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A MOMENT WITH MO

Hello OTA Supporters!

I am so happy to share a moment with you as we kick off this edition of the OTA newsletter. I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about why I think OTA is special and why I am so proud to be part of this organization.

The company I work for has a philosophy "People Make the Difference." Every year they devote an entire week to celebrating the people who make their business a success. And while this sentiment could apply to any group or situation, at OTA the application of this philosophy takes on many facets. People truly do make a difference here, in many significant ways.

In this issue of the newsletter, we share some of the ways that people not only make a difference – they make a real and tangible impact on the lives of the soldiers we help. You will read stories about high school students who chose troop support for a senior project, and motorcyclists dedicated to a cause. About two young men who spent their summer on a journey that left permanent marks on their hearts as well as the soldiers they met along the way. You will read about those who serve. In their own words, our troops

express gratitude and discuss how our donors and sponsors help us make a difference in their lives.

But these stories only touch the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the people of OTA, many of whom you won't read about here. There are the countless people who contribute or come to our events. There are the churches, schools and companies who collect boxes of DVD's, phone cards and other needed items for us. There is the veteran who continues to serve his brothers in arms as he helps us prioritize projects, ensuring that the troops in the greatest danger and in greatest need have their wishes granted as quickly as possible. There are the many volunteers all over our great country who do whatever they can to help. People just like you and me.

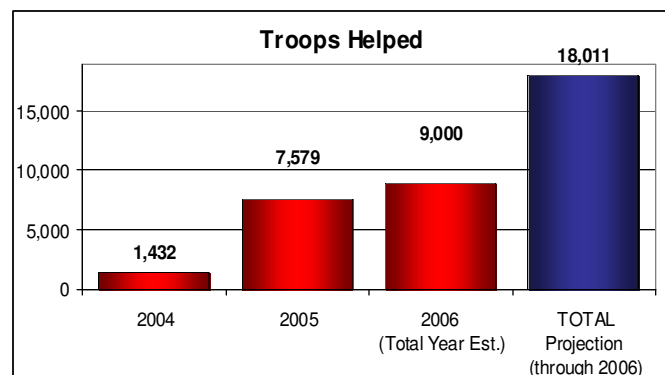
For over 2 years, these efforts have made a positive difference in the lives of over 14,000 members of our Armed Forces. We thank each and every one of you for your never-ending support and for taking the time to "make a difference" in so many special ways.

Sincerely,
Monica "Mo" Orluk, Vice President

PROGRESS TO DATE

By our estimates, more than 18,000 troops will have benefited personally from OTA by year end. Many of the items we provide are expensive (e.g., tactical gear and supplies), so we have a great need for financial contributions. Only with your generosity can we insure our troops feel the love and support we send them from so many miles away. **We need your help. They need your help.**

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



NOW A PART OF UNITED WAY AND CFC!

It's that time of year when corporate and federal employees kick off their annual giving campaigns. And now you can donate directly to OTA through the United Way and the Combined Federal Campaign.



Simply designate OTA on your annual giving contribution form with the following codes:

- **United Way Agency #1525287**
- **CFC Code #9131** (in Southwest PA and Ohio Valley only)



By supporting OTA through these two campaigns, you'll be doing your part to make sure our troops are taken care of throughout 2007.



Soldiers in the 151st Trans. Company receive personal care items, barber kits, and vinyl records (Afghanistan).



B Company, 2-8 Infantry, 4th Infantry soldiers receive Under Armour t-shirts from OTA (Iraq).



Steeler's fans in the Air Force don't forget the Pittsburgh home team while in Iraq!

OTA TEAMS UP WITH BUY CAUSE



Need electronics, apparel, home goods, sports, or entertainment items for yourself? Want to buy things directly for our soldiers? Why not visit the on-line giant BuyCause.com to make your purchase, and benefit OTA and our soldiers at the same time.

Buy Cause and OTA are working closely together to make sure our troops have what they need. In fact, OTA is featured as the spotlight charity on Buy Cause's home page the first week in October! Check it out!

Offering nearly as many vendors as Amazon.com, Buy Cause contributes a portion (between 5% and 25%) of your purchase to your Personal Account in the form of "Buy Cause Bucks", which you can designate to the charity of your choice (like OTA!).

Not only can you donate the "Buy Cause Bucks" in your personal account, but you can also purchase items our troops need and have them sent directly to OTA. We will make sure they get to the units who have requested those items. It's that easy!

Right now, our greatest needs include the following, which you can find on www.BuyCause.com:

- Warm blankets and comforters
- Warm winter gloves (black or tan)
- Cold weather socks
- Reusable hand warmers

We also have on-going needs for:

- DVDs (movies and TV series)
- CDs
- Socks (athletic white or black)
- Video gaming systems and games
- MP3 players

You can have the items sent directly to us by entering the following in the *Ship To* address on your on-line Buy Cause order:

**Operation Troop Appreciation
9900 West Sample Road, Suite 209
Coral Springs, FL 33065**

OTA is proud to be working with Buy Cause, and we hope you will consider this site to fulfill your own needs, and the needs of our soldiers.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS....

Many of the troops we help send letters or emails to let us know how much OTA has meant to them. Here are some of those messages...

Some people say "Thank you for your service", buy themselves a yellow ribbon magnet for their car and think it entitles them to say they "support the troops". I challenge those people to speak with OTA and its army of volunteers.

"OTA raises the standard for what it means to be an American."

OTA volunteers sacrifice so much time to make sure any Unit who has asked for something, receives it. If they don't have the money, they raise it through fundraiser after fundraiser. And as if that weren't enough OTA always has a smile, a handshake and more importantly, a hug for every soldier they meet.

"You are true angels to us."

Through every dollar OTA raises, they raise the standard for what it means to "support our troops," and more importantly they raise the standard for what it means to be an American.
~ Sgt M.F., Army

"You have the ability to touch people's lives and you do it."

I have learned a lot over here about heroes. They come in all shapes, sizes, and jobs. Organizations and people like you earn the title hero. Your job is to work for the morale of people you don't know, asking nothing in return. That is rare.

I thank the Good Lord for people like you and the others of your organization. You have the ability to touch peoples' lives and you do it. ~ Sgt. M.M, Army (Iraq)

Thank you for everything. I passed everything out but only kept one thing for myself. Being from the Pittsburgh area, I felt it was my duty to keep the Steelers socks and I did wear them for the opener. Thank you again. ~ Sgt. J.M., Army (Iraq)

We received your package!! Everyone was so happy! We can not thank you and your organization enough for supporting the troops and showing you care. It is so amazing what ya'll do for the troops. I mean, I hope you know how much it means to us. You don't personally know us, yet you choose to show you care for us. That is such an amazing act of generosity and kindness. I thank God for people like you who have a big heart and use it. You are an inspiration to us and give us hope that what we are doing over here is worthwhile.

I pray the Good Lord blesses you and the rest of your organization. You are true angels to us. ~ Sgt. M.H, Army (Iraq)

I personally witnessed and participated in the receiving end of your operation. If you could only see the joy your organization creates...I know you receive letters of thanks, but those really can't compare to watching eyes tear up when they see their Nation, in the form of volunteers like yourselves, acknowledge what they are doing. The goods that you send are simple, but the selfless act is much more important.

"You are an inspiration to us and give us hope..."

With every t-shirt or whatever you have sent, you also send a very powerful message. ~ Sr. Master Sergeant D.S., Air Force, (Qatar)



Headquarters company of the 3-112th Armored receives Under Armour from OTA (Iraq)



An Air Force Logistics Embedded Training Team for the Afghan National Army received PS2 system and games, DVDs, and CDs.



Soldiers at Central Command received Under Armour, sandals, towels and personal care items from OTA (Qatar)

A 3,500 MILE WALK WITH APPRECIATION

Can you imagine what it would be like to walk across America? Adam Goodrich (24) and Christopher Tapp (27) did just that to demonstrate their appreciation and support for the members of our Armed Forces, choosing OTA as the organization to benefit from their efforts. The pair flew to Seattle in June and began their four-month, 3,500-mile journey back home to Clearwater, Florida. Along the way, they met with countless soldiers, many of whom benefited from OTA while deployed, and had the opportunity to thank them for their service.

The first few days brought the first of many memorable soldier meetings. As the pair passed through Yakima, WA, they met with Corporal Clay Hull, an Iraqi War Veteran who received “wish list” items from OTA while deployed.

From there, the journey continued east, but injury slowed their progress. In late June, Adam suffered a stress fracture in his left foot that required a rest period, and both men suffered from severe blisters. They recuperated with Chris’s family in Wyoming for a few days before taking off again.

They reached Denver in mid-July, and Adam appeared on **CNN Headline News** in a feature segment of the **Glenn Beck Show** with OTA Vice President, Monica Orluk. While in Denver, the two spent a day talking and exchanging stories with Iraqi war veterans from Fort Carson. Then it was on to Fort Riley, Kansas where Adam and Chris enjoyed another day with soldiers who benefited from OTA while deployed.

...one of the proudest moments of my life...

As they continued across the country, they encountered many people who encouraged them with a kind of word, a meal, and occasionally lodging. Each of these encounters left an indelible mark on Adam and Chris.

They spent August traveling south and met soldiers at Fort Benning, Georgia, where they rode in Bradley Fighting Vehicles and met with the Commanding Officers, who presented them with Coins of Excellence for their efforts. Adam spoke of the experience as “one of the proudest moments of my life and by far, my favorite part of our journey.”

Chris and Adam made their final steps home into Clearwater on September 29. OTA Vice President Monica Orluk joined the men’s family and friends at Pier 60 as they made their way across the last bridge into the city. The group walked together for the final mile to a Welcome Home Celebration.

Also joining the celebration were Senior Master Sergeant Don Scott (Mac Dill Air Force Base) and Army Staff Sergeant Andrea Maple who both personally benefited from OTA while deployed to Qatar. Sr. MSgt. Scott presented the pair with Centcom Excellence Coins, demonstrating the military’s gratitude for the efforts Adam and Chris made during their Walk With Appreciation.

OTA Vice President, Monica Orluk said of the meeting, “it is not often that people do great things. Adam and Chris did a great thing, and I’m not sure they realize just how wonderful it was for OTA to be part of their journey.”

On behalf of OTA and the soldiers we serve, we thank Adam and Chris for Walking with Appreciation and for sharing their experience with us. They will continue to update their blog chronicling their journey and experiences on the OTA website (www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org).

You can also view the newspaper articles and TV news segments highlighting the journey (click on **About OTA**, then **Press Coverage**).



Adam (left) and Chris hiked from Seattle to Florida on a 4-month cross-country trek.



Chris with Cpl. Hull (left), who was injured in an IED attack last year and is now home in Yakima recovering.



Meeting with Spc. Jason Guidry (left) and Spc. Rabon Weger of the 1st Battalion, 13th Armored in Ft. Riley, who received “wish list” items from OTA during their 2005 deployment.



Pfc. Eric Melde and Sgt. Robert Mundo from Ft. Carson talk about their deployment to Iraq.



Adam and Chris celebrate the last steps of their journey with OTA VP Monica Orluk.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

This summer, as a result of increased press to the military, OTA received “wish list” requests from thousands of deployed troops. OTA sent out a plea to our Pittsburgh-area patrons and volunteers to donate funds and needed items. And the response was unbelievable!

With help from churches, synagogues, schools, companies and individuals, we fulfilled those wishes and sent more than 2,000 pounds of needed items to thousands of our troops. The outpouring of support and generosity was astounding, and we would like to take a moment to thank all of you who contributed so freely in our time of need. From the bottom of our hearts, **Thank You.**

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT

Jordan Zuppe and Sarah Haluska are seniors at Hopewell High School, just outside Pittsburgh, PA. When charged with completing a senior service project, it didn't take them long to choose troop support as their theme. As luck would have it, the girls chose OTA as an outlet to achieve their goals.



Jordan and Sarah with cakes they baked for their troop support party.

This summer, the girls organized a neighborhood backyard party as part of their project.

From invitations, to preparing food, to clean-up, the girls planned and carried out all aspects of the party.

The result? Over \$1,000 raised in a single afternoon for OTA!

Jordan and Sarah's efforts provided the money OTA needed to send:

- Clothing and personal care items to an Air Force trauma center in Iraq, for medical staff to hand out to 300 wounded soldiers coming in for emergency treatment.
- Bed sheets and feather pillows to a platoon of 30 Marines performing dangerous combat missions in Iraq.
- Under Armour t-shirts to a 20-man naval squad in Afghanistan, doing humanitarian work and training the Afghan army.

That's a lot of good resulting from the efforts of two very special young women!

HOOPS FOR HEROES

There's nothing like a little healthy competition and the crowds turned out for that and some fun, while supporting our troops.

The Pennsylvania Army National Guard partnered with OTA to host **Hoops for Heroes** at the Mall at Robinson, near Pittsburgh, PA. The September 17 event consisted of a “free-throw” competition with participants donating one dollar for each attempt at the most consecutive number of shots.

Thanks to event sponsors Dick's Sporting Goods, The Mall at Robinson, Sundance Vacations, Court Time Sports Center, R. K. Virgile Scrap Metals, and University of Pittsburgh Band Director Jack Anderson, the day was a huge success.

Congratulations to the winners in the four age categories, and thank you to all who participated!

We offer our very special thanks to event coordinator, Sgt. Mike Fischer of the PA Army National Guard. His efforts helped OTA raise enough money to provide a platoon of soldiers in Iraq their “wish” for Under Armour t-shirts.



A perfect shot by our youngest Hoops for Heroes participant!

SCREAMING EAGLES TROOP SUPPORT BIKE RUN

The motorcycle engines roared at Roma's Restaurant, Sunday, September 10th for a bike run and pig roast, all in support of OTA and our deployed troops. The weather was perfect as more than 140 riders took to the roads in Pittsburgh.

Special recognition was awarded to the Three Rivers Punishers Club who had the highest number of riders at the event. And to Don Bolden who traveled the furthest to ride – 466 miles all the way from Yorktown, VA! Thank you all for your support!

Special thanks to event coordinators Jim Kunkle and Judy Homer-Sexton who worked tirelessly to secure sponsors, raffle prizes and entertainment for the day. Also, kudos to the staff of Roma Restaurant, especially Bob, for making sure no detail was overlooked and everyone had a great time.



Bikers from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia joined OTA for the Screaming Eagles Bike Run.

Proceeds from the day's event went to provide "wish list items" for deployed soldiers from local Pittsburgh units:

- **303rd Psychological Operations unit from Oakdale, PA** received Under Armour socks for 198 soldiers.
- **864th Adjutant Generals Office from Oakdale, PA** received industrial sized coffee pots, coffee and travel sized personal care items to provide a bit of comfort to hundreds of soldiers en-route to theater.
- **An Air Force Master Sergeant from Carnegie, PA** received his request of personal care and comfort items from OTA for all of his 95 fellow airmen in Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan.
- **An Army Staff Sergeant from Pittsburgh in A Troop of the 3/4 Cavalry** received Under Armour t-shirts, baseball equipment, and socks for his 80 soldiers.

MORE SUCCESS STORIES

Since our last newsletter in June, more than 3,300 deployed troops received their "wish list" requests from OTA, bringing the number of troops who have benefited from OTA since inception to more than 14,000!

Here is a snapshot of some of our recent units, what they are doing, and what OTA provided:

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Mission</u>	<u>Wish List</u>
Army	Assisting in Trauma Life Support in Iraq and doing infantry missions	Nomex Gloves Spotting Scopes Bore snakes Earplugs
Navy	Provide humanitarian assistance to Iraqi civilians	DVDs Books
Air Force	A military working-dog unit on the Horn of Africa	Dog Supplies Hygiene Items Under Armour
Army	Starting a Forward Operating Base from scratch in Iraq	Under Armour Folding Knives
Air Force	Training Afghan army and doing force protection	Personal care items
Army	Provide aviation support in Afghanistan	DVDs CDs Under Armour
Marines	Doing force protection at an air base in Iraq	Under Armour

