

PUGET SOUND ON WATCH

Showing enduring support, racing in Atacama desert

THE USO patch is three inches by two, less than an ounce in weight. To many this information is trivial, but to a marathon runner expected to carry their own gear it is critical.

“Every single ounce carried serves as a very specific purpose,” USO Northwest Board Member and former military officer, Kyle McCoy said. “I’m maniacal about the weight involved –to the point of cutting tags off of my shirts.”

Kyle will be taking part in a seven day, 150 mile, self-supported, foot race starting March 3 in the Chilean Atacama desert. The USONW is his fundraising cause. Kyle is hoping to raise between \$10k-\$20k for the nonprofit organization.

When Kyle agreed to wear the USO patch on his gear the USONW staff understood the significance of the gesture.

“It is a true testament to his commitment to our mission,” Development Director Jo Anne Hume said. “He was touched by our mission when he was serving and we are all impressed by this Herculean effort. It will be a great thrill to have him cross the finish line donning our logo.”

Kyle said he is honored to take part in this race, specifically in support of the



USO Northwest Board Member Kyle McCoy is taking part in a 7 day, 150 mile self supported foot race, in the Chilean Atacama desert—a race named by *TIME* Magazine as one of the top 10 Endurance Competitions in the world. This picture was taken of Kyle McCoy during the Marathon des Sables, a six day, 151 mile race in the Saharan desert of Morocco.

USO Northwest.

“Kyle is a talented long-distance runner,” Katie Carder McCoy, Kyle’s wife, said. “Competing in these races allows him the opportunity to continue improving his ultra-running skills and, perhaps, more importantly it gives him months to plan, train, gear shop, and generally look forward to a new adventure.”

Kyle participated in the Loop the Lake Marathon on Dec. 29, 2012, the Calico Run for the Angels Marathon on Jan. 12, and the Orcas Island 50k on Feb. 2, in addition to day to day training for the Atacama Crossing.

There will be many challenges during this 150 mile race. Kyle will tackle sand -dunes, river crossings, gravel, loose rocks, hard packed earth, and waist high grass. The Atacama Desert is recognized as the driest place on earth. Day time temperatures can be as high as 104 degrees Fahrenheit with night temperatures reaching below 41 degrees Fahrenheit.

Kyle will also face the infamous salt flats, where many competitors have trouble.

“I know the feeling now, having gone through [salt flats] before,” Kyle said. “Basically, I’ll put my head down, relax, drink lots of water and “shuffle” along

at an extremely efficient pace by trying to conserve as much energy as possible while pushing just enough.”

Kyle participated in the Marathon des Sables, a six day, 151 miles race across the Sahara Desert in Morocco, finishing as second place American.

There is concern about racing in high elevation, something Kyle was not able to prepare for due to the excessive snow in the Washington State mountains. The Atacama Crossing will begin at 10,000 feet.

Kyle will be drawing from his lessons learned through the Marathon des Sables such as traveling light, and taking more diversity in food. The total weight of his gear is 20 pounds, of which 13 belong to food, equaling approximately 2,200 calories a day. He will also be drawing from his Army Ranger training.

“There are others that are in worse shape than you all around the world, so forget about your misery, fake a smile and keep moving,” Kyle said. “Eventually, no matter how low you are at any given time, you’ll come back –and it’ll feel that much better to the extent you didn’t slow down too much.”

His Ipod Shuffle is one of his nine optional items he is taking. He will spend half of the day’s running distance in silence,

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Naval Sea Cadet Corps teaching teens how to lead

ON a brisk Saturday morning, outside the Headquarters for the Navy Cargo Handling Battalion Five (NHCB-5) building on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, it is eerily silent. Less than six cars are in the parking lot. The Marine and Navy Reserve Center next door has lights out. Life comes to the grounds through the echoes of the Naval Sea Cadets from the Hornet Division as they sing jodies while doing Physical Training.

“Ever since I can remember I’ve wanted to be in the military,” Petty Officer 2nd Class Zachary Blomgren said. “This program really gave me the chance to test the waters and just see if it was something I really wanted to do.”

Many in the Naval Sea Cadet Corps joined for

the exact same reasons as Zachary. Others state curiosity in the program itself, an opportunity at a head start in the military world, or a chance to go to training camps and shoot weapons. The program is for children and teens from the ages of 11 through high school graduation.

“Before I joined I was a kid going through life without any goals and any aspirations,” Petty Officer 3rd Class Bryan Rusth said.

Today, Bryan is the Assistant Lead Petty Officer (ALPO) tasked with helping Zachary – the Leading Petty Officer- with his duties. He said his time spent in a leadership position whether Master-At-Arms or ALPO has been the best experience for him.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Alexandra Clark is a

squad leader, ready to help and support the younger and lower ranking cadets.

“I’m teaching them and showing them what it means to be in the Sea Cadets and to be a leader,” Alexandra said.

Since joining almost three years ago, she says she has learned to become more outgoing and has become a more disciplined person.

Drill starts for the cadets at 7:30 a.m. and does not finish until 4:30 p.m. It is a long day for many of them.

“A lot of kids will say “I don’t know how the heck you get up at 0430/0500 on your weekend, that’s crazy, stupid,” makes you insane,” Zachary said. “I think it puts us apart from the average

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From the cockpit of the Executive Director

USO Northwest Supporters -

The memories of 2012 are already two months behind us but it was a year of accomplishments for this organization.

The dedicated Board Members, Staff, Volunteers and numerous partners have allowed us to raise the morale of America’s Military Heroes and their family members at staggering numbers.

In order to provide our numerous and exceptional programs, this organization made a commitment to add three new staff members.

Since coming onboard, Samantha Lingad has ensured our Mobile Canteen has attended over 200 events throughout Washington and Oregon and has plans for Idaho in the summer of 2013. If you see her on the highways, be sure to give her the USONW honk of approval!

Tracy Mann manages our events and can be seen everywhere our military needs her to be.

In 2012, our Board of Directors made a strategic decision to upgrade all of our facilities as well as our Mobile Canteen. Though onboard only six months so far, Jo Anne Hume has already made an impact directing our development efforts and her efforts will ensure USONW will reach our lofty development goals.

Last year also saw record events during our Red, White and Blue Golf Classic in May, as well as our 5-Star Gala in September. Both events were hugely successful, thanks to numerous supporting partners.

I would personally like to recognize Boeing, Walmart, Pinnacle, Talbot Financial, Merrill Gardens, TriWest, US Bank and America’s Credit Union for their sponsorship and displaying the leadership necessary to ensure we were able to reach our mission of serving, supporting and remembering our military and their families.

Another major milestone for this organization was the grand opening of our USO Center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in November. Over 250 friends attended the grand opening and received the firsthand announcement USO Headquarters approved our request to change our name to the USO Northwest. This name change from USO Puget Sound Area now more accurately reflects the general service area in which we operate and will ensure expansion of our services to our military serving in Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon.

I would be remiss not to mention a big “thank you” to our Volunteers, affectionately known as our “Army of Gratitude”. Approximately 250 USONW volunteers allow us to meet every commitment at all hours of the day or night.

As I end this newsletter, I not only thank them but also our 24 Board Members, seven Staff Members and our thousands of supporters. We could not do all that we do without the collective efforts of our extended family.

I can see exciting times ahead for this organization and believe many of you will be thrilled to witness many of the changes we have planned in 2013-2014. There is a lot which needs to be done and together; we will... until they all come home!

Cheers! - Don



Bedtime stories from the sailor 20,000 leagues under the sea

THE submarine slips into the cold, dark water. Within a matter of minutes there is no evidence of its existence. The family onshore will not see their loved one for months. A week or two go by and as if by magic a package arrives for the family. The children start the DVD and there before them in an instant is their sailor reading them a bedtime story even though he is 20,000 leagues under the sea.

“When submariners go out to sea, there is little to no communication with their families back home,” Samantha Lingad, USO Northwest Mobile Canteen Manager and Submariner wife, said. “This can mean up to six months of a child not seeing their parents face or hearing their voice. And for kids six months can seem like an eternity!”

The USO Northwest is beginning to schedule the United Through Reading program with sailors at Naval Base Kitsap (NBK) on a regular basis. Service men and women choose a book to read aloud and then are recorded on DVD. The DVD and book are mailed to the family at home. The recordings take place at the Liberty Center.

“We are able to use the space through the generosity of the staff at the Liberty Center and the NBK Deployed Forces Support/Liberty Programs,” she said.

The first two days the program was available six people participated. This number is expected to increase as word gets out about the free program.

The books are provided to the USO Northwest through USO Arlington, the headquarters for the overall organization. They are purchased through Amazon, First Book –another not for profit– or received by

in-kind donations.

“I think that the USO Northwest has a lot of potential for marketing and to raise the number of recordings,” Alexandra Volp, Programs Manager with USO Warrior and Family Care, said.

Samantha’s personal goal is to have every deploying parent of a young child record a United Through Reading DVD before their boat goes out to sea, she said. Also, service members do not have to be parents to participate; the program is available to anyone who has children in their lives such as aunts and uncles.

Many find the DVDs become a treasured item, played over and over again. Even spouses have played the video for themselves when children go to bed just so they can see their loved one.

“By recording United Through Reading DVDs before they leave, these sailors ensure that even though they are far away, they can be part of their children’s bedtime routine,” Samantha said. “Not only are they sharing stories with the child, they are teaching them vocabulary, and a love of reading. They are also creating stronger bonds with their child. This is something that service members can miss out on during deployment.”

Part of Samantha’s job as Mobile Canteen Manager is to bring USO programs to those who cannot make it to a brick and mortar center. If any service member would like to take advantage of this free program, not stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord or near the USONW SeaTac Center, contact Samantha at mobilemanager@usonw.org.



Fire Controlman 2nd Class Andrea L. McCellan reads to her son through the United Through Reading program (UTR) aboard the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7). U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Joshua Rodriguez

Items and Tasks Needed for Centers

- Mobile Canteen**
Items: Hot cocoa mix, individual snacks, bananas, hot dogs and buns, cases of juice boxes, XBOX Games and Gift Cards for gasoline (please!)
- SeaTac Center**
Items: Trial size toothpaste, snack items such as granola bars, apple sauce, packets of crackers, Poptarts, individually packaged chips, etc.
- Shali Center at McChord Field**
Items: Large cans of tuna, sliced ham, sliced bologna, sliced turkey, paper towels, cases of bottled water, paper plates, and individually wrapped chips.

Kyle McCoy participates in the Atacama Crossing, helping USO

cranking the music right as he reaches rock bottom, he said.

“It’s like a nice version of shock treatment,” Kyle said. “One of my favorites is AC/DC – Highway to Hell. It has a way of firing me up, and helping me to laugh a bit at the ridiculousness of this entire race.”

Kyle said he chose to compete in this race because he loves to travel, meet interesting people, and push his personal boundaries.

“When Kyle asked whether I would be okay with him spending the time and money to compete in the Atacama Crossing, I agreed, provided he didn’t come back looking like a skeleton,” Katie said. “He lost a significant amount of weight during the Marathon des Sables and I don’t want to see that happen again.”

Kyle’s strategy for the Atacama Crossing is to try and not outthink the race. He would rather be the hunter than the hunted.

“Early in the race I should not be pushing beyond my abilities, I’ll save this for the end,” he said.

Kyle’s goal is to finish in the top ten, raise money for the USO Northwest, and have fun.



He has never been to Chile but has been told it is beautiful. Katie will be exploring the Atacama desert for a couple days before joining him at the finish line, and then the two of them will explore central Chile.

“Kyle and I love to travel and have a bucket list of seeing 100 countries before we die,” Katie said. “Chile will be number 21 for me and number 28 for Kyle.”

The USO Northwest is drafting up ideas for a welcome back party for Kyle to thank him for his dedication to the USONW and to hear all about this incredible race.

“I thought Kyle’s approach was one of the

most unique and inspiring ideas to raise funds for the USO Northwest,” Executive Director Don Leingang said. “For most of us, it is hard to fathom running in the Chilean desert, let alone all the training Kyle has endured to prepare for this experience.”

The gratification of knowing his support –financial or otherwise- goes toward helping troops passing through the Northwest is what Kyle likes most about the USO, he said.

“As a former soldier myself, I found that any comfort, physically or mentally, provided by the civilians around us was extremely gratifying,” Kyle said. “This comfort can come in the form of simply saying “Thank you for your service,” or the ability to check e-mail while passing through an airport USO facility.”

All donations made through the www.usonw.org/mccoy page will be go directly to fund the USO Northwest’s Capital Campaign “Enduring Support” which is raising funds for the renovation of the USONW SeaTac Center.

Help make the USO patch on Kyle’s gear worth its weight.

My Most Memorable Flight: Saigon’s Evacuation

By Al Uehara
USO Northwest Volunteer

LATE April, 1975, the entire country of South Vietnam was color-coded red on an intelligence briefing slide. The fierce warning color indicated territory controlled by the enemy -the Viet Cong. Saigon remained as the only refuge. We would be flying there.

Multiple United States Air Force units were tasked to provide airlift flights to evacuate the fleeing citizens of South Vietnam. At the time I was a young, C-130 navigator, on my first operational assignment at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. Providing supplies and reinforcements through combat support flights into South Vietnam was routine. This evacuation sortie would be my final flight into the country and would be my most memorable flight during my entire USAF career.

The cargo compartment of the C-130 was barren. Web seats and other cargo equipment normally installed were removed. Only flat cargo pallets and tie-down straps anchored across the pallets about every five feet remained. Our crew of five, plus an extra pilot and two security policemen were on board and ready for the flight to Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon.

We needed to minimize the chance of being hit by small arms fire during our descent. The overhead approach was initiated at 15,000 feet directly above the runway. The pilot pitched the C-130 on a very steep descending spiral. A tactical landing was accomplished uneventfully.

There were three mortar rounds, each one marching closer. The third one made a direct hit on one of our squadron’s C-130s while it was on the flight line at Tan Son Nhut. The plane was completely damaged, the crew –thankfully– all alive. It was an instant reminder we could be hit if the desire was there.

We taxied to a ramp area where three large passenger busses approached the rear of our

aircraft. Our inboard engines were shutdown to reduce prop wash, but our outboard engines still ran. The loadmaster quickly ushered passengers into the empty cargo compartment. In less than ten minutes the refugees were onboard. Immediately we taxied back to the runway.

The flat cargo pallets and tie-down straps anchored across the cold, hard pallets provided our passengers with something to hold on to during takeoff. At the end of our departure climb out, the loadmaster announced to the crew 176 souls were on board. For a normal overwater flight, our regulations restricted us 80 people. This was due to the four, 20-man life

Regulations were thrown out the window and sacrifices would be made. On this day, we would do whatever was required to rescue the people of South Vietnam.

rafts we carried in case of ditching emergencies.

Accomplishing our mission was the highest priority. Our crew duty hours were extended with no questions. Regulations were thrown out the window and sacrifices would be made. On this day, we would do whatever was required to rescue the people of South Vietnam.

I peeked into the cargo compartment. It was tightly packed. Five young men were standing since there was no place to sit. For the entire five-hour flight to Clark Air Base in the Philippines they stood.

With 176 refugees on board our aircraft it was amazing to see there was no baggage pallet at the rear of the aircraft. They only carried the clothes they wore. They’d left their country, possibly forever, with practically nothing. It was a depressing sight.

We entered into chaos at Clark Air Base. One after another the C-130s were landing in 30 minute intervals with similar passenger loads of South Vietnamese refugees. Busses to pick them up were woefully delayed.

Our aircraft commander allowed our passengers to exit the aircraft for fresh air. They were able to stretch and move around. And I’m sure the outside evening darkness provided a sense of privacy for many who needed to relieve themselves after a long get away flight.

At this time, I was able to enter the half full cargo compartment. The odor was foul. Tight seating and no inflight services were apparent. Once I reached the ramp area I opened up one of our emergency water containers.

Passing out paper cups filled with water was like handing out money. In a matter of seconds everyone was tightly packed around me. I tried to fill the cups as fast as I could but knew it was not fast enough. But they all waited patiently despite the circumstances.

People looked less frightened. I noticed an older woman, probably in her late sixties, cradling a pot in her arms. It wasn’t new or shiny; it looked like the kind one would cook rice in. Within the pot was a small tin can of food. She held these two items preciously. It was all she brought to her new country.

The satisfaction I felt from this simple gesture of giving water resonated in me. These people were thousands of miles from their home, stressed and tired, and for a brief moment were able to relax, and quench their thirst. The sense of satisfaction I felt serving water to those refugees may never be surpassed.

Today the front is in many other parts of the world, and the mission quite different. In addition to combat operations, our military is providing support to the civilian communities in many foreign countries. Perhaps, somewhere there is a service member giving refugees water and experiencing a similar feeling to mine.

I’m hoping I can re-experience a fraction of this satisfaction through supporting our troops as a volunteer at the USO Northwest. After all, providing a friendly place to simply relax and have some refreshments before moving on can go a long way.

Sea Cadets learn leadership skills for military, life



teenager.”

To be in the Sea Cadet Corps, individuals must pay \$53 a year which goes directly to the headquarters in Washington, D.C.. Advance training, such as dive classes, is an additional cost ranging from \$100 to \$300 before the cost of transportation. Bootcamp is held in the summer, usually in California.

For Zachary, training is a highlight of the program. He said he enjoys being able to bring a new aspect, a new way of doing things, back to his unit to make them more unique than other units.

“In the short week and a half or so we were [at the Petty Officer Leadership Academy], so much camaraderie was built up between not only members of our unit, but that of many others stretching across the entire country from Washington to Michigan,” Petty Officer 3rd Class Drew Ketcham said. “In that training session alone I gathered a significant amount of knowledge in leadership that I don’t believe I would have received in a more “civilian-based” organization.”

Throughout Drill cadets give presentations such as Petty Officer 1st Class Elias Williams’ on Naval Jobs and Rates. He prepared a Power Point slide show, spoke to the class, and was then critiqued on the presentation.

“I was really nervous,” Elias said.

The cadets liked how much eye contact he made with the audience, and his ability to be honest with them. His commanding officer, Lieutenant Gordy Strang, encouraged him to slow down and to avoid having his back to the audience.

On February 2, a special guest arrived by invitation of Elias, a sergeant major with the Army. He spoke to the cadets about his 24 years of service. While praising them for their efforts in the Corps he also reminded them of what sacrifices they undoubtedly will face in the future, from moving to another country to even losing friends in combat. He stressed the importance of getting to know one’s men and what makes a good leader.

He put Elias on the spot when he asked him to choose a fellow cadet to receive a Challenge Coin. It was a test of leadership, he wanted to prove the point a leader must always know how his men are performing.

“Often, [Petty Officers] are tasked with mentoring future generations of cadets, due to the lessons we’ve learned and the experiences we’ve gone through,” Drew said. “There is the always present challenge of teenagers leading other teenagers, and the conflicts that can arise from that atmosphere.”

Zachary explained he has led some cadets who are in the program

because their parents forced them which can cause tension among the ranks. However, the cadets are quick to realize the tasks at hand and specific duties are more important than arguments and grudges, Drew said.

Lt. Strang said after a couple drills the cadets really get comfortable with the program and many become joined at the hip.

“For me, more than anything, being in the NSCC means responsibility, as I have a responsibility to provide a good example to all the younger guys and strive to be the best that I can be,” Bryan said.

The Sea Cadets all have various areas they would like to go into when they graduate high school. Navy League Cadet Destry Denton, 11, confidently announced he wants to be a Navy SEAL. Seaman Apprentice Joseph Jordan mentioned going to college so he could become an officer with the Navy or Army. Alexandra has plans to double major in psychology and medicine so she can become a doctor.

Seaman Recruit Chance Kerns is using the NSCC as a chance to get a head start in the military so he is ready for the Marine Corps. He said he knows his future will not be an easy one.

“Being in the Marines is a really tough challenge, but I want to challenge myself,” Chance said. “And since Recon is one the hardest jobs you could do in the Marines, I want to be the best I could possibly be.”

Towards the end of Drill the petty officers took the cadets outside to practice working together as a squad to identify and take out enemy snipers. A few cadets were tasked with being medics, they would not receive one of the fake, 1950s white rifles others were issued. The officers hid in the brush and even in the trees.

As the squads emerged cautiously from the building using anything they could for cover, the officers could be heard yelling “Bang, bang, bang!” then saying the name of the target.

Chaos erupted. Medics were left unprotected. Formations scattered. It was every cadet for themselves.

After the exercise the officers gathered in a private meeting. They agreed the exercise did not go as planned. They failed as leaders, they said they should have been with the squads rather than posing as snipers. It was another moment in their eight hour day where they’d learned about each other, themselves and taking care of the wellbeing and education of the cadets in their charge.

“I am very thankful for the lessons I’ve learned and the knowledge I’ve accumulated throughout all of the invaluable and innumerable experiences the Corps has given me,” Drew said.



Race For A Soldier



September 29, 2013 - Gig Harbor, Wash.

USO Northwest picks Volunteers of the Year

Tom Barrett is a United States Navy veteran who has not stopped serving. He is often found volunteering at the Shali Center on Joint Base Lewis- McChord or with the Mobile Canteen.

“The USO gave to me during my service and I want to give back my time and expertise,” he said.

Starting as a volunteer in March 2012, he accomplished 1,480 hours in nine months. USO Northwest Staff quickly learned they could count on Tom for anything.

“Tom makes my job easier and over the summer saved my sanity by taking the Mobile Canteen to events when I simply needed a break,” Mobile Canteen Manager Samantha Lingad said.

He often volunteers to travel with the Mobile whether to Whidbey Island to deliver coffee to sailors or to Costco to buy hot dog buns. These items are far easier with two people to accomplish and Tom is always willing to be Samantha’s partner in crime, she said.

Shali Center Manager Andrew Oczkewicz said Tom could be counted on to cover last minute shift cancellations no matter the hour. The Shali Center often has deployments leaving before 6 a.m or after 8 p.m. On numerous occasions Tom has served alongside Samantha during cold, rainy days, staying the entire event to make sure every service member has been fed.

Having spent 10 years in the service Tom knows how important it is to support the troops.

“I’ve been there and done it. I know the empty feeling,” he said. “These guys can be very scared, helping them on that walk to the plane or ship is very important.”

He tells volunteers to keep their head up and remember who they are there for. He reminds them to be a helping hand and have a smiling face.

Because of Tom’s dedication to the USO Northwest he has experience working virtually every task needing to be accomplished to support the service members and their families, Andrew said.

“The versatility of the USO Northwest is very fun,” Tom said. He enjoys working at the Shali Center but Mobile events are his

Tom Barrett



favorite, he said. Events like the Sesame Street tours are popular and have high visibility. He would like to travel with the show across the country and would also like to serve with the USO overseas.

“This upcoming year my goal is 2,000 hours,” he said.

With the USO Northwest’s expansion in the region Tom said he is looking forward to supporting those in Idaho, Oregon and Alaska.

“If I don’t get to go to Alaska, I’m going to be upset,” he said. Tom spent 17 years working in retail and enjoys training others. Helping to set up a new center and train new volunteers is something he said he would enjoy doing.

Tom’s two daughters Madeline and Jennifer both think his involvement with the USO is great. Tom jokes they like it because it keeps him out of trouble. Madeline, an Army wife, occasionally volunteers alongside Tom.

When Tom received the Volunteer of the Year award he said he was proud.

“But I think I have more to do,” he said. “It gave me validation to want to continue.”



Karen Brady

out and do.” SeaTac Manager Bill Baker doesn’t have to worry about his office file plan because Karen runs it so well, he said.

“At least four hours a week she dedicates time to track hours and to monitor active and in-active volunteers through our e-coordinator system,” he said. “I literally could not do that part of my job without her.”

Bill also leans on her to assist in the training of new volunteers. Karen often tells volunteers to be pleasant, smile and follow the rules in the rule book. Bill said Karen is an outstanding representative of the USO mission and always sets up the new volunteers for success.

“I feel like helping my country,” she said. “This is my way of feeling like I’m contributing.”

Karen says it means a lot when the families and service members tell the volunteers thank you and how much they are appreciated. Karen’s branching out into other USO programs has been noticed by her friends.

“She has always done what was required as a Volunteer,” USO Northwest volunteer Colene Kravits said. “But the past couple years she has seemed more interested.”

Working during the donation drive held at the Bonney Lake Fred Meyer last summer was a highlight for Karen. Along with helping with the Snowball Express where children who have lost a parent while serving, fly to Texas to spend a few days at an amusement park. Karen also enjoyed the surprise homecoming party held for Wounded Warrior Army Specialist Chris Anderson.

“The Friday homecoming for SPC Anderson was heartwarming,” she said. “I can do pretty good till I see another cry, then I’m wiped.”

There are two aspects to supporting the troops for Karen. The mindset most people have is they are okay with the troops, but not for war – no one wants war, she said. Then there is the action.

“Helping active members, their families, doing what you can. As much or as little,” she said.

A GOOD thing grows. It branches out, SeaTac Center volunteer Karen Brady said.

“In my mind being Volunteer of the Year is not based on one’s hours over others,” she said. “There’s a lot more to it, I would hope. Going a step beyond your duty.”

Karen started out as a USONW volunteer in 1996 by covering shifts for a friend, eventually volunteering every other Sunday. She kept with the same people and the same routine. After a hiatus to Montana for two years she came back to the SeaTac Center in 2010.

“I got brave,” she said. “I took other shifts, met new people and lo and behold I could do it!” Last spring Karen offered to assist former SeaTac Center Manager Shirley McGann with entering data.

Karen worked for Pacific Northwest Bell for 26 years as a data manager. She also worked for two trucking companies and spent 14 years at EDM Supplies.

“Helping the SeaTac Managers has helped them as much as me,” she said. “It gets me back to what I like. It’s good for my brain, for me to get

Getting to know USONW's SeaTac Manager

Bill Baker

What was your first experience with the USO? I remember traveling through the Philadelphia Airport back in 1991, only two years after I joined the Air Force, the volunteers on-duty were quite friendly but the facility was in dire need of an upgrade. But still, it was the welcoming nature of the volunteers that made my brief stay memorable.

Where are you from originally? Lansdale, Pennsylvania, which is located about 30 miles northwest of Philadelphia.

So are you an Eagles fan? *Absolutely!* I bleed green!

What inspired you to join the military? I was always fascinated with planes and flying so I knew that if I did join it would be the Air Force. My story for joining is one part patriotism and one part need. I had no college plans after high school and I knew if I stayed in the environment I was in I wasn't going to have much of a future. The Air Force provided me a way out of where I was and I will always be grateful for that.

How long did you serve with the Air Force? Twenty-three years.

What did you enjoy most about the AF? Two things. First, the relationships I developed with so many people. I feel like I can travel anywhere around the world and will be able to visit with someone I've met. The other involved my last seven years in the Air Force working as a First Sergeant. I was charged with sustaining the morale, health, welfare, and discipline of the Airmen in each of the five squadrons I was assigned to. What always astounded me was the impact I could have on one person's life. I took this very seriously. I can only hope I had more positive impact than negative. I feel the experience molded me for what I'm doing today.

Do you have a motto you live by? If I had to choose a motto it would be from Ephesians 2:8, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." It helps me to remember my humility because I can't do any of this alone. I am in regular need of forgiveness.

What amazes you every time you come to work at the USONW? Without a doubt it's the commitment level of our volunteers.

Favorite Top Pot Doughnut? Apple Fritter.

What is the one thing most people don't know about the SeaTac Center? When I let people know that we are not affiliated with the government or the Department of Defense, many of them are taken back. And then when they find out we receive no funding from the government

they're completely floored. Many think we work for the government and have no idea everything we do is done from the loving hearts of thousands of people who look up to our troops as heroes.

Three words to describe you. Happy go-lucky.

How would you describe the first week you spent managing the SeaTac Center? Wide-eyed. To see so many people want to give up some of their personal time to volunteer for this Center still astounds me. I mean just driving here can be enough to pull your hair out. To do all that and then work a shift when there's a flight going out to the Pacific

takes a special kind of crazy. So I think that I fit in quite well because I need to be around people who are just as crazy as I am.

What are you looking forward to most about the future SeaTac Center?

Our humble Center is already a 5-Star facility –just imagine what we're going to be able to do when we double our size. I get excited every day when I imagine not having to turn guests away because there's no room or how I will be able to walk through the center and see guests feel like they're someplace safe and warm where absolute strangers care about them without question. I mean seriously, how cool is that?

What expectations do you have for your role as the SeaTac Manager?

To recruit, train, and sustain the best USO Volunteers in order to continue to provide 5-Star service to the world's greatest military members, past and present, and their families. Everything else will naturally fall into line after that.

What is your idea of perfect happiness? Heaven. On Earth, sitting on my deck in the summertime with a cold pint of beer, ribs cooking on the grill, Jack Johnson playing through the speakers, the kids playing in the yard, and my hot wife under my arm. Not quite as perfect as Heaven but it sure feels close to it.

Which living person do you most admire? My wife Chrystal because she has to put up with a goof like me.

Who is your favorite hero of fiction? Spiderman.

Anything you would like to add? To my volunteers, fellow staff members and board members: thank you for your support and patience with me as I've learned this position. I still have quite a ways to go but knowing each of you is on my journey makes it all worthwhile.



Bill Baker (left) and Executive Director Don Leingang (right) pose with SPC Chris Anderson (center) at his surprise homecoming celebration held at SeaTac International Airport.

Kimpton Hotels: Operation Romance

Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants in the Northwest is offering a \$99 rate for Friday/Saturday nights, a bottle of wine from Maryhill Winery and a nightly hosted wine reception. Operation Romance is good through March 31, 2013. Military ID is required and reservations can be made at their website using the code: OPR.

For Seattle: Alexis Hotel, Hotel Monaco, and Hotel Vintage Park.

For Oregon: River Place Hotel, Hotel Vintage Plaza and Hotel Monaco Portland.



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Junior and Senior Hostesses To Be Selected for U.S.O.

The following article was found in USO Northwest archives. Originally published Thursday, June 3, 1943 in a Oak Harbor, Wash., paper.

WORKING from the office of Dr. G. R. Heap until the R.L. Maylor building can be renovated, Miss Elizabeth Golly, associate director, is laying the foundation for the Oak Harbor USO club.

Beginning next Monday from 1 to 5 p.m. and continuing throughout the week, junior and senior hostesses are to register with her in the Maylor building east of the News office.

Junior Hostesses must be unmarried, must give at least three hours a week to the club and be able to supply the names of established persons in the community or their employers as character references. After they complete hostesses courses, they receive a card which entitles them to visit other USO Clubs. They may later join separate junior hostess clubs of girls with similar interests. They will be required to take five lectures in six weeks time. In one lecture naval officers or a community leader will speak regarding what is expected of the hostesses. The girls will converse with service men, play games, dance and take part in community singing.

Senior hostesses will act as chaperons, committee members to arrange for special parties and coffee hours, and will be called upon at different times to do the special service of the mother of the home.

Navy wives will register later. Service men are welcome to the club with their wives at any time.

An important rule of the organization is that junior hostesses must not enter or leave the USO with a service man. There is to be no drinking on the premises. Although men may smoke, ladies are requested not to.

The Club will not be open for service men until it is furnished and remodeled, it was decided late last week. The Federal Works Agency will have charge of the remodeling, renovating and furnishings, but no activity was started in this direction but FWA construction engineers said engineering work would begin soon.

As the club swings into full action it will serve more and more as a liaison between enlisted men and the community. Hostesses may call and ask for soldiers, sailors or marines to attend special festive dinners or parties and these requests will be filled. It will become more and more a place where service men may find information on available rooms, rides, etc. These services will be in addition to the regular functions of the USO –dancing, games, parties, community sings, etc.

The USO committee, of which Dr. G. R. Heap is president and which is made up of representatives of the community, had the choice of six member agencies to operate the Oak Harbor club. These were the YMCA, the YWCA, the Jewish Welfare board, the Travelers Aid Association, the Salvation Army and the National Catholic Community service. They chose the latter to operate the local organization after weighing merits of each agency carefully. In all communities, one or two of these agencies operate for the United Service Organization, pay all bills and are responsible for management. The women’s division of the NCCS is represented by Miss Golly; the name of the man representing the men’s division is not yet announced. Miss Golly was connected with USO work in Coeur D’Alene for nine months. Her profession was originally teaching with a background of music, speech and piano. Her home is in Minot, N.D. She now has a room at the Charles McGreevy home.

A meeting of representatives of various women’s clubs is being called for Friday evening at the Civic Improvement club to discuss general policies.



To the Members of the First JR. Hostess Class of the USO, Oak Harbor, Washington

YOU have been invited to prepare yourself for Jr. Hostess activities in the USO Club of Oak Harbor, Wash. There will be a series of 6 lectures intended to assist you in discovering how you can best serve in cooperation with the USO in a Recreational Program for men in the service of their country. You are required to attend at least five of these lectures. You will be joining in with thousands of other girls in this service.

The Jr. Hostess group of Oak Harbor will elect their own officers and adopt simple by-laws to govern the work and program of the group. There are no dues and very few incidental expenses.

As a Jr. Hostess you will be required to check in and out of the building in order that an accurate record of your time of service may be kept, since an award pin is given to each Jr. Hostess upon the completion of one hundred hours of service. You are asked to keep a careful check up on yourself; first, your personal appearance; second, ability to meet people easily; third, your social responsibility; fourth, ability to see things as they are (reality vs, glamour); fifth, ability to practice your ideals; sixth, seek to serve in at least three different ways.

USO Activities:

1. Act as a social partners for dances, picnics, game nights and any other social events in the USO Program.
2. Plan special parties and decorations.
3. Serve as information clerks with such duties as calling dance list girls, answering telephone, greeting visitors and giving general information.
4. Work in the library issuing and keeping books in order.
5. Work with hobby groups.
6. Serve at the canteen or check room.
7. Assist at dancing, bridge and other classes.
8. Make posters and other signs for bulletin board use.
9. Plan and accompany men on sightseeing trips.
10. Register and give identification badges to building visitors.
11. Handle stenographic work in connection with their own organization—cutting stencils, preparing bulletins, etc.
12. Cooperate with the “troops in transit” program by preparing supplies of cake, candy, magazines and writing paper.
13. Help with the unit mending service.
14. Develop a letter-writing system to enable men who have transferred to other posts to retain their USO contact.
15. Create a business bureau where qualified members of the group will be on regular duty in the lobby to take dictation and give other free service of the type usually provided by a public steno.
16. Act as coach for men taking special courses in mathematics, languages, or other subjects within the USO member’s field of study.
17. Aid in the collection of books, magazines, flowers, or other [illegible] articles needed to improve the building.
18. Adopt special USO projects for holidays or events to stimulate interest and realize a worthy objective.

“The community, which has always fulfilled its responsibilities creditably, will realize that this is not a church affair, fraternal or clique, it is a WAR affair. We can now disregard personal prejudices to serve the war effort. We can step in, play the game the way the leaders have outlined it, and do all we can to make the USO charming and attractive to the men for whom the building is maintained.”

No dough, no problem, Shali Center dishes up meals



Service members from the 52nd Medical Brigade enjoy tri-tip open faced sandwiches, mashed potatoes, salad, and dessert.

FREQUENTLY the USO Northwest Shali Center is used as a hub for deploying service members. They shuffle through the center, gathering food items like hot dogs or sandwiches. For a brief time they are able to watch TV or sprawl out on a couch before going over to the neighboring building, Troop Holding. USONW volunteers give them a smile and a care package before they board the plane.

In January the USO Northwest launched a USO program called No Dough Dinners. Service members who gather for the dinner at the center are not about to deploy. They are there to enjoy a free home cooked meal –more extravagant than hot dogs and sandwiches.

“What I like most about the dinners is that we are serving the troops in a social situation and not the hours before their deployments,” Andrew Oczkewicz, Shali Center Manager, said.

A No Dough Dinner is held typically the day before payday for the service members. There is no criteria units must meet in order to qualify for a No Dough Dinner. The only thing asked is command leadership arranges transportation to and from the Shali Center to help monitor arrivals at the 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. sittings.

When USO Northwest volunteer Patty Bert learned the No Dough Dinners’ expenses were only covered 11 of the 12 months she offered to sponsor the \$600 dinner for February.

“It just felt right to cover the expense for such a fun way to give back,” she said. “I asked my son if he would split the cost and of course he said yes.”

Aaron is a Major in the National Guard and has

served almost 20 years. He was able to join the troops for the first sitting at 5 p.m. while Patty worked as a volunteer.

“The evening went well,” she said. “The service ran smoothly and I felt all went away happy and full!”

February’s Italian dinner was enjoyed by 100 members of the 4-2 Infantry. For March the meal will be meatball subs, salad, and ice cream sundaes.

Service members are waited on during the meals but for dessert they are free to create their own ice cream sundaes. One service member from January’s dinner made a delicious treat seven inches high, Andrew said.

“The most memorable experience so far is when a soldier was excited about the possibility of winning the raffle item and then he won it!” Andrew said. The item was \$100 to Ink Spot Tatoo.

The No Dough Dinners are popular amongst USONW Volunteers. Sign-ups are filled within minutes. Andrew’s brother, Chef Paul Oczkewicz, enjoyed volunteering so much in January he assisted with the February 14 dinner and plans to come back for the next.

Sponsors of the dinners are invited to join the service members at the event. It allow them a chance to meet local heroes and put a face to their donation.

“For the summer we’ll be inviting service members and their families to the No Dough Dinners,” Andrew said. “Serving the meals out on the patio will allow us to accommodate 200 to 300 individuals. It will be a family event at the USO.”

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers –

Anxiety is rippling through the Armed Forces with the talk of draw-downs and speculation about upcoming budget cuts. Rumors of programs and events going away are making the rounds as fast as the currents in the Puget Sound. Everyone has been holding their breath for March 1, 2013. Except for the USO Northwest.

We are not part of the Department of Defense and do not receive any government funding. All of our funding comes from amazing supporters like you.

If anything the USO Northwest is preparing to provide even more support to our local military and their families. Since our founding in 1941 the USO has continuously supported the military community during war and peace time. Only once were we put on hiatus and the mistake was quickly realized.

Our Mobile Canteen is ready to deploy to a number of events this year. Trips to Yakima, Spokane, and Idaho are being planned.

Our Staff is planning a dance for our supporting community members and our local military for July 19 at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI).

Tracy Mann, Events Support, is working with QFC and Fred Meyer to have donation drives throughout the next couple months to provide items for our Centers, those deploying and the single service members.

The USO Northwest is continuing to establish brick and mortar places for service members to feel welcomed. As mentioned in *The Oregonian* by columnist Steve Duin, we’re hoping to have a center in the Portland Airport.

One of our Managers, Samantha Lingad, has worked with Naval Base Kitsap to set up designated times on base where we can offer our United Through Reading program in the Liberty Center.

We have the needed passion and drive to make sure our military and their families are taken care of.

Each person who comes through our doors and approaches our Mobile is viewed as a hero. A person who has given up so much allowing us to enjoy freedoms provided by the Constitution. We cannot think of a reason why we wouldn’t want to support them.

So while the government plans to cut back on programs and service offered to our military and their families the USO will not. We will strive to reach more than the 540,000 we currently serve. We will not disappear on March

1 but go on as we have for the last 72 years.

Enjoy the stories published here!

All the best,
Meaghan Cox
Communications and IT Lead



Mark, circle, scribble, the events are here

Donation Drive with QFC

March 9 and April 20, 10:00AM-4:00PM, Collecting nonperishable food items for military and their families at the QFC Store located in Lacey, WA.

Senior Enlisted Meeting

March 21, 11:00AM-12:30PM, At SeaTac the USONW Staff will present information about our programs and brainstorm with the Senior Enlisted on how to better serve our military and their families.

Seattle Mariners Salute to Armed Forces Night

April 13, 5:30PM at Safeco Field, The USONW will have tables on each level to share information and sell our awesome USONW Liberty Bottles and Enduring Support Challenge Coins.

Heroes Half Marathon

April 28, 8:00AM at the Port Gardner Landing in Everett, The USONW Mobile Canteen will be there to show support for the participants and provide snacks.

Red, White and Blue Golf Classic

May 21, 10:00AM at the Golf Club at Newcastle, Join the USONW for a exciting day of golf! Teams are made up of service members and community members.

Ski to Sea

May 26, All Day in Bellingham, The USONW will have an information booth.

Visit USO Northwest at www.usonw.org for more information

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USO Trivia

1. How many individuals did the Mobile Canteen serve in 2012?
2. How many hours did the USO SeaTac Center volunteers serve in 1969?
3. Name the four states USONW now serves.
4. Did the USO have a center in Port Angeles, WA during WWII?
5. When the USO Spokane Center closed in 1947, what was their visitor count (total from 1942 to 1947)?

USO2GO delivered

USO2GO delivers the USO's most popular services to troops in remote and restricted areas. Everything from beanbag chairs, snacks, coffee, and toiletries to phone cards, DVDs, and XBOX 360. At the start of February a unit from Joint Base Lewis-McChord was the recipient of a USO2GO delivery. The donation was overwhelming.



Join 300+ golfers and spectators, local celebrities like former NFL Seattle Seahawks Fullback Mack Strong, and military heroes from all five service branches for a world-class golf event spanning two courses at The Golf Club at Newcastle. Included in the festivities will be an 18-gun salute from the US Marines, a special performance of our National Anthem, an aircraft flyover, delicious food and more! The USO Northwest Red, White and Blue Golf Classic is the Northwest's premier golf tournament and auction benefiting the USONW, local military and their families.



Show your support for our local military becoming a corporate or individual sponsor.



Active-duty military are able to play in our tournament courtesy of our generous sponsors.



We need volunteers for a variety of positions such as scorekeeping.

www.usonw.org/golf

Trivia Answers: 1. Served 80,000 2. Volunteers completed 20,222 hours 3. Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington 4. Yes. 5. 1,959,403 guests.