

The OPERATION: THANK YOU NEWSLETTER
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HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

How can it be a new year? I have heard that when you are having a good time that time flies. Well, I must have had a ball last year because it just flew by. Come to think of it I am having a ball working with our HEROES and all the support I get from the ever growing number of volunteers that are such a big part of being able to support them. I love what I do – it is not work – it is a labor of love! God has blest me by choosing me to lead this team and providing us with such brave and wonderful troops. I thank each of you for YOUR personal contributions to OTY. I have made some great friendships through my work with OTY. I have gotten to know mothers, fathers, grandparents and wives of your troops plus many of our BRAVE HEROES that don't think of themselves as heroes. Shared the joy of having them home safely, cried with those who find something to be thankful for in that their children are alive and home though they have made great sacrifices for their country. Through the internet I have made friends with many of our troops serving in harms way and when thanked they say they are just doing their duty. Yes, then there are MY Marines, serving and protecting right here at home. Also, I have had the honor of meeting and getting to know several that I first met while they were serving overseas.

WE DID IT!!!!

In case you have not heard – We did not make our goal for Christmas messages again this year – WE BEAT IT by over 2,000. I want to thank everyone who helped with this project all over the country. Yes, I said all over the country. That is not a typo. We had people from all over taking part in this project. Some learned about what we do at the David T. Smith Country Living Fair back in September, others are friends or family of mine or friends or family of members of OTY that learned about what we do and wanted to be part of it. Members worked booths in Festivals getting messages written, others got their churches involved, teachers got their classes involved, while others got their clubs and gym classes working. Eastern Star Sister & Brothers all over the state were writing messages. I was worried there for awhile that when I got sick the week of all the Grand Masonic Bodies Conventions and could not attend the 4 banquets and luncheons that week that we would not make our goal. BOY was wrong! A couple of us even suffered through the Marine Ball getting them to write messages to their brothers-in-arms. We sent out 70 to 75 boxes or packages of cards to that many locations at a total cost of \$650. Many thanks to all those who live close enough to come on packing days and proof read and stuff ALL the cards and to all who sent or gave me money to help with the cost of postage. I personally enjoyed having the chance to meet many personally that I had been working with via email over the past year. It is always nice to put a face and name together. Thank you all!!!

KROGER CARD USE FALLING OFF

I am sad to report the number of Kroger Gift Cards out in someone's pocket or purse has grown by almost 6 times but the use of the cards has fallen way off, even with the Thanksgiving shopping. Our first check from Kroger was just over \$400 but the check received in December was \$300.62. I do appreciate greatly those still remembering to reload and use your cards. OTY gets the figure you reload added to our accumulated total for the month. Then Kroger donates 4% of that total in the form of a check every month as long as that balance is above \$5,000 a month. The first month with only 100 cards in circulation was over \$10,000 but the December figure was just over \$7,000. This is such a simple way to contribute to OTY and the money required to do what we do for the troops I ask you to please remember

to reload the card in you pocket and use it. Also, remind your friends and family, that many of you gave cards, to that they need to keep using them. The cards are reloadable over and over and over.

PLEASE TAKE A MINUTE AND RELOAD YOUR CARDS BEFORE YOU CHECK OUT OR PAY FOR YOUR GAS. With just a minute of your time this could be a good source of income for OTY.

VALENTINE IS COMING

Okay! I know we just got the last Christmas card in the mail but by the end of January we need to be mailing Valentine messages to the troops. Teachers this is a good project for the kids. The young grades can make their own Valentines in art class and the older grades can write letters in English Comp. class. Operation: Valentine will be under the management again this year of Jimmy Adams, head of our Springboro Chapter. **ALL VALENTINES SHOULD BE BACK TO ME NO LATER THANK JANUARY 19TH.** We will pack on Wednesday, January 23, at 10:00am at the Lebanon Lodge. Bring your lunch.

YOUTH SHINE IN OTY WORK

I am very proud of the young people who work hard as part of OTY. Jimmy Adams, from Springboro, has been very active since almost day one of OTY. Jimmy's mother contacted me after she saw an article the first Christmas OTY sent cards and said she had a son that was very interested in the military and had been writing letters to the troops but the only problem was he didn't have any names and addresses to mail them to. She asked if I could help with that problem. Of course I could and he has been a hard worker ever since. He started Operation: Valentine that next year. His twin, Patrick helped get things started. Jimmy and Patrick are now 15 years old and I am very proud to have them working with OTY. Springboro recently held their 3 day Christmas Festival. Jimmy got his ROTC unit involved and they had a booth at the Festival and ask people to take a minute and write a message of appreciation to the troops. They got 541 cards done. There was a very nice picture and article in the Dayton Daily News about Jimmy and the ROTC unit. I understand Jimmy's next project will be an ROTC collection for the troops. He did this last year for the Blue Star Moms of Dayton and was very successful. This next project is for OTY. In a few years Jimmy is going to move from OTY team member to one of our "kids". That will be a proud day for our country and for me.

Have you checked out our website lately? We do. The webmaster is another young man from the Springboro area, 15 year old Ben McCray. Ben's mother, Debbie had been working with her church and OTY for some time when she said Ben told her he would like to learn to build a website and ask if he thought I'd let him do one for OTY. This was something I had wanted to do but knew nothing what-so-ever about and didn't have time to try and learn. The only thing I told him was that if ever there was something there that I didn't approve of it would have to come off right away. He set out to learn about building our website. He has done a great job! Be sure and check it out www.ohiooperationthankyou.org The only problem is I have not had time to keep him supplied with update material.

Many thanks to both of you for all the work you do for Operation: Thank You. We would not be the same without you. I am very proud of you. Keep up the good work!!

OTY STILL LOOKING FOR A HOME

There have been a couple of leads on a home for OTY outside of my living room and front hall and now garage but so far nothing has worked out. We have out grown my house. OTY needs a place of its own. We are looking for someone who has a small store front type place that they will donate the use of to OTY. Being a 501C3 tax-exempt organization the donor could take what he could charge for rent off his income taxes and be reducing his taxes with the deduction. We would like this to be in the area of

Hamilton Twp, Morrow, Lebanon, Mason or close to that area. This is the area most of our group live who come out to help pack which we would do 2 or 3 times a month. If you know of something let me know and supply me with a name and number and I will call them or if you know of them personally you might tell them about OTY and see if they might be interested in learning more.

SOLDIERS HOME

Lt. Ryan Kent is due home for a visit on December 27th. He has already returned to the states having completed his tour of duty in Iraq. WELCOME home, Ryan, and THANK YOU!!! Ryan is from Morrow. Ryan is the son of Mr. and Mrs. David Kent of South Lebanon.

PFC Darrell Duncil didn't get to stay for Christmas but was home on leave. Darrell had to return on December 21 to complete his tour of duty in Iraq. Darrell is the grandson of Pete and Irma Packine of Morrow.

Phillip Horsley, serving on the USS Blue Ridge stationed in Japan was able to get home for the holidays as well. Phillip is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Charles Horsley of Lebanon.

Capt. Billy Ferrell made it home on Leave and the nice thing for me about this, I got to visit with him on the phone. He returned on December 30 for another 6 months in Afghanistan.

Others we have heard to be returning in the next couple of months so should be removed from our mailing lists.:

Dawn Kertz, & PFC Omar Lima.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF THE OTY TEAM!

*Operation: Thank You One Person Joining With Many
To Serve Our Troops While They Serve Us.*

"Never believe that a few caring people cannot change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have." - Margaret Mead