



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 11, 2012

CONTACT:

Oname Thompson, 703-980-6471

othompson@uso.org

General Martin Dempsey Enlists Support from Diverse Group of Stars to Travel on USO Holiday Tour

USO Tour Veteran Kellie Pickler, Washington Capitals Forward Matt Hendricks, Nationals Pitchers Ross Detwiler and Craig Stammen, and Comedian Ilza Shlesinger Unite For 7-Day Holiday Tour

Twitter Pitch: @Martin_Dempsey to kick off @the_USO holiday tour w/ @KelliePickler, @NHLPA member Matt Hendricks, @Nationals @CStammen35, @NationalDet and @Iliza

WHAT: USO Holiday Tour Led By **18th Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey**

WHO: Washington Capitals forward **Matt Hendricks**
Washington Nationals pitcher **Ross Detwiler**
Washington Nationals pitcher **Craig Stammen**
Critically-acclaimed country music singer **Kellie Pickler**
Comedian/host of CBS' "Excused" **Iliza Shlesinger**

WHEN: December 2012

WHERE: Various locations
Note. For security reasons, the specific countries and dates cannot be released in advance.

WHY: Washington Capitals forward **Matt Hendricks** to team up with Washington Nationals pitchers **Ross Detwiler** and **Craig Stammen**, critically-acclaimed country music singer **Kellie Pickler** as well as comedian/CBS "Excused" host **Iliza Shlesinger** on 2012 USO holiday tour led by **the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey**. Continuing a time honored tradition of taking celebrity sports figures and entertainers overseas to visit troops during one of the toughest times of year – the holidays, General Dempsey will lead the group on an seven-day, four-country tour to more than six military venues.

The USO has worked with the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff since 2000. Last December, General Dempsey led his first annual holiday tour as Chairman, delivering fun and cheer to more than 7,100 servicemen and women stationed in five countries. Capping off that tour, the group, along with President Barack Obama and other national leaders, attended a flag ceremony at Andrews Air Force Base that

signified the official end of the eight-year war in Iraq.

Gearing up to bring a touch of home to troops abroad are NHL'er Hendricks, who wrapped up his second season with the Washington Capitals, and Major League Baseball players Detwiler and Stammen, who recently concluded their 2012 season with the Nationals, thriving in the starting rotation and the bullpen, respectively. Adding to the list of do-gooders is USO tour veteran Pickler, who released her third studio album "100 Proof" in early 2012 that was later named *Rolling Stone's* top country record of the year and who recently named [USO Warrior and Family Care](#) as the benefactor of her 2012 Laramie Langhorn, scheduled to be auctioned off by Ram in mid-January; and comedian Iliza Shlesinger, who hosts the CBS syndicated comedy dating show "Excused."

This trip will mark the first USO tour for Hendricks, Detwiler, Stammen and Shlesinger, and the sixth for Pickler, who traveled to Kuwait and Afghanistan in May 2012 as well as participated in her first USO holiday tour led by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen in 2008.

QUOTES:

Attributed to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey:

"This trip is incredibly special to me for two reasons. First and foremost, the holidays are always the toughest time of the year on our nation's troops – a time when they are really missing their family and friends and could really use America's support, so a care package from home means a lot to them. The second reason this tour is important, is my fondness of the USO. As a young lieutenant back in 1974, who had just arrived in Germany and was lost, I visited a USO center and spoke with a nice lady who happily helped me. I will never forget that day and I look forward to taking the tour with me again this year."

Attributed to Matt Hendricks:

"I am extremely humbled by the invite to join General Dempsey and the USO on this amazing holiday tour. It is a privilege to represent my fellow NHL players, as we say thanks to the men and women in uniform who sacrifice so much in defense of our freedom. I can't express enough how excited I am for this opportunity, and how much I appreciate everything that General Dempsey and the USO does for our service members."

Attributed to Ross Detwiler:

"I'm honored to join General Dempsey on his USO holiday tour to pay tribute to the brave men and women who devote their lives to protecting our country. I feel privileged to be able to participate in this tour, not just as a professional athlete, but as an American citizen. I look forward to personally thanking these service members who fight for our freedom every day."

Attributed to Craig Stammen:

"This USO holiday tour is a once in a lifetime opportunity and I'm excited to give back to the troops who have sacrificed so much for our freedom. I look forward to joining General Dempsey in bringing some holiday cheer to our servicemen and women, who

are so far from friends and family. Honoring the military is near and dear to our hearts at the Nationals, and participating in this tour is just one more way that I can show my gratitude for their service.”

Attributed to Kellie Pickler:

"I love our nation's troops and the USO. I stand by everything they do and all the wonderful things they represent. I am truly honored to have been asked to accompany General Dempsey on his USO holiday tour and can't wait until the tour kicks off, so I can go over and meet more great servicemen and women."

Attributed to Iliza Shlesinger:

“When I think about what the soldiers do and what I do- it's so similar. They risk their lives everyday to ensure our freedom and I work for 2 hours a week telling weiner jokes. Ok, so we're nothing alike. Makes it that much easier to respect what they do so wholeheartedly.”

NOTE: When getting into the holiday spirit this season, remember our deployed servicemen and women, wounded warriors and military families. Visit usowishbook.org and recognize a special occasion while directly benefiting troops and their families.

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.

###