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Universal Pictures and the USO Salute America's Service Heroes, and Create Red Carpet Moments at "Unbroken" Premiere in Hollywood

Film strikes a chord with military non-profit, which shares a personal story of perseverance, resilience and military service

ARLINGTON, VA. (Dec. 17, 2014) – In homage to the life and legacy of American hero and former Olympian Louis "Louie" Zamperini, and all of those who have served our nation, Universal Pictures partnered with the USO and invited five local troops to attend Monday night's "Unbroken" premiere at The Dolby Theater in Hollywood, CA. The service heroes represented each branch of the Armed Forces and were honored with an opportunity to walk the red carpet, screen the epic drama and attend the film's star-studded after party. Four of the five of the service members are also local volunteers at the Bob Hope Hollywood USO center at LAX – the center's ONLY military volunteers. Among Universal's special guests were **Captain Alvin Tat** of the U.S. Air Force, **Staff Sergeant Blake E. Sistrunk** of the U.S. Army, **Petty Officer 3rd Class Lisa Rogers** of the U.S. Coast Guard, **Sergeant Frank Velazquez** of the U.S. Marine Corps and **Petty Officer 1st Class Allan Ferraris** of the U.S. Navy. ***USO photo and video link below***

Last month, in celebration of the one-year anniversary of the USO's *Every Moment Counts* campaign, Universal pledged its support of the national initiative and vowed to help create, share and support #USOmoments that matter for our nation's troops. In a show of its commitment, Universal generously co-branded the "Unbroken" red carpet with the USO free of charge. Among those who took time out to create a special moment for the troops was actor **Brad Pitt**, who shook their hands and expressed his thanks.

Academy Award® winner Angelina Jolie directs and produces "Unbroken," an epic drama that follows the incredible life of Olympian and war hero, Army Air Corps bombardier Louis "Louie" Zamperini, who survived in a raft for 47 days after a near-fatal plane crash during World War II—only to be caught by the Japanese navy and sent to a series of prisoner-of-war camps. The film opens in theaters nationwide on Christmas Day.

"We are so honored to have been joined by members of the USO for the premiere of 'Unbroken,'" said Doug Neil, Universal's executive vice president of digital marketing. "Louie was an American hero whose life was driven by honor and patriotism, and the participation of his fellow troops in Monday night's celebration means so much to all of us who have been touched by his extraordinary life."

Universal's "Unbroken" strikes a chord with the USO, who found a personal connection with the new film. The USO recently sat down with Brigadier General (ret.) and Executive Vice President for USO Operations, Programs & Entertainment John I. Pray, Jr., who shared his father's experience as a POW in Japan during World War II. Captured while defending a battalion in the Philippines in 1942, the late Colonel John I. Pray, Sr. endured three and a half difficult years in a prison camp before reuniting with his wife in 1945. Connecting through letters and surviving off the bonds of his fellow brothers in arms, Pray, Sr. lived a life of service and went on to retire from the U.S. Army many years later.

"Universal's enthusiastic support for our troops and the USO has been absolutely incredible," said Pray. "It is an honor for us to be a part of such a powerful film like 'Unbroken.' While it is a story about the past -- what our servicemen and women did to protect our country during WWII -- it allows audiences to draw parallels to what generations of these amazing men and women have continued to do to defend this great nation. And while the circumstances have been different, it is that same unshakeable belief in our country that drives our servicemen and women, and their families today."

Over the days and weeks prior to the film's release, Universal and the USO urge the general public to join them in honoring WWII veteran and POW survivor Louie Zamperini by sharing their own "I Am Unbroken" story on Facebook using the #IAmUnbroken hashtag. For more information about the *Every Moment Counts* campaign, visit USOMoments.org or join the conversation on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) using #USOMoments. **To obtain red carpet USO photos from the premiere visit <http://bit.ly/1z5IVt4>.**

The Bob Hope USO provides USO services and programming to members of the military and their families from throughout Southern California. They operate four airport centers at LAX, Ontario International Airport, Palm Springs International Airport and John Wayne Airport in Orange County, as well as provide USO programming and outreach at military installations throughout the region. The Bob Hope Hollywood USO at LAX supports more than 70,000 troops and military families annually, and boasts 230 USO volunteers, to include Universal Picture's special guests Captain Alvin Tat, Petty Officer 3rd Class Lisa Rogers, Sergeant Frank Velazquez and Petty Officer 1st Class Allan Ferraris. **To learn more or to volunteer visit www.BobHopeUSO.org.**

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About the USO

The USO 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, troops in transition and families of the fallen. The USO is a private, non-profit organization, not a government agency. 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, BNSF Railway, Clark Construction Group, LLC, The Coca-Cola Company, Grand Canyon University, JCPenney, Jeep, Johnson & Johnson, Kroger, Northrop Grumman Corporation and TriWest Healthcare Alliance and Worldwide Strategic Partners: BAE Systems, BIC, The Boeing Company, ConAgra Foods, FedEx, Harris Teeter, Lockheed Martin, Microsoft Corporation, Procter & Gamble, TKS Telepost Kabel-Service Kaiserslautern GmbH & Co. KG and Wawa Inc. We are also supported through the United Way and Combined Federal Campaign (CFC-11381). To join us in this important mission, and to learn more about the USO, please visit uso.org.