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General Martin Dempsey Brings USO Veteran Entertainers Kellie Pickler and Rob Riggle On His Fourth and Final USO Holiday Tour Abroad

Also joining the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as his special guests are actress Dianna Agron, Washington Nationals pitcher Doug Fister, actress Meghan Markle and eight-time Pro Bowler Brian Urlacher

ARLINGTON, VA. (Dec. 8, 2014) – USO veteran entertainers **Kellie Pickle** and **Rob Riggle** join **General Martin Dempsey** on his fourth and final annual USO holiday tour as the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Also accompanying the Chairman as his special, celebrity guests are star of the Fox musical drama “Glee” **Dianna Agron**, Washington Nationals pitcher **Doug Fister**, star of the USA Network legal drama “Suits” **Meghan Markle** and eight-time Pro Bowler/former Chicago Bears linebacker **Brian Urlacher**. Continuing a long-standing USO holiday tradition, General Dempsey and his group of familiar faces are actively entrenched in the tour’s second phase. *****USO photo link below*****

DETAILS:

- Much like his past USO trips, General Dempsey’s holiday tour is designed to deliver a much-needed break to troops, by giving them an opportunity to talk with and meet some of their favorite stars.
- Three days into the Chairman’s moment-filled USO holiday tour, the group has visited three military bases and one ship at sea, as well as created precious holiday moments for more than 1,400 airmen, sailors, Coast Guardsmen and soldiers, and their families. Among the locations visited so far are Andrews Air Force Base (Maryland), Naval Station Rota (Spain), the USS Ross and U.S. Army Garrison Vicenza (Italy).
- This tour is part of an ongoing USO tradition of partnering with senior leaders and working with celebrity entertainers to bring a touch of home to troops stationed abroad. The USO has worked with the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff since 2000.
- General Dempsey led his first USO tour in December 2011. To date, the Chairman has led four USO tours to eight different countries and lifted the spirits of 22,158 troops. He has also enlisted the support of 22 USO tour veteran, to include Jordin Sparks, Minka Kelly, Thomas “Nephew Tommy” Miles, Matt Hendricks, Matt Light, Ross Detwiler, Craig Stammen, Adam LaRoche, and Jep and Willie Robertson. Among the countries he has visited with the USO are Afghanistan, Bahrain, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan and Saudi Arabia.
- This trip marks the fourth and final USO tour for General Dempsey; the eighth for Pickler, who traveled with General Dempsey in 2012 and spent Christmas with troops in Afghanistan last year;

the second for Riggle, who traveled to Kuwait and Iraq in 2007 and entertained more than 3,400 troops; and the first tour for Agron, Fister, Markle and Urlacher.

- **Dianna Agron** is a true renaissance artist, effortlessly navigating between film and television as easily as she does between singing, dancing, acting and directing. Dianna's break through role was playing the beloved "Quinn Fabray" on the hit series "Glee." She enchanted audiences in her four years on the show and also in the feature film "Glee: The 3D Concert Movie." Agron will return as a special guest star in several episodes this season. Most recently Dianna was seen opposite Robert DeNiro and Michelle Pfeiffer in the feature film "The Family," directed by Luc Besson. In 2011, Dianna appeared in the film "I Am Number Four," directed by DJ Caruso and also in "The Romantics." 2014 has been a prolific year for Agron, completing production on multiple features including the romantic comedy "Tumbledown" opposite Jason Sudeikis and Rebecca Hall, "Bare" directed by Mark Polish opposite Mark Polish, Andy Garcia and Justin Bartha, "Zipper" opposite Patrick Wilson, and the independent ensemble "Conspiracy on Jekyll Island."
- Born in California, **Doug Fister** made his highly-anticipated Washington Nationals debut in May 2014 and went on to have a great first season in D.C. With six years in the majors, the 6-foot-8 right-handed pitcher is 60-56 with a 3.34 ERA in 155 games. Known for his work ethic and consistency, Fister has logged at least 160 innings in five straight seasons and averages just 18.5 seconds between pitches – making him the quickest worker in the National League. Fister was acquired by the Nationals in a four-player trade with the Detroit Tigers in Dec. 2013. He has also previously played for the Seattle Mariners.
- **Meghan Markle** stars as 'Rachel Zane' in USA's provocative drama, "SUITS," which returns for the second half of season four in winter 2015. Markle is a graduate of the prestigious Northwestern University with a dual degree in Theater and International Relations. Her film credits include: "Horrible Bosses," "Get Him to the Greek," "Remember Me," "A Lot Like Love," and the UK produced indie thriller "Anti-Social." Prior to landing her break-out role on SUITS, Meghan had notable recurring and guest starring roles on television series including "Fringe," "Without a Trace," "CSI: NY," "CSI: Miami" and "The League." A Los Angeles native, Meghan is actively involved in the socio-political arena, previously working at the US Embassy in Buenos Aires in the Public Affairs sector. She now works closely with The United Nations Women, where she was a presenter at UN Headquarters for the HeforShe Gender Equality Campaign in September 2014. Markle was also a panelist on the esteemed list of speakers for One Young World (Dublin, 2014), including former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. She recently launched a lifestyle website www.TheTig.com celebrating fashion, travel, food and redefining the idea of beauty - The TIG is lauded as Best of the Web in both InStyle Magazine and Elle Magazine.
- A native of Albemarle, North Carolina, **Kellie Pickler** gained fame as a contestant on "American Idol" at age 19 followed by a move to Nashville, where she has recorded four critically acclaimed albums (*Small Town Girl*, *Kellie Pickler*, *100 Proof*, *The Woman I Am*), performed around the world and made countless television appearances - including a 2013 win on "Dancing with the Stars." The granddaughter of a former U.S. Marine, Pickler's favorite experiences are the eight USO tours to 12 countries she has shared with more than 34,000 troops and military families. Whether serving as ambassador for the USO's "Every Moment Counts" campaign, helping female troops pamper themselves through the USO's "Ladies Night" program, or auctioning off her Ram truck to benefit wounded warriors through the USO Warrior and Family Care initiative, the songstress always steps up to support and show her gratitude of America's military community.
- **Rob Riggle** joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1990 at the age of 19. After serving nine years on active duty and completing deployments to Liberia, Albania and Kosovo, he discovered his love of comedy

and separated from the military in 2000. Immediately enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, Riggle's unit was among the first to respond to the attacks at the World Trade Center. Recalled back for one year of active duty in 2001, he was twice deployed to Afghanistan and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 2009. On January 1, 2013, Riggle retired from the military after 23 years of service and with more than 19 medals and ribbons, including the Combat Action Ribbon. While serving our nation, he made his comedic debut on "Saturday Night Live" in 2004 and went on to serve as a correspondent on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" as well as to star in countless hit shows including "The Office," "Arrested Development," "American Dad!," "30 Rock" and "Modern Dad," among others. Equally as successful was his presence on the big screen, having been featured in such blockbusters as "Step Brothers" with Will Ferrell; Jon Lucas' "The Hangover;" "21 Jump Street (and its sequel "22 Jump Street")" starring Jonah Hill and Channing Tatum; "The Internship" with Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson; and "Dumb and Dumber To" starring Jim Carrey, among others. When not acting on sitcoms or in movies, Riggle can be seen on "Fox NFL Sunday" as the pregame show's comedic prognosticator.

- A professional NFLer who spent his entire 13-year career playing for the Chicago Bears, **Brian Urlacher** announced his retirement from football in May 2013. The 6'4", 260-pound linebacker left behind an impressive legacy as one of the best linebackers in football for almost the entirety of his tenure. He set franchise records for linebackers in solo tackles (1,052), assisted tackles (306), sacks (41.5) and tied Dick Butkus for second place in interceptions (22). Among all defenders, Urlacher's tackle totals are tops in Chicago Bears history. With eight Pro Bowls under his belt and four first-team All-Pro appearances, Urlacher is one of the best linebackers of his generation.

QUOTES:

Attributed to General Martin Dempsey:

"I will never forget the time when I was a young lieutenant back in '74 and had just arrived in Germany and was lost. I stepped inside a USO center and spoke with one of the nicest ladies who happily helped me. In my dealings with the USO over the past few years, spearheading tours around the globe, I can confidently say that the USO is as helpful and comforting today as it was back then. This year's tour has been just as memorable."

Attributed to Dianna Agron:

"This is a trip I have wanted to take for a while. I am so grateful to have this experience, and to our soldiers who dedicate their lives to our country. This is a great way to close out the year, it feels like a real gift."

Attributed to Doug Fister:

"It is an honor and a blessing to join the final holiday tour hosted by Chairman Dempsey. It's truly a humbling experience to be a small part of USO history, representing the Nationals. Our main focus is to lend our support to the countless men and women who fight for our freedoms, and personally thank them for the sacrifices they make every day. This tour is very personal to me and my family as my grandfathers and many other family members proudly served, setting an example for us all to follow."

Attributed to Meghan Markle:

"I have always had such a profound respect for our nation's troops and military families. I cannot thank them enough for everything they do for us. I am delighted and honored to be visiting the troops to say 'thank you' and wish them a happy holiday."

Attributed to Kellie Pickler:

“Feeling blessed to have the opportunity to go back out on the road with General Dempsey and be a part of his final USO holiday tour as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I was honored to tour with him in 2012, and I am having a great time again this year. This is my eighth USO tour, and it is honestly a joy for me to be able to bring a piece of home to our service men and women while they serve abroad.”

Attributed to Rob Riggle:

“Military service has always been a part of me, a part of who I am as a man. As a Marine, who not only served active duty but also reserves for the vast majority of my life, it is hard for me to see this tour as just a week-long trip. Being with the Chairman and back on a USO tour again is much like returning home for me. There is definitely comfort in this visit and I am honored to be a part of it.”

Attributed to Brian Urlacher:

“My kids and I have always enjoyed giving back, especially during the holidays. Whether we are handing out presents to those less fortunate, helping out my old high school or visiting hospitals, volunteering is important. When I received the invitation to join General Dempsey on his last USO tour this holiday, I jumped at the chance to get involved. I respect our troops and their sacrifice, and am fortunate to have been invited.”

MULTI-MEDIA:

USO Tour Photos: <http://bit.ly/1vZBl1t>

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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.

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