



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 24, 2010

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**USO Puget Sound Area Golf Tournament Marks Fastest Sell-out in Organization's History
Historic WWII plane flyover and Marine 18-gun salute open event
Former Seattle Mariners Buhner, Valle, and Wilson join as celebrity golfers**

SEATTLE – The USO Puget Sound Area (USOPSA) announced today the fastest sell-out of the annual golf tournament in the organization's history, with the maximum number of golf teams sold-out 8 weeks prior to the May 25th event at the Golf Club at Newcastle. This year's opening ceremonies for the tournament also include the first-time flyover of a World War II Avenger fighter plane, a Marine 18-gun salute, and the support of former Seattle Mariners Jay Buhner, Dave Valle, and Dan Wilson as celebrity golfers.

"This has been the fastest sell-out of an event in the USO Puget Sound Area's history," says Stan Harrelson, president and CEO of the Pinnacle Family of Companies, and chairman for the 2010 Red, White, and Blue Golf Tournament, "This outpouring of support comes at a critical time for our military members and their families. We've seen 30,000 troops deployed from this area over the last year, and our men and women in uniform have been called to unprecedented levels of service. The USOPSA works around-the-clock to provide the comforts of home and moral support to our military community."

Don Leingang, USOPSA executive director praised the sponsors of the golf tournament and work of celebrity golfers Buhner, Valle, and Wilson as co-chairs of the event. "These guys have heart in what they're doing to support the USO," Leingang says, "Our media sponsor, Bonneville Seattle, has provided exceptional promotional support on 710 ESPN Seattle, News Talk 97.3 FM, and 770 KTTH, and we're excited to have sports newscaster Bill Swartz join us as our Master of Ceremonies for the post-tournament dinner, auction, and awards ceremony on May 25th."

A total of 180 golfers will compete at Newcastle with 51 military members sponsored to play in the tournament and attend the awards dinner. "Individuals and businesses are always eager to show their support," says Leingang, "We have 60 corporate and individual sponsors for this year's tournament and auction. Our highest level of corporate support for this event – ever."

A highlight of the tournament includes the flyover of a 1940's Grumman Avenger. Only a few remain out of over 10,000 used as strategic torpedo bombers during World War II. The most famous Avenger pilot is former President, George H.W. Bush. He was the youngest naval aviator at the time and was shot down on Sept. 2, 1944 over the Pacific island of Chichi Jima. A flight in the Avenger is a top auction item for the USOPSA event and includes a framed photograph of the historic plane signed by President Bush.

Golf tournament co-chair, Dan Wilson, says it was an easy decision to support the USOPSA. "As a former Seattle Mariner, I know what it's like to be on the road and separated from my family. It's hard, but it doesn't



come close to what our troops and their families experience during a deployment. It's a great sacrifice and they do it willingly and with honor," Wilson says.

Sportscaster and former Seattle Mariner, Dave Valle, added, "The work of the USO Puget Sound is so important. We need our men and women in uniform, and they need to know that we support them. The USO makes sure that no soldier, sailor, airman, Marine, or Coastguardsman leaves or arrives without hearing the words "thank you," and "welcome home."

Former Mariner teammate and coach, Jay Buhner, says he is looking forward to the event. "Supporting the USO Puget Sound Area is one small way to give back to those who sacrifice so much for our freedoms," says Buhner, "The hundreds of volunteers are the ultimate gratitude team, and make sure that our military members and their families know that we are grateful for their service to our country."

Harrelson added that former Seattle Seahawk, Mack Strong, will also be competing in this year's tournament and has agreed to chair the USO Puget Sound Area golf tournament in 2011. "Mack is a true community leader and servant, and we're very excited to have him leading the charge for next year's tournament," Harrelson says.

Last year over 439,000 people were served through the USOPSA centers and programs – 54,000 more than in 2008 -- including 30,000 troops deployed from the region. This marks the second consecutive year that the nonprofit has set new records for service to the region's military community in the USOPSA's 44-year history. The USOPSA saw increases in the number of troop care packages, doubling to almost 17,000, and a 4,000 per month, on average, increase in servicemen and women utilizing the Sea-Tac and McChord USO Centers, Mobile Canteen, and Cyber Café on Whidbey Island.

Leingang added that while troop deployments from the region may decline, "military families continue to travel 24/7, and caring for the home front will take center stage." "We have military members and their families experiencing multiple and extended deployments, and while troops are beginning to return from Iraq, efforts in Afghanistan continue to increase. As the needs have grown, so has the outpouring of support from our organization." Leingang says.

In addition to troop care packages for deployments and homecoming celebrations, the USOPSA extends "Helping Hands" grants through numerous programs that target the needs of military families. Additionally, USOPSA is a supporter of the Wounded Warrior Battalion at Ft. Lewis' Madigan Hospital.

The USOPSA is a recipient of the 5-Star *Standards of Excellence*, the highest award given to USO centers. The award recognizes centers and operations that "exceed all standards," and places the USOPSA among a select number of 135 USO centers serving the U.S. military around the world.

For more information on the USOPSA and the upcoming golf tournament, dinner and auction at Newcastle, go to www.usopsa.org

The 2010 Red, White, and Blue USO Golf Tournament is made possible by the generous support of our sponsors:



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