



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **USO Northwest Florida seeking donations for traveling service members this holiday season**

PENSACOLA, Fla. and Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. - The USO Northwest Florida Centers at the Pensacola International Airport (PNS) and Destin-Ft. Walton Beach Airport (VPS) will be extending their hours of operations to 24-hours a day for the thousands of military personnel heading home during the peak holiday travel times. During this annual "Exodus," the USO provides comfort and care to our service members.

"We are blessed to have so many men and women serving our country who call Pensacola home for a majority of the year," said Pensacola Mayor Ashton Hayward. "Our community is quick to rally behind those who defend our freedom, especially around the holidays. Tis' the season of giving, and there is no better gift than time spent with loved ones."

The USO is accepting refreshments such as individually packaged salty snacks and cookies, Ramen noodle cups, granola bars, peanuts, doughnuts, bottled water, canned soda, and paper products. It is the goal of the USO to make potentially long wait times fun, free, and more enjoyable. Anyone wishing to help may drop off donations December 14 through 23 at the USO Centers at PNS and VPS. Financial support can also be given at

[www.uso.org/northwestflorida](http://www.uso.org/northwestflorida) or by mail at P.O. Box 33135 Pensacola, FL 32508. For information about dropping off donations at PNS, you may call 850-607-8369 and for VPS, please call 850-609-4738.

On December 16 the USO in the Pensacola International Airport is partnering with Coca-Cola and Walmart to bring extra holiday cheer to troops who are on their way home, with a special visit from Santa. Coca-Cola and Walmart are also donating \$10,000 to the USO, which will help the USO give service members and their loved ones much needed support this holiday season. There will be photo opportunities available with Santa from 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. The check presentation will take place at 12:30 p.m. and the Coca-Cola Polar Bear will be on hand for photos as well. Members of the media are welcome to attend as well.

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### About the USO

Mission: The USO strengthens America's military service members by keeping them connected to family, home, and country, throughout their service to our nation. We act as an extended family, with kindness, caring, comfort, compassion, encouragement, support, and reassurance, for American service members everywhere.

Right here in Northwest Florida, the USO is bringing that touch of home to those who are serving their country. The USO Airport Centers see thousands of military personnel each year. There is nothing more comforting to a young service member than seeing that USO sign. They soon learn that the USO is a place to relax, enjoy free refreshments, and see a friendly face who can answer questions and point them in the right direction. That touch of home is provided by this caring community and volunteers who donate their time, financial support and food to the USO. If you are interested in learning more call the USO at 850-455-8280 or log onto [www.usovolunteers.org](http://www.usovolunteers.org) to sign up to volunteer. Training and orientation are provided to ensure you the best volunteer experience possible.

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