



MOMENT WITH MO

Summer 2010

This issue of the OTA newsletter focuses on leadership. We often hear the term “lead by example” and we have many stories to share about people who do just that – they lead every day through normal acts of caring and selflessness.

OTA is fortunate to work with these people and we owe our success to them.

In our “Students for Soldiers” segment you’ll read about some remarkable students who, in various ways, went above and beyond to demonstrate support for our deployed troops. What makes them so special is that they did so with no other motive than to do something good for others.

Community support is needed now more than ever, and you’ll read about how the business community has worked diligently to help OTA carry out “wish list” requests for our brave soldiers.

You’ll also read a very special story about how two groups, OTA and Animal Friends, joined forces to help some very special canines who lead the way as they help to protect our deployed soldiers in Afghanistan.

And we are proud to share with you the incredible job our own PA National Guardsmen are doing in Afghanistan, and of how, once again, the country came to Pennsylvania’s finest to deploy the best example of military leadership to complete missions overseas.

Finally, there is a story about some incredible honors that have been bestowed on me personally. Having been involved with OTA since its inception, I have been blessed because I found a way to demonstrate my support for the troops in a very real and tangible way. It is an honor to be recognized for work on a cause I feel true passion for.

As you read this issue of the newsletter, you’ll see that there are many leaders in OTA who all do remarkable works every day in support of our troops. And we thank everyone who has chosen to be a leader for our cause.



Monica Orluk

Vice President

WE ARE COMMITTED TO OUR COURAGEOUS...

Operation Troop Appreciation (OTA) is dedicated to members of our Armed Forces serving and sacrificing for our country. By providing them with “wish list” items to raise their morale and to aid in the success and safety of their missions, we present a united front to our deployed military by supporting them as individuals. We do this because each and every one of them:

- ★ Memorializes our nation's past
- ★ Sacrifices to maintain our nation's culture and freedoms
- ★ Ensures the safety and freedom of our nation's future generations

Our mission is to build and sustain the morale of deployed troops, enabling them to complete their missions with the assurance that the American public supports and appreciates their selfless service and daily sacrifices.

FACES FROM THE FRONT

Since the last newsletter edition, OTA has provided “wish list” items to **4,000 troops**, items ranging from **sports equipment, Under Armour® moisture-wicking shirts, phone cards, pillows, sheets, personal hygiene, and snack items**. Here are a few of the smiling faces and the “wish list” items they received from OTA!



Unit: 2 Div NPTT from Ft. Riley, KS

Mission: Train the Iraqi military police

“Wish list” items: Men’s undershirts and boxers, socks, pillows, sheets sets, hygiene supplies



Unit: 2nd Plt, B Co 1-503rd stationed in Italy

Mission: Fight the Taliban in Afghanistan

“Wish list” items: Under Armour® shirts, blankets, snacks, socks, gloves, movies



Unit: BTT 10601 COS Irbil from Ft. Riley, KS

Mission: This Border Transition Team is responsible for protecting the border between Iraq and Turkey

“Wish list” items: Mosquito netting, protein mix, video gaming, hygiene items



Unit: 3-320 FA S3 from Ft. Campbell, KY

Mission: Provide support to units in Afghanistan and perform humanitarian work for the Afghan locals

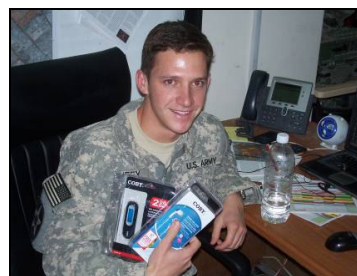
“Wish list” items: Sports equipment, hygiene items, books, LoungeAirs®, TV, snacks, pillows, sheet sets



Unit: 772 EAS/MX from Little Rock Air Force Base

Mission: Maintain aircraft in Afghanistan

“Wish list” items: Snacks, coffee



Unit: HSB 2-12 Field Artillery from Ft. Lewis, WA

Mission: Provide support for Iraqi Security Forces in Baghdad

“Wish list” items: MP3 players and video gaming

NEWS FROM THE 110TH INFANTRY, PA NATIONAL GUARD IN AFGHANISTAN

The following excerpt is from an on-line posting by the PRT-Kunar Public Affairs Office. It highlights the efforts of members of the 1-110th Infantry, currently deployed from the Pittsburgh Area to Afghanistan, and whom OTA is supporting throughout their deployment.

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – At a remote forward operating base in eastern Afghanistan’s Kunar Province where there is no exchange store, no coffee stands and mail only gets sent out every six weeks, a unit from Pennsylvania’s Army National Guard puts everything on the line for the advancement of the Kunar government and people of Afghanistan.

As the security force platoon for the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team, the Soldiers of the 107th Field Artillery Battalion currently attached to the 110th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 28th Infantry Division, have both the blessing and the burden of keeping themselves and their comrades safe while working hand in hand with local Afghans in the most kinetic province in the country.

This “type of environment” is the Kunar province, a rough, mountainous terrain known to be the hub of much activity in Afghanistan, lying along the northern border with Pakistan and a site of several well-known insurgent supply lines. The security forces team has the responsibility of protecting both the PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) and Forward Operating Base (FOB) Wright, where they live. Split into two teams, the Soldiers rotate between guarding the FOB, manning an outpost nearby, and providing protection for the PRT’s numerous missions.

The other element of the mission is their counter insurgency role.

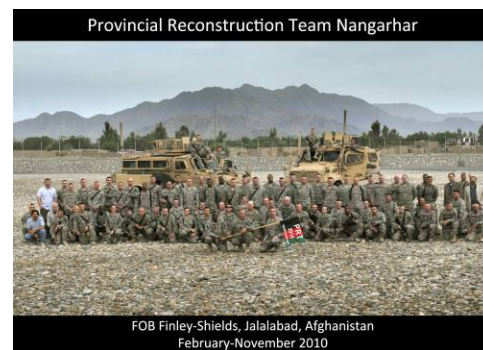


Master Sgt. Jimmy Arbogast, the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team operations Sergeant Major from Sandy Lake, PA., secures the area while on a quality assurance visit to the Kunar Prison.

(Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Nathan Lipscomb, Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)

“Basically our goal is to engage with the population, get out of our [vehicles], show our eyes to the Afghan people and interact with them so they understand they are not just fighting a country -- we are partners out here who want to help them improve their life,” says U.S. Army Capt. Ellis Stokes, the PRT Kunar Security Forces commander from Baldwin, PA.

In return, their ability to reach out and relate with the people pays off. Despite having only been here a couple of months, the troops have already forged bonds with several local citizens, children in particular, and their familiar faces are often welcomed with waves and greetings.



In order to be effective in their tasks, the security platoon spends arduous amounts of time on assignments or pulling guard. The

hours on their feet for preparation, training and missions, compounded by heat and mental fatigue is what U.S. Army Sergeant 1st Class David Miller called the biggest difference between what the Soldiers do here and at home.

Miller said his Soldiers’ ambition, willingness and attitude get them through. That, and the overwhelming support they have received from back home. From numerous care packages to letters from strangers and school children to thoughts and prayers for the safety of the Soldiers, the men of the unit have said they are both thankful and fortunate to have such a supportive community.

For the next several months the team will continue to patrol the streets of Kunar and work with the provincial government in an effort to improve the future of the people here who they are getting to know as friends. But they know it is not without danger and risk.

Stokes, Arbogast and Miller all emphasized that their number one priority is to bring everyone home.

TWO LOCAL SOLDIERS REMEMBERED

On a tragic day in Afghanistan, Friday, June 11, 2 soldiers of C Company 110th Infantry died in a suicide bomb attack during a patrol in a market in Zabul, Afghanistan.

Sergeant First Class Robert J. Fike of Conneautville and Staff Sergeant Bryan A. Hoover of Elizabeth were long-time members of the Pennsylvania National Guard, and deployed from the Pittsburgh area in early 2010 for a year-long mission in Afghanistan. They were part of a security force platoon for the Provincial Reconstruction Team, working to rebuild Afghanistan's infrastructure with the help of military personnel serving as engineers, medical personnel, agriculture experts, civilian affairs experts and security personnel.

Sergeants Fike and Hoover were the 35th and 36th Pennsylvania guard members killed in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Sergeant First Class Robert J. Fike



SFC Robert J. Fike was a loving father to his 12 year-old daughter and loved hunting, fishing, and riding his Kawasaki Ninja motorcycle. He was a 1989 graduate of Penn Trafford High School and earned his bachelor's degree in organic chemistry from Edinboro University.

He worked as a state prison guard at the State Correctional Institution Albion in Erie County. As a soldier in the National Guard, he was a military policeman, and served in Saudi

Arabia before deploying to Iraq in 2007 and Afghanistan in 2010.

A member of the National Guard for 16 years, he loved the military, and was a highly decorated soldier whose awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service Medals and Iraq Campaign Medal.

Staff Sergeant Bryan A. Hoover



SSG Bryan A. Hoover graduated from Elizabeth Forward High School in 2000, and earned his bachelor's degree in sports management from California University of Pennsylvania. He returned to his high school alma mater and was the assistant track and cross-country coach. Bryan was an avid sports fan who enjoyed playing hockey and running. He was engaged to be married.

He joined the Marine Corps in October 1999 and served on active duty until September 2004. In March 2005, after several months in the Marine Corps Reserve, he enlisted in the Pennsylvania National Guard.

His military awards include the Army Commendation Medal, Pennsylvania Commendation Medal, Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Air Assault Badge and Humanitarian Service Medal.

Memorials

SFC Fike's family has set up the "SFC Robert J. Fike Fund" to benefit his soon-to-be 13-year-old daughter, MacKenzie. Donations to the fund can be sent to:

[SFC Robert J. Fike Memorial](#) ★ [Monroeville Office](#) ★ [c/o Citizens Bank](#) ★ [4010 Monroeville Blvd.](#) ★ [Monroeville, PA 15146](#)

The Patriot Guard riders accompanied both soldiers' remains upon their arrival in Pittsburgh to their respective funeral homes and final resting places. Donations in Bryan's memory can be made to:

[Patriot Guard Riders of Pennsylvania](#) ★ [5108 Valley Stream Lane](#) ★ [Macungie, PA 18062.](#)

Rest in Peace, Brave Warriors. You will never be forgotten.

Sergeant First Class Robert J. Fike

Staff Sergeant Bryan A. Hoover



SSG Hoover (left in both pictures) and SFC Fike on patrol in Zabul, Afghanistan.

(Photo by Daniel Shakal/Special to the Post-Gazette)

A SOLDIER'S STORY

One of our favorite stories about helping troops comes from Private Brian Sgro, a native of Castle Shannon, PA who is serving with HHB 4-319th AFAR in Afghanistan.

We first became acquainted with Pvt. Sgro when his childhood church, St. Winifred's, began a collection drive of blankets and warm socks for Brian's unit last winter.

St. Winifred's parishioners donated over 80 blankets, hundreds of pairs of warm socks and space heaters which OTA proudly shipped to this unit. OTA also provided Cold Gear Under Armour® shirts, DVD players and movies.

After the shipment arrived, Sgro contacted OTA about a critical need for GPS systems for each of their 10 platoons. The systems would assist the soldiers as they cover their AOs (Area of Operations) on missions, and be assured of returning safely and to help document important information about threats they encounter.

The area they are serving in has not been completely mapped, so the soldiers would often get lost when returning from long missions, and end up in very dangerous territory without the assurance they would be able to return safely.

Below, Pvt. Sgro explains how these GPSs helped his unit:

The GPS systems, to say the least, have saved us multiple times. Recently we had a rocket attack and we were able to calculate the exact grid for where we were hit within seconds, thanks to the GPS. We passed the information to our TOC (Tactical Operations Center) and QRF (Quick Reaction Force) teams who were on the ground at the exact location within minutes to deal with the situation.

In other examples, we were able to assist in preventing multiple IED (Improvised Explosive Device) attacks on coalition forces here in Afghanistan, as we could communicate their exact grid location to the EOD (Explosive Ordnance Detachments) who could diffuse the bombs before they injured our soldiers. Our GPS systems have also helped us during dismounted patrols for locating weapons caches, high target individuals, and other mission essentials such as rally points.

In one instance, our Colonel himself literally said "GOD BLESS YOUR OTA FRIENDS." As I explain below, we had a VBIED (Vehicle Born Improvised Explosive Device) literally 1/2 km from us and were able to use the GPS systems OTA gave us to pass the information within seconds to the proper teams. How cool is that?

So, here's that story: As we were leaving our base one day with the Colonel, a report came in of a black Hillux carrying two individuals and weighed down in the back [with explosives]. This vehicle is equivalent to the Toyota 4Runner so you can imagine what size explosive was in the truck.

The grid was unknown, just that the vehicle was in our AO. We slowed from 40 mph to a crawl of 5 mph and, BINGO, the truck was headed DIRECTLY TOWARD US.

The Colonel, obviously a priority, had to be protected so we immediately halted the convoy. We transmitted the grid of the Hillux to command who traveled several kilometers to locate it and approached the target. They found four home-made explosive jugs, daisy chained and hooked to the car battery, activated by the car horn ready to explode. EOD came and cleared the scene. And the best part was, after checking out these would-be bombers through our system, we found out one of them was the main IED maker in our province, Number 2 on the Most Wanted list, and he is on his way to a wonderful place called JAIL. We fortunately lived to fight another day and for that we thank OTA for sending us the equipment we needed to perform our jobs, stay safe, and protect our Colonel.

WORDS CAN NOT EXPRESS THE SUPPORT FROM ALL OF YOU.

Thanks to OTA and all of the supporters who continue to support all forces in Afghanistan and throughout the world. We continue daily to serve all of you in the United States proudly. ~ Pvt. Brian Sgro



Brian Sgro gets coordinates on one of the GPS systems OTA shipped to his 10 platoons.



Members of the HHB 4-319th AFAR head out on patrol.



One of the platoon members is thrilled to receive mail from home.

STUDENTS FOR SOLDIERS

Evan Cross recently turned 6 years old and while planning his birthday party, made an unusual and very unselfish request.

Instead of party-goers bringing presents, he asked them all to bring something to send the troops. Ten children ages 2 to 9 attended the party and activities included reading a story about a military family, a letter writing station, games, military cadences and bugle calls. PA National Guard soldier Staff Sergeant Christopher Clark also made a special appearance and picked up the presents and delivered them to OTA. Now that's what we call a party!



Michael Clouse, a high school junior pursuing his Eagle Scout patch in the Boy Scouts, worked with OTA for the past 6 months to support hundreds of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Michael collected, sorted, packed and shipped over 800 pounds of "wish list" items to his target group of troops!

Michael exhibited an unusually high level of leadership, enlisting his fellow scouts to canvas neighborhoods and churches asking for donations of specified items the troops needed, including healthy snacks, hygiene items, morale-boosting games and equipment, and other useful items.

From some of the soldiers he helped, he received a framed photo and a flag that had flown over a base in Afghanistan. We are proud of Michael's accomplishments and are glad for the opportunity to have worked with him!



OTA VP RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE



Vice President Monica Orluk has been an integral part of troops' lives since OTA's inception in 2004.

Monica Orluk, OTA Vice President, has received two awards in honor of her volunteer commitment to Operation Troop Appreciation.

The first recognition came when Monica was named a [University of Phoenix Volunteer Leader Award Honoree](#), an award given by HandsOn Network and the University of Phoenix to 10 outstanding volunteer leaders in the nation. These leaders were recognized for their leadership, motivation of others, and for being catalysts for change in their communities. This honor also provided a \$10,000 grant to OTA!

On the heels of that announcement, Monica was also honored by The Greater Pittsburgh Chapter of the [National Association of Women Business Owners \(NAWBO\)](#) at their annual "Make the Connection Awards" gala dinner as a deserving volunteer who has made her organization an asset to the community.

Monica believes 100 percent in her mission to support troops, often volunteering more than 40 hours a week with OTA while working full-time and attending school. When asked why she serves, Orluk responds, "When you are blessed in life as I am, the best way to be thankful is to give to others."

As a 2010 University of Phoenix Volunteer Leader Award honoree and a recognized volunteer in the Greater Pittsburgh community, she backs up her words every day with her acts of service. Join us in congratulating Monica on these prestigious honors!

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR TROOPS

We rely heavily on leaders in the business community and individuals to help us carry out our wish-list requests. While we regret that we don't have space to acknowledge every wonderful story, we are happy to share a few examples of how our community steps up to help our brave soldiers.



Fiserv Automotive & Origination Solutions

has been a constant source of support for our troops overseas since they started their ongoing collection initiative in late 2008.

Since that time, they have adopted many units and shipped over 70 cartons of wish list items to our deployed troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, most recently to the 1-110th PA National Guard in Afghanistan.

Fiserv Loan Servicing Solutions also sponsors the OTA Golf Outing every year.

TetraTech in Greentree, PA, has been supporting OTA for the last few years with amazing results!

They have conducted numerous fundraising activities as well as collection drives for needed hygiene items, socks, snacks, and other morale-boosting items our troops often request.

One Tetrattech employee also donated a much needed hand truck dolly for use at our collection and distribution facility. TetraTech colleagues have also participated in several of OTA's packing parties.






F. Tambellini Ristorante, one of downtown Pittsburgh's most popular restaurants, held a fundraiser gala banquet for dozens of food aficionados and troop supporters.

Owners Charlie and Janet Pelligrini hosted a 6-course dinner of their most popular dishes. Staff Sergeant Matthew Claycomb, the guest of honor, was the keynote speaker.

The fundraiser benefitted OTA's on-going program to support the soldiers of the 1-110th Infantry currently serving in Afghanistan, the unit that SSG Claycomb currently serves.

TJ & S is a Pittsburgh-based insurance company who supports OTA in many ways. Holding collection drives for our troops, volunteering as "packers" when we send items overseas and securing donations, they epitomize the philanthropic spirit of our business community.

They recently held a reception for OTA Board members and presented a check and a sizeable collection of snack and personal items for troops overseas.

Church of the Resurrection in Brookline, PA, completed a major community troop support project with the church's Faith Formation CCD group, a local Cub Scout troop and the American Legion.

Parishioner Dollie Goldbach coordinated this project that yielded close to 1,000 items and a sizeable monetary donation to OTA. This is a great example of how groups can join forces and do great things!

Risen Lord Ladies of Charity in Pittsburgh conducted a very special project, packing close to 250 individual care packages for the 1-110th Infantry PA National Guard.

This project joined members of the church and community who worked tirelessly to collect, pack and deliver these personal gifts for our troops. Wives and mothers from the unit's Family Readiness Group prepared the boxes and personalized them for each of the 242 members of the 1-110th and other deployed troops in remote areas in Afghanistan, including a personal letter and two phone cards for each soldier.

Hometown Mail Center owner Mike Tabacchi has been a staunch supporter of OTA, serving as a drop-off location for the Mt. Lebanon community to donate needed items for troop care packages.

He also facilitates shipping for OTA, participates in OTA packing parties, transports shipments from our packing facility to his store, and volunteers his time for OTA events and activities. Mike and his staff exhibit the true spirit of business and community support!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Every week we receive letters and emails from our troops. Here are some of our favorite recent messages...

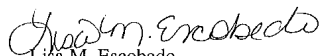
Dear Operation Troop Appreciation,

On behalf of the Soldiers of Bravo Company, 307th Brigade Support Battalion, Al Asad, Iraq I would like to offer our deepest appreciation for supporting our Troops overseas. The support we receive from great Americans like you keeps our morale high during long days and months away from home.

Every gift you send, every package that is opened, every special piece of home that is received, reflects your deepest commitment to supporting and caring for our deployed Soldiers. It shows that America is strong, united, and has the resolve to press ahead during these challenging times as we rebuild Iraq. The desert can be tough on the Soldier in the field and these items encourage and bolster everyone's resilience.

Once again, thank you for the time, effort, love and support you have offered in delivering a special piece of America to our Soldiers in the field. God Bless you!

Sincerely,


 Lisa M. Escobedo
 Lieutenant, US Army
 Executive Officer

Thank you!

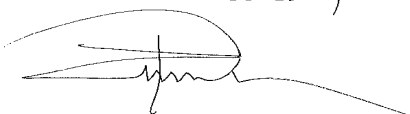
Operation Troop Appreciation,
 We absolutely appreciate your genuine and generous support of our Troopers. The DVDs, snacks, and hygiene items made a real difference for our Soldiers. Thanks so much for all that you do as our Troopers continue the mission in Southern Afghanistan.
 With Warm Regards,
 LTC Mike Morgan
 Squadron Commander
 Task Force Saber
 Air CAU!

Dear OTA,

Thank you for your wonderful support to our troops! All toiletry items will be used well by our soldiers in remote locations of Afghanistan. Again, I can't express enough gratitude for your support.

*Blessings,
 OH Light Skin*

DEAR OTA
 ON THE BEHALF OF THE MNCS OMET
 (COMBINED MINNESOTANS AND COAST SOLDIERS)
 I WASH TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE
 FOR YOUR CARE AND EFFORT
 WASH YOU ALL THE BEST
 AND
 GOD BLESS YOU




Dear OTA,

On behalf of the 3rd Battalion of the 157th Field Artillery Regiment, I want to personally thank you for your benevolence. The care packages were timely and useful.

Our office is open most afternoons, and the fact that we have a small warehouse worth of free and practical gifts is a great invitation for people to visit who wouldn't normally visit a chaplain's office. Specialist Stein is the Battalion Chaplain Assistant, and has done a fantastic job organizing and maintaining this ministry. Your blessings, toward our mission, have not gone unnoticed. God is also pleased, I'm sure.

Blessings,


 Todd M. Wolf
 Chaplain (Captain) US Army
 Battalion Chaplain

DEAR OTA,

I am writing you on behalf of my Section "Maintenance (Helicopter)". We have been fortunate enough to be blessed this deployment by you and everyone involved with "Operation Troop Appreciation." This letter is a small portion of the Tremendous amount of THANK YOU'S I'd like to send back to you. It is an indescribable feeling soldiers get when we receive something from home. It's even more heart warming to know that it came from strangers who took time out of their lives to acknowledge us, think about us and show their support. I'd like to "thank you" for every thing you've sent us and for your kindness. We couldn't ask for anything better than that.

OTA EVENTS BENEFIT DEPLOYED TROOPS (AND THEIR POOCHES!)

With requests coming in every day from units serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, OTA works hard to fulfill every request – from tactical equipment, safety gear, musical instruments, sports equipment, and phone cards to basic hygiene and personal care supplies, and anything else they need.

As the troop surge in Afghanistan continues, and with 130,000 troops now serving there, many live in remote locations in austere and primitive conditions, OTA has undertaken some fun approaches to build awareness to the cause by involving many in our community.

Here are a few of those stories.

The dogs and their handlers prepare for patrol in Afghanistan.



OTA and Animal Friends

Many people might not be aware of a special force working with our military to support deployment missions. They are our military working dogs! And OTA and Pittsburgh North Shore's Animal Friends have joined forces to show appreciation for the very special service they provide our troops.

Attached to the military branches deployed throughout Afghanistan and Iraq are hundreds of canine "soldiers" who work side by side with our troops. OTA worked with one group in particular consisting of more than 70 Military Working Dogs who perform guard and patrol duties, and use their intense "sniffing" ability to detect explosives and other material.

OTA and Animal Friends are working together through **Animal Friends Chow Wagon** program to provide gifts of food, treats and toys to these dogs to help them stay in top form while performing their missions. These dogs provide a critical service to our troops, and maintaining the dogs' health and welfare ensures that their handlers are successful in their missions.

OTA also participated in Animal Friends' annual Mutt Strut event on May 30th. An Army Reserve color guard kicked off the event and OTA honored the canines who serve alongside our troops during times of conflict

Fifth Annual OTA Charity Golf Outing

For the fifth year in a row, OTA hosted its annual **Charity Golf Outing**. OTA volunteers were joined by 108 golfers who enjoyed a gorgeous June 12 afternoon on the lush links of Hickory Heights Golf Club in Bridgeville, PA.

As a special treat, 20 local military members golfed as our guests, their fees being paid for by the generosity of the golfers and sponsors who wished to give the gift of golf to those who give so much to us.

Door prizes, a silent auction and other activities rounded out the day of golf, good food and good fun!

OTA wishes to thank OTA Golf Committee Chair **Virginia "BJ" Schneider** for her tireless efforts all year to make this OTA's biggest and best golf outing ever. She coordinated the course, golfers, sponsors, volunteers, prize give-aways and all the critical details that made this day so special for golfers, sponsors and our military members alike.

Golfers get ready for tee off.



[CONTINUED].....OTA EVENTS BENEFIT DEPLOYED TROOPS

Pittsburgh Marathon

OTA took part in the annual Pittsburgh Marathon for the first time as a participating charity on May 2. Our efforts were aimed at raising funds to fulfill "wish list" requests identified by the Pennsylvania National Guard Unit serving as the Provisional Reconstruction Team in Nangahar, Afghanistan.

The OTA Marathon Squad was comprised of 126 runners, 27 volunteers and countless friends who came to show their support.

The OTA runners trained for many months in preparation for the rigors of world class competition and they competed well in every race category. Our complete results also include the achievement of many personal goals reflected by our runners and volunteers. And the attainment of our fundraising goals will serve our local soldiers very well.

OTA sends a very special **Thank You** to OTA race coordinator **Alice McLaughlin** who spent months coordinating the event, and to **Tricia Staley** who facilitated many of the important details of the race.



Marathon runners round the final corner before crossing the finish line.

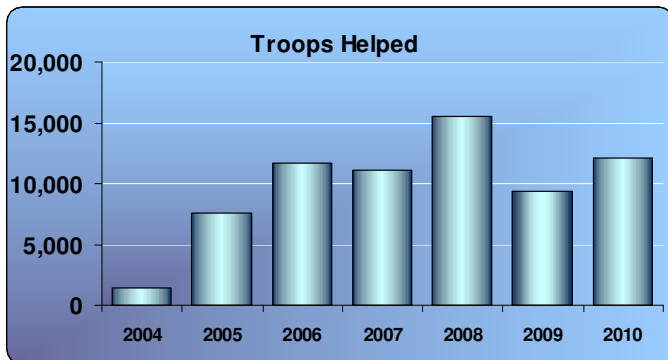
DONATIONS

Many of the items we provide our troops are expensive (e.g., safety and tactical gear), so we have a great need for financial contributions.

Only with your generosity can we continue to insure our troops feel the love and support we send them from home. Every dollar matters!

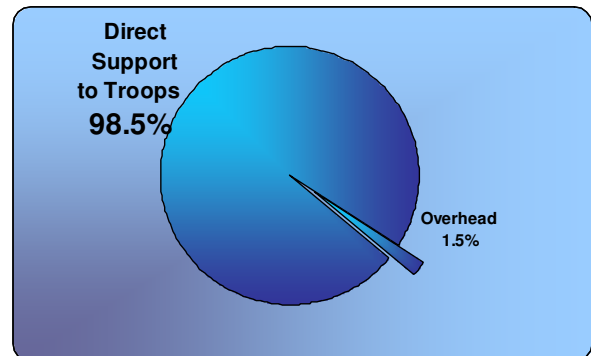
You can make a secure on-line donation, or send contributions to:

Operation Troop Appreciation
PO Box 14550
Pittsburgh, PA 15234
www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org



OTA has provided "wish list" items for more than 68,000 troops since our inception in July 2004.

We serve active duty, Reserves and National Guard Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and other theaters.



OTA is an all-volunteer organization with minimal overhead expenses. As a result, 98.5 cents of every dollar we spend directly supports our troops in the field.

Very few charities can boast this high efficiency rate.