



## FACT SHEET

The USO lifts the spirits of America's troops and their families through morale-boosting programs, services and engaging entertainment. From South Korea to Germany, from Okinawa to Afghanistan, at training bases and airports across the country and for those serving on ships and squadrons deployed around the world, we will continue to adapt to the needs of our troops and their families and provide the most impactful support possible on behalf of the American people:

- Entertain through programs such as Entertainment Tours, USO2GO and Mobile Entertainment Gaming System;
- Support and comfort through USO centers and programs such as Operation USO Care Package, Sesame Street/USO Experience for Military Families and our *With You All the Way* partnership with The Trevor Romain Foundation; and
- Connect our troops with their families through programs such as United Through Reading's Military Program and Operation Phone Home®.

Our programs and initiatives support those who need us most and are made possible by the generosity of the American people, USO volunteers and staff and the support of our corporate partners.

### Deployed Troops

**USO CENTERS:** The USO provides programs, entertainment and services at more than 160 USO locations worldwide, including Afghanistan, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Germany, Italy, Japan, Guam, South Korea and the United States. While numbers are still being compiled, in 2011 USO Centers were visited approximately 8 million times by troops and their families. We provide a warm and comforting place where they can connect with family via Internet or telephone, play a video game, catch a movie, have a snack or just put their feet up and relax. The eight USO centers in Afghanistan collectively average more than 100,000 visits monthly. USO Bagram-East, the second Center at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, is expected to open early this year. With the end of operations in Iraq, the USO has closed the four USO centers (Baghdad, Balad, Balad PAX and Basra) which were visited more than 1.2 million times by our deployed service members and coalition forces since they opened in February 2008.

**MOBILE USO:** A USO center on wheels, Mobiles offer troops the same kind of great support that USO provides in an airport or installation USO. These large mobile centers travel to big events and military exercises to provide a place for men and women in uniform to relax during downtime, provide USO service to areas without a USO center, and support our Centers and the community in times of crisis. Each Mobile USO offers the troops laptops, large screen televisions, video game consoles, Wi-Fi access, casual seating, refrigerators, coffee makers and microwaves.

**ENTERTAINMENT TOURS:** The USO is probably best known for entertainment tours that bring celebrities and performers who graciously donate their time to lift the spirits of our troops and their families around the world. Through November 30, 2011, 135 celebrity entertainers traveled to 23 countries and 17 states, entertaining more than 270,000 troops and their families through 75 tours including 18 tours to combat zones. Entertainers who recently supported the USO include; New York Yankee Nick Swisher, country music stars Toby Keith and Montgomery Gentry; R&B singer/songwriter Babyface;

talk show host Jon Stewart; "CSI: NY" star Gary Sinise; NBA Hall of Famer Karl "The Mailman" Malone; comedian Carlos Mencia and NBA All Stars Derrick Rose and Al Horford, the legendary rock group The Doobie Brothers, as well as Minka Kelly, Jordin Sparks, Robert Horry, and Thomas "Nephew Tommy" Miles who accompanied General Martin Dempsey on his first visit to Southwest Asia as the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

**OPERATION USO CARE PACKAGE:** There is nothing like receiving a care package when deployed in a far-away place. And it's not just the benefit of the goodies that are in the USO care package that makes a difference. Even more significant is that volunteers back home committed their time and energy to put the packages together. Since 2003, the USO has distributed more than 2-million care packages to troops around the world – giving the troops the comforts of home and sending a strong message of support from the citizens they serve.

**PROS VS. GI JOE:** In partnership with the nonprofit organization Pro vs. GI Joe, deployed service members compete against professional athletes in intense video game competitions. Family and friends of the participating service member are asked to join the professional athletes stateside to meet the pros, watch their loved ones compete, and talk with them via webcam.

**USO2GO:** Designed to send much needed electronic gaming, sports/musical equipment, and personal care items to troops in remote locations, USO2GO was launched in 2008 to ensure that those in the field have some of the small comforts of home. USO2GO deployed bundles, weighing nearly one ton each, have been delivered to more than 500 remote forward operating bases in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, Egypt, Djibouti and Kuwait, with over 200 bundles delivered in 2011.

**MEGS:** Packaged in small, ruggedized containers, Mobile Entertainment Gaming System (MEGS) provides entertainment options to troops in remote locations. Within minutes of opening a MEGS box, troops are watching a movie or playing a video game. A tent can quickly transform into a movie theater or game room - allowing those in harm's way a chance to relax and recharge.

**USO HOLIDAY BOX:** The USO brings a touch of home to troops stationed overseas with the USO Holiday Box program. During the summer of 2011, 14 remote forward deployed locations received the patriotic themed decorations for all the summer holidays from Memorial Day to Labor Day. This winter the USO distributed 146 holiday boxes to forward deployed troops in remote areas of the world.

**CHRISTMAS CONVOY:** The USO helps the American public deliver the spirit of the holiday season with gifts delivered to troops stationed in some of the most remote outposts in Afghanistan. The USO continued this effort for the second year in 2011 with the help of many generous sponsors– bringing holiday boxes full of decorations, cell phones, calling cards and personal care packages for more than 4,000 troops stationed at 67 remote units in Afghanistan. CH-47 Chinook Helicopters were used to air-drop gifts to some bases where wheeled convoys could not reach.

## **Military Families**

**'JOINING FORCES':** On April 12, 2011, the USO joined First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden's *Joining Forces* initiative to strengthen military families nationwide. *Joining Forces* focuses on three key issues facing military families – education, employment and wellness.

**WITH YOU ALL THE WAY:** The *With You All the Way* program, in partnership with the Trevor Romain Foundation and the Trevor Romain Company, supports children from age six to 18 as they tackle the difficult issues unique to growing up in a military family. The program reaches military children through performances on or near military installations, schools,

DVDs, and kits distributed at USO Centers. Tour performances are led by Romain, who listens to what children are experiencing and helps them cope and express themselves in positive ways. The 2012 *With You All the Way* tour will take Trevor and his team to visit with military children stateside and overseas.

**SESAME STREET/USO EXPERIENCE:** The "Sesame Street/USO Experience for Military Families," which made its debut in July 2008 to help families deal with the challenges of deployments and homecomings, just wrapped up its fifth installment. Since the tour's inception three years ago, the tour has taken its message to more than 248,000 troops and military families, and performed 433 shows on 131 military bases in 33 states and eleven countries. Additionally, the tour has logged more than 106,500 miles and distributed more than 1.6 giveaways. In 2011 alone, the tour visited 52 military bases and lifted the spirits of more than 55,000 military families. In 2012, the USO will launch phase VI of the "Sesame Street/USO Experience for Military Families," which is expected to visit more than 100 stateside military installations.

**OPERATION PHONE HOME®:** Operation Phone Home® is one of the most frequently requested services from our forward deployed troops. At our centers located in combat zones, the USO provides a private phone network for troops to make free phone calls home, access to computers with free high speed internet bandwidth to connect, online, with friends and family, as well as free wireless Internet access for troops with their own computers. For those forward deployed troops who are serving in remote areas without access to our centers, the USO provides free international pre-paid calling cards. In 2011, the USO shipped phone cards to more than 250 locations around the globe. To date the USO has provided nearly 3 million free pre-paid international calling cards to troops stationed overseas.

**UNITED THROUGH READING'S MILITARY PROGRAM:** One of the most powerful things we can do is connect a deployed parent with their children back home. In 2006, the USO partnered with United Through Reading® to host its nationally recognized program at select USO centers worldwide. Whether troops are stationed at a forward operating base in Afghanistan or deploying overseas, they can visit their participating USO center to read a story aloud to their child. Mom or Dad's special storytime is recorded on camera, and the USO mails this priceless DVD and book home. Children can watch and listen to their parent at bedtime, naptime or anytime. Families complete the circle by sending back a touch of home – a photo of the child watching their deployed Mom or Dad reading the book. Since the program's inception, more than 200,000 recordings have been sent to military families across the world.

**USO PHOTO BOOK:** Through a partnership with RocketLife, LLC, the USO Photo Book program gives loved ones a chance to connect with family and friends deployed overseas by creating and sending a free personal soft-cover photo album sized perfectly to fit in a uniform cargo pocket. USO Photo Book supports and comforts our service men and women by helping them stay connected with their families and supporters back home. Hundreds of families will create these free photo books over the holiday season.

## Wounded Warriors and Their Families

The USO is in a unique position to establish a first-class network of support for our wounded, ill and injured troops, their families and caregivers, and the families of the fallen. Immediately following 9/11/2001 and the start of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, USO Centers around the world began to play a crucial role in the recovery and reintegration of our nation's healing heroes and their families. Through local community support, celebrity visits, field trips, concerts, dinners, and other impactful events, USO staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to ensure that all who have served and sacrificed know just how much America appreciates their extraordinary sacrifice. USO Centers near major military medical

facilities such as USO of Metropolitan Washington supporting the two major medical facilities in the nation's capital, USO Warrior Center supporting Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, and USO San Antonio supporting the Brooke Army Medical Center, focus on important programs and activities designed to combat against stress and despair. And around the globe, USO Centers help service members and their families reintegrate into society and their "new normal".

In fact, the USO began its support of the wounded warrior community in April 2003 by embedding a USO Center within the Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility (CASF) at Ramstein Air Base to provide a critical home away from home environment for wounded being staged there for transport to the United States following medical treatment at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC). Like the CASF USO, the USO Warrior Center built in 2008 at LRMC serves the outpatient wounded being treated there and also provides a home away from home environment for the wounded held at LRMC until they are cleared to return to their units in Afghanistan. Additionally, both USO Centers are proud to maintain the mission resiliency of hard working medical personnel.

The USO will ensure that Americans returning from combat zones have every possibility of leading fulfilling lives by meeting their needs directly or through best-in-class partnerships. The help needed -- from the point of injury on the battlefield to reentry into their local community -- includes physical health/recreation, mental health support, family strengthening, education, employment, and community reintegration.

America will continue to welcome home service members with visible and invisible wounds. In January we launched a series of Public Service Announcements entitled "Portraits" designed to raise awareness for the impact of invisible wounds of war--Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

**USO WARRIOR AND FAMILY CAREGIVERS CONFERENCES:** The second annual Caregivers Conference took place September 14-15 in the Fort Bragg area. These events provide husbands, wives, parents and other caregivers supporting wounded, ill or injured troops practical advice and valuable information about available resources. Sessions address such topics as post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, caregiver boundaries and intimacy, compassion fatigue, parenting, childhood grief and suicide prevention. The second day of the conference offers a session for wounded warriors specifically covering similar topics in an environment where they can feel comfortable sharing experiences. In 2012 the USO has committed to hosting two conferences.

**USO WARRIOR AND FAMILY CENTERS:** On June 27, 2011, the USO broke ground on the Warrior and Family Center at Fort Belvoir, Va, the first of two stateside centers to support wounded warriors and their families. In mid to late 2012, we will break ground on the second at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Md. These centers will offer a comprehensive array of specialized services and programs designed to meet the needs of recovering troops -- and their families -- in a supportive and home-like setting. The approximately 20,000 square-foot buildings will include, movie theaters, classrooms, sports cafés, healing gardens and more, all created expressly for wounded warriors and their families and caregivers.

**OPERATION ENDURING CARE:** The USO has undertaken a \$100 million capital fundraising campaign, Operation Enduring Care, to raise \$25 million to build the two centers, \$50 million to support ongoing programs and \$25 million to endow the two centers. One hundred percent of all cash and cash-equivalent contributions will go to the initiative that supports wounded warriors and their families and our families of the fallen.

**WARRIOR GAMES:** In 2011, the USO was a proud partner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Warrior Games held at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. This competition featured over 200 servicemen and women from all branches of military service who are wounded, injured or ill. Athletes competed in archery, cycling, basketball, shooting, swimming, track & field and volleyball. The USO will again be a partner in this momentous event from April 30 to May 5, 2012.

## Families of the Fallen

The USO is committed to supporting the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice through our partnerships with organizations such as TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) and Fisher House, as well as the support received at various centers throughout the United States. We have supported every dignified transfer at Dover Air Force Base since March 1991. USO centers are located in the heart of Dover Air Force Base as well as inside the Air Force Mortuary Affairs complex, enabling us to support bereaved families. Military personnel/honor guard teams from every branch supporting the dignified transfers of our fallen service members, and mortuary personnel. The USO also provides support at the Center for Families of the Fallen located near the mortuary. The Center is a place for families to gather in privacy, furnished with sitting areas, meditation and meeting rooms, a playroom and kitchen. The USO also supports the operations of the Fisher House for Families of the Fallen, where families can stay as they await the arrival of their loved ones. Additionally, the USO works 24/7 to coordinate among centers across the country to support and comfort families traveling to and from Dover, meeting the myriad needs of families who have just received tragic news about their loved ones only hours earlier. Fallen heroes can arrive at Dover at any time. No matter what the hour, the USO has been there, and will continue to be there, for each and every flight.

## Providing the resources for USO programs and services

**CHARITY NAVIGATOR:** The nation's largest evaluator of philanthropic organizations gives the USO its highest rating, "4-stars – Exceptional."

**USO WISHBOOK:** Available throughout the year for gift giving for weddings, birthdays and patriotic holidays, USO Wishbook provides Americans a unique way to give a gift that gives twice - once to a friend or family member and then again to our brave men and women in the military. Found at [USO.org](http://USO.org), USO Wishbook is a comprehensive catalog featuring virtual gifts that support troops and their families. Every gift purchased from USO Wishbook will help fund USO services and programs that support troops and their families.

To learn more about the USO and how we serve our troops and their families, visit us at:

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