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# **Man Wins \$100,000 In ThanksUSA Treasure Hunt**

## ***Game Created To Support U.S. Soldiers' Families***

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**WASHINGTON --** The big winner of a national American history treasure hunt that raises money for scholarships for military families made a visit to D.C. over the weekend.

Tom Thompson, 55, of Elmont, N.Y., came to Washington to collect a treasure chest worth \$100,000. He won the prize in the first annual ThanksUSA treasure hunt game designed to support families of U.S. troops.

"We do a lot of things -- arguably not enough-- but we, do a lot of things to support the troops, but as a country, we really don't do anything to support the families," said Thompson.

The online game was created two years ago to raise scholarship money for the children and spouses of military service members.

Inside Thompson's treasure chest were relics from around the globe, including rare coins from sunken ships, Civil War era bullets, a buckle and buttons from a soldier's uniform and diamonds and jewels from four continents. The grand prize also included a stay at the Willard Hotel; a tour of [the White House](#), Capitol and other District monuments; and attending a Washington Nationals game.

The hunt's creators are sisters Rachel and Kelsi Okun of McLean, Va.

"We just want people to know that they can make a difference, and this is our way of making a difference for the people who help us to be who we want to be," said Rachel.

The Okuns said the hunt has made a difference because many people who play the game also contribute to the scholarship fund. The Okuns said they have raised more than \$3.5 million for more than 1,000 military children and spouses.

Oriana Futrell, of Spokane, Wash., was one of the recipients of one of those scholarships. Futrell's husband, Dan, has served in Baghdad for the past year.

"I found that I had received the scholarship after he had arrived in Iraq, and it was great to have that financial support during that very stressful and scary time," said Futrell.

The Okun sisters said they have gotten tons of thank you letters.

"There was one from this girl in [New Mexico](#) and with our scholarship she had been the first person in her family to go to college," said Rachel.

"For us this is really for us the quintessential, grass-roots, neighborhood-based kind of effort to thank the troops," said Bob Okun, the girl's father.

For more information, visit the [ThanksUSA Web site](#). The treasure chest and all of its contents were donated by [Adeler Jewelers](#), of Great Falls, Va.