



15TH ANNIVERSARY • 2004-2019



OPERATION TROOP APPRECIATION

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

THE Eagle

Winter 2019

GBU & OTA PARTNER FOR OPERATION REACHOUT



On a cool November morning, over 200 people gathered to accomplish something great. Partnering with GBU Financial, we hosted the 13th Annual Operation Reachout project! GBU set a goal to double their outreach in 2019 by providing 5,000 care packages for our troops overseas. They purchase all of the care package items, covered all the costs associated to the event, and donated the funds needed to cover our shipping costs. OTA provided our logistical expertise in shipping overseas and our 13,000 SF Operations Center to conduct all the pre-planning activities and the packing event. Combining our efforts provided a way for both our organizations to partner in our support for the military and the process culminated in completing 5,000 care packages and shipping the first 1,000 directly to our troops overseas. And we accomplished this task in less than 3 hours!

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the GBU team, members, community volunteers and OTA staff who worked incredibly hard to make this event the largest project completed in both our histories.



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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.

MESSAGE FROM MO



As we near the end of 2019, I can't help but wonder where the time went! This year was full of exciting projects and events as we celebrated our 15th year of service to our military and veterans. In this issue of *The Eagle* we share some incredible stories, from special homecoming projects, veteran events and the largest active-duty packing project in our history! Our volunteers have done an outstanding job to ensure that our troops and veterans receive the support they deserve. We are honored to thank them for their service and sacrifice for our freedom.

At a time when our country seems to be more divided than ever before, I see a unity in our organization that has accomplished great things. While OTA may be the name on the charity, we are comprised of an extensive network of donors, sponsors and volunteers across the country who come together to make a very meaningful and impactful difference in the lives of our brave heroes.

Thank you seems to be an insignificant way to express our gratitude. Your monetary donations fund our efforts, with confidence that 90% of those gifts go directly to our programs. We continue to be a 100% volunteer charity, and appreciate every check, ticket purchase, and event you attend to support our work.

If you had asked me 15 years ago what I envisioned in the future, I would have replied, we'll be here until the war is over. Having grown up through the Gulf War we naively believed it would be over quickly. Now when asked that question, our reply is "until every troop returns home and every veteran is housed, healthy and living a great life." How blessed we are to have been given this opportunity to serve so many, for so long.

On behalf of the entire volunteer staff at OTA, we wish you a very happy holiday season and a blessed, healthy new year!

– *Monica*

15 YEARS OF SUPPORT

Total Donations:
3.3 MILLION DOLLARS!

Launched Active Duty Wish List Program 2004:
180,000 TROOPS HELPED

Launched Veteran Welcome Home Program 2014:
4,500 VETERAN PROJECTS COMPLETED



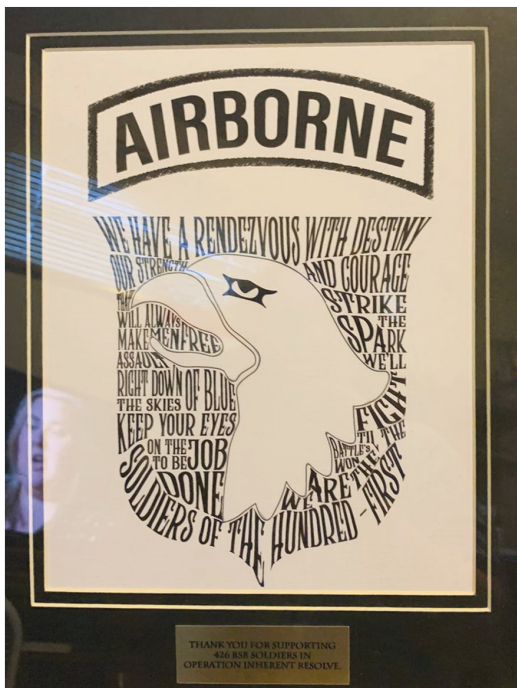
WELCOME HOME TO THE 426BSB, 1BCT, 101ST AIRBORNE!

In August, OTA learned that 42 single members of the above unit were returning home from a year-long deployment in Afghanistan to their barracks, without family on base to welcome them home. We wanted to say thank you in a special way, so OTA provided new bedding and pillows to brighten up their rooms, as well as towels, shower curtains, shower shoes and special goodies to welcome them home.

We want to thank Travelers Insurance for a generous grant that made this project possible, and we are pleased to share some pictures of the soldiers we helped, and the very special thank you gift they provided to OTA in return.



Dear Monica and Operation Troop Appreciation,
Thank you so much for your overwhelming support for the Soldiers of 426BSB. Our Soldiers returned to their barracks rooms completely outfitted! They were so impressed by your generosity. Please know how happy you made them! Your support to us and all Soldiers is so admirable! Thank you again!
Mania Nischwitz



**Welcome Home
Taskmaster Soldier!**

We are so proud of the great work you accomplished while deployed supporting Operation Inherent Resolve. You have helped shape history through this deployment and we are excited to welcome you back to Fort Campbell, KY.

Please enjoy these gifts as a small token of our huge thanks for your courage and selfless service. These have been provided to you by Operation Troop Appreciation, Monica Orluk, Unilever and your Taskmaster Soldier and Family Readiness Groups with gratitude and appreciation.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Please enjoy these words of thanks our troops and veterans have sent to OTA (names are withheld to protect troop privacy):

Dear Operation Troop Appreciation,

Please accept the enclosed Certificate of Appreciation in honor of your support for our Soldiers and our mission. The certificate is signed by the Army Forces-Jordan (ARFOR-J) Director and Command Sergeant Major. Thank you for all that you do!

God Bless,

Ssg, PAARNG, Religious Affairs NCO, ARFOR-J

I want to thank Operation Troop Appreciation, and Sherry Einhaus, for having me at Salute to Veteran's. I had the most wonderful time at the Pirate game. You are an outstanding organization and Thank you for what you do for our Veterans.

Veteran, US Army

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.

Chaplain

We couldn't believe all the stuff you sent us. OTA is a fantastic organization!

The kindness of strangers is so refreshing. It really warms my heart to know that there are people like you out there, willing to help people so far away that you don't even know.

Please tell your volunteers thank you so much and they are amazing people to do this for us.

Your boxes definitely made a difference today. Care packages make our deployment a lot easier. You and your volunteers are a big part of what keeps us going. The items we received today will definitely go to good use and the kindness that came from them will go even farther.

Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart!

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.

Petty Officer, PA National Guard



COMMUNITY SHOUTOUTS

OTA relies on the support of many companies, schools, churches and veteran groups who consistently help us through collection drives and monetary donations. We thank them all, but would like to highlight a few examples of how working together, we can achieve great things!



For many years, **American Legion Post 712**, Pleasant Hills PA has joined forces with OTA in support of our troops and veterans. From donating items to our Annual Veterans Holiday Celebration, to raising funds through their motorcycle run, this group of veterans does an outstanding job in supporting our cause. In turn, we have been able to provide them with donations of snacks and hygiene items they distribute when they visit local VA hospitals. It's a win-win and we are extremely grateful for their generosity and commitment to our courageous troops and veterans!

WEST-AIRCOMM West AirComm Federal Credit Union chose OTA as their 2019 Charity!

Through a series of events, including a ticket raffle for a \$500 Giant Gift Card, OTA day at Primanti Brothers, bake sale and other events throughout the year, employees and members worked diligently to help them achieve their goal of raising \$12,000 for OTA! Headquartered in Beaver, PA the credit union helps our community with its great service and dedication to our troops and veterans!

American Legion Unit 171, Damascus, Maryland's President, Amanda Baughman selected Operation Troop Appreciation as her unit's charity to support during her term! In addition to holding multiple fundraising events and collection drives, they drove their donations to OTA! That's a road trip we can all appreciate! Events began in June of 2019 and have so far resulted in the Legion donating four pallets full of items for our programs and \$1,200 in monetary donations. Thank you to all the members and to Amanda for your generosity and support!



OTA 4TH ANNUAL VETERANS HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

On December 14th, over 100 veteran families will take part in our 4th Annual Veterans Holiday Celebration. This special "by invitation only" event allows OTA to ensure that veterans in need have a day to celebrate the holiday season with their families and removes the stress associated with providing their children with gifts under the tree.

This year, Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on hand, there will be lot's of activities for the kids and holiday entertainment provided by PA National Guardsman, **Dwayne Lewis!** We even heard that Santa's dad, a WWII Veteran may be showing up to greet our guests as well! While the festivities commence, veterans can "shop" from our supply of donated toys that will be secretly wrapped by the OTA elves. We also ensure that Santa provides at least 1 or 2 items from their "Santa Wish List"!

Once the shopping and wrapping are complete, children are reunited with their parents to enjoy a holiday buffet.

In some cases, this may be the only opportunity our veterans have to celebrate the holidays with their families. Our volunteers work for weeks to prepare for this special event that says Happy Holidays and Thank You for Your Service in a very meaningful way.

We are currently accepting monetary donations to cover the cost of the event, as well as food donations for our meal. Please contact Community Projects & Events Manager, **Sherry Einhaus** to donate or learn more at sdeinhaus@comcast.net.





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 15 YEARS!
WE SERVE THOSE WHO VOLUNTEER
TO SERVE OUR COUNTRY!**



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

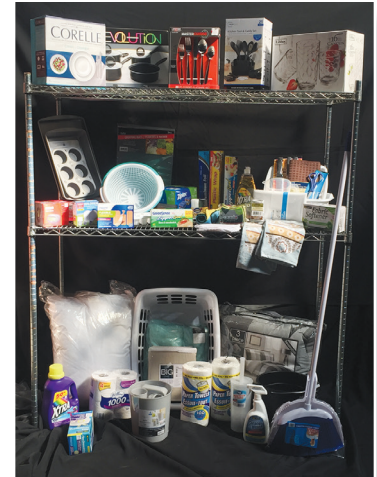
- Body wash
- Men's deodorant
- Men's triple blade razors

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:

https://smile.amazon.com/hz/charitylist/1s/1GX06K5FPKBNE/ref=smi_cl_wl_rd_cl

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 Community Projects Coordinator, **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.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS—SAVE THE DATE!

- Saturday, May 16** **AN EVENING OF ART & APPRECIATION**
OTA Operations Center
1200 Lebanon Road, Unit #510
West Mifflin PA 15122
An art auction featuring original work by local veteran artists and select pieces from The Joseph Scott Gallery in New York.
- Saturday, April 11** **4TH ANNUAL COUNTRY SOUNDS FOR SOLDIERS CONCERT**
The Lamp Theater
222 Main Street
Irwin, PA 15642
Phone: (724) 367-4000

Look for more details coming in the new year!

***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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