

PO Box 18052 ★ Pittsburgh, PA 15236
www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org

OFFICERS' CORNER

Can you believe we enter our 15th year of operation on July 1st! If you had asked me in July of 2004 where I thought OTA would be in 15 years, the answer would have been “do you really think we'll still be needed?”. Yet here we are! And the need for our services has never been greater. I reflect on the early days, packing boxes from our basements. Then seeing our operation grow, moving into the Hunt Armory, where we enjoyed sharing residence with our brave PA National Guardsmen for four years. We moved again to larger space at Century III Mall, before moving into our current home, a 13,000 square foot operations center.

How did we get here? We got here because of you – the volunteers who have worked thousands of tireless hours raising money, packing boxes, holding events, and carrying out our mission through self-less service to our troops and veterans. To our donors, who year after year continue to make monetary donations, hold collection drives, spread the word about the good work we do and make it possible for us to keep the doors open, the lights on, and fund our programs. And finally, to the companies who offer their services pro-bono so that we can continue to ensure that donations are used to fund our programs, not staff pockets.

OTA's mission is to show our commitment to our military community, reflecting our dedication to past and present, active and veteran members of our Armed Forces.

OTA demonstrates its mission to build and sustain the morale and well-being of the military community by providing them with items and services that contribute to their morale, well-being, and self-sufficiency.

Companies like Wahila Creative, who built and manages our website, H2R CPA who provides accounting support, Eckert Seamans who contribute legal services, My Way Moving & Storage who has moved us 4 times, and the many others who have helped administer our charity through the years – we would not be here without you all!

So what have we accomplished in 15 years?

- Fulfilled “Wish-List” requests for over **165,000 deployed members of the U.S. Military since 2004**
- **Completed over 4,200 projects through our Welcome Home program** to veteran families in need
- **Limited our overhead** to rent, utilities and administrative fees so our funding is used for our troop and veterans
- **Remained a 100% volunteer non-profit**, creating a new non-profit business model few have been able to replicate

Our country is facing great challenges, and our military and veteran community need our support more than ever. I can assure you, that we will continue to maintain the standards and principles that are the foundation of OTA, and that we will continue to be “Committed To Our Courageous” as long as the brave troops and veterans we serve need our help.

Continue reading for more stories about our volunteers, troops and veterans. We hope you enjoy!



Monica Orluk, CEO

Morale Through Music

We received a request from a unit for two guitars from OTA so they could learn to play and give lessons in their downtime on base. The guitars were donated by [Yamaha Music USA](#) along with strings and other supplies from [Pittsburgh Guitars](#) in the South Side. Once the guitars were sent and received, we received this wonderful message in our inbox:

"Thank you so much. This will definitely help us build rapport with the Afghan National Army. We are able to share our culture with each other, as we fight alongside each other. We will be happy to send you lots of pictures of us playing and teaching guitar to them as well.

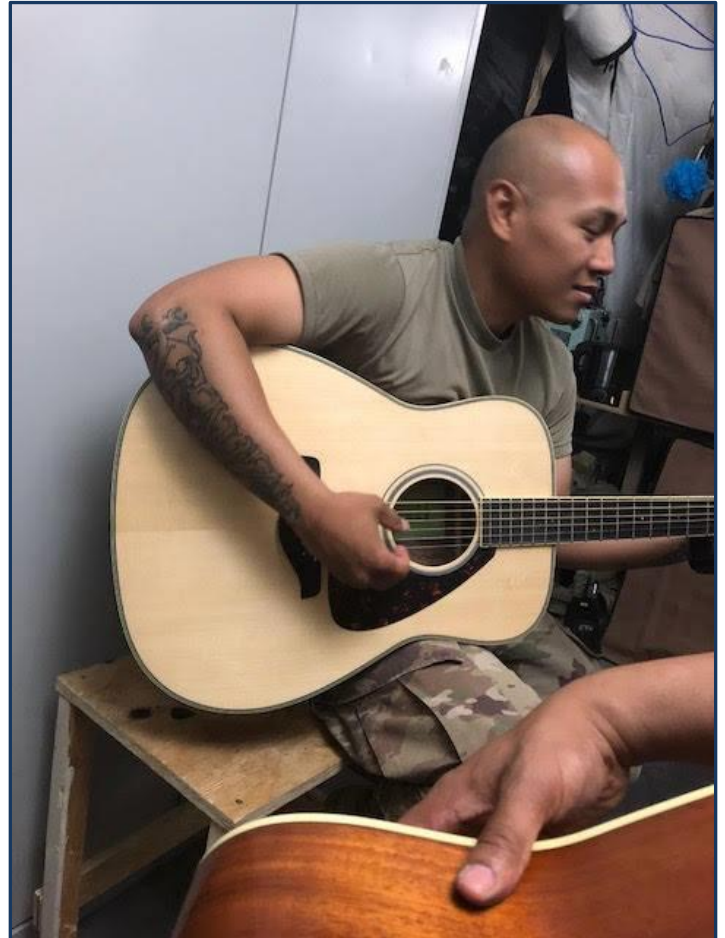
I can't tell you how much we are all going to appreciate these acts of kindness. Your operation will make it so much easier to help not only our company but the other armies that we serve alongside.

We are so grateful for your assistance in helping us with our mission. Although it may be small to you, this a very large step forward in turning the war over to our counterparts here."

"Here's a few pictures of us trying to learn how to play. We just got back from mission. It was such a nice surprise to give to the guys! They are soo stoked and haven't stopped playing. I am truly grateful for the smiles you've brought to my company."



*Thank you Pittsburgh Guitars
and Yamaha Music for
improving the morale of these
brave soldiers!*



Music is the universal language of mankind. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

From the Front Lines & the Homefront



Wow! Thank you so much for everything that was sent. My division is so grateful for the two huge boxes that were packed FULL of great things! We have finished our patrol and enjoyed some pretty great treats from your organization. If there is anything that we can do to demonstrate our gratitude, please let us know. Thank you again.

Thank You Thank You Thank You!

There is so much that comes to mind when I think of all the support we have received and all of the love we've been shown. We have been absolutely blown away by the countless words of encouragement and numerous items sent our way. Our battalion's morale has been increased because of your selflessness, your heart for Soldiers, and your heart for our country. You did things you didn't have to do to grant us access to things we didn't have. For all you have done I offer our sincerest thank you and my personal commitment to complete the task that lies ahead.

You are a most needed blessing and an answered prayer for us and I pray God's continued Grace, Mercy, Favor, Peace, Protection, Love, and Success to you. From the Soldiers of 3-29 FA and the Unit Ministry Team, thank you very, very much.



OTA RECOGNIZED!

OTA'S Welcome Home Program relies on partnerships with other veteran agencies who refer veterans in the most critical need to our services. One of our significant partners is the Veterans Leadership Program of Western PA (VLP). On May 23, 2018 OTA was honored to be the recipient of their Organizational Tribute Award at the Annual Tribute Dinner, held at the Sheraton, Station Square.

We shared honors with many other individuals and veterans who work in tandem with our charity to improve the lives of our local veterans and their families. THANK YOU VLP for being a wonderful partner in our support of veterans and for this great honor!

Monica Orluk accepts VLP Tribute Award



Join Us for Our Upcoming Events:

August 25, 2018 – OTA Annual Motorcycle Run

November 9 & 10, 2018 – OTA Annual Jewelry Sale

November 11, 2018 – Annual Veterans Day 5K Race

For more information and details please visit our website:

www.OperationTroopApprecation.org



Easy Donations or Organized Collection Drives

Please remember, there are troops deployed all over the world. OTA is always in need of donated items and monetary contributions to fulfill our troops' "Wish List" requests.

In many deployed locations, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq, our troops are unable to purchase many items on their own and must rely on packages from supporters at home.

Please consider donating any of the following items to OTA to help our troops and veterans stay stocked on critical needs.

Hygiene:

- Body wash
- Men's deodorant
- Men's triple blade razors

FOOD (unopened and unexpired):

- Nuts & tuna packets
- Beef jerky & beef sticks
- Dried fruit & trail mix
- Granola bars & energy bars
- Cookies, crackers, chips & pretzels
- Powdered drink mix (no liquids please)
- Specialty ground coffee (NO K-cups)

veteran Welcome Home kits:

- Multi-purpose cleaner & dish soap
- Aluminum foil & plastic wrap
- Quart & gallon zipper bags
- Tall Kitchen & large trash bags
- Buckets, brooms, dustpan sets
- Kitchen towels & cleaning rags
- Bath towel sets
- Cleaning rags & sponges
- Small Appliances
- Twin and Full-Size Sheet sets & Comforters

New Items in original packaging, please!

Yellow Ribbon Campaign:

A simple and easy way to help raise money for the troops! OTA will provide you with a "Support the Troops" Yellow Ribbon template, you print them and distribute for a donation (typically \$2-\$5). Donors write their names on the ribbons which are then posted in your church, school, or store. Proceeds are given to OTA to purchase "Wish List" items for the troops.

Cents for Soldiers:

OTA's Cents for Soldiers campaign is a great option to raise funds simply by collecting loose change! Groups place a Cents for Soldiers Donation Jar in a central location, and ask family, friends and coworkers to toss their spare change in. It's also a popular activity for schools to teach students math and counting skills, as well as community awareness.

Letter Writing:

Our troops love to get cards and letters from supporters (especially school children) back home! It's a great boost to troop morale and facilitates pen-pal correspondence. This is a particularly popular project for schools, church youth groups, day cares and senior centers.

For more information on these programs, please contact OTA Community Projects Coordinator, Sherry Einhaus, sdeinhaus@comcast.net or by phone 412-973-1831

CONNECT WITH US

Operation Troop Appreciation is an official cause on Facebook and Twitter.

Follow us for announcements of upcoming events, notice of volunteer opportunities, pictures and postings from the troops we help.

