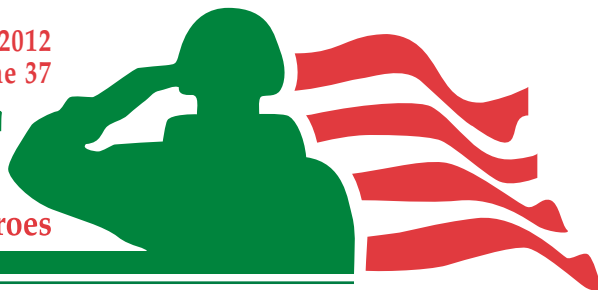


THE ROAD TO RECOVERY REPORT

January 2012
Volume 37

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



Providing
Emergency Aid
to Troops Severely
Wounded in
Afghanistan or Iraq

KEY PROGRAMS:

Emergency
Financial Relief



Partner
Appreciation
Program



Road to Recovery
Conference and Tribute

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families say thanks
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Coalition helps record number of wounded troops in 2011, focuses on winter aid as 2012 begins

Dear Coalition Friend,

As 2011 draws to a close, I wanted to take a moment to let you know how crucial your financial and moral support has meant to our brave, seriously wounded servicemen and women in the past year.

That is why you're receiving this special year-end edition of your Road to Recovery Report newsletter.

I'm pleased to report that despite a whopping increase of more than 20 percent in the number of calls for emergency aid in 2011, the Coalition managed to provide the full amount requested by every severely wounded serviceman or woman.

Thank you!

Together we crossed three milestones in 2011 by:

- ▶ Passing the 5,000 mark in distributing \$500 Secret Santa checks, which help wounded heroes provide Christmas presents for their families.
- ▶ Issuing our 8,000th Thanksgiving "Thank You" check worth \$60 to help wounded heroes provide their families with meals over Thanksgiving weekend.
- ▶ Distributing a record 1,014 Easter checks worth \$60 each to enable financially strapped military families to buy groceries or enjoy a traditional Easter meal. (The previous record was 1,000 Easter gifts distributed in 2010.)

And we did all of the above while continuing to respond to emergency requests from seriously injured troops facing evictions, utility cutoffs, car repossessions and other financial crises.

That is why I consider every Coalition supporter a "civilian hero" who has thrown out a financial lifeline to rescue our injured troops.

I'm glad the Coalition could be there for so many wounded heroes in 2011.

But as winter begins, I'm also concerned about 2012 and beyond.

With the sluggish economy and the continuing war in Afghanistan, responding to every emergency financial aid request will pose an even bigger challenge in 2012.

So please enjoy your year-end newsletter. Then let's start planning for the year ahead.

Retired Army Spc. Brent Hendrix lost his right leg and underwent 66 surgeries after his vehicle ran over a roadside bomb in Iraq. "I still love my country and love the people who support it," says Brent, shown here attending the Coalition's Road to Recovery Conference and Tribute.



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 ★ (888) 447-2588



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.

- An Army Cpl. from Colorado Springs, Colorado requested \$3,488.90 to cover overdue rent and utility payments.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$3,488.90**
- An Army Sgt. from Edmonton, Kentucky needed \$1,500.00 for food and new beds for his two children.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,500.00**
- A Marine Sgt. from Vermontville, Michigan needed \$2,272.36 to pay past due rent, car payments and property tax.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$2,272.36**
- An Army Sgt. from Palmdale, California needed \$3,351.32 to catch up on overdue rent, utility and car payments.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$3,351.32**
- An Army Staff Sgt. from Fort Sill, Oklahoma lost his left leg while serving in Iraq. He found himself \$1,706.65 behind on car and utility payments.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,706.65**
- An Army Spc. from Carrollton, Texas was injured as a result of serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. He required \$956.59 for rent and water payments that were past due.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$956.59**
- An Army Sgt. from Mesa, Arizona faced \$4,196.81 in unpaid rent, utility and car payments when he contacted the Coalition.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$4,196.81**
- An Army Sgt. from Terre Haute, Indiana was having trouble paying medical bills, his rent and putting food on the table. He needed \$1,783.00 to get caught up.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,783.00**
- A Marine Sgt. from Frazee, Minnesota had \$1,658.99 in past due utility and mortgage payments when he contacted the Coalition.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,658.99**
- A Marine LCpl. from Lakeview, New York was facing a mortgage payment of \$1,557.67 he could not pay.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,557.67**
- An Army Staff Sgt. from Windcrest, Texas lost his left leg due to a wound suffered while serving in Iraq. He had \$1,000.00 in home repairs he needed completed.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,000.00**
- An Army Sgt. from Ft. Mitchell, Alabama needed \$2,515.74 to pay overdue rent, utility and car payments.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$2,515.74**
- An Army Staff Sgt. from El Paso, Texas needed \$1,742.93 for an overdue car payment and for some groceries.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,742.93**
- An Army Sgt. from Columbia, South Carolina needed \$1,353.10 to pay his car insurance and phone and electric bill.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,353.10**

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 their 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 our seriously injured service members 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.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS



Wounded troops and families say thanks for all you have done to help in 2011



A look back at some of the most heartwarming letters



Retired Army Spc. Gary W. Hughes Jr., pictured here with his wife Melissa, was severely wounded by a bomb explosion. As he and his wife were sinking deeper in debt, Coalition supporters stepped in to provide the financial help they needed.

The Coalition was the first time we ever had any real financial help and it was a huge blessing. We were running behind on just about everything and it has taken a lot of stress off to not be worrying about the utilities being turned off or how we are going to get caught up. If you had not helped us I don't know where we'd be! It took some (a lot) of the stress off of us during this time. Thank you so much! You do not know how much it meant to us. Thanks again.

— *Spc. Gary W. Hughes Jr, U.S. Army (Ret.),
Joplin, Missouri*

I was shot through both knees in the battle of Fallujah. Since then I've had 33 surgeries and the last one was a left leg amputation above the knee. I also have a reconstructed hip, pelvis and tailbone. We had to give one car back to the bank and our other car is 12 years old and in the shop. Our medical bills are piled up from the births of our children. After my injuries my wife had to get a job to help take care of me and this has put a big burden on us financially. Running a family on one disability income is extremely difficult. But with the help of CSAH we are able to stay afloat until our situation improves. Thanks for all you've

done and continue to do for our vets and their families.

— *Sgt. Justin Bond, U.S. Army (Ret.),
Hanford, California*

We didn't have heat for a few months this winter and had to use space heaters and electric blankets. [Coalition donors] stepped in and covered the installation costs for a new furnace. I can't describe how you helped my family by giving us a safe, warm home. Without your help, we'd still be cold and tired. Thank you doesn't seem to even begin to cover it! We are still struggling and trying to get on track, but we can do it from a warm house now. God Bless You All!

— *Staff Sgt. Paul B. Cornett, U.S. Army (Ret.),
Clayton, Ohio*

My children and I could not stay in our home when a broken well pump left us without water and our electricity was turned off when I had to spend everything I had getting to and from the doctor for my eldest son's knee surgery. Thanks to the Coalition, my well pump was repaired and the electric turned back on, allowing us to return home – OUR HOME! We are returning to our normal lives again and I almost feel like the provider I once was. My children are back in their own beds. All said, my family is regaining our life back thanks to this amazing organization.

— *Sgt. Steve Chaddick, U.S. Army (Ret.),
Hope Mills, North Carolina*

Policy on using troops' names and photos

Readers of "The Road to Recovery Report" may wonder why some service members are identified by their full names and in other cases only first names and last initials are used. The reason is that the U.S. Department of Defense has asked the Coalition to refrain from using the full names of active military personnel, and we are complying with that request by using only their last name initial, when applicable. In the case of retired service members, in order to protect their privacy, the Coalition uses their full names and/or photos only with their permission.





SECRET SANTA PROJECT



Seven years of \$500 Secret Santa checks, and thousands of smiles and surprises on Christmas morning



In the households of many severely wounded servicemen and women, Santa needs a little help at Christmastime. That is why the Coalition created its innovative Secret Santa Project, in which generous supporters pitch in to surprise our wounded servicemen and women with \$500 to provide their children with Christmas presents.

Thanks to kindhearted Coalition friends, the 2011 Christmas Season is the seventh in a row in which every wounded hero on our list has received a gift of \$500. That's more than 5,000 Secret Santa gifts in all, worth over \$2.5 million.



Retired U.S. Army Sgt. John Radell, pictured here with his wife while attending a Coalition Road to Recovery Conference and Tribute, received a surprise \$500 gift check so he could afford to buy Christmas presents for his children.

[My injuries] have changed everything for my family and I. My life has completely changed. I am unable to work, but grateful. We received a \$500 gift check and thus far I am very appreciative of the help and support. My family and I are still in need of financial assistance since I am no longer able to work.

— *Sgt. John Radell, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Crestline, California*

I had to quit my job to care for my husband. We have four children and they also want to tell you, "Thank you!" We also want to thank you once again for the \$500 check at our hardship time so we could have a Christmas for our family.

— *Wife of retired U.S. Marine Sgt. George Paniagus,
Jacksonville, North Carolina*

My wife and I were struggling to put food on the table for our three sons. Our kids have seen me at my absolute worst, and your kids should never have to see the things mine have seen.

The Coalition paid our mortgage and car payment to

keep us afloat. We also were able to give our children a better Christmas with the \$500 gift check!

I truly don't know where we'd be without this Coalition! They've gone above and beyond any of our expectations. Thank you! It means more than anyone realizes knowing you guys are there. What a true blessing!

— *Staff Sgt. Jeremy Wilczek, U.S. Army (Ret.),
Dacula, Georgia*

By having to stay at home and take care of me, my wife lost her job of 20 years. The Coalition has helped us pick up the pieces of our broken life and have a little reassurance that we were cared about and loved regardless of the brokenness. We received a \$500 check for Christmas. Thank you for the love and support. This has been a godsend for my wife who has sacrificed so much to give her all to me.

— *Spc. Wendell W. McLeod, Jr., U.S. Army (Ret.),
Chesterfield, South Carolina*



After retired U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Kevin A. Ross was disabled in Iraq, Coalition donors paid all their bills for six months. "There are no words to say what it means to us. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We love you," Kevin said.

