



OPERATION TROOP APPRECIATION

COMMITTED TO
OUR COURAGEOUS
MEMBERS OF THE
US MILITARY, PAST
AND PRESENT

THE Eagle

Winter 2021

OPERATION REACH OUT 2021



In 2019 GBU Life and OTA partnered to continue GBU's "Operation Reach Out" program. Since 2007, GBU Life has shipped thousands of care packages to the troops overseas. The project was so successful that GBU ran out of space – and addresses to facilitate shipping and reaching project goals. Jennifer Stockdale, a GBU employee mentioned that there was a charity just down the street who might be able to help, and that charity was OTA!

And 2021 has shown even greater results as Operation Reach Out has expanded to both deployed military and veteran support. Through November, we have helped 5,977 troops and veterans and we have many more in the pipeline to help in December.

We truly value the partnership with GBU Life. We share a passion for service and appreciation for the selfless sacrifice our troops and veterans make for our country!

Our first year of partnership resulted in shipping supplies to over 5,000 deployed troops and we were fortunate to have over 200 GBU members volunteer to assist with this effort! Then came Covid and the pandemic brought new challenges. Having set a goal to exceed the number of troops helped through Operation Reach Out, we shared concern that with shut downs and quarantines, we would not have the bandwidth to reach that goal. We came together and were able to modify our program to focus more on financial support from GBU Life supplemented with volunteer opportunities as the pandemic allowed. Once again, Operation Reach Out exceeded our goal helping 6,488 deployed troops.

Pre-Covid Operation Reach Out Packing day.



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MISSION

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.

MOMENT WITH MO

It is hard to believe that another year has passed! New challenges were presented as we continue to struggle with the effects of Covid on our troops, veterans and volunteers. And we saw an end come to the very difficult war on terror in Afghanistan.



In this issue of *The Eagle*, we'll share OTA's connection to the September attack on the airbase in Kabul, and stories from the troops and veterans we serve. And we'll share the many ways that our volunteers and sponsors have helped us reached some incredible milestones.

We count our blessings every day for the support we continue to receive from you and for the selfless service of our troops and veterans. For over 17 years, OTA has supported their efforts in military and humanitarian missions across the globe. With your generosity, we'll continue our mission of being "Committed to our Courageous" for as long as our troops and veterans need our help.

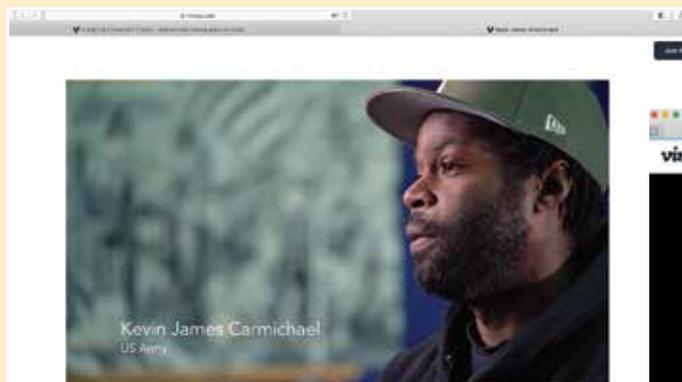
This holiday season, we wish you the best. May the New Year bring you much happiness and many blessings! As you gather with family and celebrate, please take a moment to appreciate the men and women who are far from home serving our country. And say a prayer for those who have returned and continue to struggle with the effects of long deployments and transition to civilian life.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *The Eagle* and we thank you for your support and dedication to the brave troops and veterans we serve.

– *Monica*

OTA Veterans' Stories of Service

Be sure to check out what our vets have to say about OTA on www.operationtroopappreciation.org or link to: <https://vimeopro.com/user20144885/operation-troop-appreciation/video/528406541>



MEDICAL SUPPORT SQUADRON RECEIVES CLOTHING FOR PATIENTS

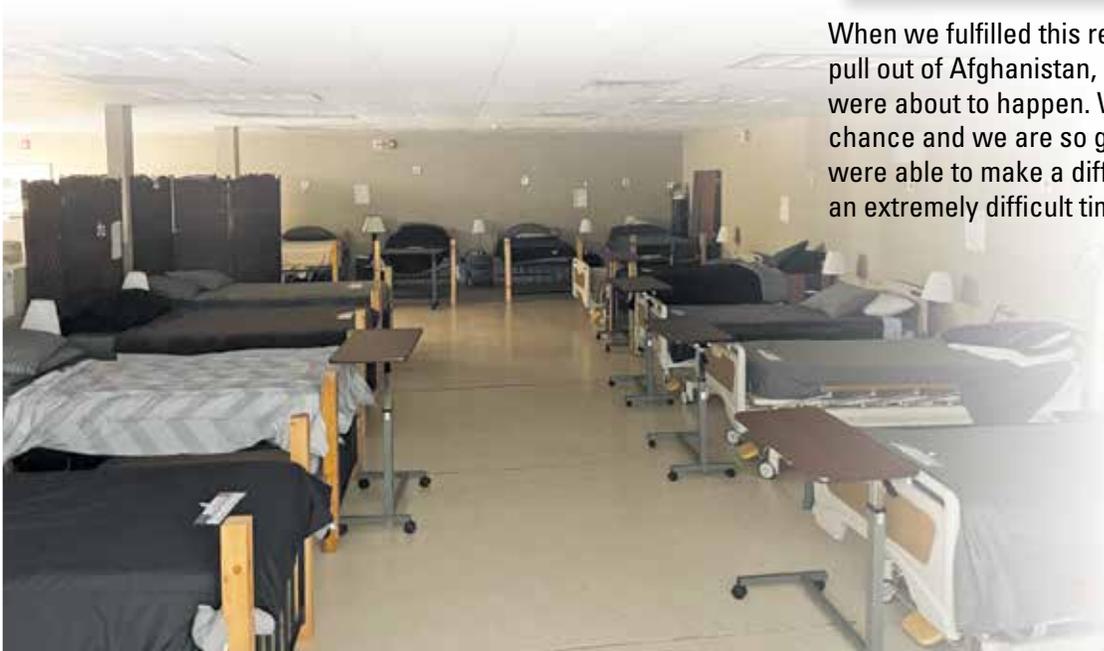
In August, we received a Troop Request from the 379th Expeditionary Medical Support Squadron at the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. This unit from Pennsylvania provides medical air transportation to the medical facility in Qatar and includes medics from the 911th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Pittsburgh Air Reserve Station, that were a part of Operation Allies Refuge in Qatar and Afghanistan. Their request was simple, please provide clothing for the patients we take care of. When injured members of the military or civilian communities are flown in, their clothing is often cut off to provide critical medical treatment. The patients were in need of comfortable clothing to wear during recovery. We also learned that our Air Force members could use some snacks and toiletries as well.



OTA quickly began to purchase t-shirts, shorts, sweat suits, and socks as well as snacks and hygiene items to fill this request. And we sent 12 cartoons of these items to the unit. When we received confirmation from our contact, we learned that military members and civilians who were injured during the attack at the Kabul Airbase were transported to this medical facility. Our support provided these patients with new clothing and aided in their recovery.



When we fulfilled this request, we had no idea that the pull out of Afghanistan, and subsequent attack on Kabul were about to happen. We know that nothing happens by chance and we are so grateful that with your support we were able to make a difference and help our military during an extremely difficult time.



VOLUNTEER EFFORTS & 2021 EVENTS

9th Annual Gently Used Jewelry Sale

In what has now become a Veterans Day Weekend tradition, OTA held its 9th Annual Gently Used Jewelry Sale at the South Park Community Center. This year's event brought new meaning to the expression "shop til you drop" and raised over \$12,000 for OTA over the course of the 2 day event!

Once again, OTA Volunteer Extraordinaire, Kathy Gasior and her hard working team set up over 5,000 pieces of jewelry and accessories in preparation for the event. The number of hours this team worked is huge and we are so grateful for their efforts.

Mark your calendars for the 10th Annual Gently Used Jewelry Sale, November 4 & 5, 2022!



15th Annual Veterans Day 5K Race



On a beautiful, but crisp November day, hundreds gathered to face the challenging course at the Hampton Community Park to participate in the 15th Annual Veterans Day 5K Race. People of all ages ran, walked, or strolled the course in support of our troops and veterans. We even had some K9's join the race! We are proud of the winners in every age category who all went home with a medal and an apple pie! And a special thank you to the wonderful sponsors who continue to show their support for this annual event.

OTA Congratulates New Chief Operating Officer

Many of you know Sherry Einhaus because she has given you a tour of our Operations Center, or picked up donations, or met you at an OTA event. But you might not know that the OTA Board of Directors recently voted to name her OTA's Chief Operating Officer! As a 100% volunteer charity, we rely on people who are willing to make a huge sacrifice of time and effort to commit to leadership roles. Sherry exemplifies the volunteer spirit of our charity and our founding principle that we "volunteer to serve those who volunteer to serve our country." Congratulations Sherry and thank you for your unyielding "Commitment to our Courageous!"



Sherry Einhaus

Overstock Extravaganza a Huge Success!

OTA was very fortunate to secure a truckload donation of new items from Amazon through our partner, Good 360. This donation provided us with pallets full of items we need for our veteran "Welcome Home" program. It also left us with pallets full of household goods, electronics, clothing, auto parts, furniture and outdoor goods that we could not use. We held our first "Overstock Extravaganza" event July 10 & 11 and raised over \$11,000 by offering the public the chance to "make a deal" on this prime merchandise. It was so successful that we held another event in September as well! We appreciate everyone who came out and participated!



Bikers Come Together to Support OTA!

The motorcycle community came out during the summer of '21 to support our troops and veterans in a really big way!

OTA held its Annual Motorcycle Run on July 30th. More than 100 bikers participated in this 100 mile run, ending with a buffet dinner at the El Rama Fire Hall outdoor pavilion. This annual event raised over \$3,000 for OTA!

On September 11, 2021, **The American Legion Post 712** held their annual motorcycle run and donated the proceeds to OTA! We thank them for their generous donation of \$3,500!

Finally, **Bikers Helping Others** chose OTA to be the beneficiary of their annual motorcycle run and donated \$4,000 to OTA! We truly appreciate the support!



FEEDBACK FROM THE FRONT

Ma'am,

The coolers have arrived along with some other goodies. Thank you again for supporting with individual requests, your items made my week!! Thank you again for supporting! We superappreciate you and your team.

– 768 EABS, AB 101



Good morning,



I just wanted to take a quick minute to say THANK YOU for the care packages!!! It's a great feeling to see my troops get excited seeing me walk in with the packages because they know they're going to get some great

goodies. Thank you to all the volunteers and business who support me and my Soldiers and others across the globe.

I set up all the items like a little store and the items were gone in about 20mins. It was great to see their faces looking through the items!!!

Thank you very much for the love and support!!!

V/R,

Matthew P.

To The OTA Family,

Through my almost 17 years of service, I have been deployed several times to three different continents. I continue to be amazed by organizations like yours that keep supporting service members for almost two decades now. Where most of the stateside population has become fatigued and 'supporting the troops' has become cliché, people like OTA remind us that there are plenty of people who still remember why we're here.



We cannot adequately articulate to you how much your effort and generosity truly means to us and

Dear OTA,

Just received the care packages thank you so much here is a pic with some of the dogs and handlers we appreciate it all!!



all the service members you support. Please understand – what you do, it truly matters & makes a difference! So from the 79th and this guy from a small town in East Texas... THANK YOU!

– SFC Sanders, US Army

Good afternoon,

I got your box. Thank you very much. On behalf of my team I want to thank you all. My team and I were very grateful for your help. Thanks for all the supplements, play cards and etc. but when I saw the kids written letters by their own hand and their paints I was touched and I read them more than twice and I will keep them to the end of my life. Apart from sending supplement and amenities, you are really doing a good job and touching our hearts.

– Armed Forces Europe, Afghanistan



HOW YOU CAN HELP

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

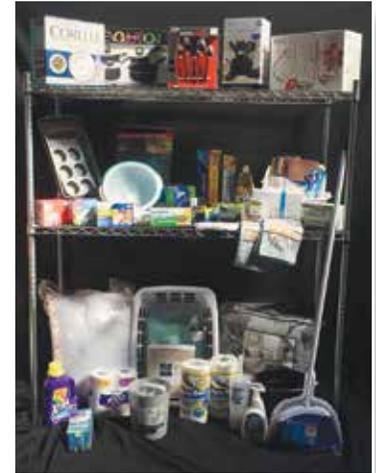
- Body wash
- Men's deodorant
- Men's triple blade razors

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.

Support OTA When Shopping Online

To purchase Welcome Home Kit items that are shipped directly to us, go to:

smile.amazon.com/gp/ch/list/81-0651982

You shop, Amazon Smile donates!

Go to Smile.Amazon.com, search for us and log onto your Amazon account to donate to OTA when making purchases.

Cards and letters are always welcome and included in the gifts we provide to troops and veterans.

For more information on these programs, please contact OTA Chief Operating Officer, **Sherry Einhaus**, sdeinhaus@comcast.net or by phone at 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.





HELP A HERO THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

THE TROOPS WE SERVE

You are far from home, missing your family.

Most of your days are spent out on patrol, never knowing when the fighting will start again.

The weather is extreme – over 100 degrees in summer, far below zero in winter.

Your missions are dangerous and you worry about those you serve with and those you left at home.

The conditions you live in are austere, and basic necessities like shampoo, toothbrushes, and razors are scarce.

Now imagine, you come back to your tent after a long mission and sitting on your cot is a box full of the things you miss most from home. **A box from OTA!**

YOUR GIFT TO OTA

Target donation items OTA provides:

- \$50** Foul weather moisture wicking clothing for a soldier
- \$100** Transportation to doctor appointments for a veteran
- \$275** Brand new bed for a veteran
- \$350** Tactical gloves and eye-protective glasses for a unit of troops
- \$500** Full size bed, mattress set, and Welcome Home Kit for a veteran
- \$900** Sports equipment, nutritional supplements, work out gear and healthy snacks to a platoon of troops
- \$1,250** Beds and a welcome home kit for a veteran family of four.

THE VETERANS WE SERVE

You've made it home and you receive the VA help you deserve: medical care, job and housing assistance.

You move into your new home, but you don't have a bed so you're sleeping on the floor.

You don't have anything to cook with, so you eat fast food, if you eat anything at all.

You have a doctor's appointment, but no car and no way to get there.

You're starting a new job, but worry because you haven't slept well, haven't eaten and will have to walk to get there.

Now imagine, you get a phone call and a knock on the door. A brand new bed is delivered along with boxes and bags of all the things you need to make your house a home. You get a phone call and you now have transportation to get to work and your doctor appointments. **All provided by OTA!**



100% VOLUNTEER FOR 17 YEARS!

WE SERVE THOSE WHO VOLUNTEER TO SERVE OUR COUNTRY!



17 YEARS OF SUPPORT

Total Donations:

3.3 MILLION DOLLARS!

Launched Active Duty Wish List Program 2004:

195,721 TROOPS & VETERANS HELPED

Launched Veteran Welcome Home Program 2014:

5,500 VETERAN PROJECTS COMPLETED

With a 100% volunteer staff, we ensure that 90% of all funding is used to fund our programs – not to line our pockets!



*We are actively seeking sponsors, donations and volunteers for all events.
Please contact Sherri Einhaus, sdeinhaus@comcast.net if interested.*



Donate

Many of the “wish list” and “welcome home” items we provide are expensive and available only from specialized suppliers. We are in need of funds to purchase these specialty items.

Conduct a Collection Drive

There are many ways to conduct collection drives for needed items throughout your community, church, school or workplace.

Donations are accepted for delivery at our Operations Center located at 1200 Lebanon Rd., West Mifflin PA 15122.

Hours: **Tuesdays & Thursdays** 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Saturdays 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Be a Sponsor or Partner

We are always in need of sponsors and partners who donate their goods or services to our organization or help to sponsor fund-raising events with monetary contributions.

Learn More About Us

Visit www.OperationTroopAppreciation.org for more information and to make a secure on-line donation.

Or send a check payable to OTA to:

Operation Troop Appreciation

PO Box 18052

Pittsburgh, PA 15236



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