

OPERATION TROOP APPRECIATION

September 2005 Newsletter

Kristen's Corner

Dear OTA Friends and Volunteers,

On July 1, 2005, OTA celebrated our one year anniversary with the knowledge that we have made deployed life a little bit easier for thousands of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan!

As we enter our second year, we are constantly inspired to do even more by the beautiful letters we receive from "our" soldiers. How can we not be inspired by words like these:

"My best friend in the world was killed in Iraq in April 2004. He is resting at Arlington National Cemetery now. When I leave the Army and go there to give him one last salute, I will be able to conjure reasons for his being there. People like yourselves will be those reasons." [Sgt. B. M.]

As long as OTA continues to make a difference like this, we will be here for our deployed troops. Join us in supporting our heroes!

Sincerely,
Kristen Holloway, President

Current Projects

OTA is proud to be helping a 750-soldier National Guard unit who quickly showed up to help in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina with only the uniforms on their backs. They have been working in harsh conditions with no change of clothes, and they asked OTA if we could provide Under Armour® t-shirts and undergarments for them. This will be our biggest project to date.

Another Iraq unit, the 110th Infantry PA National Guard unit, will also benefit from OTA. They arrived in Iraq over the summer and OTA is working to provide tactical gloves and sports items for their year-long tour.

DVD Drive

Many of our troops have requested **DVDs, CDs, Phone cards, and video games** (Play Station 2 and X-box) to help combat boredom between dangerous missions.

To supply these items, OTA has begun an ongoing "DVD Drive." If you would like to donate these items, please send to:

Operation Troop Appreciation
PO Box 14550
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

OTA wins Redbook Magazine Award!

Pick up the October 2005 issue of Redbook Magazine and read how OTA is being honored in this year's "Mothers and Shakers" contest!

The "Mothers and Shakers" program, in its eighth year, honors women for grassroots activism. Kristen Holloway is one of eight 2005 honorees, along with actresses Mariska Hargitay and Sharon Stone and musician Tricia Yearwood, who were honored during a Sept. 20 gala luncheon at New York City's Lincoln Center.

Past "Mothers and Shakers" winners include First Lady Laura Bush, crusader Erin Brokovich, Duchess of York Sarah Ferguson and journalist Katie Couric. **Not bad company!**



OTA Billboard

Thanks to the support and creative design of Intergroup Communications, OTA had a **first-rate billboard** displayed in Pittsburgh for the month of August. We enjoyed prime real estate right near the sports arenas to proudly display our organization. An image of the billboard is below. Pretty nice, huh?

Join us in supporting our troops.

**Thank them.
We have.**

Thanks Daddy!

OPERATION TROOP APPRECIATION
www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org

"A Soldier's Christmas in August"

On August 28, 2005, OTA hosted our largest fundraiser yet at the Green Tree Radisson. Thirty vendors offering everything from home decorations to books to jewelry and art participated and donated a portion of their sales to OTA.

Two of OTA's troop projects were the beneficiaries of this event.

- The 319th Gun Devils, a paratrooper battalion in Afghanistan
- The 110th Infantry, a PA National Guard unit in Iraq

This was the culmination of four months of heavy planning and execution by OTA volunteers, all leading up to the final August 28th event. OTA would like to extend some very special thanks to our sponsors:

- Green Tree Radisson Hotel
- Comcast
- 1st & Goal Sports (Century III Mall)
- Intergroup Communications
- Play it Again Sports (Cranberry)

At the event, we had a "Soldier Christmas Tree" where those with loved ones or friends deployed overseas could make a personalized stocking for that soldier and hang it on our tree. A picture of the decorated tree appears below.



Without all of our generous vendors and tireless volunteers, this event would never have been as successful as it was. **THANK YOU to all who helped and came out to support OTA!**

Troop Support Bracelets

OTA has teamed up with the "Defending Freedom," an organization that provides troop support bracelets for fundraising activities. They are being sold for \$3 each. The bracelets say "Defending our Freedom" on one side and "Pray for Our Soldiers" on the other.

If you would like to buy one, please visit our website at www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org and follow the link on our home page.

When you order a bracelet on-line, you can designate your purchase to benefit OTA.



Iraq Update

Since the June newsletter, we have provided "wish list" items for 13 more military units in Iraq and Afghanistan. These include:

- Water guns and fans to 100 pilots and flight crew of TF Griffin.
- Sports equipment, an inflatable pool and hammocks to 400 paratroops of 3-319th Gun Devils from Ft. Bragg.
- Tool belts for a platoon of the 20th Engineer Battalion rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure.
- 1,500 Under Armour ® t-shirts to various units.



Marines from Camp LeJeune, NC receive 600 Under Armour ® t-shirts and 600 pair of Under Armour ® socks from OTA before deploying to Iraq in June 2005.



All 150 Soldiers from HQ Company of 3-112th receive letters and Under Armour ® from OTA.

Congratulations!

First introduced in our June newsletter, OTA recently completed a *Home Interiors* Candle fundraiser. OTA volunteer and *Home Interiors* salesrep, Natalie Kappert, led this fundraiser and generously donated 50% of all sales to OTA.

Congratulations to top seller Velouise Bell, who won two Pirates baseball game tickets for selling the most! Thank you to all the volunteers who sold candles and made this fundraiser such a success.

Take a Soldier to the Movies



We have received many requests from people who wish to write letters to our troops. While OTA can not release names and addresses of our soldiers out of privacy and security concerns, we do have a **great alternative** for those of you who wish to correspond with soldiers.

“Take a Soldier to the Movies” (TSTM) is an organization that provides “Saturday night movie package” to deployed troops. In each Red, White and Blue popcorn box, TSTM includes:

- **Letter of support with return mailing address**
- New or used DVD
- Artificially sweetened powdered drink mix packets, i.e., Crystal Light or Kool Aide (no tubs)
- Movie theatre style candy (no chocolate)
- Microwavable Popcorn

If you'd like to or have your letters included in these movie packs with the opportunity to receive correspondence from the soldiers who receive them (or contribute some of the above items), **please send your letters in UNSEALED envelopes to:**

Operation Take a Soldier to the Movies
10617 W Oklahoma Ave U1
West Allis, Wisconsin 53227-4152

Learn more at www.SoldierToMovies.org.

Local Troops Talk Football

Fox Sports Pittsburgh radio station 970 AM has teamed up with OTA to show their support of our troops in a unique and exciting way.

Soldiers from the 110th Infantry, a National Guard Unit headquartered in Johnstown, Pa will appear on “In the Locker Room” which airs daily from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and is hosted by former Steelers Tunch Ilkin and Craig Wolfley. “Troop Talk” will air during the 9 a.m. hour on the day following Steelers games, typically Monday.

Fox Sports Pittsburgh has been a great supporter of OTA, providing advertising and guest speaker opportunities in promoting fundraising events. “Troop Talk” is another way that Fox Sports Pittsburgh is doing even more to support Pittsburgh area soldiers serving far from home.

Please be sure to tune in to the radio show on 970 AM the day after the Steeler's game. You can also listen live via the Internet at www.970theburgh.com and clicking on the “listen live” tab. What a wonderful way to bring a bit of home to our soldiers!



OTA benefits from Soldier's Book

OTA is honored to be selected as one of two non-profit organizations that will benefit from proceeds of a soon to be released book: *Soldier Life: A Day in the Life of an American Soldier*. LBF Books, a Pittsburgh based company is publishing the book, and plans to release it in December, 2005.

The book is result of a military Internet blog, www.soldierlife.com, written by an anonymous soldier who has served in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Having benefited from OTA and Soldier's Angels, he decided to donate a portion of the sales of his book to our organizations.

You can reserve your copy now by visiting www.lbfbooks.com. Pre-orders receive a discount, so order your copy soon!

Introducing the Military Family Network

The Military Family Network (MFN) is a network service that bridges the gap between military and community life by building relationships with military family support services, government, nonprofit organizations, businesses, churches, schools and individuals.

Like OTA, MFN rallies community support and resources on behalf of military service members and their families.

MFN is currently working on coordinating a partnership alliance of military, corporate and faith communities in support of military families, reservists, and veterans affected by Hurricane Katrina. To learn more about how you can help visit www.emilitary.org/katrina.html.

Supporting OTA

As you know, OTA can only do its work for our deployed troops with donations from generous individuals. Please tell your friends and family about us and make a small donation if you can. Tax-deductible checks can be sent to:

Operation Troop Appreciation
PO Box 14550
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Or make a donation securely on-line at:

www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org

