



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 17, 2012

**CONTACT:**

Oname Thompson, (703) 908-6471

[othompson@uso.org](mailto:othompson@uso.org)

## **Renowned Cartoonists to Draw Crowds As They ‘Trick or Treat’ Troops and Their Families with Entertainment on USO Tour to Europe**

*USO Veteran Entertainers Ray Alma, Paul Combs, Bruce Higdon, Mason Mastroianni, Ed Steckley and Tom Stiglich Prep for Halloween Visit to Germany, Turkey and Kosovo*

**WHAT:** USO tour featuring six members of the **National Cartoonists Society (NCS)**

**WHO:** **Ray Alma** of *MAD Magazine*  
**Paul Combs**, *Fire Engineering Magazine*  
**Bruce Higdon** of “Punderstatements”  
**Mason Mastroianni** of “B.C.”  
**Ed Steckley** of *MAD Magazine*  
**Tom Stiglich**, Editorial Cartoonist, “Uncle Joe” comic

**WHEN:** October 21- 29, 2012

**WHERE:** Germany, Turkey and Kosovo

**WHY:** Renowned cartoonists **Ray Alma, Paul Combs, Bruce Higdon, Mason Mastroianni, Ed Steckley** and **Tom Stiglich** prep for a [USO/Armed Forces Entertainment](#) tour to Germany, Turkey and Kosovo October 21-29. Just in time for Halloween, the group will visit, uplift and treat scores of troops and their families with fun filled entertainment. The USO veteran entertainers will also tour multiple work sites, pose for photos and spend upwards of 30+ hours drawing personalized cartoons and caricatures for service men and women, and their families to take home and enjoy.

A follow up from last month’s Cartoonists Tour, which took place in the Middle East and made history by providing the last stint of USO entertainment for the USS Enterprise prior to its decommissioning later this year, this tour is expected to hit four bases in just eight days. The trip marks the third USO tour for Higdon and Steckley, and the second for Alma, Combs, Mastroianni and Stiglich, who have collectively traveled to Kuwait, Iraq, Germany and Qatar. Among the bases this tour will visit are Ramstein Air Base, Izmir Air Base, Camp Bondsteel and Camp Film City.

The NCS traces its association with the USO to World War II, when professional cartoonists made repeated trips overseas to spend time with troops. Whether visiting military hospitals,

entertaining troops with chalk talks, or sharing words of encouragement, roughly one hundred cartoonists and caricaturists have participated in military-related USO tours since 2005.

Within the past four years, the USO sponsored more than twenty cartoonists to travel overseas and visit troops. Among those who recently volunteered with the USO are Tom Richmond, Jeff Keane, Jeff Bacon, Dave Coverly, Rick Kirkman and Sam Viviano, among many others.

## QUOTES:

*Attributed to Ray Alma:*

"I've been appreciative of the military ever since I was a little boy playing with my G.I. Joes. Now I have the honor of meeting these real-life "Real American Heroes" and I can't be happier. Being able to go on these USO trips over the last couple of years and being able to draw for our service men and women has been a dream come to true for me."

*Attributed to Paul Combs:*

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others" - Gandhi.' As I embrace these words, let me say that it is an honor and a privilege to serve our courageous warriors as an emissary for the USO and National Cartoonists Society. I sincerely thank you for your service, sacrifice, and inspiration!"

*Attributed to Bruce Higdon:*

"I am always excited and honored to be a part of the USO's tremendous effort to lift the spirit of America's troops and their families. To be surrounded by our nation's heroes, and, hopefully, bring smiles to their faces, while thanking them for the service to our nation and its freedoms is a priceless experience that cannot be described in words."

*Attributed to Mason Mastroianni:*

"One of the most rewarding parts of being a cartoonist has been the ongoing opportunity to spend time with some of the most inspiring young men and women I've ever had the pleasure of meeting."

*Attributed to Ed Steckley:*

"I'm extremely honored and humbled to be included in this upcoming USO tour of Kosovo, Germany and Turkey. It's always a thrill to work with a group like this, and to show our appreciation for our servicemen and women around the world."

*Attributed to Tom Stiglich:*

"I'm honored to spend time with an amazing group of brave men and women who give so unselfishly of themselves... Oh, and Ed Steckley has a large head."

## NOTE:

Give a gift of the holidays to our troops and military families stationed far away, and help them feel a little closer to home year round through USO Holiday Boxes at <http://www.uso.org/uso-holiday-boxes/>. For additional ways to help show your support visit <http://www.uso.org/act-now.aspx>.

## About the USO

*The USO (United Service Organizations) lifts the spirits of America's troops and their families millions of times each year at hundreds of places worldwide. We provide a touch of home through centers at airports and military bases in the U.S.*

*and abroad, top quality entertainment and innovative programs and services. We also provide critical support to those who need us most, including forward-deployed troops, military families, wounded warriors and their families and the families of the fallen.*

*The USO is a private, nonprofit organization, not a government agency. All of our programs and services are made possible by the American people, support of our corporate partners and the dedication of our volunteers and staff. In addition to individual donors and corporate sponsors, the USO is supported by President's Circle Partners: American Airlines, AT&T, Clear Channel, The Coca-Cola Company, jcpenny, Kangaroo Express, Kroger, Lowe's, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Procter & Gamble, and TriWest Healthcare Alliance and Worldwide Strategic Partners: BAE Systems, The Boeing Company, Lockheed Martin, Microsoft Corporation and TKS Telepost Kabel-Service Kaiserslautern GmbH & Co. KG. We are also supported through the United Way and Combined Federal Campaign (CFC-11381). To join us in this patriotic mission, and to learn more about the USO, please visit [uso.org](http://uso.org).*

**# # #**