



Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
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As delivered

I'm thrilled to be here. I'm really interested in getting to your questions and comments but first I'd like to spend a little bit of time talking about what the USO does for all of us across the joint forces. And I am going to speak to it in the context of Sailors as opposed to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guard and all of those that you serve and then encourage my counterparts to participate in these events in the future. I think it's important we carry the message that leadership really values what it is that the USO does and from a leadership perspective, how important your work is.

Soon I will be traveling to Bremerton, Wash., to visit some of our Sailors there and I'll do an all-hands call. It's hard for me to reach out as the Pacific Fleet commander and touch Sailors on an individual basis. So what Trish and I do when she's traveling with me is hold what we call a "town hall" meeting and those are usually smaller and it's with the spouses. It's not a challenge that the USO has. The USO is out touching Sailors individually every day and just as importantly, touching their families.

We were just talking about how we're in Hawaii – this is paradise – what do we need the USO for? Well it is paradise from a climate perspective but we have military families that are struggling for all kinds of reasons; might be financial or family reasons; or the separation of a young Sailor that just finished basic training who gets posted to Hawaii far from home and then sent on deployment and their family is left here without a sense of how to connect back to family. And of course, that is the mission of the USO and as sometimes I think that's lost on us.

I want talk a little bit about what Pacific Fleet is, to help put into context what those Sailors that you're serving do and how expansive the job is that you've taken on in serving those Sailors. So as the Pacific Fleet commander, I'm a somewhat unique commander in the Navy leadership structure in that I am responsible for both the production of readiness and I'm also a consumer of the readiness of the force. I've been an operator my whole career. Until now I was never responsible for putting money in the bank, for changing the oil in the car, for putting fuel in the tank. That was somebody else that did that. My adage was "what do you mean I'm out of money? I've still got checks." So there's a production side of keeping the Navy operating and those Sailors that you serve in the Pacific own both sides of that responsibility. That's one of the reasons why the Pacific Fleet is the largest commands in the Navy and the largest command in PACOM.

There are 140,000 Sailors that report for duty every morning to the Pacific Fleet. By far and away the largest command of all the commands that serve Admiral Harris. Of those 140,000 Sailors, 50,000 of them, every day, are forward deployed. Now some of them are part of our forward-deployed forces in Japan with their families, although they are on about a 50 percent operational tempo – meaning they are home about 50 percent of the time and gone 50 percent of the time. The remainder of those forces are forward deployed. So we've got the John C. Stennis

strike group that is homeported in San Diego, she'll be deployed for seven to eight months away from home. Not only do those Sailors need support but their families need support back wherever home is.

The geographic area of the Pacific Fleet and the Pacific Command is the largest geographic area of any combatant commander. It also has the largest population of any area for a combatant commander. It is larger both geographically and in population perspective than all the other geographical combatant commanders combined. So that is the mission of the USO here in the Pacific. You're supporting half the world and half the population of military families and their service members.

You've heard about the ongoing rebalance to the Pacific. The challenges that we face here are representative of the challenges we put on the backs of our Sailors. It's home to three of the world's largest economies, 15 of the world's 20 busiest sea ports and seven of the world's 10 largest militaries. So it's a consequential region beyond just size and population. My command is made up of two fleet commanders, the 3rd Fleet and 7th Fleet. Together that comprises over 200 ships, over 1,000 aircraft and as I mentioned, over 140,000 Sailors. I engage with 36 nations in the Pacific region including five of our seven treaty allies. c. To put it in a business context, I'm responsible for around \$500 billion worth of assets as the Pacific Fleet commander and an annual budget of \$12 billion. That's a lot of money and a lot of resources. In comparison, the average Fortune 500 company has about 90,000 fewer employees than the Pacific Fleet and they have about \$455 billion less in assets than the Pacific Fleet. So how do we get at this problem? We get at it by empowering those 140,000 Sailors that the USO supports day in and day out and if you multiply the families behind that, whether it's spouses or children or mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, grandfathers and grandmothers, we're talking easily a force of 500,000 family members that the USO supports just from the Pacific perspective. The USO is a critical partner in everything we do here in the Pacific because it's all about people. People ask me what is the most important resource that I have assigned to me and without a doubt the answer is Sailors and their families. That is exactly what the USO is charged with supporting and exactly why the USO is so important.

Let me give you some examples of what the USO is doing for us. There are a lot of organizations that support the military and we're grateful for all of their support but the USO has an ability to be, as the Chief of Naval Operations says all the time, being where it matters when it matters and I add with what matters. You cannot go through an airport in the United States today where there is not either a direct USO organization or a USO affiliate to support Sailors and their families that are traveling through the airport.

We have established a new relationship with the Australians in Darwin. My wife and I have been to Darwin a couple of times visiting Sailors and we're very grateful for the support that the Navy receives there but most importantly, the Marine Corp. The U.S. presence there is significant so the work that General Toolan has done is really quite extraordinary. The USO is there. They're supporting those Marines that are so far away from their families. I see it in the presence in Korea, in Japan, in Hawaii and the effort that is being undertaken to get a permanent USO representative here. My wife and I were just in Guam and we're thrilled with support we see for the families there by the USO.

I am committed to supporting the success the USO continues to demonstrate throughout the Pacific. It's a vast, vast region and with that comes great problems and in those problems you'll find service members, often times without family and it's that connection that's so critical of the USO to close on.