



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2015

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USO and Trace Adkins Take Famous Grand Ole Opry Tradition on Tour to Visit Troops in the Middle East and Europe

Trip marks the megastar's tenth USO tour and the first time an artist has taken an Opry Circle replica around the world to bring a touch of home to troops

ARLINGTON, VA (Apr. 17, 2015) – Grammy®-nominated megastar **Trace Adkins** is celebrating the Grand Ole Opry's 90th anniversary and its rich history with the USO throughout his ten-day, three-country, troop-filled trip abroad. Currently in the Middle East on his tenth USO tour, Adkins is bringing a bit of the Opry tradition to troops and military families with their first 90th Anniversary **Circle Throwdown**. Throughout his USO tour, Adkins is performing on a replica of the famed six-foot circle of wood which sits center stage at the Grand Ole Opry House. As country artists and fans know, the circle was removed from the stage of the Ryman Auditorium and placed at the Opry House when the world-famous show moved to its permanent location in 1974. Generations of country music greats have performed on the circle's wooden boards, now Trace is bringing that experience to troops and military families overseas.

In collaboration with the USO, Adkins is also a part of the Opry's *Cause for Applause: "Salute the Troops"* activities in May, which will benefit the USO and MusiCorp throughout Military Appreciation Month.

*****USO photo and video link below*****

DETAILS:

- Three days into his ten-day USO tour to the Middle East and Europe, Adkins has visited, entertained and created USO moments for more than 3,000 military personnel. So far, he has visited with and performed for troops at Camp Buehring in Kuwait as well as various bases in Afghanistan – with many more acoustic and big band USO performances still to come.
- Last month, the Opry – America's longest-running live radio show – kicked off its 90th birthday with a nine-month celebration including all-star shows and special events. One aspect of the celebration is dedicated to important causes and charities, called **Cause for Applause**.

Throughout the month of May, the Opry will team up with the USO and MusiCorps to "Salute the Troops" by creating special moments during shows, honoring troops and helping to raise funds.

- Adkins will be part of a special Opry performance saluting the troops on May 19th at the Opry House. Joining him on stage are USO tour veterans Craig Morgan, Lee Greenwood and Kellie Pickler, among others. Other notable USO tour veterans who will take the Opry stage throughout the month of May include Reba McEntire, Hunter Hayes, Brett Eldredge, Larry Gatlin, Charles Daniels Band and Rascal Flatts. To check the May Opry schedule and/or book tickets using the **promo code SALUTE** visit www.Opry.com/USO. *A portion of each ticket sale will be donated to help support the USO and MusiCorps.*
- Far from a stranger in supporting troops, Adkins first volunteered with the USO in 2002 and became one of the first entertainers to travel to the Middle East with the USO. To date, the Louisiana native has participated in ten USO tours and traveled to seven countries – visiting, entertaining and creating moments for more than 43,218 troops and military families.
- The USO's partnership with the country music industry dates as far back as the early 1940's, when Gene Autry, also known as "The Singing Cowboy," traveled to the Pacific and toured with a group of USO performers. Following in his footsteps and beginning what is now a long-standing tradition, stars of The Grand Ole Opry began touring with the USO in 1949. Among some of the earlier faces to participate in USO tours were Red Foley, Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl, Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, Hank Williams and Roy Rogers, among countless others.
- In addition to partnering with the Grand Ole Opry during Military Appreciation Month, the USO is also celebrating its *Every Moment Counts* campaign. Under the *Every Moment Counts* umbrella, Adkins and the Grand Ole Opry encourage all of their partners, donors and fans to work together to make a MILLION moments in May for our troops and their families. For more information visit USOmoments.org or join the conversation on Facebook or Twitter using #USOMoments.

QUOTES:

Attributed to Trace Adkins:

"One of my very first, big performances was at the Grand Ole Opry. I remember that day very well. I also fondly remember the day, back in 2003, when I was invited to become a member. The Grand Ole Opry is a lot like family to me – as is the USO. It's an honor to celebrate Cause for Applause, kick off the Opry Circle Throwdown on my USO tour and help raise awareness about a cause dear to my heart, our troops and their families."

Attributed to J.D. Crouch II, CEO and President of the USO:

"Trace Adkins just reached a milestone – his tenth USO tour entertaining troops and families around the world. His enduring commitment to our military is legendary, and this time he's taking along another legend with him: a piece of the Grand Old Opry. Trace says he's had a heart for our troops for a long time, and we know they have a heart for him as well."

MULTI-MEDIA:

USO Photos & Video: <http://bit.ly/1DHEtmf>

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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, 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, GEICO, 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.

About the Grand Ole Opry

The Grand Ole Opry® is presented by Humana®. Opry performances are held every Friday and Saturday of the year, with Tuesday Night Opry shows through December 15. To plan an Opry visit, call (800) SEE-OPRY or visit opry.com. The Opry presents the best in country music live every week from Nashville, Tenn. Celebrating nine decades of entertainment, the Opry can be heard at opry.com and wsmonline.com, Opry and WSM mobile apps, SiriusXM Satellite Radio, and its flagship home, 650 AM-WSM. The Grand Ole Opry is owned by Ryman Hospitality Properties (NYSE: RHP). For more information, visit opry.com.