

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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April is USO Month

The month of April: It's so easy to go lyrical in the spring - blue birds, cherry blossoms; no ice on the windshield. It's a temptation to look only at the prettiness of spring - to rejoice at the prospect of welcome relief from cold, rain, wind.

But the world hasn't changed - only the weather. Under our spring skies and in the midst of our daffodils we are still a nation with unabated need to maintain an ever-ready military defense. Around the globe politically angry people are rioting and killing and the potential for dangerous conflict prevails.

We have with us the constant knowledge that all is not right with the world.

One very tangible evidence of this is that there are nearly three million young Americans in military service - stationed around the globe.

We as individuals cannot change the temper of nations - but we as individuals can contribute to the well-being of the defenders of our country. The best is none too good for them.

Through the USO we have a way to reach these young people to show our appreciation - to extend our good will.

President Eisenhower says: "April has been designated USO Month. During this time the USO hopes to make everybody more personally concerned for our young people in the Armed Forces and better informed as to how they may best serve their interests."

The Monterey USO invites you to visit the club on Webster and El Estero - and to offer your service to the men and women of our armed forces.

The purpose of USO is to "serve more than 2,500,000 men and women in the various services and their families. It is a voluntary, civilian federation of six agencies and is responsible to the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense. The President is the national honorary chairman of the USO.

Member agencies are Young Men's Christian Assn., National Catholic Community Service, National Jewish Welfare Board, Young Women's Christian Assn., The Salvation Army and National Travelers Aid Assn.

First established on Feb. 4, 1941, the USO now has 267 local units of service in this country and overseas. In addition, special programs for military and naval maneuver areas are planned and carried out as needed. Through its entertainment division, the USO provides units of both professional and approved volunteer entertainers for touring overseas military commands throughout the year.

Twenty-two of the USO clubs and lounges are outside the continental U. S. A. . . . Anchorage (two clubs), Fairbanks, Kodiak, the Canal Zone (three clubs), Nice, Cannes, Paris, Casablanca, Athens, Salonika, Rhodes, Istanbul, Naples, Rome, Seoul, Guam, Manila, Tokyo and Honolulu.

The USO program is designated to meet the specific human needs of members of the armed forces in off-duty hours. Wherever they may be serving those needs remain basically the same - friendship, entertainment, recreation, acceptance by the community, help with personal problems, and contact with the centers of their religious faiths.

During April, USO Month, Monterey's USO will hold open house to give the community a first-hand look at the program available to armed forces personnel through the USO.

"We feel that it will be reassuring for parents to know that their sons and daughters who are away from home while in military service will find recreation and good counsel in the friendly atmosphere of our Monterey USO," Edwin Bliss, chairman of the Monterey USO committee said.