

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

OFFICERS' CORNER

Wow, can you believe another year is fast coming to an end? And what a year! We are so blessed to have your support – and 2019 promises to be the biggest year for OTA yet! We celebrate 15 years of volunteer support for our troops and veterans. And I'd like to take this opportunity to "toot our horn" a bit. Maintaining an all volunteer charity is challenging, sometimes difficult to be honest, but the team at OTA has always risen to, and exceeded those challenges. People often ask our volunteers why they put so much effort into OTA? A fair question to someone who works extremely hard for no monetary compensation. I'll be so bold as to speak on behalf of our entire volunteer staff. We do it because we live in the greatest country on earth. Because men and women have fought bravely to secure the freedom, rights and privileges we enjoy as citizens of the United States of America. Make no mistake, their efforts make a huge difference in the lives of our deployed troops and veterans. But it takes a lot of support from you, our faithful donors and sponsors, to carry out our mission. We volunteer to serve those who volunteer to serve our country. And we thank you for your donations and continued support as we move forward, caring for our troops and veterans in a way that no other charity does, providing services that no one else provides.

YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE and your help allows us to:

- Provide "Wish-List" requests for over **167,000 deployed members of the U.S. Military since 2004**
- **Complete over 4,500 projects through our Welcome Home program** to veteran families in need
- **Limit our overhead** to rent, utilities and administrative fees so our funding is used for our troop and veterans
- **Remain a 100% volunteer non-profit**, creating a new non-profit business model few have been able to replicate

So we invite you to celebrate our 15 years of success! Plan to participate in one of the many events listed on the calendar of events. Learn about the many ways you can help our troops and veterans.

As always, your support is greatly appreciated!



Monica Orluk, CEO

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.

Pittsburgh Pirates, PNC Bank & #1Cochran Jeep Deliver!

The Pittsburgh Pirates have always demonstrated tremendous support for OTA and the military community. And this year, they wanted to show their support in a major way! Together with OTA, PNC Bank and #1Cochran Jeep Chrysler Dodge, the Pirates chose a special veteran to receive a life changing gift on September 19, 2018 during Military Appreciation Night at the Pirates game.

Jason Boyer is an Army veteran who served in both Operation Iraqi and Operation Enduring Freedom. Like many of our returning heroes, Jason faced challenges with physical injuries that impacted his ability to work. Despite his best efforts, his vehicle fell into disrepair and needed thousands of dollars to pass inspection – in fact, the repairs cost more than the car was worth.

The Pirates, PNC Bank, and #1 Cochran Jeep Chrysler Dodge decided it was time to thank Jason for his service in a very special way – they surprised him with a brand new 2018 Jeep Grand Cherokee! And he had no idea! Through the efforts of the sponsors, OTA volunteers and his VA case manager, a story was concocted to get Jason and his family to the game. In a pre-game ceremony, the game announcer started talking about OTA, then transitioned into telling Jason's story as the car was driven around the field to where Jason and his family were waiting, unaware that their lives were about to change in a major way!

THANK YOU TO THE PITTSBURGH PIRATES, PNC BANK, #1 COCHRAN JEEP CHRYSLER DODGE and all those who participated!

These pictures capture the moment when the surprise was revealed and reflect the incredible impact this gift will make for Jason and his family.



"This is for me? Are You Serious? – The surprise revealed.



Jason and son Dante



Jason, Brandy and Dante Boyer



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Join OTA for these upcoming events that support our active-duty and veteran support programs!

- **November 3, 2018** – OTA at the Wheeling Nailers Home Opener! Join OTA for Military Appreciation Night at the Wheeling Nailers Home Opener, WesBanco Arena, Wheeling WV. Help support our troops and veterans! Purchase tickets through this special link and OTA receives a portion of your ticket purchase: <https://www.fevo.com/edp/Wheeling-Nailers-vs-Indy-Fuel-Opening-Night--Operation-Troop-Appreciation-3Q7hffHo>
- **November 3, 2018** – Kinsey Wine & Beer Festival, Oakdale PA. Sample some of the finest beers and wines in Western PA at this great event! And you may even see an OTA volunteer pouring your favorite beverage! For more information: <https://www.evensi.us/kinsey-wine-beer-festival-7237-nobletown-oakdale-pennsylvania-15071/259987582>
- **November 9 & 10, 2018** - 8th Annual "Gently Used Costume Jewelry Sale". More than 35,000 pieces of jewelry, a mix of brand new, vintage, and trendy pieces! Pins, Bracelets, Earrings, Necklaces and much much more! Invite a friend or two and join us on Friday, Nov 9 (1PM to 7PM) and Saturday, Nov 10 (11AM to 6PM) at the South Park Community Center, 2675 Brownsville Road, South Park 15129 . (across from Gil's Café and behind the South Park Library). ALL profits support OTA and our active-duty and veteran support programs. Y108 will broadcast live both days! Win great prizes at the "American Basket Auction". For more information, contact Kathie Gasior: kgasior2@gmail.com
- **November 11, 2018** – OTA Annual Veterans Day 5K Race – Join us for this special event, at the Hampton Community Park, Allison Park PA. All levels and ages welcome! 9:00 a.m. start. Pre-Registration fee \$20, race day \$25, Team Challenge (5 member) pre-entry registration \$75, race day \$100. To register for the race, please contact Race Director, Alice McLaughlin: gerardmac977@aol.com or <https://runsignup.com/Race/PA/AllisonPark/OPERATIONTROOPAPPRECIATION5K>

OTA T-Shirts on TeeSpring!

Announcing brand new OTA t-shirt designs on TeeSpring! We have 2 designs for you to choose from: A 15th Anniversary Commemorative T-Shirt and a really cool OTA support t-shirt. There are 3 links, as the anniversary shirt is offered in a ton of fun colors. Each shirt is \$19.99 and proceeds get donated directly to OTA! Help us support our troops and veterans, click on the links below and order your shirt today!



<https://teespring.com/OTA-15YR2>

<https://teespring.com/OTA-15YR>

<https://teespring.com/OTA-Basic>

WIN THIS FRAMED, AUTOGRAPHED ALEJANDRO VILLANUEVA ARMY JERSEY!

OTA is offering you the chance to win this priceless memento, honoring the service of our favorite Pittsburgh Steeler, Alejandro Villanueva! This Army jersey is autographed by Alejandro and includes the inscription "Rangers Lead The Way!". The jersey is professionally framed and tickets are available for \$20 each. Winner will be drawn on Veterans Day, November 11, 2018. To get your tickets, contact Monica Orluk:

monica@operationtroopappreciation.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.

