

# SALUTE TO BOB HOPE



Bob Hope, perhaps the best-known entertainer of the 20th century, and America's beloved comedic ambassador, died on July 27, two months after his 100th birthday. Hope was a versatile performer who

succeeded in every aspect of "show-biz". He was a natural showman who entertained eleven U.S. presidents, millions of troops, and countless viewers and listeners around the world.

He may best be remembered for the hundreds of shows he gave at military bases around the world. Traveling with an orchestra and a flotilla of guest stars--many of whom also appeared on his TV specials--Hope entertained the troops on tour from 1942 to 1990. His longtime association with the military resulted in his being named an honorary veteran in 1997, the only American so honored by Congress.

Back in 1941, Bob Hope agreed to appear at a military base in Riverside, California, that did not charge admission. Although reluctant at first, the cheering crowds and favorable publicity changed his mind. He booked an Alaskan tour with the USO in 1942 and took along members of his radio troupe, including trumpeter Jerry Colonna and singer Frances Langford.

The next year Hope visited troops in England, Africa, Sicily and Iceland, and in 1944 he played throughout the South Pacific. In 1945 Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire

joined Bob's caravan in France and Germany. It was, *Newsweek* later declared, "the greatest entertainment giveaway in history."

Hope would open all his shows by introducing his ensemble, adding that nobody on stage had dodged the draft--they were all unfit for service! He would joke that the military had classified him a 4-Z, for "coward".

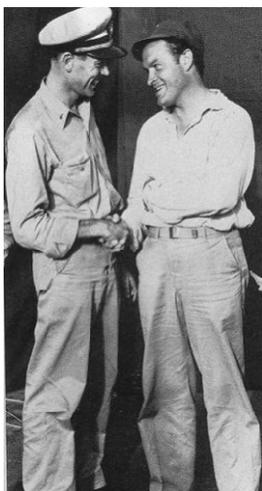
The performances were routine for Hope--it was the venue that mattered. Showing off Langford and a pretty tap-dancer named Patty Thomas, Hope said, "Aren't they lovely hunks of morale, boys?" Reporter Ernie Pyle wrote in 1943 that Hope's entourage had several near misses with the enemy, and that "it got to looking as though the Germans were deliberately after them."

His daughter, Linda Hope, told reporters that her father passed away quietly, with no final words. The family was gathered at his bedside, and seeing a little audience on hand, "it warmed Dad's heart."



The USNS *Bob Hope* (T-AKR 300) honored its late namesake by doing what Bob Hope would have wanted--supporting the troops. The *Bob Hope* has been deployed in the Arabian Gulf since early May.

Military Sealift Command's newest class of ships--Large, Medium-Speed, Roll-on/Roll-off Ships, or LMSR--have expanded the nation's sealift capability by supporting an Army heavy brigade's equipment and a corps' combat support, as well as surge capability for lift of a heavy division's equipment from the USA. Pedestal cranes and both side and stern ramps mean that the LMSR is ideally suited for undeveloped ports or logistics over the shore.



With Henry Fonda who served in the US Navy



Pinning a Red Cross button on President Truman