

NATIONAL  
VETERANS  
MEMORIAL  
AND MUSEUM

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**National Veterans Memorial and Museum to Unveil**  
***So Ready for Laughter: The Legacy of Bob Hope***  
***Special exhibit from The National WWII Museum tells the story of Hope's life***  
***and unique contributions to World War II***

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** (January 9, 2020) – The [National Veterans Memorial and Museum](https://www.nationalvmm.org) today announced the opening of its newest special exhibit, *So Ready for Laughter: The Legacy of Bob Hope*, on January 31, 2020. The National Veterans Memorial and Museum will be the traveling exhibit's first stop following The National WWII Museum in New Orleans, where it debuted. The exhibit will be open through April 17, 2020.

“For those of us who have served our country far from home, Bob Hope’s USO shows were an incredible morale booster,” said Lieutenant General Michael Ferriter (U.S. Army retired), President and CEO of the National Veterans Memorial and Museum. “We are excited to share Bob Hope’s unparalleled commitment to entertaining our military members during 2020, the 75<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of WWII, in a museum dedicated to telling veterans’ stories.”

Supported by national tour exhibit sponsor, the Bob & Dolores Hope Foundation, *So Ready for Laughter* tells the story of Bob Hope’s unique place in WWII history and beyond. Using multimedia elements and captivating storytelling—including artifacts, films, rare photographs and an interactive display—the exhibit highlights how Hope helped lift the human spirit during one of the darkest times in American history.

Exploring Hope’s major tours and travels during World War II, *So Ready for Laughter* features nearly 50 artifacts and includes an original 11-minute documentary produced by award-winning filmmaker, John Scheinfeld. Highlights include rare and unpublished photographs of Hope; wartime correspondence between Hope and servicemembers; WWII-era relics engraved to Hope; videos of his traveling, wartime troupe and Hollywood Victory Caravan programs and scrapbooks.

“From the first time my father, Bob Hope, entertained the troops at March Field in 1941, he knew he had discovered a most meaningful audience,” said Linda Hope. “He truly appreciated the men and women who were sacrificing to defend America on the Homefront and abroad. It was his honor, along with the entertainers with whom he collaborated, to connect these individuals with a touch of home and let them laugh -- even if only for a brief moment. Bob Hope knew this was the “Greatest Generation” even as he entertained subsequent generations of troops around the world across six decades. In his memory, the Bob Hope Legacy is thrilled to sponsor *So Ready for Laughter*, an exhibition which celebrates Bob’s

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# NATIONAL VETERANS MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

spirit and honors the courageous men and women who served our country during the perilous time of World War II."

Bob Hope came to the United States as an immigrant with his family in the early 1920s, settling in Cleveland, Ohio. He initially worked as a newsboy, butcher's assistant, shoe salesman and amateur boxer. Hope went on to eventually shape his art on the vaudeville stage, and by the start of World War II, he was just emerging as one of America's most popular radio and film stars. When the nation went to war in 1941, Hollywood recognized the need for contributions and responded by entertaining troops, raising funds, and boosting morale. Hope's work quickly took on new meaning when he took his wartime programs on the road to military camps and bases across the country, inspiring other entertainers to join him.

"Bob Hope's legacy of entertaining the nation's military began in World War II as he toured the world to lift the morale of the men and women fighting overseas, and his dedication to our troops lasted over seven decades," said Kim Guise, Assistant Director for Curatorial Services at The National WWII Museum. "He saw the positive impact laughter could make during the difficult times of the war and believed that it was important to bring a piece of home to the front lines."

## **The National Veterans Memorial and Museum**

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum takes visitors on a narrative journey telling individual stories and shared experiences of Veterans from all military branches throughout history. The National Veterans Memorial and Museum pays tribute to the sacrifices of men and women in service and their families. History is presented in a dynamic, participatory experience with photos, letters and personal effects, multi-media presentations, and interactive exhibits. Together, these elements link our national story to the larger context of world

## **Bob & Dolores Hope Foundation**

The Bob Hope Legacy honors and preserves the "Spirit of Bob Hope", underscoring his career as a world class entertainer, comedian, patriot and humanitarian. The broader Bob & Dolores Hope Foundation, which supports the Bob Hope Legacy, was established to provide for and assure the continuation of the philanthropic ideals of Bob and Dolores Hope.

**The National WWII Museum** tells the story of the American experience in *the war that changed the world*—why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today—so that future generations will know the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn. Dedicated in 2000 as The National D-Day Museum and now designated by Congress as America's National WWII Museum, it celebrates the American spirit, the teamwork, optimism, courage and sacrifices of the men and women who fought on the battlefield and served on the Home Front. For more information, call 877-813-3329 or 504-528-1944 or visit [nationalww2museum.org](http://nationalww2museum.org).

Support for the *So Ready for Laughter: The Legacy of Bob Hope* exhibit was provided by the Greater Columbus Arts Council

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