

# On Stage

*Over the course of history, many entertainers have supported our troops during times of conflict. Veterans magazine takes the time to highlight four such artists who have made an impact on the spirit of this country.*



Lee Greenwood, happy to be chatting with troops and signing autographs. The troops are thrilled as well.

## “God Bless the USA.”

The most recognized patriotic song in America  
**Lee Greenwood**

Few artists have ever written a song that has become more a part of America’s cultural landscape than Lee Greenwood’s “God Bless the USA.” If he’d never written or recorded another hit, Greenwood would have secured his place in music history with that powerful inspiring ballad.

“God Bless the USA” has been voted the most recognizable patriotic song in America, taking the top honor over “God Bless America” and the “National Anthem,” but it is only one of the many hits that have propelled Greenwood’s

successful career. With his distinctive voice, insightful songwriting and unparalleled showmanship, Greenwood has been captivating audiences for decades.

Along the way, he has won numerous accolades including two Male Vocalist of the Year awards from the Country Music Association and the CMA Song of the Year honor in 1985 for “God Bless the USA.” He has won the Top Male Vocal Performance in 1983 for “I.O.U.” His lengthy string of hits includes such classics as “Ring on Her Finger, Time on Her Hands,” “It Turns Me Inside Out,” “Somebody’s Gonna Love You,” “I Don’t Mind the Thorns (If You’re the Rose)” and “Dixie Road.”

Never one the rest, Greenwood continues to write and record with the same passion and integrity that has always fueled his stellar career. "I want my family to see what I do and not just what I did," he says of sharing his passion for music with his wife Kim and their two sons, Dalton and Parker. "I like the artistry of it. I could have been a carpenter or a farmer, but I love the spirit of music. That love still flows and I'm writing much more than I have in previous years. I want to create something new."

That creative spark began early in Greenwood's life. He grew up on a farm near Sacramento, California and in between doing the hard work required on a working farm; Lee developed his musical skills. He began playing the saxophone at seven and by the time he was 14, he could play nearly all the instruments in the school orchestra. While still in junior high school, he launched his first band, the Moonbeams.

Greenwood became a working musician at a young age and was very focused on his career. He passed on a music/track scholarship to the College of the Pacific and a shot at a professional baseball career to pursue his musical ambitions. He even skipped his high school graduation ceremony because he had a show to play at the Golden Hotel & Casino in Reno, Nevada. "I needed to put my next foot forward," says Greenwood with a smile. "So I skipped graduation and headed for Nevada."

Like all young musicians, Greenwood was faced with a series of decisions that would significantly shape his career. He met a keyboard player named Felix Cavaliere at the Desert Inn Hotel in Las Vegas where they were both working in the lounge. Lee joined the show group and went to Puerto Rico for a month with a promise to appear on the Ed Sullivan Show. The show fell through and Lee ended up living for a while at the drummer's apartment in Hoboken, New Jersey. Felix and Dino approached Lee about joining them in forming a band to work and record in New York. However, Lee decided to return to Nevada. The group they would form became the Young Rascals who went on the record the hit "Good Lovin'" and enjoy a successful run at the top of the charts. But Greenwood never regretted his decision. "I didn't want to be part of a band...I always wanted to have a solo career."

Early on, Greenwood lived in Los Angeles and recorded for Paramount Records, but admits those were lean years. Tired of struggling, he opted for the bright lights of Las Vegas where he became one of the most popular entertainers on the competitive casino circuit. There he

## God Bless The U.S.A.

by Lee Greenwood

*If tomorrow all the things were gone,  
I'd worked for all my life.  
And I had to start again,  
with just my children and my wife.  
I'd thank my lucky stars,  
to be livin here today.  
'Cause the flag still stands for freedom,  
and they can't take that away.*

*And I'm proud to be an American,  
where at least I know I'm free.  
And I won't forget the men who died,  
who gave that right to me.  
And I gladly stand up,  
next to you and defend her still today.  
'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land,  
God bless the USA.*

*From the lakes of Minnesota,  
to the hills of Tennessee.  
Across the plains of Texas,  
From sea to shining sea.  
From Detroit down to Houston,  
and New York to L.A.  
Well there's pride in every American heart,  
and its time we stand and say.*

*That I'm proud to be an American,  
where at least I know I'm free.  
And I won't forget the men who died,  
who gave that right to me.  
And I gladly stand up,  
next to you and defend her still today.  
'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land,  
God bless the USA.*

honed his live performance skills and developed his craft as a songwriter. Famed country music manager Larry McFadden discovered Greenwood and brought him to the attention of MCA Records Nashville where he teamed with acclaimed producer Jerry Crutchfield to record his groundbreaking country debut album, "It Turns Me Inside Out."

Years of performing in Vegas taught Greenwood how to connect with an audience and his ear for a great song combined with his distinctive voice gave him an edge at country radio. He soon became one of the format's biggest stars serving up such hits as "It Turns Me Inside Out," "Ain't No Trick," "She's Lying," "Hearts Aren't Made to Break (They're Made to Love)," "You've Got a Good Love Comin'" and "Going, Going, Gone."

"I think my choice of material has been an asset to my career. People recognize that I choose songs that have quality and are not cheap shots," says Greenwood. "I always record songs that have more depth in the lyric. I'm just not the kind of guy to sing something cute. I'm a songwriter and I go for depth. Maybe that's what has made me have a lasting career."

Lee met a young Nashville girl who was in college at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. She was also Miss Tennessee USA 1989. On Lee's USO/DOD tour that year they fell in love and were married in Nashville in 1992.

After more than a dozen years of relentless touring, Greenwood decided to scale back and spend more time with his family. Their son, Dalton was born in April 1995 and the following year the veteran performer opened the Lee Greenwood Theater in Sevierville, Tennessee, a booming tourist town in the Smoky Mountains. Boasting state-of-the-art sound and lighting, the theater provided Greenwood an opportunity to indulge his passion for performing yet remain in one place and spend time with his family. (Second son, Parker, was born in 1998.)

"We had a two and a half hour performance that was like a Broadway show with dancers, singers, costumes, lights and a full band," says Greenwood. "It was everything you would see in New York and we did 220 shows a year."

After five years, Greenwood opted to leave the Smoky Mountains and resume touring nationally. He continued to be in constant demand, particularly after the terrorist attacks of September 11 when the nation once again embraced "God Bless the USA" as part of the healing process.

Greenwood admits when he first wrote the song, he had no idea how much it would impact people. "One of the reasons

I wrote the lyric 'I'm proud to be an American,' is I really wanted to instill the pride back in America. The song represents my family, my community and all the Americans who are proud of who they are."

As proud as he is of "God Bless the USA," Greenwood is an artist who prefers to look forward not back, and these days he's most excited about two new recording projects. He's currently working on an album of pop standards such as Ray Charles' classic "I'm Busted" and Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time."

Greenwood is also working on a new country album. "This is more than a come back album, this is more like a reinstatement of my talent," he says. "Even at this age, I can still do this effectively and this will be an album for all generations. I'm hoping to discover a new legion of fans that buy the music that Keith Urban, Toby Keith, Brooks & Dunn and Martina McBride are recording. I intend on being competitive. That's the only way you'll get on radio and the charts."

Competitive and driven as an entertainer, Lee Greenwood is also a loving family man and a savvy businessman who has learned to effectively balance all facets of his busy life. And yes, he could sit back and enjoy the success of his career but that's not Lee Greenwood. He's always moving forward, ready to conquer the next challenge.

"I'm not easily defeated," he says sitting in his Music Row office, wearing a smile and an air of determination. "I've been at the bottom and I know I don't like it there. I prefer to be successful. I prefer to be resourceful and in pursuit of excellence and in pursuit of something I have a passion for. I've been a musician and a singer since I was seven years old. It's always something that brought me joy and because I have joy in my heart for doing it, I spread the joy to other people. Whether I made \$100 a week or \$50,000 a night, it doesn't really make a difference to me as long as I've made the audience happy. I sing for the joy of it."

## **Thanksgiving With Troops In Iraq & Kuwait** **Aaron Tippin**

By William E. Dietzel

I had the privilege to interview a super-patriot and a super country music singer—Aaron Tippin about his trip to Iraq. Aaron Tippin, takes the time each year to go overseas to entertain our troops, leaving his family during a special holiday and spending Thanksgiving with our troops who are serving in Kuwait and Iraq. The tour is sponsored by Stars For Stripes and organized by July Seals who used to be Minnie Pearl's manager.

In an interview with Aaron Tippin said “performing for the military is now a part of my life and believe me when I say it gives me a great feeling of love and appreciation for those man and women standing the line for Freedom. “The military jump started my career when I performed my first single ‘ You’re Got to Stand for Something.’ This is my third tour of this particular region and fifth time entertaining the troops since becoming the first singer to entertain our military in Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf War in 1990, along with Bob Hope.

Every time we go over there they always tell me what a blessing it is for me to come and perform for them,” says Tippin. “It’s more of a blessing for me than they’ll ever know.

“We have played outside the wire near the enemy. We make great un-armed targets when we get into a group and make noise. When we volunteered to play in Falluja at a dangerous outpost where they get very little entertainment, we played acoustically around an old campfire.

“I didn’t serve in the military, but grow up with a Dad in the Air Force as a flight instructor flying T-28s. I have two uncles, one which was in the Army and the other in the National Guard. I now have a son-in-law who’s in the South Carolina National Guard—‘The Black Guards’. I am very proud of him.

“To sum it all up, going over there and seeing for yourself is seeing what’s real,” Tippin says. “We’re winning the war...the evidence is there.”

While touring in the U.S., Tippin regularly donates his time performing for charities and special events that honor the U.S. military. He is also the spokesman for the Paralyzed Veterans of America and for the Armed Services YMCA. Stars For Stripes is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing celebrity entertainment to troops deployed overseas.

## Serving Fort Campbell Soldiers with the Underwater Warriors

Deborah Allen

Singer/songwriter/producer Deborah Allen traveled to the Cayman Brac with six injured soldiers from Fort Campbell in connection with the Underwater Warriors on March 24 – 31 for six days of diving and healing. Deborah, a spokesperson for Underwater Warriors, played a small benefit concert on March 30th in which she dedicated her song, “Deeper Waters” to the Underwater Warriors.



Aaron Tippin stands with happy members of the United States Air Force

“This is a great opportunity for me to give back to the soldiers and thank them for sacrificing their lives for us,” said Deborah. “This was a life-changing trip. When

you see in person the sacrificial scars that are carried by our young brave wounded soldiers, then how they courageously move forward with confidence into the freedom, yet challenging mysteries of the underwater world, you can’t help but be moved and impressed by their positive spirits and attitudes. Seeing the beaming smiles of accomplishment on their faces as they pop up out of the water after a dive into the deep is affirmation that Under Water Warriors Foundation is a legacy of healing for our country that must be carried on!”

Cayman Brac. is partnered with Underwater Warriors, a US non-profit organization to provide a journey of healing for injured servicemen and women through scuba diving. Underwater Warriors Foundation (UWF) is an educational organization that was launched in March 2006 to teach scuba as a therapeutic recreation to wounded soldiers and their family members, and operates without cost to the participants. These injured soldiers are able to find freedom once again in an underwater world.

*The 50-50-90 rule: Any time you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there’s a 90% probability you’ll get it wrong*



World-class artist, Deborah Allen, a Memphis native, has recorded and toured with various musical icons.

This event was organized by Underwater Warriors and was possible through the cooperative efforts of both public and private sectors on Cayman Brac. Sister Islands District Commissioner Ernie Scott says, "This is further proof that a partnership between businesses and government can produce powerful results. We see huge potential for the development of our Island's relationship with Underwater Warriors.

"As an ex-serviceman, I understand the huge sacrifice these brave men and women have made," said Craig Burhart, owner of Indepth Watersports, the dive operation in Cayman Brac that is partnering with Underwater Warriors. "My staff and I are happy to do whatever we can to help restore their confidence and ability to enjoy life," he added.

"Cayman Brac is one of the safest, most tranquil places on earth, and we are delighted to be able to share our beautiful Island with those who have had to deal with the trauma of war," noted Sister Islands Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Moses Kirkconnell. "A program to serve those who deserve so much is entirely honorable, and Cayman Brac's involvement is simply the right thing to do," he added.

In addition to the Underwater Warriors, Memphis native, Deborah Allen, has committed her time and talents to various charity benefits over the years including the Celebrity Race Tractor hosted during last year's CMA Festival in Nashville. The star-studded event, which was a huge hit among country fans, benefited Habitat for Humanity and sparked national press attention.

Allen, a world-class artist, is known for such hits as "Rock Me," "Baby I Lied," "I've Been Wrong Before," "I Hurt for You," and "Nobody's Fool." The Memphis native has recorded and toured with various musical icons including George Jones, Prince, Hanks Williams, Jr., Little Big Town, Billy Dean, and Paul Overstreet.

### **“Help A Vet, Help A Vet”**

#### **Tour Shifts Into High Gear To Help His Fellow Veterans Floyd Flowers**

Hologram Records recording artist, Floyd Flowers is helping the veterans and giving back to them what they gave to him. This country music singer/songwriter from Pitt County, NC was nominated at the 2007 New Music Awards for "Breakthrough Country Artist of the Year" and he is now on his "Help A Vet, Help A Vet" tour, receiving an amazing response.

Floyd is playing traditional country music at clubs, VFW's and VA Hospitals. He is paying tribute to his fellow veterans by donating 15% of record sales to the Department of Veteran Affairs. He is also promoting his "Red, White & Blue" campaign for the veterans. Anyone attending his shows wearing these colors will receive a special discount on his merchandise. "I understand the huge sacrifice these brave men and women have made and I am happy to do what I can," said Floyd.



Floyd Flowers is a traditional country music artist who makes sure he gives back to the brave men and women in uniform.

After the success of "Small Living For A Large Family," which landed the #1 position on the Indie World charts, Floyd released his new single, "Overtime," which is currently climbing the New Music Weekly, Music Row and Indie World charts. This single can be found on his latest CD, I Ain't Much But I'm All I Got. This album also includes the smash hit, "Since You Moved Out, I Moved Her In."

Floyd is not your country music singer, but your typical everyday man. This disabled Vet can relate to people who are trying to make ends meet. He was in the Army Reserve, U.S Navy Active Duty, worked construction, had his own dry wall company and has even been trained as a practical nurse.

Floyd was adopted by his grandfather's twin sister after his biological mother was unable to make ends meet. Though Floyd never met his real father, a highly decorated Staff Sgt., he found a dad in his great uncle, Floyd Sr. When he was 12, he was writing and singing his own tunes. "My Mom always encouraged me to keep playing and singing."

During Floyd's high school years, he enlisted in the Army Reserve, and after a few years transferred to the U.S. Navy Active Duty. "During this time, I kept singing and picking my guitar every chance I had," said Floyd. His talent was recognized when he won the "Veteran Administration Southwest Regional Vocal Competition." While in the Navy, he also won recognition as "Atlantic Fleet Singer."

In 2001, Floyd received his first #1 on the Indie World charts with "Bring It On Home." Since then, Floyd had chart success with "She's Got It," which reached #1 on the Indie World and Inside Country charts. Floyd has played in many venues including the Oklahoma Opry, Carolina Opry, and Tootsie's. He has also played at the Lake Country Music Festival in Virginia, where he opened for Travis Tritt, Marty Stuart and Emerson Drive.

Floyd's values are old fashioned and his music is anything but pop. "My musical style is clean and country. I choose to write the best songs to give the audience a glimpse of who I am." Floyd is on the path to pursue his love of country music and help his fellow veterans at the same time.

To stay updated on Floyd and to purchase his album, see where he is performing and for booking inquiries, visit [www.hologramrecords.com](http://www.hologramrecords.com) and [www.plamedia.com](http://www.plamedia.com).

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