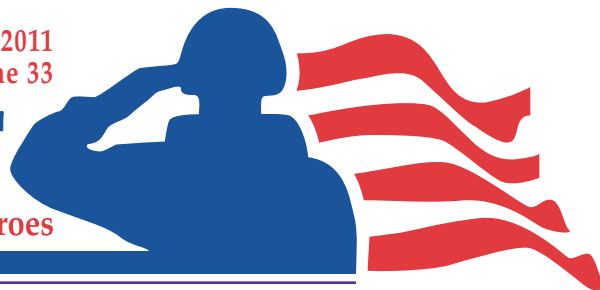


# THE ROAD TO RECOVERY REPORT

May 2011  
Volume 33



An Update for Supporters of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes

## Summer season bleak for wounded troops



Providing  
Emergency Aid  
to Troops Severely  
Wounded in  
Afghanistan or Iraq

### Key Programs:

Emergency  
Financial Aid

Family Support  
Network

Career Network

Road to Recovery  
Conference & Tribute

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Most Americans look forward to the balmy summer months as an opportunity to barbecue, go to the beach or enjoy the warm sunshine.

However, for thousands of severely wounded troops, this summer promises to be a season of increasing want.

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes has launched its Fourth of July Emergency Aid Drive early this year to make sure severely wounded troops and their families have the necessities to help make it through the summer.

As you may know, the cost of fuel is skyrocketing. Many families compensate for these sky-high gas prices by driving less.

Unfortunately, many wounded servicemen and women can't make that choice.

Sgt. Mack C.'s injuries require specialized medical treatments. However, as Mack told

us, "We have exhausted all our family's resources. We have no money and are in extreme debt because of my injuries and inability to earn any form of income due to being unemployable and homebound."

By the time Mack contacted the Coalition, he had "used up my credit cards on food and other supplies since we had no money." Coalition donors helped to pay some of Mack's bills, which allowed him to keep enough gas in his truck to continue to get his special medical treatments.

The Coalition launched the Fourth of July Emergency Aid Drive after emergency aid requests from severely wounded troops jumped 20 percent in the first two and a half months of

2011 compared to the same time period in 2010.

As a result of this increase in the number of wounded troops and their families in trouble, the Coalition needed to rush 13 percent more emergency funds to seriously injured troops during that time period.



*Paul Thurman suffered from seizures after a bomb exploded three feet from his head while serving in Iraq. He needed to make long trips to get treatment from a neurologist but couldn't even afford food and school supplies for his family.*

"From what we've seen over the first two months of 2011, the need for emergency aid for wounded troops is growing much faster than we had anticipated," said Major General John K. Singlaub, U.S. Army (Ret.), national spokesman for the Coalition.

"At the current rates, the Coalition will be hard pressed to fulfill critical emergency aid requests this summer, especially for severely wounded troops who must fill their gas tanks

just to reach life-giving medical treatments."

Sometimes the medical treatments are for their children or spouses. When Donald Stevens' car wouldn't start, he was forced to beg for rides to the emergency room for his two children. Fortunately Coalition donors gave Stevens the money to fix his vehicle and ensure his kids could get to the hospital in an emergency.

"In these busy summer months, I hope Americans can spare a moment and think about the thousands of severely wounded troops who may be languishing inside their homes unable to get outside even to make a crucial hospital visit because they lack the gas money," said Singlaub, who is spearheading the Coalition's Fourth of July Emergency Aid Drive. ■

Providing Emergency Aid to Troops Severely Wounded in Afghanistan or Iraq

Coalition to Salute America's Heroes ★ PO Box 96440 ★ Washington, DC 20090-6440 ★ [www.saluteheroesproject.org](http://www.saluteheroesproject.org)



## THE COALITION AT WORK



### By the numbers: Your generosity at work



*Here's a brief sampling of severely wounded troops who have been helped by your generous donations to the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.*

- Spc. Titus D. of Charlestown, West Virginia was shot in the head while serving in Iraq. He contacted the Coalition when overdue utility and car payments left him with nothing left over to buy groceries. He needed \$1,619.57 to get caught up and fill his pantry.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,619.57**
- Ssg. Steven C. of Falkville, Alabama returned from serving in Iraq with a severe injury. Overdue mortgage, car and utility payments had him \$3,540.50 behind.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$3,540.50**
- Spc. Randy J. was partially paralyzed while serving in Iraq. He contacted the Coalition when he found himself \$1,150.00 behind in rent payments.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,150.00**
- Marine Cpl. Justin M. of Beaufort, North Carolina is recovering from a traumatic brain injury he suffered while serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,192.76 to bring his mortgage up-to-date after returning from Iraq severely wounded.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,192.76**
- Sgt. Juan M. of Chino, California was \$3,416.74 behind in rent, utility and car payments when he called the Coalition.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$3,416.74**
- Pvt. Jesus D. of Menafee, California lost a limb while serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,969.29 in overdue mortgage payments to get current.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,969.29**
- Pfc. Eric G. of Ft. Sam Houston, Texas was left with only half of one lung after taking a gunshot wound to the chest during combat operations in Iraq. Overdue mortgage and car payments totaling \$2,283.13 hung over his head during his recovery.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$2,283.13**
- Sgt. Brian S. of Barnum, Minnesota is a double amputee as a result of injuries suffered over in the Iraq theatre of operations. In order to get caught up on his mortgage and pay for propane to heat his home, he needed \$1,114.79.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,114.79**
- Pvt. Eric B. of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin is trying to recover from a painful spinal injury suffered while serving in Iraq. He contacted the Coalition when he faced overdue utility bills totaling \$797.59.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$797.59**
- Sgt. Jared R. of Columbia, Missouri contacted the Coalition when he needed \$1,740.43 to prevent the bank from repossessing his vehicle.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,740.43**
- Ssg. Edward M. of Lake Elsinore, California was severely injured during his tour of duty in Iraq. He needed \$1,232.40 to make an overdue mortgage payment.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,232.40**
- Cpl. David H. of Grandview, Iowa let the Coalition know he needed \$1,550.63 for past due utility bills and to fill his pantry with groceries.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,550.63**
- Spc. Damon G. of Louisville, Kentucky had trouble with rent and car payments totaling \$1,349.94 after returning from Iraq with a severe injury.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,349.94**
- Marine Cpl. Christopher C. of Harvest, Alabama faced a variety of overdue car and utility payments totaling \$823.22.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$823.22**
- Ssg. Michael C. of Hutto, Texas lost a limb while serving in Iraq. He contacted the Coalition to help him pay \$1,393.75 to repair his means of transportation.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,393.75**
- Sfc. Neil M. of Fountain, Colorado had his left hand amputated as a result of a severe injury suffered while serving overseas in Iraq. He needed \$950.36 to repair his vehicle.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$950.36**





## IN THEIR OWN WORDS



### Thank you letters from our severely wounded troops



#### Without Coalition donors, severely injured serviceman and family “would have been homeless and on the streets”

When I applied for help, we were truly on the verge of disaster. We were late on bills, both our vehicles' titles were pawned for loans to pay the power bill and other past due bills. We needed food, clothes, everything. We were just too far behind.

I prayed every day and when I was at a breaking point, [Coalition case manager] Neida Sotomayor called me and said they could help! I couldn't believe what the organization was doing for us. They took care of everything that was late and put us in a good position. I got on my knees and thanked God for the blessing. My life turned around with that one phone call. This organization, especially Ms. Neida, is forever in my heart and soul. We owe the Coalition more than I can ever repay. I don't have the words but to say, “Thank you, thank you, thank you.”

— *Chad S., Tifton, Georgia*

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes has been there emotionally, supporting me and my family in every way possible, financially and providing me with many resources. It's organizations like this that keep the vets' motivation and spirit alive. I am grateful and want to express my gratitude.

— *Ronnie Tercero, Orlando, Florida*

I had to file for bankruptcy when I couldn't find a job, even with a Master's degree. CSAH is helping me increase my ability to function. Their support is a real blessing to me. Americans who sacrifice to help vets

helps me feel I am worth something.

— *Destiny Gray-Hern, Moreno Valley, California*

I was deployed five days after my son was born. Injured by an IED while serving in Fallujah, Iraq. Lost hearing, memory and suffered a traumatic brain injury. Took four surgeries and five months to recover. My wife had two jobs to take care of me. CSAH helped us with our mortgage, utility, food, gas and auto loan. Thank you for supporting us and taking care of our needs. It shows that you really care about us.

— *Luis Lopez, Kissimmee, Florida*

When I had hardship trying to get my utilities paid there were places I would call, and the Coalition was always there for me. I was getting evicted from my house but the Coalition paid my rent for me. If it weren't for them my four kids would be out right now on the streets. That's hard to say but that's the truth. My eviction was 72 hours away. I called the Coalition and they paid for it.

The Coalition has taken the strain away from my whole family and it's something I think is very important. And I love how the Coalition thinks about the family. While I was in the hospital the Coalition called my wife and asked how she was doing. To find out how she's doing with the kids and to find out if everything is OK. It means a lot to me that the Coalition does stuff like that.

— *Michael H., U.S. Air Force*

#### More creative ways you can help our troops severely wounded in Afghanistan or Iraq

**Volunteer at a Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center** near you. Your skilled hands and warm heart are needed by our patients to heal, progress and be comfortable. Hospital employees will also be grateful for your assistance and will pay careful attention to finding tasks to match your skills and abilities.

**Other ways to volunteer include:** Volunteering your time as a caregiver for a few hours to give the spouse of a severely disabled service member a much-needed break; offering to run errands for a wounded soldier or his/her spouse; or mentoring or tutoring wounded troops who need to develop new skills for job training.

**Take a wounded serviceman or woman out to a movie,** sporting event or other activity. You can help a seriously injured service member forget about their pain for awhile, and perhaps even help in their mental and emotional recovery, by getting them out of their home or hospital for an afternoon or evening.





## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



### Meet some of the men who “never would have survived” without the help of Coalition donors



**Chief Warrant Officer Levi R. U.S. Army**  
San Antonio, Texas

**Injury:** Severe burns and internal injuries after an IED blast that killed four teammates in southwest Afghanistan.

**Financial hardship:** Forced to move from North Carolina to Texas almost immediately.

*“A veteran retiring in 2002 received a lot less support than one retiring in 2010, thanks to the work of the Coalition.”*



**Sgt. Frank Garren U.S. Army (Ret.)**  
Chatham, Illinois

**Injury:** Lost partial use of his left leg and foot from nerve damage caused by shrapnel from an IED (improvised explosive device).

**Financial hardship:** Sharp decline in income after retirement. Faced foreclosure on his home and repossession of vehicles.

*“I would do it all over again for my country, but without the Coalition I never would’ve survived stateside.”*



**Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Charles A. U.S. Army**  
Killeen, Texas

**Injury:** Shot point blank in the stomach. Nerve damage, broken back, right leg amputated.

**Financial hardship:** Must rehab five days a week.

*“The Coalition is doing wonderful things; keep up the good work.”*



**Sgt. James Wilson U.S. Army (Ret.)**  
Crystal Lakes, Missouri

**Injury:** Burned when the truck he was riding in exploded. Temporarily paralyzed, third-degree burns from the waist down. Can’t be in the sun, blast caused traumatic brain injury, leaving serious memory loss.

**Financial hardship:** Divorced. Has custody of only daughter. Needs to make basic repairs on his home and propane for heat.

*“I didn’t want to ask for help because of my pride. I really appreciate the people who provide help to the Coalition.”*

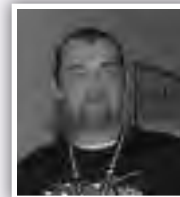


**Specialist Robert K. U.S. Army**

**Injury:** Stepped on a mine during a firefight in Afghanistan. Left foot amputated.

**Financial hardship:** During recovery, wife left job to be in the hospital. Kids stayed home. Had to maintain two households during recovery.

*“I want to give thanks to everyone who has donated. It’s amazing that there are that many people out there who have donated to the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes.”*

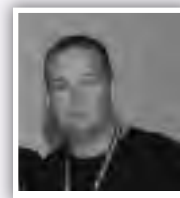


**Sgt. Gary Wynn U.S. Army (Ret.)**  
Seminole, Florida

**Injury:** Suffered severe back injury during firefight in Iraq.

**Financial hardship:** Lost the family business. Wife can only work part-time because of huge childcare costs. Had two cars repossessed and were forced to live on food stamps.

*“We will have a Christmas with our \$500 gift check. I can’t wait to see my kids’ smiling faces. Wish I could give them more; it’s hard to make them understand.”*

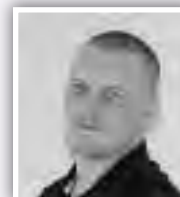


**Sgt. Steven Miner U.S. Army (Ret.)**  
Yulee, Florida

**Injury:** Traumatic brain injuries and a ruptured retina from multiple IED and mortar blasts.

**Financial hardship:** Unable to retrain for new career after suffering battlefield injuries.

*“Very grateful to people who support veterans. Very rewarding to know that people care about us.”*



**Sgt. Jeremiah Conner USMC (Ret.)**  
Palm Harbor, Florida

**Injury:** Traumatic brain injury from multiple bomb blasts, post traumatic stress disorder.

**Financial hardship:** Living with in-laws on air mattress.

*“Coalition has helped me on my way to getting better.”*

