



The USO lifts the spirits of America's troops and their families through highly valued programs, morale-boosting 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 as we say "thank you" on behalf of the American people: Here are a few examples of the ways through which we accomplish our spirit lifting mission:

- **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, USO Warrior and Family Care 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®.

USO programs and initiatives support our men and women in uniform and their families with special emphasis on those who need us most: wounded, ill and injured troops and their families and caregivers, families of the fallen, deployed troops, and military families, many of whom have endured numerous deployments. All of our programs and services are made possible by the generosity of the American people, support of our corporate partners and the dedication of our volunteers and staff.

**TELL USO SURVEY:** In 2011, the USO conducted the third annual Tell USO Sound Off Survey, designed to collect ideas and opinions of those that we serve to help improve the programs and services we provide around the globe. The 2011 USO Survey was completed by a record number of participants and includes the following highlights:

- USO Value (aka "goodness") has increased in each of the two years since the initial survey was first conducted in 2009. This year, a vast majority of troops serving on active duty responded with the highest agreement to all five USO Value statements:
  - The USO helps to ease my separation from family and friends;
  - The USO boosts the morale of troops;
  - The USO lets me know that my country supports me;
  - The USO provides me with things that help me feel normal in a less than normal environment; and
  - The USO personnel have had a positive impact on me personally.
- USO Centers delivered an even better experience in 2011 than in previous years with ratings of Satisfaction and Value increasing. USO Centers still remain the largest single source of USO service to troops with increased use of services in 2011.
- Service men and women selected Warrior and Family Care for wounded, ill and injured troops and their families as the most important program for the USO to deliver in 2011.

## 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. In 2011, USO Centers were visited more than 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. Currently, USO centers in Afghanistan collectively average about 150,000 visits monthly. USO Bagram-East, the second Center at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, opened in early February along with a USO furnished Day Room at the Kandahar Warrior Recovery Center.

**USO VOLUNTEERS:** Volunteers are the heart of the USO. They deliver goodness to our troops and their families in our Centers and the community at locations around the world. In 2011, more than 24,000 individuals volunteered for the USO, giving more than 1,260,000 hours of their time to further our spirit lifting mission.

**ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITIES:** The USO is probably best known for entertainment tours that bring celebrities and performers who graciously donate their time and talents to visit our troops and families wherever they are serving. On February 13, 2012 at a White House ceremony, President Barack Obama recognized the USO with the prestigious 2011 National Medal of Arts for its longstanding entertainment tradition. Since January 2012, the USO has deployed 50 celebrity entertainers on 39 tours to 18 countries and 13 states, entertaining more than 135,200 troops and military families. Seven of these tours were to a combat zone. Entertainers who recently participated in morale boosting USO tours include NFL coaches Bill Cowher, Leslie Frazier, Ben Kotwica and Eric Mangini, as well as Kellie Pickler, Toby Keith making his 10<sup>th</sup> USO tour, Anna Kournikova, Gary Sinise, Sesame Street's Elmo and Rosita, Dennis Haysbert, Jon Stewart, and cast members from TV shows "Sons of Anarchy," "The Big Bang Theory" and "Southland," among others.

**OPERATION USO CARE PACKAGE:** There is nothing like receiving a care package when deployed in a faraway 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 the connection to volunteers back home that 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.

**PRO 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. The impact of Pro vs. GI Joe events is felt on both sides- families have the opportunity to connect and troops are provided a break from life in a war zone.

**MOBILE USO:** USO centers 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.

**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 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 600 remote forward operating bases in Afghanistan, Iraq, the

Philippines, Egypt, Djibouti and Kuwait. Last month the USO celebrated the shipment of our 1,000<sup>th</sup> USO2GO bundle.

**MEGS:** Packaged in small, ruggedized containers, our 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. This year the USO introduced a new MEGS Light -- a smaller, more compact version of the MEGS, ready for distribution to some of the most remote corners of the world.

**HOLIDAY BOX:** The USO brings a touch of home to troops stationed overseas with the Holiday Box program. Over the winter holidays, the USO distributed 146 holiday boxes to bring a touch of home to troops and help them ring in the new year. Last month, troops received boxes to celebrate the summer patriotic holidays from Memorial Day through Independence Day.

**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 to more than 4,000 troops stationed at 67 remote units in Afghanistan. CH-47 Chinook Helicopters were used to airlift gifts to some bases where wheeled convoys could not reach.

### **Military Families**

**DR. BIDEN BOOK EVENT:** On June 9, 2012, Dr. Jill Biden introduced her new children's book, "Don't Forget, God Bless Our Troops", to military families of the DC National Guard at a USO book reading. The book was inspired by Dr. Biden's granddaughter Natalie's personal experience with her father's deployment, and offers coping mechanisms, ideas on how to stay connected through lengthy deployments and lets military kids know that they are not alone. Dr. Biden will donate all author proceeds to the USO in support of the future education of children of military families. Hosted by USO of Metropolitan Washington and the DC National Guard Armory, the book reading event also included arts and crafts stations and snacks. Each child who attended received a signed copy of "Don't Forget, God Bless Our Troops."

**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. More and more expecting fathers are taking advantage of this free internet access to virtually accompany their wives in the delivery room for the birth of their children. In Southwest Asia alone, more than 28 million minutes were logged in free talk time for our troops in 2011. For those forward deployed troops who are serving in remote areas without access to our centers, the USO provides free international prepaid 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 prepaid international calling cards allowing troops stationed overseas to connect with their loved ones back home. In other places around the world, many USO Centers also offer free internet and free phone calls.

**WITH YOU ALL THE WAY:** The *With You All the Way* program, a partnership between the USO and 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 with deployment, and when a parent returns home "different," with the goal of teaching them positive ways to express themselves. The *With You All the Way* tour kicked off in January with presentations to hundreds of military children in Hawaii and Guam and over the course of the year will spread messages of support to children living on military installations in the Pacific and Europe.

**SESAME STREET/USO EXPERIENCE:** *The Sesame Street/USO Experience for Military Families* made its debut in July 2008 to help families deal with the challenges of deployment and homecomings. Since its inception, the tour has taken its message to approximately 295,000 troops and military families and performed 500 shows on 134 military installations in 33 states and 11 countries. Additionally, the tour has logged more than 108,700 miles and distributed more than 1.8 million giveaways. The tour kicked off its new eight-month adventure across the U.S. at Scott Air Force Base in early April. Its stateside return is complete with a colorful new tour bus, fresh new look and a brand new character named Katie – a military child experiencing the stresses of moving as her parents are transferred to a new duty station. The longest-running tour in USO history, it is expected to visit more than 65 military installations and perform more than 225 shows by November.

**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 story time 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. In 2011, more than 55,000 recordings were sent to military families across the world.

**PHOTO BOOK:** Through a partnership with RocketLife, LLC, the 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. The Photo Book program supports and comforts our service men and women by helping them stay connected with their families and supporters back home. Since the program began more than 8,000 photo books have been shipped to military families separated from their deployed loved ones. The connection these books offer is invaluable to both those who give and receive the book.

**'JOINING FORCES':** On April 12, 2011, the USO joined First Lady Michelle Obama's and Dr. Jill Biden's *Joining Forces* initiative to strengthen military families nationwide. A year later, the USO continues to support the initiative that focuses on three key issues facing military families – education, employment and wellness. In May, the USO and partner Full Circle Home were joined by First Lady Michelle Obama, Dr. Jill Biden and nearly 100 Congressional spouses for a Mother's Day service event at the Vice President's residence. This day of service entailed assembling hundreds of Mother's Day gift boxes filled with pampering products, gift cards, a charm bracelet, special Welcome Home seeds and - most important - a love note from their family member. These boxes were combined with others assembled at events throughout the nation and shipped in time to surprise the women on Mother's Day. The USO

and Full Circle Home delivered the gifts on behalf of deployed troops who requested to have the special woman in their life recognized.

In April, USO President Sloan Gibson joined judges Tom Brokaw, J.R. Martinez, San Antonio Mayor Julián Castro and Deanie Dempsey, wife of General Martin Dempsey, for the *Joining Forces* Community Challenge. Based on the judges' assessment of many candidate organizations, Mrs. Obama and Dr. Biden announced five winners and "The People's Choice Winner" of the *Joining Forces* Community Challenge, in an effort to recognize and celebrate the extraordinary efforts of citizens and organizations across the country that are working to improve the lives of military families.

### **USO Warrior and Family Care™ *Healing with Honor***

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, as well as the families of the fallen. As such, the USO has developed a comprehensive long-term program, USO Warrior and Family Care, to support the continuum of care that will give these men and women the best chance to heal with honor.

Immediately following 9/11/2001 and the start of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, like the USO has been doing since its inception in 1941, 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 high impact 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 uncertainty of what the future may hold.

In April 2003, the USO embedded a USO Center in the heart of the Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility (CASF) at Ramstein Air Base to provide a critical home away from home environment for wounded troops 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 that was built in 2008 at LRMC serves the outpatients 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. More than 20 events per month at the Warrior Center help these healing troops get a touch of home. Additionally, both USO Centers are proud to maintain the mission resiliency of hard working medical personnel.

USO's support of wounded, ill and injured troops, their families and caregivers continues today and encompasses many critical facets of life, including physical and recreational activities, behavioral health, family strengthening, education and employment transition, and community reintegration support. In order to best serve wounded, ill and injured troops, their families and caregivers, USO Warrior and Family Care partners with numerous best-in-class organizations.

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). "Portraits" is a documentary style PSA that features service members who proudly answered the call to duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, and now live with invisible wounds. These stories and more can be viewed at [www.USOInvisibleWounds.org](http://www.USOInvisibleWounds.org).

**USO CAREGIVERS CONFERENCES:** Caregivers Conferences provide husbands, wives, parents, hospital staff 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, caregiver boundaries and intimacy, compassion fatigue, parenting, childhood grief and caregiver resiliency. The most recent conference took place in May in San Antonio, Texas.

**USO WARRIOR AND FAMILY CENTERS:** Last month we put the last beam on the top of the Fort Belvoir Warrior and Family Center and recognized our donors at a Topping Out Ceremony on June 13, 2012. Fort Belvoir is the site of the first of two stateside centers to support our healing heroes and their families. Later this year, we will break ground on the second Warrior and Family Center at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, MD. These centers will offer a comprehensive array of specialized services and programs in a supportive and home-like setting. The approximately 20,000 square-foot buildings will include movie theaters, classrooms, sports lounges, business centers, healing gardens and more, all created expressly for wounded, ill or injured, troops their families and caregivers.

**USO/HIRE HEROES USA TRANSITION WORKSHOPS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITY DAYS:** The USO, in partnership with Hire Heroes USA, hosts transition workshops for wounded, ill and injured service members, their spouses, and caregivers. The workshops focus on resume writing, mock interviews with employers, professional work practices and translating prior military experience into a civilian career. As a follow up to the workshops the USO, in partnership with Hire Heroes USA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, host Career Opportunity Days for wounded, ill and injured troops, spouses and caregivers. These non-traditional career fair type events connect employers with participants based on interest and background. Employers conduct practice interviews and provide interviewing skills and feedback. Career Opportunity Days are limited to 10-15 employers and 40-60 wounded, ill and injured transitioning troops and veterans, as well as their spouses and caregivers to ensure the size and magnitude of these events provides an environment conducive to one-on-one interaction and networking. In 2011, six Career Opportunity Days were held with nearly 300 attendees. This year, the USO will host 22 workshops and 14 Career Opportunity Days. Of the workshops and Career Opportunity Days already held this year we have seen five confirmed hires. In June we will host our first Career Opportunity day in the Fort Bragg, North Carolina area. Of those that have participated in the USO/Hire Heroes USA transition workshops since the program began in 2011, 64% of those that have responded to outreach that have transitioned to the civilian sector were either employed, interning or in school at that time.

**USO/ASPENPOINTE PEER NAVIGATOR PROGRAM:** The USO works with AspenPointe, one of the largest nonprofits serving individuals and families with behavioral health issues, substance abuse, employment, career development, education, housing, jail diversion/reintegration, telephonic wellness and provider network services. The AspenPointe Peer Navigator Program seeks to serve all wounded, ill and injured troops who desire a smooth transition to civilian life. Through a peer support system with veteran mentors with similar experiences, the program works to help the integration process be less stressful and much smoother- providing that much needed “concierge” type service to these men and women when they are doing their best to navigate the winding road of transition. The USO works to identify healing heroes and assist them and their families connecting them with AspenPointe and community resources.

**WARRIOR GAMES:** In May, the USO proudly supported the 3rd annual Warrior Games held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. More than 200 wounded, ill and injured servicemen and women from all branches of military service competed in Olympic-style events such as archery, cycling, wheelchair basketball, shooting, swimming, track & field and seated volleyball. The USO Mobile and Rocky Mountain USO volunteers were also on-hand throughout the week providing support to the athletes and their families.



**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 the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) and Fisher House, as well as the support received at various USO 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. The USO works 24/7 to coordinate among USO 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.**"

**OPERATION ENDURING CARE:** The USO launched Operation Enduring Care, a major fundraising effort, to support America's healing heroes and their families and our families of the fallen. This campaign is the USO's largest commitment in its history and will deliver the resources needed to support our healing heroes, their families and caregivers through their recovery process. The funds will be used to build two new, innovative Warrior and Family Centers, deliver vital programs and ensure that these facilities continue providing the critical support that our healing heroes, their families and caregivers need.

**USO WISHBOOK:** Available throughout the year for gift giving for weddings, birthdays, Mother's and Father's Day and patriotic holidays, USO Wishbook provides Americans a unique away 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 date, more than 16,000 gifts have been purchased, including two \$5,000 Build a Bike for a Wounded Warrior gifts. The most popular gifts are "A Phone Call Home", "Comfort Food Package" and "Bedtime Stories."

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

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