

IN THIS ISSUE: *MEET OTA'S TROOPS*
WAYS TO HELP
BRINGING CHRISTMAS TO THE TROOPS

COMMUNITY & CORPORATE SUPPORT
SUCCESS STORIES
...AND MUCH MORE!

A MOMENT WITH MO

Dear OTA Supporters and Volunteers,

Summer is over, school is in session and we begin to look forward to the changing seasons and upcoming holiday season. We at OTA feel anticipation of the holidays in a slightly different manner than most. The holiday season is the time when we receive the majority of our troop requests for the year. It is also the time in which our funding needs are the highest and we are able to make our biggest impact on troop morale. In this issue of the OTA newsletter, you will read about many ways you can help us prepare for the upcoming holiday season and the challenges we face. And you'll also be introduced to some of the brave troop members who benefit when we are successful at meeting (and often-times exceeding) these challenges – thanks to good people like you! You may not directly come in contact with the troops that you help – but rest assured, the impact made by our tireless volunteers and generous donors is HUGE.

While we are all aware of what is happening in Afghanistan and Iraq, we don't often come face to face with the brave men and women we help. I'd like to share one of those times when I was able to meet a young man who benefited from OTA's efforts. Imagine my surprise when, while attending a local community day event with the PA National Guard, one of the guardsmen exclaimed, "Hey that's my unit! Wait, that's me!" while leafing through the OTA scrapbook. He continued by showing me where he was in the photo and the story of the day the picture was taken. He is with the 1/110th Infantry Division and OTA sent his company their requested "wish list" gifts of Under Armour and sports

equipment when they deployed to Iraq. Two years after helping this brave young man, I was able to shake his hand, say thank you and welcome him home personally! What an honor and a privilege! Throughout the course of the day, I learned about his experiences in Iraq, the dangers he and those in his unit faced every day, and what an impact OTA had on their morale. To hear him talk about the day the HUM-VEE he was driving was hit by an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) and how they managed to survive brought home the challenges these men and women face every day. With every story of war however, was another story about how great it was when a package arrived from home.

As you read this newsletter, know that every soldier's story, every letter printed and every event we hold would not happen if not for you and the never-ending support you give to OTA. Be it through the giving of your time, energy or money, your efforts are felt and appreciated. This holiday season, remember that there are many, many troop members far from home, missing their loved ones while faced with dangerous situations daily. You do and will continue to have a great, positive impact on the lives of those men and women who sacrifice daily to preserve our freedom and keep us safe. And for this we thank you!



Sincerely,

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 that contribute to their morale and aid in their missions, we present a united front to our deployed military by supporting them as individuals, for 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.

SOLDIERS OF THE 774TH EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE THANK OTA

Contributor Anna Morelock

The soldiers of the 774th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company returned to Fort Riley, KS, in the early morning hours of Sept. 8. The unit spent a little more than a year working in two provinces in eastern Afghanistan, conducting about 460 EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) missions – removing improvised explosive devices or other explosive hazards from populated areas – and about 250 route clearance missions.

1st Sergeant Ken Sanchez, who led this unit during their deployment, explains how OTA's assistance during their deployment helped with morale and their mission effectiveness:

"I started my military career in 1972 in the Marine Corps. During that time, many Americans looked upon the American soldier much differently then they do today. No matter what the American public's political views are or how they feel about the war, they are behind the American service member. This was evident especially in airports as we came home. It was touching to see people, and especially children, line up to shake our hands.

As an extension of that support, a lot of nonprofit organizations are sending items to the service members. It doesn't matter what it is. What does matter is that people care enough to give their time and money to keep these organizations going. When the service members receive these boxes (for some it is the only mail they see) it is like Christmas. This is a big morale booster, even more so when organizations like OTA deliver items that have been requested for morale and welfare.

We were not in country very long before we needed replacement supplies. The environmental conditions were starting to degrade our safety glasses. Soldiers were required to wear safety glasses whenever they left the Forward Operating Base (FOB). I was not able to acquire the glasses needed to replace the ones that were going bad. While at my battalion I noticed a box of new glasses on SSG Bartlett's desk (a soldier at the 242nd Ordnance Battalion). I asked her where she was able to get glasses and she told me she got them from OTA. I contacted OTA, explained our situation and requested enough glasses to replace our scratched ones. Within two weeks of the request we had the glasses. Towards the end of the rotation soldiers' gloves were wearing out. I requested replacement gloves and again OTA came through and supplied us with them. Needless to say, my soldiers were very happy to receive these items!

On behalf of my soldiers and myself I wish to thank everyone who has given their time to raise money and who support organizations like OTA." ~ 1SG Ken Sanchez



Soldiers of the 774th work to keep their fellow soldiers and the Afghani population safe from explosives.



Working with and living so closely to the Afghan people, the soldiers of the 774th built trust and forged new friendships.

NOW PART OF UNITED WAY AND CFC!



Now you can donate directly to OTA through the United Way and the Combined Federal Campaign.

Simply designate Operation Troop Appreciation on your annual giving contribution form with the following codes:

- United Way Agency #1525287
- CFC Code # 94786 (in Southwest PA and Ohio Valley only)

By supporting OTA with these campaigns, you'll be helping OTA make sure our troops are taken care of throughout 2008.

BARNES & NOBLE HELPS OTA!

BARNES & NOBLE

Barnes & Noble.com will donate 5% of each sale to OTA for every order placed through this special website. Simply choose Operation Troop Appreciation on the payment page during checkout.

You may order books, music, movies and more! Also, this site allows shipping to APO/FPO addresses.

Simply shop on the link www.bn.com/ASY to start shopping today! Donations to OTA will be made for orders placed via this site only.

SURPRISE, SURPRISE ! ONE SOLDIER'S SPECIAL GIFT

When Specialist Donny Wyant deployed to Iraq, he knew that he would have to participate in many difficult missions. But no one could imagine the challenge a most recent mission became – and it had nothing to do with the war!

Spc. Wyant, along with his sister, Sgt. Amy Carpenter (currently serving in Guam) decided to surprise their mother when they learned that they would both be granted leave during the same time this summer. Their mother, Eileen Wyant, and OTA VP Monica Orluk are co-workers at Fiserv Lending Solutions. Eileen works at the headquarters in South Bend, Indiana. Having two children serving so far from home has made this past year extremely difficult and they really wanted to make the homecoming something special for their mother.

Amy came home as planned – the first surprise for mom. Enlisting the help of his father, friends and other Fiserv employees, Donny was able to keep his leave secret from his mom and plan a special homecoming surprise.

The plan played out on Tuesday, July 10th, when Eileen received a call to report to the office conference room for a special meeting. Under the guise of pressing business, Eileen hurried to the meeting. Donny had arrived in South Bend and, with the help of Eileen's co-workers arranged for the entire Wyant family and friends to meet him at the office. There they gathered, hiding Donny from view as they waited for Eileen to make her way to the conference room.

Eileen walked in, spotted her husband, Donald Sr. and other family and friends. She was a bit confused until Donald, Sr. stepped aside and Eileen saw her son for the first time in months. "Oh my Gosh! Honey!" she gasped. "When did you get here? How did you get here?" she cried as she held her son. Needless to say, there was not a dry eye in the room.

Spc. Wyant is with the 82nd Airborne, currently working as a scout out of Camp Taji, Iraq. His unit is one of many who have received wish-list items from OTA this year. With the help of friends and family, he delivered the best gift he could to his mother – coming home safe for his two week leave.

We continue to pray for Donny and all those serving with him and hope that they all come home safely.



Eileen Wyant spots her son, Spc. Donny Wyant.



Mother and son reunite.



The soldiers of HSC 122ND ASB Retention thank OTA for their gifts of Under Armour shirts, CDs, and nutritional supplements.



Spc. Wyant and his fellow soldiers show off the care packages they got from OTA, including ballistic glasses, Under Armour, snacks, DVDs, and magazines.

SUCCESS STORIES

Since our last newsletter update, 2,300 more deployed troops received “wish list” items from OTA, bringing the total number of troops who have benefited from OTA to over 28,000! Here is a snapshot of some of these units, what they are doing, and what OTA provided.

Branch	Mission	Wish List
Hospital	The Joint Theater Trauma System oversees the care of injured soldiers throughout Iraq and Afghanistan.	T-shirts, flip flops, socks, etc. for wounded soldiers
Army	This parachute riggers unit from Ft. Bragg, NC air drops supplies throughout Afghanistan to our troops	Mechanics gloves, sunglasses, camelbaks
Army	Provides route security, recon, and leads IED counter patrols in Iraq.	Camelbaks, GPS systems, phone cards
Army	This unit works with and lives with the Iraqi National Police, conducting combined patrols to eliminate terror forces.	TV, PS2 and games, DVDs, CDs, books
Marines	This reserve unit of Marines performs infantry patrols in the Triad Area of Operations in Iraq.	Sports equipment, board games
Marines	Confidential per OPSEC	Hygiene products, snacks
Navy	This unit provides security force protection.	Christmas decorations
Air Force	This Civil Engineer squadron serves in Qatar coordinating logistics of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.	Under Armour, phone cards, hygiene items, snacks



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Every week we receive letters and emails from our troops, letting us know how much OTA's gifts and letters mean to them. Here are some of their messages...

“OTA rocks! Thanks for thinking of us and sending all the goodies... especially the books and stationery.” ~ Lt. Col., L.M., Air Force

“I just wanted to send out a quick note to thank you again before we pull up tent stakes here and get ready to redeploy. As I have said and many others here have told me, OTA has given us the most and best support since deploying to Iraq.” ~ 1SG M.G., Army

“I would like to thank you and your volunteer staff from all of the soldiers on my team. You have covered everything we need, truly your organization is one of a kind and my hat goes off to you.” ~ CW2 T.T., Army

“I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone at OTA for the working gloves, Wiley X sunglasses, and words of encouragement you provided me during my deployment to Afghanistan. Our work over here is made easier because of you!” ~ Cpt. K.L., Air Force

“There is no way that we will ever be able to repay the kindness of OTA for the things that you have done for us and the things that you have sent us. You and your organization are a real lifesaver for those of us who find ourselves at war with a vicious enemy of freedom so far from our families and lives at home.” ~ SSG D.B., Army

“On behalf of all the soldiers in my squad, I just want to say thank you. Thank you for taking the time and effort to put together the care packages and ship them to us. It really means a lot that you all care. We will continue to do our best to make you all proud, as we are proud to be Americans.” ~ SSG W.R., Army

“We really loved the Wiley X ballistic eye protection too. Everything was great and we just wanted to let you know that you have a wonderful organization. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you so much. We truly appreciate your generosity and kindness.” ~ Spc., D.W., Army

BRINGING CHRISTMAS TO IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

As OTA's reputation grows among our troops, we receive requests from hundreds of soldiers who hope for a bit of extra support from home as winter approaches. Many ask for basic necessities like blankets, gloves and winter socks. Others are beginning to think about Christmas and the 2007 holiday season. They ask us to remember them and the other 150,000 deployed troops in Iraq and Afghanistan facing another lonely holiday away from their loved ones.

This year, we offer two unique programs to provide you with options as you remember these brave men and women who are so far from home this holiday season.

Adopt a Soldier: This program allows you to make individual donations to OTA for specific items our troops often request. For example:



- \$30 – Fire-retardant work gloves
- \$50 – A cold-weather Under Armour® shirt
- \$100 – Ballistics glasses / eye protection

Adopt A Unit – Your civic group, church, friends or company work together to grant “wishes” for an entire unit of troops by putting on your own fundraiser, or making an outright donation, to support an entire unit.



Once you determine at which level you'd like to participate, OTA will provide you an Adoption sheet that includes:

- Unit Photo with mission description
- Background information on the unit
- Requested “wish list” items for that unit
- Suggested target donation to complete the “wish list”

Units can be “adopted” at target donation levels between \$150 and \$4,000.

Groups or individuals who adopt a unit or a soldier are under no obligation to raise the full target donation -- there is no such thing as too small or large a contribution! **Every dollar you spare makes a significant impact on the morale of those we help.**

The need for support and appreciation from the home front has never been greater. With your help, OTA will bring a little bit of “home” to those who serve so far away by fulfilling their “wish lists” and giving them gifts that symbolize our support, appreciation and respect.

This holiday season, won't you consider adding a unit or an American soldier to your Christmas and holiday shopping lists by making a donation to OTA? Your support will make the holidays brighter for our American Heroes.

Please contact Monica Orluk at 412-759-0696 or littlemo34@yahoo.com to obtain your adoption packet or for more information.



Brentwood Bank of S. Park, PA adopted the Soldiers of 158th Infantry, and customers and employees signed a banner to show their support.



OTA sent the soldiers of HHOC STB G3AIR 3ID their “wish list” items of sun glasses, foot powder, and snacks.



B-Trp KMTB received their “wish list” items from OTA: ear plugs, ACU shirts, ballistics glasses, and DVDs.

EMERSON PROCESS MANAGEMENT ADOPTS TWO UNITS!

Since we began the program, dozens of companies, individuals, churches, schools and civic groups have adopted units. We thank each of them for their generosity and compassion, and would like to share a special adoption story.

It is not often that one encounters a group of people who set a goal, exceed that goal, set another bigger goal and then exceed THAT as well. But that is exactly what happened when Emerson Process Management decided to adopt a unit through OTA.

Emerson Process Management is a division of Emerson, a global company that brings together technology and engineering solutions for industrial, commercial, and consumer markets. They are headquartered in R.I.D.C. Park, O'Hara Township, PA and have approximately 685 employees in North America



Emerson Process Management OTA Team:
(left to right) Ron Weber, Wendell Kinley,
Cheryl McKee, Kyra Bunardzyna and Christine
Huweart

Having learned of OTA at a previous event, team member Ron Weber spoke to his team about OTA and recommended they adopt a unit. Cheryl McKee contacted OTA VP Monica Orluk, who helped Emerson secure a unit to adopt.

The first unit Emerson adopted was the 173rd BSB unit, an active duty Army unit based in Bamberg, Germany. Their mission in Iraq is to halt gun trafficking from Iran, assist the Iraqi army and provide humanitarian support to the people of Iraq. To fund this adoption, Emerson held a golf outing on July 28th with 120 golfers participating, raising more than enough to take care of these brave soldiers. So much more in fact that they decided to adopt another unit and use the surplus funds as the start of a second, even bigger project!

The second unit Emerson adopted was the Headquarters Company of the 9th Engineer Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. This Army unit is located in Iraq and their mission is confidential per OPSEC, but it is extremely dangerous and they were in great need of some items from home, such as writing supplies, hygiene items and Under Armour brand T-shirts.

Emerson held a hot sausage sale on August 28 and again collected more than enough for OTA to complete this unit's wish-list. In all, this company raised \$2,000 for these units! They also created a banner for the soldiers signed by company employees.

OTA sends a great big THANK YOU to all the employees of Emerson Process Management who made these projects possible. We appreciate your generosity and support!

UNITS FOR ADOPTION

OTA has received "wish list" requests representing more than 2,600 troops, and we anticipate receiving several dozen more in the next few weeks from troops making sure hundreds more of their fellow Soldiers and Marines receive gifts for Christmas and the holidays.

One such unit is the 2-82 AHB Task Force Corsair. This 300-soldier battalion from Fort Bragg, NC serves in Afghanistan. Their mission is to provide responsive and reliable aviation support to all units throughout their area of operation (AO). Because the winter months reach temperatures below freezing, these soldiers, who spend much of their time outdoors, have requested cold-gear Under Armour clothing from OTA to help them keep warm. This will be quite an undertaking for OTA, as this project will cost over \$10,000. But we are definitely up for the challenge! We want to ensure each of these 300 soldiers below receives these critical items.



ADOPTION CONTINUED.....

And there are many more units who need OTA's help. The following is a partial list of units available for adoption.

Mission	Wish List Items	Targeted adoption amount
Conducts intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations in Iraq.	Snacks, DVD movies, hygiene items	\$150
This unit does all maintenance for ambulances which provide ground evacuation from battle sites around Baghdad.	Under Armour t-shirts, phone cards	\$200
Provide security forces for personnel in Afghanistan, often split up into small groups who travel to remote sections of the country.	Under Armour t-shirts	\$300
Conducts combined patrols with Iraqi National Police to eliminate insurgent attacks in Baghdad.	Sunglasses, hygiene items, high-protein snacks for meals on the run	\$350
Mission confidential per OPSEC. These troops are conducting very dangerous work and have requested items to help them relax after their long missions.	Television, PS2 video game system and games	\$500
Train the Afghan police.	Fire retardant gloves, blankets, board games	\$900
Confidential per OPSEC. This platoon has been through a lot during their deployment, including the January Karbala attack, heavy combat, IEDs, sniper attacks, and the loss of platoon members. They are in need of a morale boost.	Air mattresses, sheet sets	\$1,290
This unit trains the Iraqi army and lives in a tough environment where power outages are common and access to basic supplies is limited.	Phone cards, blankets	\$2,000
Fight insurgent forces in Afghanistan and aid in humanitarian missions for the Afghan people.	Under Armour t-shirts, soup	\$3,200
Provide needed clothing to wounded warriors needing medical attention at the US Hospitals throughout Iraq.	Socks, shorts, t-shirts, slippers	\$4,000

SPECIAL THANKS

Many businesses have been very generous with their time, talent and contributions. We would like to especially thank the following for their continued support and generosity so freely given on behalf of our troops. Please show them your appreciation for their support of OTA with your patronage.

The PovertyNeck Hillbillies (PNH) treated country music fans to some great performances this year as the band made the concert rounds throughout Pittsburgh. The band donated autographed guitars to OTA at three of its summer concerts which were raffled off to raise money for the troops. In all, the guitar raffles raised over \$2,000 for OTA! Special thanks go to OTA volunteers Jayme McGuirk, Karen Maxwell, Susan Dolinar, Peggy and Bob Graeser for representing OTA on some very hot summer days at these concerts! And OTA thanks PNH for their continued support of our brave soldiers.

Computer Literates (Gibsonia, PA) owner John Mack wanted to demonstrate his support of the troops in a special project and chose OTA to be his outlet. Throughout the summer, he and his employees distributed raffle tickets for a 37-inch LCD TV and DVD recorder in exchange for donations to OTA. Within a few weeks, Computer Literates had raised more than \$2,000 in donations for OTA. Congratulations to J. Resh of Pittsburgh for winning the TV!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Don't miss your chance to participate in fun upcoming events to support our troops! All profits from these events will be used to support the **Adopt a Unit** program, ensuring our troops receive their "wish list" items in time for Christmas.

October 19 thru 21: Century III Mall, 1st and Goal Sports Card Collectors Show

Purchase special \$5 card packs (guaranteed to contain one rare or rookie card) and get a chance to win a Nintendo Wii system! Purchase a \$100 photo pack and get ten 8x10 autographed photos and a chance to win a 20 x 20 framed, autographed Sidney Crosby photo and a special bonus photo as well. Proceeds from these sales benefit OTA.

November 10: OTA Charity Monte Carlo/Night at the Races event **

You can't lose at this event as you "bet" on horse races, and take a chance on other fun games. Festivities include buffet dinner, DJ, raffles and door prizes at St. Norbert's Church, Routes 51 & 88, Pittsburgh. Tickets are \$12 and include buffet dinner, beer and pop, silent auction, 50/50 raffle, music, and door prize drawings.



November 11: Veteran's Day 5K Race **

The second annual race will be held in the Hampton Community Park in Hampton Township at 8:30 a.m. The race will feature music by community performers, a complimentary post-race All-American Buffet, and prizes for each of the nine age categories.



November 11: CleanTown USA Carwash

Come get your car washed on Veterans Day (Sunday) at CleanTown USA on Rt. 8 in Allison Park, PA, and CleanTown will make a \$1 donation to OTA.



November 17 thru December 16: Robinson Mall

Sign a Christmas card for a soldier, buy a stocking for the OTA Soldier's Wish Tree or make a donation of a DVD, CD or AT&T phone card to fill a soldier's stocking this Christmas. Stop by the OTA table at Robinson Mall to meet our volunteers and see how you can make a difference in a soldier's life this holiday.



** To purchase tickets or register for these events, go to www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org and visit the **Events** section of our homepage. **

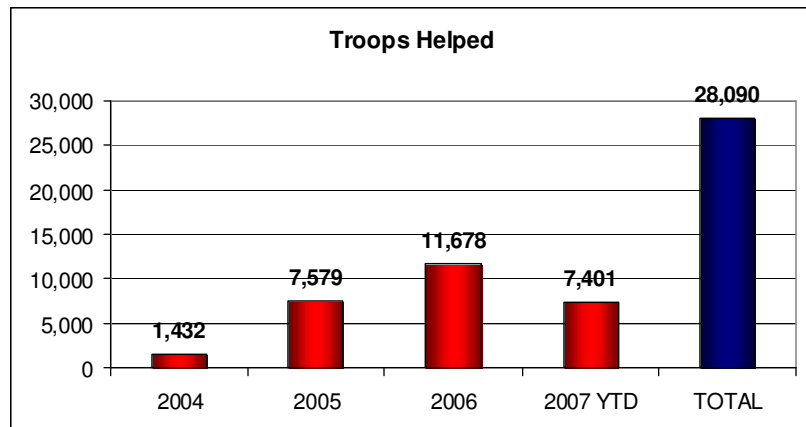
PROGRESS TO DATE

Many of the items we provide our troops are expensive (e.g., Under Armour, tactical gear and supplies), 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.

You may make a secure on-line donation, or send contributions to us at:

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



OTA has provided "wish list" items for more than 28,000 troops since our inception in July 2004.