

**OPERATION TROOP AID TO HONOR  
KELLIE PICKLER  
AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE  
FIRST OPERATION TROOP AID “CHRIS KYLE” PATRIOT AWARD  
*Organization Recognizes Chris Kyle With Official Name Change  
Pickler To Be Presented With Award At 2015 CMA Music Festival***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (May 27, 2015) – **Operation Troop Aid (OTA)**, the elite non-profit military care package charity, will recognize country music star **Kellie Pickler** as the recipient of the first **Operation Troop Aid “Chris Kyle” Patriot Award** (formerly the Operation Troop Aid Patriot Award, now named in memory and honor of the late American Sniper and U.S. Navy SEAL, Chris Kyle). Pickler receives the acknowledgement for her unwavering and impassioned support and contributions to the United States Armed Forces and their families. The Navy SEAL’s parents, **Wayne and Deby Kyle**, and **OTA Founder, Mark Woods**, will make the presentation to Pickler from the LP Field stage (following her performance of the National Anthem to open the night concert) on Saturday, June 13 at the 2015 CMA Music Festival.

Operation Troop Aid is a military organization (specializing in entertainment and care package distribution) founded to make a positive difference in the everyday lives of our military and to inspire our troops by actively demonstrating that fellow Americans stand with them. OTA Founder, Mark Woods joins Mr. and Mrs. Kyle to honor their son, his legacy and his contributions to the U.S. military and its veterans. Deby and Wayne Kyle will be in Nashville Thursday and Friday, June 11-12, 2015, as part of a mini media junket to introduce the **Operation Troop Aid “Chris Kyle” Patriot Award** as official and make the presentation to Pickler at LP Field on June 13.

In its origination, the Operation Troop Aid Patriot Award was established to honor “The American Sniper.” From 1999 to 2009, U.S. Navy SEAL Chris Kyle recorded the most sniper kills in United States military history. Kyle earned his legendary status among his fellow Seal teammates, Marines and other military soldiers and airmen, all of whom he protected with his deadly accuracy from rooftops and stealth positions. Kyle served four combat tours in Operation Iraqi Freedom and other clandestine operations for the U.S. Navy and Marines. He was shot twice, survived multiple helicopter crashes and was involved in six IED attacks. He was awarded two Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars with Valor, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, as well as one Navy and Marine Corps Commendation. Kyle became the Chief Instructor for training Naval Special Warfare Sniper and Counter Sniper teams. He authored the “*Naval Special Warfare Doctrine*,” the first Navy SEAL sniper manual and the New York Times bestselling book “*American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. History*,” which ranks as one of the greatest war memoirs of all time. Before his untimely passing in 2013, Chris Kyle worked to assist veterans in re-acclimating to civilian life and overcome combat stress.

*“Chris Kyle’s dedication to serve and protect our country is demonstrative and symbolic of all our service men and women who make the ultimate sacrifice,”* said **Operation Troop Aid Founder Mark Woods**. *“To honor Chris’ service and resound his personal mantra (‘It is our duty to serve those that serve us’), it is absolutely fitting that we rename our annual award in Chris Kyle’s name, honor and legacy.”*

A member of a military family, Kellie Pickler is passionate about supporting the men and women of America’s armed forces. Pickler is an eight-time USO tour veteran and the 2013 recipient of the Heart for the Warrior Award from the USO of North Carolina. As the captain of the winning celebrity team in the recent inaugural Cracker Barrel Old Country Store Country Checkers Challenge, Pickler was

awarded \$25,000 for the USO to support the organization's programs and services. In recognition of her contributions to the troops, she was the cover girl on *Maxim* magazine's military issue in 2012.

*"We are pleased to recognize this young lady as part of our (now) annual tradition; we welcome Kellie to the legacy of Chris Kyle's service to our military in alliance with Operation Troop Aid,"* stated **Wayne Kyle**. *"Words are simply not enough to express our deep gratitude for those, like Ms. Pickler, who freely share their love and support of our military men and women. This award will be one of the great highlights for us each and every year and we are proud to be a part of it."*

Pickler will be the first woman to receive the annual OTA award; previous recipients of the Operation Troop Aid Patriot Award include Kid Rock, Hank Williams Jr., Toby Keith, KISS, Darryl Worley, Aaron Tippin, Mark Wills, Charlie Daniels and Gary Sinise.

For more on Operation Troop Aid, visit: [www.operationtroopaid.org](http://www.operationtroopaid.org).

# # #

#### **About Operation Troop Aid:**

Founded in 2004 by 21-year military veteran, Mark Woods, Operation Troop Aid promotes entertainment initiatives and provides care packages for U.S. troops with revenue generated through event promotions and public financial generosity. OTA is a nonprofit corporation striving to make a positive difference and inspire the United States Armed Forces by letting them know Americans stand with them. Operation Troop Aid is a certified IRS approved charity.

#### **About Kellie Pickler:**

Kellie Pickler grew up immersed in country music in the small town of Albemarle, North Carolina with the words of Tammy Wynette, Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, and Dolly Parton shaping her musical footing. At the age of 19, she gained fame as a contestant on the fifth season of "American Idol." In 2006, she signed with 19 Recordings/BNA Records and released her debut album, *Small Town Girl*, which has gone on to sell more than 900,000 copies worldwide and produce three hit singles: "Red High Heels," "I Wonder," and "Things That Never Cross a Man's Mind." She followed that in 2008 with her self-titled sophomore record, featuring country radio hits "Don't You Know You're Beautiful," "Best Days of Your Life" (co-written with Taylor Swift and her first Top 10), and "Didn't You Know How Much I Loved You." Having established herself as not only a powerful vocalist but also a songwriter, Pickler released her third studio album, *100 Proof*, in 2011 to huge critical acclaim. The album was named the No. 1 Country Album of The Year by *Rolling Stone* and was listed on "Best of 2012" lists by *Washington Post*, Rhapsody, AOL's The Boot and more. In spring of 2013, Pickler partnered with dance coach Derek Hough and won the Mirror Ball Trophy on "Dancing with the Stars." On Nov. 11, 2013, Pickler released her new album, *The Woman I Am*, on her new label home, Black River Entertainment. She co-wrote three songs on the critically-acclaimed album, including the title cut. Pickler recently launched her home goods line "Selma Drye by Kellie Pickler" in cooperation with the Opry Stores ([shop.opry.com](http://shop.opry.com)). She is currently working on a new album. In addition, she will star in the upcoming CMT reality show "I Love Kellie Pickler" due to air later this year. Pickler is also an avid supporter of the U.S. military, having recently completed her eighth USO Tour in December 2014. For more information, please visit [www.kelliepickler.com](http://www.kelliepickler.com).

#### **OPERATION TROOP AID MEDIA CONTACT:**

Music City Media  
Kat Atwood | [katwood@musiccitynews.com](mailto:katwood@musiccitynews.com) | 615.770.2994  
[MusicCityMedia.com](http://MusicCityMedia.com)

#### **KELLIE PICKLER MEDIA CONTACT:**

Essential Broadcast Media  
Ebie McFarland / Scott Stem | [ebie@ebmediapr.com](mailto:ebie@ebmediapr.com) / [scott@ebmediapr.com](mailto:scott@ebmediapr.com) | 615.327.3259