



The Road to Recovery Report

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

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Coalition to Salute America's Heroes ★ PO Box 96440 ★ Washington, DC 20090-6440 ★ www.saluteheroesproject.org ★ 1-888-447-2588

Faithful Coalition friends asked to help prevent wounded troops from going hungry this Easter

“We have exhausted all the family’s resources. We pray you will assist us.”



Because of the continued long wait for government disability checks, many wounded heroes are struggling to feed their families, and they desperately need help this Easter. Shown here at a Coalition Road to Recovery Conference and Tribute is Brent Hendrix, who lost his leg serving in Iraq.

On Easter Sunday most Americans will sit down to a delicious ham or turkey dinner, surrounded by their families.

But sadly, Easter Sunday may turn out differently for many heroes severely wounded in Afghanistan or Iraq.

That’s because unless donations to the Coalition pick up quickly, many of these financially strapped troops and their families won’t have enough to eat.

In anticipation of this crisis, the Coalition’s chief spokesman, Major General John K. Singlaub, U.S. Army (Ret.), sent an urgent Easter appeal to all Coalition supporters in February.

Singlaub announced the Coalition’s **2013 Emergency Easter Meals Project**, whose goal is to send \$60 each to as many disabled troops as possible so they can provide their families with meals during the Easter Season.

Past donations have been rushed to desperate wounded troops like retired Army Sgt. Mack Cole, who told the Coalition, “We have exhausted all the family’s resources. We pray you will assist us.”

Unfortunately the response to Singlaub’s 2013 Easter appeal was much less than expected, according to David Walker, the Coalition’s new president and CEO.

“Easter Sunday falls a little early this year – on March 31,” he said. “So we’re hoping to see a surge in donations in the next couple weeks. If not this could be a very bleak Easter Sunday for many disabled troops and their families – especially

with the way grocery prices are rising.”

Newly released government figures show troops wounded in Afghanistan or Iraq are waiting an average of 277 days (or about nine months) for their first government disability check to arrive.

“This is the main reason the Coalition created its emergency financial aid program,” Walker continued. “Obviously our wounded heroes can’t wait nine months to feed their families. We have to throw them a financial lifeline to hold onto until their government disability checks start arriving.”

Incoming donations from Coalition supporters will be helping seriously injured servicemen and women like Brent Hendrix, shown at left, during the Easter Season, as well as wounded troops like:

► Retired Army Sgt. Joshua Johnson of Colorado. After receiving emergency financial aid from Coalition supporters, Joshua wrote, “We were not going to be able to buy groceries for the month. The gratitude that my family and I have for the help you provided is hard to put into words.”

► James Sides, a retired Army Sgt., suffered brain damage after his chopper plunged into the water in Iraq, told the Coalition, “I made it back from Iraq in one piece but we couldn’t pay the bills or put food on the table.”

► Betina Tanner, whose husband suffered multiple concussions when an explosion catapulted him out of his vehicle, said, “We’re hanging on by a thread. ... Having trouble buying groceries and clothes for the kids.” ■

KEY PROGRAMS:

Emergency Financial Aid

Partner Appreciation Program

Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute

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Providing Emergency Aid to Troops Severely Wounded in Afghanistan or Iraq



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The Coalition at Work



By the numbers: Your generosity at work

A brief sampling of severely wounded troops from around the USA who have been helped by your kindness.

- Marine L.Cpl. Edward O. of **San Antonio, Texas** called seeking \$2,094.00 to avert an eviction after suffering severe injuries in Iraq.
▶ **Coalition paid: \$2,094.00**
- Army Staff Sgt. Brandon F., a wounded serviceman from **Kernville, California** contacted the Coalition seeking \$673.90 to avert the disconnection of his electricity.
▶ **Coalition paid: \$673.90**
- Air Force Sgt. Roy J. of **Converse, Texas** was having trouble paying his water and electric bills and other urgent expenses as a result of his injuries and asked the Coalition for \$2,244.83.
▶ **Coalition paid: \$2,244.83**
- Army Spc. Richard D. of **North Fort Myers, Florida** called the Coalition because he was facing an electricity cutoff as a result of his battle injuries and asked for \$403.00.
▶ **Coalition paid: \$403.00**
- Army Staff Sgt. Sophia D., a servicewoman from **Raeford, North Carolina** who suffered an amputation after serving in Iraq, urgently needed \$1,200.00 to avert an eviction.
▶ **Coalition paid: \$1,200.00**
- Army Spc. Leslie V., an injured servicewoman from **Harker Heights, Texas**, was having difficulty paying for her mortgage and auto expenses when she called the Coalition seeking \$1,610.95.
▶ **Coalition paid: \$1,610.95**
- Marine Sgt. Justin W. of **Wellington, Maine**, contacted the Coalition seeking \$269.09 to avert an electricity cutoff after suffering wounds in Iraq.
▶ **Coalition paid: \$269.09**
- Army Sgt. Ryan R., a wounded serviceman from **Pekin, Illinois**, was facing the possibility of a home foreclosure when he contacted us and asked for \$630.00.
▶ **Coalition paid: \$630.00**

Thank you letters from our severely wounded troops

“Your organization is a beacon of hope in a time where many veterans are isolated in darkness.”

I had five combat tours and was wounded on one of them. My knees have been operated upon over a year ago, my spine was done in late April of this year and my shoulder replacement is TBD right now, I have been diagnosed with severe PTSD and undergoing tests for TBI. Thank you for your generous gift to me. All of you are true patriots and Americans who know what the cost of sacrificing for something that is bigger/better than your individual selves, and that our freedoms though sometimes taken for granted, are not easily won. It is you that are heroes in your selfless giving to make a better situation for someone else. God bless you.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Over Thanksgiving, we received an unexpected check for \$60. We were forever grateful! But your organization’s willingness to help just kept going. Today we got another unexpected surprise: a check for \$500 for Christmas! My husband, who suffers from PTSD and lack of emotion, actually teared up. “Our family can have a Christmas!” he said. I want to thank you for getting us through the hard times, supporting our nation’s true heroes, and most

of all, returning the smile to my husband’s face and allowing the Christmas Spirit to thrive in our home.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Thank you so much for the \$500 check you mailed me for Christmas. It was extremely thoughtful and helpful during this holiday season. I am grateful and excited that organizations like yours exist, and that you are helping veterans. I know that the veteran community needs more determined, selfless, and positive messages, like the one you sent me. Your organization is a beacon of hope in a time where many veterans are isolated in darkness. Please continue to help and assist veterans in need.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

We will be able to give our four kids a Christmas with the gift you provided. The joy on my kids’ faces this Christmas will be because someone cared about a soldier not able to provide for his family because I was blown up in Iraq. My heart is so full of joy over this gift and my family thanks you from the very bottom of our hearts. Please give the person who gave my kids Christmas a hug and tell them we thank you.





New president and CEO David Walker takes helm of Coalition *Sets “aggressive goal” of increasing direct support of wounded warriors by at least 50 percent*



The Coalition’s new president and CEO, David Walker (in white shirt), greets Army SFC Gabriel M. and family at the Coalition’s 2010 Road to Recovery Conference and Tribute in Orlando, Florida. Gabriel’s left leg was amputated as a result of combat injuries he sustained in Afghanistan. “The Coalition is a phenomenal organization,” he said.

David Walker, newly appointed president and CEO of the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes, brings a long commitment as a volunteer to the organization as well as vast business experience.

“I am proud to lead the Coalition as we boldly address a national crisis in which thousands of wounded warriors and their families find themselves homeless, impoverished and/or unemployed upon returning from the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq,” Walker said.

“The Coalition will continue to be distinguished by our direct emergency financial assistance to America’s wounded heroes. I have seen firsthand the powerful impact this program has had on so many individuals and wonderful families.”

Walker had served as a volunteer on the Coalition’s Board of Directors since 2005 and as volunteer Chairman since 2009. Then in July 2012 he was elected to the paid, full-time position of president and chief executive officer.

Prior to joining the Coalition, Walker served for nine years as vice president for the National Glass Association. Before that he served as vice president for the National Association of Manufacturers.

Walker says his No. 1 goal for the Coalition is to make supporters’ gifts go farther and help more wounded heroes by streamlining operations.

“We have established an aggressive 2013 goal of increasing our direct support of wounded warriors and their families by more than 50 percent,” he said.

That goal can be achieved only with the continued generosity of Coalition supporters, whom he describes as “the lifeblood of our organization. You’re the ones who keep our wounded heroes alive, financially and spiritually.

“The thank you notes we receive from wounded heroes on a daily basis are testament to the invaluable role we play in hundreds of lives, and further proof that we are serving our veterans in a unique and extraordinary way.”

Walker also announced the Coalition will hold its 2013 Road to Recovery Conference and Tribute in December in Orlando, the same location as previous events. The conference is an all-expense-paid, four-day educational event for about 100 severely wounded troops and their families.

The popular conference was created to help them start healing mentally and emotionally by meeting with others in their situation, listening to motivational speakers and attending educational seminars.

Walker also has an interesting bit of military history in his family. During World War II his uncle served in the Army as a bomber pilot, and flew a mission from England to France on D-Day. Walker still wears his uncle’s Army Air Corps pin.

Walker and his wife, Catherine, live in Lovettsville, Virginia, and have two daughters, Amy, 26, and Lindsay, 24.

The Coalition’s other board members are Major Gen. John K. Singlaub, U.S. Army (Ret.); Col. Martin L. Badegian, U.S. Army Reserve, a senior special agent with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; Gail Laude, a vocational employment specialist; and Lt. Col. Thomas J. Orłowski, U.S. Army (Ret.), a management consultant. ■





Coalition donors catch wounded Marine in financial safety net *“We were on the brink of homelessness, and we were rescued.”*

Marine Tee Jay Simmons is alive and well today, thanks to two safety nets.

The first safety net is the one that caught him when he slipped off an aircraft carrier and nearly plunged into the ocean.

The second is the financial safety net provided by supporters of the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes.

Tee Jay left his home in Haines City, Hawaii to join the Marines.

Then one day, while preparing an F-18 for another mission, he lost his footing and fell off an aircraft carrier.

Fortunately the safety net rescued him.

Nonetheless, he wound up with multiple back injuries and PTSD.

And when he was released from the hospital he returned home to an ocean of financial problems.

“When you’re injured and you can’t work, you’ve lost that income,” he said. “So now the family is struggling. We were being behind in rent and utilities. Had to cut out all but necessities.”

Added to that is the psychological stress of being injured while trying to support a family.

“There’s depression; there’s anxiety; there’s paranoia. There’s all these other things emotionally going on,” said the wounded Marine.

Then came the financial safety net. Coalition supporters quickly came to the rescue and provided Tee Jay and his wife with emergency financial aid.

“The assistance offered is lifesaving,” he said. “We were on the brink of homelessness, and we were rescued.”

The retired Marine, along with his wife and little girl, also were invited to a Coalition Road to Recovery Conference and Tribute – an all-expense-paid, four-day event featuring motivational speakers, educational seminars, family counseling and even a job fair.

And because the event was held in Orlando, Florida, the approximately 100 families in attendance also got free passes to Disney World.

During the conference, Tee Jay recalls, “We met several families just like us . . . and wounded guys just like me. You can meet a friend for life here. It’s the cement that holds us together.”

Despite the progress he’s made, the wounded hero knows he still has a long way to travel along his personal road to recovery.

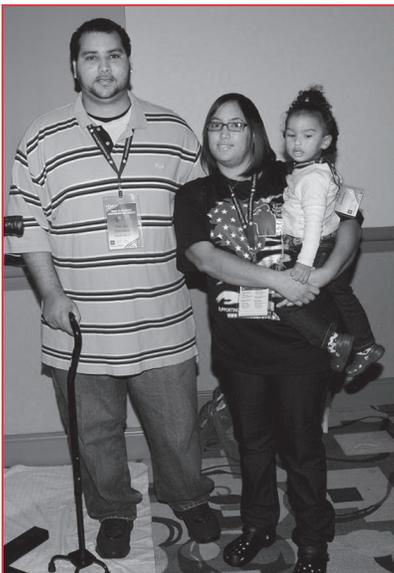
But he’s not going to quit: “Once a Marine, always a Marine,” he said proudly.

Of course, he’s thankful to have his family by his side.

“My 2-year-old knows I need help putting on my socks and that I need my cane,” Tee Jay said. “My wife does all the things I can’t.”

The Simmons family is also grateful for the kindness shown by the generous Americans who regularly reach into their wallets and purses and make a financial sacrifice to thank him for his painful physical sacrifice.

“The Coalition is doing the work of God,” Tee Jay said. ■



Wounded Marine Tee Jay Simmons is shown here with his wife and daughter while attending a Coalition Road to Recovery Conference and Tribute. “The Coalition is doing the work of God,” Tee Jay said.

