



The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 49 ★ 2014 Holiday Edition

Providing Emergency Aid to Troops Severely Disabled in the War on Terror

“The Coalition is just plain awesome. If it didn't exist there would be a lot of lost soldiers. If it wasn't for the Coalition, I wouldn't have the peace of mind that I have now.”

— Army veteran
Leroy Esco, Jr.



Your generosity makes the holidays bright for our heroes

For the families of our disabled heroes, the holidays can be difficult. Stress and anxiety over finances, coupled with painful physical injuries, turn what should be a joyful time into a time of despair.

But for ten years now generous friends like you have gone the extra mile to make sure the holidays are happy and bright for our wounded warriors and their families.

Your generous support makes our Thanksgiving “Thank You” Meals Project and the Secret Santa Project possible – bringing joy and cheer to so many grateful heroes

and their families at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and in the New Year.

And of course the holidays are often accompanied by bitterly cold weather that makes your emergency financial aid giving – averting foreclosures, evictions, and utility disconnections – truly life-saving for our wounded heroes.

So thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Inside your holiday newsletter you'll find updates on exciting Coalition programs and events. I hope you're encouraged to see how your faithful support, patriotic spirit, and generous giving are making a difference every day in the lives of America's heroes.

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Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

Every year when the holiday season rolls around, I'm reminded of a unique and difficult sacrifice the brave men and women of our Armed Forces make each year – the Thanksgivings, Christmases, and New Year's celebrations spent without friends and family.

Each year, to protect your family and mine, they say goodbye to husbands and wives, children and parents, brothers, sisters, and friends, to spend their holidays in a faraway land, without their loved ones and all the things that make the Christmas Season so bright.

That takes a special kind of self-sacrifice. And it's just another reason we owe a debt of gratitude to those brave heroes who went away to fight the terrorists and returned home broken and suffering. Because no one who has given their arms or their legs or *more* to protect our families and preserve our freedoms should go hungry at Thanksgiving or have to tell their tearful child that Santa won't be visiting their family on Christmas morning.

I know faithful Coalition supporters like you feel the same way. And that's why every year you give generously to the Thanksgiving Meals Project and the Secret Santa Project – to make sure our disabled heroes and their families can enjoy a special hot meal and a few presents under the tree.

I'm so grateful for your generosity, and I know the heroes and the children you've helped are too. Thank you for making sure they have a roof over their heads, food on the table, and heat and electricity during the cold winter months. And thank you for giving to make their holidays bright.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your family from all of us at the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.

Gratefully yours,

David Walker
President & CEO





One Coalition friend brings joy in suffering

Carly Mul owns Webfabrics, a fabric store with “a long history of sewing for good causes.” Last year she rallied her network to provide a lovingly hand-stitched quilt for each family attending the 2013 Road to Recovery (R2R) Conference.

At R2R, Carly became friends with a veteran she would soon help in a very special way. On Memorial Day, the veteran’s wife shared with Carly that it was a difficult day for her husband. For him, Memorial Day is a day of sadness and remembrance of a friend – “Mark” – who was buried at Arlington Cemetery.

Carly was touched, knowing the

veteran lived on the West Coast and his wartime disabilities made a trip to Arlington unthinkable. She immediately offered to visit Arlington Cemetery and lay flowers on Mark’s grave. And after doing so, Carly snapped a few photos and sent them across the country to her new friend.

Carly’s simple action brought great joy to her friend, and is a wonderful example of the special bonds forged at R2R events – made possible with your generosity. In our next newsletter, we’ll share some practical, heartfelt suggestions for connecting with and helping veterans in your life. I know you’ll be excited to read it, because I know you care deeply for our nation’s veterans.



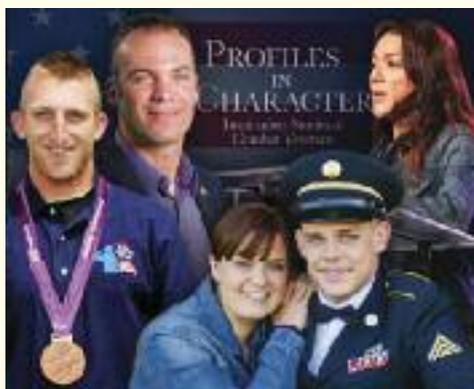
If you love a good story ...

... you’ll love the Coalition’s coffee table book, *Profiles in Character!*

Best of all, it’s available as a *free* PDF download when you visit our main Facebook page!

You’ll learn more details about some of the heroes whose stories and pictures you have seen many times – like Sgt. Jorge De Leon, Sgt. Matthew Pennington, and Sgt. Rob Jones. And you’ll meet many new heroes – like Capt. Tim Hornik, who was blinded after just 49 days in Iraq, and SSgt. Erica Denmark, who lost a leg to a mortar attack.

And you’ll learn how your kindness helped turn around the lives of these heroes, who were struggling to rebuild after catastrophic injuries – but were rescued by the Coalition, thanks to the generous giving of supporters like you.



Thanks to you, a catastrophically wounded veteran will have a home

Your generosity is making home a reality for a combat-wounded veteran who lost both his legs while serving in Afghanistan.

On September 10 the Coalition awarded a \$7,500 grant to build a home for Retired SFC Aaron Causey, his wife Kat and their 8-month-old baby girl.

An IED took Aaron’s legs and left significant soft tissue damage. After more than 40 surgeries and two and a half years of recovery and rehabilitation, the Causey family is finally ready

to return home to Alabama, where they will have a network of support and assistance from their families and friends.

“Kat and I are very grateful to Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes for their generous support to help us build a home where I can be independent and able to live my everyday life more easily,” said Aaron Causey. “After three years of living in different, temporary housing that was so far from both of our families, we are looking forward to returning to our roots and raising our daughter in our own home.”





Your Coalition is committed to doing all we can to change the lives of our nation's severely disabled war on terror veterans. To further that mission we're constantly working to raise awareness about the issues these heroes face and reaching out to help them in the community. Here is a just a sampling of the accomplishments and recognition the Coalition has experienced recently because of the loyal support of donors *like you!*

Jorge De Leon represents Coalition at Hunters Extravaganza in Texas



On August 23 Jorge (in the red shirt) visited with vendors at the San Antonio Alamodome event and shared the Coalition's mission.

Coalition Spokeswoman Mary Jessie Herrera meets with Congresswoman Ann Kirkpatrick

Army Sgt. Mary Jessie Herrera (Ret.) visited with Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (AZ) to discuss much-needed VA reforms. Rep. Kirkpatrick (on the left) was among the six elected office holders who honored the Coalition in the House of Representatives last year.



Coalition President David Walker op-ed on "The Changing Face of War"



In this moving *Washington Times* article David writes, "We can save wounded soldiers who would have died in earlier wars and provide our wounded with marvelous prostheses for missing limbs, but we have no surgery for damaged spirits. Human beings are simply not built for endless combat." The op-ed follows David's recent *USA Today* and *New York Times* articles on the growing epidemic of PTSD.

Coalition's Col. Martin L. Badegian presents grants to Wounded Warriors Family Adventures

This \$5,500 grant check, presented by the Coalition to Ted Lawson and John Ebright of Wounded Warriors Family Adventures (WWFA), will help sponsor a summer program designed to provide wounded warriors and their families with counseling and bonding opportunities through a series of structured programs and wilderness events. In the past the Coalition has sponsored WWFA's Family Ski Week in Breckenridge, Colorado, where wounded vets and their families enjoy a range of programs and the opportunity to learn to ski using various adaptive technology.





A Message from Coalition Spokesman Donny Daughenbaugh



Hello everyone, Donny D. here! If you see an opportunity in your community where the Coalition would fit in, or if you'd like to represent the Coalition at any of the hundreds of Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) events (#12523) on the horizon, please email me at ddaughenbaugh@saluteheroes.org. These events are great opportunities to showcase the Coalition's mission! Please stop by one of these events and say "hi" to our staff and great spokespersons!

Daughenbaugh represents Coalition at Mud Run

Coalition Spokesman Donny Daughenbaugh and his wife Sarah, Co-Director of the Heroes Thanking Heroes program, following the Original Mud Run in Houston, Texas. A portion of the proceeds of that event benefitted the Coalition.



Shilo Harris



On August 24 the Coalition supported KAMO Adventures' BBQ fundraiser featuring Army SSG Shilo Harris (Ret.). Shilo, who attended the Coalition's 2013 Road to Recovery Conference, shared his amazing story of surviving an IED explosion while deployed in Iraq. KAMO Adventures is a Kansas City non-profit that takes wounded veterans on hunting and fishing trips and offers scholarships through local universities.



Coalition's Col. Martin L. Badegian presents grants to the Denver VAMC Volunteer Services



One grant for \$1,500, presented by the Coalition to Chaplain Jack Fletcher, Chief of Volunteer Services, will fund transportation for two hospital volunteers who require specialized transportation. The second grant for \$1,000 will purchase meal coupons for veterans who can't afford meals while attending outpatient treatment at the VA.



GuideStar awards Coalition Gold Exchange participant badge



We are honored by this recognition from GuideStar, one of the nation's most respected information sources on non-profits. Visit guidestar.com to learn more and post a review of our efforts.



You're a faithful supporter – won't you be our "friend," too?

You've been a true friend to our troops and veterans severely disabled in the war on terror. So we'd love it if you'd be our "friend" online, too!

You might not know that the Coalition has *two* very active Facebook pages, as well as a Twitter account and a YouTube channel. These sites are fun, informative, and interactive, and a great place to learn more about what we're up to and hear stories of veterans you've helped.

On our main Facebook page, we post regularly on programs and events we're holding – maybe even some in your area! On our Heroes Thanking Heroes Facebook page, you can hear from some of the heroes you've helped. Our Twitter is a great place for Coalition updates. And on our YouTube channel, we have many emotional and inspirational firsthand accounts from veterans, their wives, and their children, sharing how your generosity changed their lives.

So ... won't you be our friend?



Facebook.com/SaluteHeroes
Facebook.com/
HeroesThankingHeroes



@SaluteHeroes



YouTube.com/user/SaluteHeroes

Why *you* should consider joining Partners for Heroes



Have you heard of the Coalition's **Partners for Heroes** program?

It's an **easy** way for you to make an **even greater** difference in the lives of suffering severely disabled veterans across our great nation.

Partners for Heroes is the Coalition's monthly giving program – and it has some great benefits that make it as easy as possible to continue your faithful, selfless support for America's heroes.

- ★ Your monthly donation is conveniently debited from your checking account or charged to your credit card each month, so you don't have to spend time writing checks or searching for stamps.
- ★ Your monthly giving is tracked, and at the end of the year you will receive a statement of your donations for tax purposes.

- ★ You'll receive less mail from us – and the money we save on postage and printing means your gift will go farther each month. (We'll continue to share exciting program updates and newsletters like this one.)
- ★ You're free to cancel your **Partners for Heroes** membership at any time.

Your monthly gift is important no matter the amount. Because when you have lost your legs and can't work, or your wife has quit her job to care for you as you battle PTSD, every dollar makes a huge difference just to help put food on the table. And every moment counts when you're facing homelessness or your child is going hungry.

So I hope you'll consider becoming a **Partners for Heroes** member today – to ensure we have the funds we need to provide emergency aid to wounded heroes and their families right away, when they need it most. For more information on how to enroll, please see your enclosed reply form.

How you can leave a legacy of love for our disabled heroes

By remembering the Coalition in your will or insurance policy, you continue your legacy of service and sacrifice for America's severely disabled war on terror troops and veterans for years to come. For a private and confidential discussion of how to leave the Coalition a charitable bequest, contact:

Mary Price, Donor Relations Manager

Coalition to Salute America's Heroes

Direct line: (703) 348-9914

Toll Free: (888) 447-2588, Ext. 103

info@saluteheroes.org

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes does not provide legal or financial advice to prospective or current donors. Always consult your attorney and financial advisor before making any important decisions regarding your estate.



By the numbers: Your generosity at work

When you make a gift, it goes to work right away to help a disabled hero facing disaster. The list below highlights a handful of severely disabled veterans who recently asked us for help – and whose lives you and the Coalition changed together.

You'll notice all the names listed below suffer from PTSD – the tragic struggle of so many of our nation's military. As you read how you helped them, keep in mind the words Coalition President David Walker wrote recently in *The Washington Times*:

“Some who emerged physically intact bear scars the rest of us cannot see. I refer to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), often aggravated by traumatic brain injuries, that leaves far too many of them in a constant state of anxiety, sleeplessness and panic attacks that render them not only unable to maintain viable careers, but also **unable to conduct what most people would consider normal lives.**

“We send the same small coterie of people back to the battle zones time and time again ... Even for those who do not suffer physical wounds, the stress is incredible. **Human beings are simply not designed for this sort of thing.** These heroes have sacrificed a lot for our security and will be dealing with their inner scars for a long time to come. **They need and deserve our support.**”



Joseph M. of Inman, South Carolina suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. He was in desperate need of \$1,110.22 to pay overdue phone and electric bills and buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,110.22

Gordon F. from Walland, Tennessee suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. He needed \$2,925.78 for emergency car repairs and auto insurance.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$2,925.78

Stephen B. of Brooks, Georgia was medically retired after serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,351.98 to avoid foreclosure and buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,351.98

Samuel Y. from McLean, Virginia suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. He desperately needed \$1,184.21 to pay his overdue property taxes.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,184.21

Mark W. of Falling Waters, West Virginia, who suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq, needed \$1,767.95 for health expenses, to pay an overdue phone bill, and put food on the table.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,767.95

Billy T. from Valdosta, Georgia served in Iraq and now suffers from PTSD. He needed \$1,529.76 for emergency car repairs.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,529.76

Sean N. of Sahuarita, Arizona suffers from PTSD after serving in the war on terror. He needed \$500 to buy food for his family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$500.00

Carolyn W. of Ocean Springs, Mississippi served her country in Iraq – and returned home with PTSD. She needed \$3,416.96 to pay her mortgage and buy food for her family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$3,416.96

Important update on Coalition's Matching Grant

This summer you may have received a letter from us about an exciting matching grant opportunity that would **automatically double the impact of your gift.**

Several extremely generous Coalition friends (who asked to remain anonymous) offered **\$135,000 to match other supporters' gifts** to help military families facing hunger, homelessness, and other financial disasters.

The Coalition relies solely on voluntary donations to fund its efforts to help our disabled heroes. And this generous matching grant came just in time to provide a boost during the summer, our critical slow season for donations

when many of our good friends are away on vacation or spending time with family, not reading their mail.

We're excited to update you that **faithful Coalition friends like you responded generously, to the tune of \$142,000 – successfully activating the matching grant!** Most importantly, that means we raised a total of \$277,000 to help severely disabled heroes in desperate need of a helping hand.

We are so grateful for the continued support of friends like you who don't hesitate to step in and give generously to rescue a hero in need.

Disabled heroes say **“THANK YOU”** for your **“unwavering support”**

Your generosity is changing lives – but don't take our word for it! Instead, take the words of the grateful American military service members whose lives you've changed. The thank you cards and emails below are for you, our faithful Coalition friend and supporter.

“My husband was medically retired last year with a combat injury rating of 80%. It has been a tough time financially since the medical retirement with waiting on back pays and trying to find a job while I am the caregiver for my husband as well. It gets stressful at times, but little things like this truly have helped us out and we truly appreciate it from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you and the donors for helping us out.”

— Courtney H.

“I just wanted to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the gift. I had my 21st surgery on 17 Feb 2014 for a pain pump in my spine. These days have been very grim and I've been bedridden for four long years. Sometimes I have no clue where or how on special occasions my family will be able to have a smile during these times. It's amazing how the little things can bring hope and joy when it seems like there is none. I just want to say thank you for everything you have done for me and my family over the years.”

— Raymond L.

“I honestly don't know where to start. I am so thankful and grateful for your organization and your support. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. Thank you for giving me hope, for knowing that some people actually genuinely care. My need was just financial but it was a giant stress. **Thank you for proving me wrong in a time I thought I was totally abandoned from everyone.**”

— Samuel Y.

“My husband's needs have grown over the past year. **Your support is greatly appreciated.** We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”

— Wife of Shane L.

“I just received a check from this great organization! **It is very humbling to receive a letter and a check that says Dear American Hero!** Thank you all very much.”

— John F.

“We are in receipt of your donation and could not thank you enough for thinking of us. **Your generosity and kindness is unwavering.** Thank you.”

— Dartagnan C.