

PEARL HARBOR AVIATION MUSEUM SALUTES BOB HOPE ON HIS 123rd BIRTHDAY and 85TH ANNIVERSARY MONTH OF HIS FIRST PERFORMANCE FOR A MILITARY AUDIENCE

Eye-catching colorized photos of the day of Bob Hope's first broadcast to the troops in May 1941 and an audio link to that Pepsodent radio show are included below

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

HONOLULU, HI, May 29, 2026 — Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum proudly salutes Bob Hope on his 123rd birthday and the 85th anniversary month of a historic moment in entertainment and military history—Hope's first broadcast for the military from March Field in Riverside, CA.

Hope was born on May 29, 1903 in Eltham, England. He arrived in the United States with his family at the age of four, grew up in Cleveland, and eventually became one of the world's greatest entertainers and the most noted supporter of America's troops.

"Bob Hope's tireless dedication, along with the performances of countless others, provided comfort and joy and brought a touch of home to America's service members throughout World War II and beyond," said Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum CEO John Hiltz.

"That's why the Museum is creating an exhibit named 'Hope for Humanity,' that will be the gateway to our new 'America Responds' galleries," Hiltz said. "There, visitors will discover how Bob Hope's USO tours and the support of other Hollywood stars such as Bing Crosby, Clark Gable and Bette Davis became a beacon of hope amid the turmoil of World War II, a legacy that remains relevant today."

"We will feature a 'Star of the Month' video each month of a different entertainer who performed for our troops and supported the war effort in World War II, Korea and/or Vietnam," Hiltz said. "But of all those who have performed for our troops over the years, none has had the impact of Bob Hope. His many tours built morale by bringing hope and joy to our troops will be featured on a large interactive map that chronicles the countless places Bob entertained our troops across the globe over five decades."

"Hope for Humanity" is part of the Museum's \$51 million "Remember Pearl Harbor" national capital campaign that aims to restore America's World War II Aviation Battlefield and tell the story of the hangars, the control tower and the runway on Ford Island that were authentic witnesses to the attack on December 7, 1941 that drew our nation into World War II.

On May 6, 1941 — seven months before the attack on Pearl Harbor — Bob Hope stepped before a group of Army Air Corps servicemen at March Field for what would lead to more than 50 tours for American troops around the world, including more than 20 Christmas tours. What began as a single radio broadcast evolved into a six-decade commitment to American service members during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War.

At the time of his March Field broadcast, Hope was already a nationally recognized radio personality, starring on the #1-rated *Pepsodent Show* on NBC. His appearance was initially intended as a routine stateside broadcast. Instead, the enthusiastic response from the servicemen in attendance revealed a powerful truth: laughter was a strategic asset on the eve of global war.

That day, Hope famously observed the unique energy of performing for military audiences, and his total dedication to supporting our troops from that moment on came to define him as a true American patriot.



Bob Hope performs for the first time at a military base 85 years ago this month, on May 6, 1941 (top). While at the base, Hope and singer Frances Langford had fun with a B-17 Flying Fortress.

As the United States entered World War II following the events of December 7, 1941, Hope took his show on the road — bringing his troupe of “gypsies” — including singer Frances Langford, comedian Jerry Colonna, guitarist Tony Romano and dancer Patty Thomas — and his unique brand of sharp, topical humor directly to forward operating bases across Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific.

Over the next six decades, Hope performed before millions of American troops in remote jungles, frozen outposts, aircraft carriers, and desert staging areas. His dedication earned him the Congressional Gold Medal and a Congressional designation as the first official “Honorary Veteran” of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The May 6, 1941 broadcast at March Field represents more than a nostalgic footnote. It marked the beginning of modern celebrity troop entertainment and the institutional partnership between Hollywood and the American military that would later be formalized through organizations such as the United Service Organizations (USO).

Historians note that Hope’s March Field performance established a new tradition: using entertainment as a means of sustaining morale, reinforcing unity on the home front, and reminding service members that they were not forgotten.

Eighty-five years later, the legacy of that single broadcast continues to resonate. It stands as a testament to the enduring bond between America’s armed forces and the artists who support them—and to one comedian who understood, early on, that serving those who serve is both a privilege and a responsibility.

Thanks for the memory, Bob.

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ADDENDUM: BOB HOPE’S PERSONAL MEMORIES OF HIS MAY 6, 1941 BROADCAST, AND A LINK TO THE HISTORIC RADIO SHOW FROM MARCH FIELD

Bob Hope’s Remembrances of the Broadcast:

“We had no idea we were going to discover an audience so ready for laughter, it would make what we did for a living seem like stealing money,” Hope wrote in his 1990 book “Don’t Shoot, It’s Only Me,” describing his performance at March Field, California in May 1941.

Hope’s opening monologue connected with the airmen at March Field and his audience around the nation:

“How do you do, ladies and gentlemen. This is Bob “March Field’ Hope—telling all of you soldiers that have to shoot in swamp or march in the brush, if they use Pepsodent no one will

ever have to drill in your mush...Well, here we are at March Field, one of the Army's great flying fields, located near Riverside, California...and I want to tell you I'm thrilled being here. And what a wonderful welcome you gave me...as soon as I got in the camp, I received a ten-gun salute...or so they told me on the operating table. These guys were glad to see me...one rookie came running up to me and said, "Are you really Bob Hope?" I said, "Yes!" — they grabbed his rifle just in time..."

Here is a link to the audio file of the **Bob Hope Pepsodent Show** from March Field on May 6, 1941. There is no known audio file of the entire show. This is the link to the best version that exists, which contains about 90 percent of the historic broadcast:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/0soo33lo14f0926fyrsvi/Bob-Hope-Pepsodent-Radio-Show-May-6-1941-from-March-Field.mp3?rlkey=8zuepoyu5tx5qhnvn2p37njoist=m9e0qtmr&dl=0>

About Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum:

Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum is more than a museum—it's a place where history, innovation, and inspiration come together. Located on Historic Ford Island, the site of the December 7, 1941 attack, the Museum stands on America's World War II aviation battlefield. Visitors can walk through bullet-scarred hangars, see legendary aircraft like the Japanese Zero and B-17 Swamp.Ghost, and hear the powerful stories of the heroes who changed the course of history. Beyond preserving the past, Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum is committed to shaping the future. Through youth programs, scholarships, and workforce development initiatives, the Museum educates and empowers the next generation. From signature events like PHAMily Fun Day to hands-on STEM experiences, flight simulators and more, the Museum connects people of all ages with the wonder of flight and the importance of history. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Museum relies on donations, volunteers, and members to fulfill its mission: to steward America's WWII aviation battlefield and inspire future generations through education and remembrance. Join us, support our work, or plan your visit at PearlHarborAviationMuseum.org

About Bob and Dolores Hope Foundation:

Bob and Dolores Hope Foundation (BobHope.org) supports organizations that bring "HOPE" to those in need and those who served to protect our nation. The Foundation also supports charitable organizations that preserve and honor the legacy of Bob Hope as an American entertainer, humanitarian, patriot, sportsman and supporter of military personnel and their families.

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