 24 Hours

MNC-I STB Mailroom
9 a.m. - noon
5 - 7 p.m.

Golby Troop Medical Clinic
Sick Call
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

Dental Sick Call
Monday - Friday 7:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Saturday 9 - 10:30 a.m.

Mental Health Clinic
Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - noon

Post-Deployment Health Briefings
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 1 p.m.

Pharmacy
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon;
1 - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

Legal Assistance/Claims
Saturday - Thursday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Friday 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Personnel Service Support Centers
Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

ID Cards
Monday - Friday 6 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Worship Hours

Victory Chapel (Bldg. 31)
Sunday
7 a.m.....Collective Protestant
8:45 a.m.....Collective Protestant
10 a.m.....Catholic Confession
10:30 a.m.....Catholic Mass
noon.....Gospel Protestant
2 p.m.....Latter Day Saints
4 p.m.....Episcopal/Lutheran
6:30 p.m.....Contemporary Protestant

Saturday
11 a.m.....Seventh Day Adventist
8 p.m.....Catholic Mass

Mini Chapel (Bldg. 24F)
Sunday
9:30 a.m.....Breaking of Bread
3 p.m.....Church of Christ
7:30 p.m.....Latter Day Saints
8 p.m.....Knights of Columbus (1st & 3rd Sundays)

Monday-Friday
11:30 p.m.....Daily Mass

Friday
6:30 p.m.....Jewish Service

AFN Freedom Radio

Al Asad 107.3 Kirkush..... 107.3
Ali Base 107.3 Mosul 105.1
Ar Ramadi... 107.3 Q-West 93.3
Baghdad ... 107.3 Taji 107.3
Balad 107.3 Tal Afar..... 107.3
Fallujah..... 105.1 Taqqadum.. 107.3
Kirkuk..... 107.3 Tikrit..... 100.1

All stations are FM

Negligent discharge of weapons

During the 2006 calendar year, negligent discharges resulted in 43 coalition injuries and three fatalities. In the past month, there have been 10 such injuries. Leaders and service members must observe proper weapons handling and clearing procedures. Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, MNC-I commanding general, has mandated the prescribed safety measures, which should be posted throughout every section.

Area 51 Weekly Schedule

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Fight Night XBox 360 Tournament 8 p.m.	Pool Tournament 8 p.m.	Ping Pong Tournament 8 p.m.	Halo 2 Tournament 8 p.m.	Salsa Night 8 p.m.	Reggae Night 8 p.m.	DJ Big Will Smooth Sunday 8 p.m.

Do you have an announcement about an event of interest to the Camp Victory community? Contact Sgt. Jacob Boyer at jacob.boyer@iraq.centcom.mil with the information. Information for community announcements needs to be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event to allow for timely publication.



Petty Officer 1st Class Perla Garcia, a religious program assistant with the Multi-National Corps-Iraq chaplain's office, executes a block in the American Tae Kwon Do Association class at Victory Base Fitness Center.



Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Pittenger, a religious programs assistant with the Multi-National Corps-Iraq, leads the American Tae Kwon Do Association class in a series reverse punches.

Traditional art changes with the times

Story, photos by Spc. D.A. Dickinson
28th Public Affairs Detachment

Camp Victory residents have several options if they want to study martial arts. One popular choice is the traditional Korean martial art of tae kwon do.

Sgt. Maj. Franklin Zepp, the chaplain sergeant major for Multi-national Corps-Iraq and III Corps, teaches the American Tae Kwon Do Association classes Tuesdays and Saturdays at 5 p.m.

"I like it. It's motivating and a stress reliever" said Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Pittenger, a chaplain assistant with MNC-I. "It helps me stay fit."

While tae kwon do is traditionally associated with Korea, the ATA has updated its curriculum to reflect changes in the martial arts community.

"In the past, the main emphasis was on kicks. The name means way of the

hand and foot," said Zepp, who took up TKD as a child as another means of fitness. "Most TKD practitioners focus on kicks. However, ATA is starting to integrate more hand techniques, to include joint manipulation, pressure points and even some ground fighting."

Many traditional martial art styles faced a rude awakening with the growing popularity of no-holds barred fighting competitions.

"I think the mixed martial arts, like Ultimate Fighting Championship, and PRIDE fighting, is causing a big change in most martial arts," he added. "There is no best martial art. However, some people are better suited physically to a particular art. TKD fits my body."

While Zepp said that the practice of tae kwon do in the ATA is changing, he insisted that the traditions of the past will be preserved.

"TKD will maintain traditional type

forms and workouts," he said.

Zepp's passion for sharing the art has inspired his students.

"He's a strong leader who's determined to have his students succeed in whatever they're doing," said Pittenger, who was recently promoted to orange belt under Zepp's instruction. "He's very knowledgeable. I think he's the best karate instructor I've ever had. He's got a great sense of humor."

Though many practice TKD primarily for physical fitness, Pittenger cited psychological benefits as well.

"It's good to keep my mind off of the deployment. It gives me a focus," Pittenger said.

Tae Kwon Do provides opportunities for competition and for achieving personal goals as a practitioner's skills improve.

"I enjoy teaching it," Zepp said. "I enjoy staying in shape and tournament competition. It's just downright fun."