



The USO is probably best known for entertainment tours that deploy celebrities around the world to lift the spirits of our troops and their families.

Since 1941, USO entertainment tours have been a constant source of comfort for our wartime and home front heroes. That's why, whether in times of war or peace, the USO and our celebrity volunteers readily extend America's thanks to our troops and their families for their service and sacrifice.

Just three months after the USO was founded in 1941, the legendary Bob Hope led a group of celebrities to perform for airmen stationed at March Field in California. Seven years later, USO Camp Shows delivered an amazing 428,521 performances, with more than 7,000 entertainers having traveled overseas. By the time of his retirement Hope had appeared in or hosted hundreds of USO performances, including 35 consecutive Christmas tours.

Among those early entertainers to set out on USO tours were Marilyn Monroe, Lou Rawls, Diahann Carol, John Wayne, Ginger Rogers, Al Jolson and Sammy Davis Jr., to name a few.

Today, the USO continues to support troops and their families around the globe by delivering goodness and cheer around the globe. Among those entertainers to participate in the first of many USO tours to the Middle East were Ben Affleck, Aerosmith, Bruce Willis, Toby Keith, Jennifer Lopez, Jessica Simpson, Coolio, Robin Williams, Drowning Pool and Mariah Carey, to name a few.

Since 2003, the USO has deployed 167 tours to 95 locations in Afghanistan, 129 locations in Iraq and 19 locations in Kuwait to support our men and women serving on the frontlines.

The USO deploys a wide range of celebrity entertainers from well-known sports figures and comedians to popular musicians, actors and models. Each of these entertainers serves as the USO's most visible volunteers.

The USO also deploys celebrity entertainers all over the world. Tour locations include, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Turkey, Japan, Guam, South Korea, Hawaii, U.S., Alaska, the United Kingdom, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Greenland, the Netherlands, Djibouti and Qatar, among other locations.

USO tours include anything from big-band performances and intimate acoustic shows to handshake tours, movie screenings and hospital visits. Such tours often take place in unique locations, like aircraft hangars, flatbed trucks, military tents, bunkers and forward operating bases. Planning USO tours is a detailed process worked in coordination with many individuals, including military personnel, talent representatives and USO staff.

The USO is a longtime entertainment partner with such organizations as the NFL, who we have a more than 46-year history with, as well as the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, the Miss Universe Organization and Sesame Workshop.

In 2011, the USO deployed 136 celebrity entertainers to 25 countries and 19 states, entertaining hundreds of thousands of service men and women and their families. In that same year, the USO produced more than 80 tours with more than 500 special entertainment events to include concerts,

autograph signings, hospital visits and movie screenings.

Entertainers who recently participated in morale boosting USO tours include Toby Keith, Carlos Mencia, Gary Sinise, Jon Stewart, Babyface, Train, NFL coaches Gary Kubiak, Jim Mora Jr., Jim Mora Sr., Ken Whisenhunt and other NFL greats, Karl Malone, NBA Players including Tyreke Evans and Derreck Rose, NASCAR drivers Joey Logano and Brad Keselowski, acclaimed thriller writers including Clive Cussler and Kathy Reichs, and the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders. Minka Kelly, Jordin Sparks, Robert Horry, and Thomas "Nephew Tommy" Miles accompanied General Martin Dempsey on his first USO holiday tour to the Middle East as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The USO continuously looks for innovative ways to entertain our troops and their families. In 2009, Comedy Central made USO history by producing and broadcasting one week of "The Colbert Report" overseas in front of troops stationed in Baghdad, Iraq. In 2010, the USO teamed up with VH1 Divas for the "Salute the Troops Concert" held at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. The concert featured Katy Perry, Nicki Minaj, Keri Hilson, Paramore and Sugarland and was hosted by Kathy Griffin.

Always adapting to meet the unique needs of today's military, the USO partnered with Sesame Workshop to better focus and target military families:

- *The Sesame Street/USO Experience for Military Families* made its debut in July 2008 to help military families deal with the challenges of deployment and homecomings, and is the longest-running tour in the USO's 71-year history.
- Since the tour's inception four 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 million giveaways.
- In 2011 alone, the tour performed 118 shows on 52 bases in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Korea, Turkey, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Spain and Japan for 55,455 service members and their families.
- Phase V of the tour unveiled a brand new Sesame Street character named "Katie" at a Joining Forces rally hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden in April 2011. Representative of so many military families today and designed exclusively for this tour, "Katie" is a military child who is relocating to a new base with her family.
- In 2012, the USO will launch Phase VI of the *Sesame Street/USO Experience for Military Families*, which hopes to deliver more than 280 shows and visit more than 75 stateside military bases.

To learn more about the USO or to find out about upcoming USO tours and events please visit our website **USO.org**