



OPERATION TROOP APPRECIATION

June 2005 Newsletter

How exciting! Our first newsletter!

Dear OTA Friends and Volunteers,

I'm pleased to be able to share our very first OTA newsletter with you! Board Member Secretary and OTA Vice President, Judy Sexton, has worked hard to bring you this informative update and will be issuing newsletters on at least a quarterly basis.

We have been working hard over the past few months to show our fighting men and women in Iraq, Afghanistan and throughout the Middle East our support and gratitude for their selfless service and daily sacrifices. The hundreds of letters we receive from Soldiers and Marines in the theater of war who have benefited from OTA further inspire us to continue our important work.

I hope you enjoy this first OTA newsletter. If you would like to be part of the newsletter staff, have anything to add to the newsletter, or have suggestions for other items to include, please contact Judy Sexton at jzhomer@comcast.net.

Sincerely,
Kristen Holloway, President

107th Reunification Ceremony

On 7 May 2005, OTA celebrated the return of the 500+ soldiers of the 107th Field Artillery. During their deployment in 2004-2005, we provided Under Armour ® t-shirts to one of the 120-soldier companies in the battalion.

The reunification ceremony in New Castle, PA was followed by a parade and picnic, and wrapped up with fireworks at Cascade Park. OTA volunteers set up for the picnic, provided food throughout the day, and had an opportunity to meet some of the soldiers we helped during their deployment.

Our hearts go out to the families of the three soldiers of the 107th who died during their deployment in Iraq. It was an emotional time for the friends and families of the three fallen heroes during the memorial service.

It was a true honor to be invited to participate in the celebration our heroes and help put on a fantastic homecoming event for them!



Picture: distinguished guests on the speaker's podium surrounded by the 107th soldiers on the parade ground

Current Fundraiser

Our current fundraiser features Home Interior candles. OTA volunteer Natalie Kappert has graciously offered to spearhead this project which will run during the month of June.

This fundraiser, which will simply include wonderfully fragrant candles, will give 50% of all proceeds directly back to OTA to continue our work with deployed soldiers! (www.HomeInteriors.com).

Now I know you are all busy and probably door-to-door selling is not what you had in mind as a fun activity. But we can also raise a lot of money by just posting these order forms at our offices or churches (how many boxes of Girl Scout cookies did you order off your department's bulletin board??). Of course, I wouldn't discourage anyone from making personal requests, but this affords all of us an opportunity to help make money for OTA without a lot of extra effort.

This is a terrific opportunity for OTA and I encourage all of you to help sell. Just to put it in perspective, if we all sell 10 candles, we could raise thousands of dollars for our soldiers. That's a great deal of money for just a little bit of work!

Please contact Natalie at natm700@comcast.net for an order form, more details, or to place an order.

BONUS: The top seller will receive two Pirates tickets to the game of their choice.



New Members

OTA is always looking for new volunteers. We heartily welcome the newest volunteers to OTA:

Julie Fagley
Juanita Homer
Natalie Kappert
Captain Ed Luzadder
Maria Maceno
Helen Richardson
Tracey Santorio

It is a pleasure to have you on board!

OTA's great success so far!

Since OTA's inception last July 2004, we have provided morale boosting "wish list" items to more than 3,000 Soldiers and Marines! And we have plans to reach out to 10,000 more this year! Items that we've sent to various military units in "the theatre of war" include:

- Under Armour® t-shirts and socks
- Phone cards
- Sports equipment
- Musical instruments
- Personal care items
- Entertainment items like DVDs, CDs, Play Station 2 consoles and games.

Check out our website at www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org for more details on these projects.



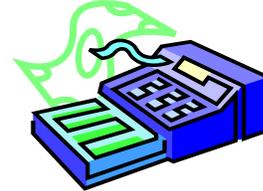
Up coming military projects

The 49th Military History Division will soon benefit from OTA's great work. The 49th has requested fencing equipment. No, not so they can build a fence around Iraq, but for sport fencing. Fencing helps the soldiers de-stress while enjoying a good physical workout. OTA is working with coaches from Bethel Park School District who are not only helping OTA procure the necessary equipment, but who are also providing equipment from their own personal collection. **THANK YOU!**

To help prepare for their upcoming deployment, OTA has sent 600 Under Armour® t-shirts and socks to a battalion of Marines shipping out of Camp LeJeune, NC this June. We wish them God speed and a safe return!

Up Coming Events – Do your Christmas Shopping early!

On 28 August 2005, OTA will hold a "Mega-Sale." This mega sale will include up to 30 vendors such as Party Lite, Pampered Chef, jewelers, crafters, etc. We will have raffles and give-a-ways, and plan on having local sports figures in attendance to sign autographs. Volunteers will be needed to help out at the event. **So mark your calendars now!** More information will be provided soon.



But right now, we need your help to find the right name for our "Mega-Sale." So put on your creative thinking caps and email your name ideas to OTA VP Monica Orluk littlemo34@yahoo.com.

Volunteers

OTA is always looking for volunteers to help out with various activities and tasks. Judy Sexton is taking suggestions on how to recruit new members and recongnize the established members. Please send any questions and suggestions to jzhomer@comcast.net.

The latest from Iraq

OTA most recently sent care packages of "wish list" items to B Company of the 1-13th Armored Regiment. Items included Play Stations consoles and games, Starbucks coffee, DVDs, a weight-lifting machine, and phone cards.



Picture: soldiers from B Company of the 1-13th Armored Regiment receive "wish list" items from OTA.



Picture: OTA's point-of contact Captain Charles Querriera with the 13th Armored opens a box from OTA.

OTA receives Award

On April 30, 2005, the Vietnam Veterans of America presented OTA President Kristen Holloway with the **Junior Legion of Honor Award** for starting Operation Troop Appreciation. This National award is given to young people who have contributed to the interethnic and interfaith harmony in the community by volunteering, and commemorates four WW II chaplains who gave up their life vests, and consequently their lives, so other sailors on their torpedoed naval ship could survive.



With tremendous private and public support for Kristen's work with OTA thus far, past success with OTA inspires her to show even more deployed Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines her appreciation and gratitude through her work as President of Operation Troop Appreciation.

Cell Phones for Soldiers

OTA would like to thank Cell Phones for Soldiers for donating a 100-minute AT&T phone cards to each soldier of B Company, 1-13th Armored Battalion! Cell Phones for Soldiers was started by 13-year old Brittany Bergquist and her 12-year old brother Robbie of Norwell, MA.

After hearing a news report about a local soldier who ran up a massive phone bill calling home from Iraq, they decided they wanted to do something to help. So they began collecting unused cell phones for

recycling. The money from the recycled phones is used to buy phone cards for deployed soldiers. We would like to invite you to learn more about this amazing organization at www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com.

And if you have old cell phones, send them their way!



Board Members

Please welcome our new Board Members. Thank you to previous Board Members Ryan Purpura and Joli Studley who both did a fantastic job setting up the organization and who continue as vital OTA volunteers.

The new Board consists of:

Kristen Holloway

Monica Orluk

Michele Petrucci

Judy Sexton

Kelly Wilson

Always looking for Donations

As you know, OTA can only do its work with 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

