



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**USO Statement on 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 9/11 Attacks**  
**“We honor ... our fallen heroes who dedicated their**  
**lives to serving us all since September 11th”**

**Arlington, Va. (September 7, 2021)** – The following is a statement from Dr. J.D. Crouch, II – CEO and President of the United Service Organizations (USO) about the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks:

“This week marks the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks – a day that forever changed our country. It is also a time when we think about how military conflicts have shaped much of the USO’s mission over the last two decades.

Many of us have a personal experience related to the attacks that claimed 2,977 lives that September morning. And the recent events in Afghanistan – where [13 service members were killed in a terrorist attack](#) during a mission to evacuate thousands of American citizens and our allies – highlight the extreme risk our service members have faced over the last 20 years. We honor these and all our fallen heroes who dedicated their lives to serving us all since September 11th.

Following the 9/11 attacks, the impact of the USO’s operations was significant. Immediately after the attacks, according to the USO’s 2001 annual report, the organization’s ‘operations immediately responded, focusing programmatic initiatives inward to those restricted to their bases and extending hours and a variety of services.’ Thanks to the swiftness of our team, we worked to keep them connected to everything that gave meaning to their service.

As the U.S. military ramped up operations, the USO was there by the side of soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and many others who were engaged in the war on terrorism. USO tour veteran Wayne Newton and others first went to European bases and the carrier USS Enterprise in November 2001 to entertain service members. Then in December 2001, Newton, along with Drew Carey and others went to Afghanistan to perform.

The USO, according to this [vivid account from our Southwest Asia operations](#), went in to support our military with a suite of services. This included building full-scale centers to support service members deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and strategic neighboring countries like Kuwait and the UAE.

At one point, there were three large USO centers in Iraq and eight centers in Afghanistan. The first USO facility in Afghanistan was the Pat Tillman Memorial USO Center at Bagram Air Base. Fittingly, it was the last of the USO centers to close in the country, just a few short months ago.

Although we no longer have a physical presence in Afghanistan, we know the USO made an indelible mark in the lives of our troops, their families and the USO staff who served there. We will be forever linked by ‘the mystic chords of memory’ with the thousands of young men and women who spent time in a faraway land to ensure our safety at home.

On this somber anniversary, we honor those who have served and thank all of those at the USO – staff and volunteers – for all that has been done for the USO and for the men and women of our country’s Armed Forces.

While their missions change, our unwavering support of our military men and women never will. Because the weight of the world lands on their shoulders, we must be by their side. Because of the good work at the USO, we always will be.”

Follow the USO on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for updates and join the conversation using #BetheForce and #MoreThanThanks on social media.

**About the USO:**

*The USO strengthens America's military service members by keeping them connected to family, home, and country, throughout their service to the nation. At hundreds of locations worldwide, we are united in our commitment to connect our service members and their families through countless acts of caring, comfort, and support. The USO is a private nonprofit organization, not a government agency. Our programs, services and entertainment tours are made possible by the American people, the support of our corporate partners, and the dedication of our volunteers and staff. To join us in this important mission and learn more about the USO, please visit [USO.org](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).*