



The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 48 ★ August 2014

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

“There are a lot of organizations that help with different aspects, but when it comes to emergency financial assistance, the Coalition is who you need to go to.”

— Marjorie Pennington,
wife of disabled veteran



Can you imagine dreading the Christmas Season because you are afraid of losing your home and your family being turned out into the street?

Or knowing your electricity could be shut off as winter approaches, leaving your family shivering in the cold?

Or fearing your children won't even have food on the table this Christmas, let alone presents under the tree?

Or enduring a painful injury that makes the holidays a struggle instead of a joy – but waiting endlessly for the medical treatments that could ease your pain?

Some disabled heroes are suffering, so for them, Christmas isn't a joyful occasion; it's a painful reminder of how dangerously close to the brink of financial disaster they are. So while it may seem early to be thinking about Christmas, here at the Coalition we are already planning for it – because these scenarios are all-too-often the reality for our disabled veterans.

Look for letters and emails from us in the coming weeks sharing how you can help ensure our severely wounded troops aren't homeless or hungry or suffering other financial disasters this Christmas. (If you don't already get our email updates, please sign up by including your email address on the enclosed reply form when you return it.)

As you read the stories and updates in this newsletter, know it's your generosity that makes it possible for us to help these heroes. Your support is making a difference every day. Thank you for your faithful support, patriotic spirit, and generous giving.

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Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

Thanks for taking the time to read *The Road to Recovery Report* – the Coalition’s newsletter sharing updates, stories, and photos of how we’re using your generous gifts to take on the frightening crises facing our severely disabled service members today.

For 10 years now the Coalition has been saying our government isn’t doing enough to help our disabled veterans – as evidenced by the fact that the bureaucratic backlog has veterans waiting *an average of ten months (and sometimes even longer)* to receive their first government disability check after leaving the hospital and separating from service.

And that’s why the Coalition was founded in 2004: To provide emergency financial aid to the brave men and women who were severely disabled while serving in the war on terror, and who now find themselves facing financial disaster because of it.

But recent news has made it tragically clear that financial struggles aren’t the only problem faced by veterans enduring the disability claim backlog. They’re also waiting months to receive the urgent medical care they desperately need – and some veterans have even died after being put on a waiting list instead of receiving treatment.

And the men and women who are already suffering financially while enduring a severe disability just can’t afford to bypass the government bureaucracy and seek medical care from a private provider.

Our nation owes these men and women a debt of gratitude for their bravery and sacrifice, and it’s unthinkable that we should allow them to suffer due to neglect or red tape.

As a faithful Coalition supporter, I know you take that responsibility seriously. Your generosity has proven time and time again that you’re willing to do whatever you can to lend a helping hand to these heroes in their time of need.

So I hope I can count on your continuing commitment as we do everything in our power to rise to the new challenge of helping disabled war on terror veterans in desperate need of medical care, and continue helping them avert homelessness, hunger, and other financial disasters.

I’m so grateful for your friendship and your commitment to keeping our wounded heroes off the street, putting food on their table, and keeping the lights on in their homes. On behalf of our wounded warriors, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your ongoing support.

Gratefully yours,

David Walker
President & CEO



Your gift saves disabled veterans from homelessness and hunger

“It’s not about the money or gifts, but it’s about the selfless donors and all who work to keep the Coalition going. God bless you all.”

— D. Aisner, wife of a disabled veteran

The Coalition’s **Emergency Financial Aid** program is at the heart of our mission to provide direct assistance – with your generous help – to our veterans severely wounded in the war on terror.

A sluggish bureaucracy has our disabled troops and veterans waiting an average of 10 months (and sometimes longer) for their first

government disability check. But for a disabled hero who is unable to work, that wait spells disaster for their family – especially when their spouse often has to leave their job to become a full-time caregiver for their loved one.

When you donate to the **Emergency Financial Aid** program, your gift goes to work quickly to help a disabled veteran keep a roof over his

family’s head, food on the table, or a car in the driveway. Sometimes he will use it for medical bills; sometimes she will use it to pay overdue utility bills. But no matter what the emergency, you can rest assured that your gift is drastically changing the life of a wounded hero who might otherwise go homeless, hungry, or suffer some other frightening hardship.

“With bills that I cannot pay, I had gave up on having a Thanksgiving meal. Your gift has allowed us to buy all we need for Thanksgiving dinner. I am so grateful and blessed.”

— James M.

Your gift provides holiday meals to disabled veterans

Coalition’s **Easter Meals Project** and **Thanksgiving Meals Project** provides thousands of severely wounded troops with \$60 each so their families – who have sacrificed so much – can enjoy a special dinner during the holidays.

As a faithful Coalition supporter, you know our disabled troops and veterans wait an average of 10 months (and sometimes longer) for their first government disability check. Often

they’re so badly injured their spouses are forced to quit their jobs to take care of them — and their family is suddenly without income.

These families struggle to put *any* food on the table – let alone a special holiday dinner with all the trimmings. These special meals projects are just another way Coalition donors’ gifts go to work to show our severely disabled veterans that we remember them and appreciate their sacrifices.

In fact, we concluded another successful **Easter Meals Project** a few months ago, thanks to the generous giving of Coalition donors. And the thanks just keep pouring in from grateful veterans! Turn to the back page to read heartwarming “thank you” letters we’ve received from grateful veterans whose holiday was brightened by generous people like you.

“I’m not rich and struggle with trying to pick bills or food but during this Christmas I am able to do both for the first time in a very long time.”

— Rocky S.

Your gift gives Christmas presents to struggling veterans’ families

The Coalition’s **Secret Santa Project** provides \$500 Christmas gift checks so our troops who have been maimed, burned, blinded, or suffered other severe injuries in Afghanistan or Iraq can give their families a few Christmas presents.

The severely disabled troops and veterans your Coalition gifts reach are

in financially dire straits – they are struggling to keep their home, pay the electric bill, and put food on the table. They certainly don’t have money for extras like Christmas gifts.

That’s why we created the **Secret Santa Project**. Coalition – and our generous donors, like you – couldn’t stand the thought of children being heartbroken on Christmas

morning by getting nothing from Santa because their wounded parent couldn’t afford it.

Each year we receive heartwarming letters from grateful veterans overwhelmed by the generosity of Coalition donors. Your giving ensures not one disabled veteran’s family misses out on Christmas cheer.



Announcing the Coalition’s 2014 Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute

The Road to Recovery Conference is the Coalition’s flagship event, bringing disabled veterans and their families together to encourage and prepare them for the challenges they will face in their new life with a severely disabling injury.

And we’re excited to announce that for the first time in its 10-year history, the Coalition will hold its signature, all-expenses-paid conference on the West Coast.

On October 5-8 the Coalition will host more than 50 combat-wounded veterans and their families at the Loews Coronado Resort in San Diego, CA.

The educational and motivational event will feature a career fair, seminars, workshops and presentations from the Veterans Administration and others. Attendees will learn about the vast array of resources and services available to



Grateful veterans say “Thank You!” to Coalition donors at the conclusion of last year’s Road to Recovery Conference.

them, and sessions on career counseling, resume writing, healthcare and personal development will help ease the often-difficult transition to civilian life.

The event is supported by several organizations and companies dedicated to giving back to the brave men and women who sacrificed so much for our nation. Past sponsors include Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Allied Barton and Bennigan’s.

“The Road to Recovery is a one-of-a-kind event that truly distinguishes the Coalition from other veteran-focused organizations,” said Donny Daughenbaugh, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.) and Regional Vice President of the Coalition. “I’ve seen firsthand how the lives of my fellow combat-wounded have been transformed, and how entire families are re-connected and rejuvenated during their time with us.”

Singer-songwriter Cassidy Diana debuts new single “Salute,” pledges proceeds to Coalition

On May 25, teen singer-songwriter Cassidy Diana debuted a new single entitled “Salute” at a free Memorial Day concert at the Delray Center for the Arts in Delray Beach, Florida. All proceeds of the song will benefit the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes.

Cassidy says she penned “Salute” as a heartfelt expression of her experiences as the military dependent child of a father who served multiple tours of duty. Her first song, “The Call,” was written in tribute to her dad.

Last December, Cassidy was invited to sing “God Bless America” at the Road to Recovery Conference, a five-day, all-expenses-paid event in Orlando for combat-wounded veterans hosted by the Coalition to Salute

America’s Heroes.

Cassidy was so moved by the Coalition’s work that she composed “Salute” and pledged all proceeds from the song to support our cause.

“I have witnessed [the Coalition’s] life changing work for 1000s of combat-wounded and their families first hand for over two years,” Cassidy said. “Please enjoy this meaningful song, and know that all proceeds will go directly to our combat-wounded through the Coalition. I ‘Salute’ you all for supporting this amazing organization by downloading my song.”

“Salute” is available on iTunes and other streaming outlets.



Matthew Pennington says Coalition donors “saved my life” after losing his leg and struggling with PTSD

Veteran now shares a message of hope with other disabled heroes

Army Sgt. Matthew Pennington was on his third deployment when his patrol vehicle struck an improvised explosive device (IED).

“I swerved to allow the engine block to take as much of the blast as I could,” Matthew remembers. “After the explosion, I tried to hit the brakes. When I looked down, my feet were gone.”

Matthew ended up losing his left leg below the knee and sustained severe damage to his right leg, although doctors managed to save it. He also suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) from hypoxia when the fire from the blast deprived his brain of oxygen for several minutes.

After leaving Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Matthew returned home to his wife, Marjorie, to begin his rehabilitation.

It quickly became clear that Matthew’s injuries extended beyond just those to his legs. He was easily frustrated, perpetually angry, and increasingly paranoid.

Matthew stopped leaving his home and began drinking heavily. The turning point came when Matthew drove his car into a brick wall in a fit of alcohol-fueled despair.

“Matthew was no longer the man I had met,” Marjorie said.

Matthew and Marjorie wanted to relocate from rural Maine to Dallas to be near a state-of-the-art VA trauma center specializing in the severe PTSD and TBI Matthew was suffering from.

That’s when Marjorie called the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes.



Matthew Pennington, who says Coalition donors “saved my life,” addresses fellow disabled veterans at the 2013 Road to Recovery Conference.

“They were so quick to help,” she recounts. “In one week, they sent checks for a U-haul and even helped with our first month’s rent and deposit.”

After just six months at the Dallas facility, Matthew’s life had completely turned around. Doctors there got him off most of his medications – narcotics for pain control, antipsychotics for mood control, and sleep aids for his nightmares – started treating his TBI, and expanded his PTSD therapy.

“What the Coalition did for me I don’t think I could ever repay,” Matthew says. “They saved my life.”

Marjorie adds, “The Coalition helped us in so many ways – not just moving us. We need the Coalition because there aren’t a lot out there like them. There are a lot of organizations that help with different aspects, but when it comes to emergency financial assistance: The Coalition is who you need to go to.”

Matthew is now a Coalition spokesperson and regularly represents the Coalition at events across the country. His wife Marjorie is the Co-Director and Senior Team Leader for Coalition’s innovative Heroes Thanking Heroes program.

“I’d like to thank the Coalition,” Matthew says. “I feel that if they wouldn’t have helped me when they did I wouldn’t be where I am today – able to help others and help raise money for charity.”

Marjorie agrees. “Coalition donors changed my life, they changed my husband’s life and they saved our marriage,” she says. “I couldn’t be more grateful.”

Check out Matthew Pennington’s blog at www.saluteheroes.org

“Life’s tough and unfair, but, with the discipline to give everything your 100 percent, you will always come out on top.”

“If we have the ability to know better, we should then learn; and, in learning, we gain strength and clarity.”

“What are the benefits of expressing love? Well, I have found that one benefit is that I smile more now, and I can

catch myself when I don’t. Having just that one simple ability has greatly improved the world around me, as people tend to treat me better. It makes sense.”

**Excerpted from Matthew Pennington’s blog posts about dealing with PTSD.*

To read more, visit <https://saluteheroes.org/about-us/blog/>



Bennigan's Third Annual Wall of Heroes campaign benefits Coalition while honoring fallen heroes

On March 27, 2012, a man walked into Bennigan's in Borger, Texas, bought a beer and wrote a note in memory of a fallen soldier, his friend LTJG Frankie Toner. It was the third anniversary of Frankie's death in Afghanistan, and the man asked that the beer and note be left on the bar that night to honor Frankie's sacrifice.

The gesture sparked a nationwide movement, and Bennigan's Wall of Heroes began as guests across the country were invited to do the same to honor their military heroes.

And this year the third-annual campaign, which runs from Memorial Day (May 26) to Labor Day (Sept. 1), will again generate donations to the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes. For every message uploaded to the Wall of Heroes, Bennigan's will donate \$1



Visit www.WallofHeroes.org to honor your military hero and make a difference in the life of a disabled veteran.

to the Coalition.

This summer's Wall of Heroes tradition has an added bonus: While Bennigan's guests are invited to recognize their military heroes while patronizing their local restaurant, notes of gratitude may also be posted from home, work or anywhere else by visiting www.WallofHeroes.org.

"We think the Wall of Heroes campaign is truly inspired, and we couldn't be more grateful to Bennigan's for going above and beyond to help increase awareness for our wounded veterans," said

David Walker, Coalition President and CEO. "Too many men and women return from combat every day broken in mind, body and spirit, yet so little support is provided to them. The Coalition is making a direct, immediate impact on thousands of these heroes, and the support from Bennigan's and its guests will enable us to serve even more."

Disabled veterans and Coalition spokesmen Matthew Pennington and Donny Daughenbaugh join Dana Bowman in parachute jump



Matthew Pennington mid-jump with tandem instructor.

On May 30, Coalition President David Walker traveled to Jacksonville, Florida with National Spokesmen Donny Daughenbaugh and Matthew Pennington for a "Never Quit" event. Donny and Matthew joined Dana Bowman – a disabled veteran with more than 4,000 jumps under his belt – in jumping from a plane.

Your Coalition representatives joined Team Fastrax, a professional exhibition skydiving team, and 30 wounded soldiers in tandem skydiving jumps landing on Jacksonville

Beach. Many of the service members who jumped with Team Fastrax are missing limbs, severely burned or are blinded due to military conflict, in defense of our nation.

David, Donny, Matthew, and Dana used this event as an opportunity to draw attention to the Coalition's mission of providing emergency financial aid to our troops severely disabled in the war on terror, and to demonstrate the courage and determination of America's disabled veterans.



Coalition welcomes new Chairman Lt. Colonel Thomas J. Orlowski

The Coalition was pleased to announce on May 14, 2014 that its Board of Directors has elected Lt. Colonel Thomas J. Orlowski as its new chairman. The position was previously held by David Walker, who remains on the board as the Coalition's president and chief executive officer.

"These moves are the latest tangible signs of our commitment to strengthening the governance of our organization," said Walker. "Tom has stepped up as an invaluable leader and visionary for the Coalition during his tenure as director, and I know we will continue to benefit greatly from his experience, ideas and high expectations."

Lt. Colonel Orlowski's 20-year Army career included assignments in the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), HQ U.S. Army Europe, HQ U.S. Continental Army Command and the Office of



Lt. Colonel Orlowski addresses disabled veterans at last year's Road to Recovery Conference.

The Adjutant General of the Army. For his service in Vietnam, Orlowski was awarded the Purple Heart, Silver Star, Bronze Star for Valor with two Oak Leaf Clusters and Air Medal. His other awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal and Army Commendation Medal.

"Since I joined the board in November 2012, I have witnessed personally the extraordinary work done by the Coalition as well as the great strides the organization has made in virtually every area of operations," said Orlowski. "David has done an exceptional job leading us, and he will continue to do so for many years. I'm very proud to have been elected chairman, and I look forward to working with the board to make certain that the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes remains one of the most vital and respected veterans service groups in the nation."

Coalition announces Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Charity List inclusion eligibility

The Coalition is pleased and honored to announce that we are now eligible for inclusion on the National/International 2014 Combined Federal Campaign Charity List.

This is a big step forward for our organization and the disabled veterans we support.

Each year federal employees have the opportunity to give to charity in their places of work through a federally mandated campaign. CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, today known as the most inclusive workplace giving campaign in the world with the number of participating charities estimated at over 20,000 nonprofit charitable organizations worldwide.

Partnerships with nonprofit organizations are a core part of the CFC structure. In each of the 320 CFC areas throughout the country, local and national nonprofit organizations collaborate closely with committees of volunteer federal employees to design marketing strategies for the campaign and to process the receipt and distribution of federal employee contributions to the charities they choose.

CFC partnerships promote greater direct giving from federal employees to local and national nonprofits while helping nonprofit organizations use these contributions to leverage financial resources from other sources.



Coalition honors our nation's veterans on Memorial Day

David Walker honors our nation's heroes at the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, D.C.

Coalition President David Walker had the honor of making a speech prior to the start of the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, D.C., joining several other high-profile speakers, including actor Gary Sinise, Grammy Award-winning singer Kristian Bush (from the country duo Sugarland), and Miss America 2014 Nina Davuluri.

The parade, the nation's largest Memorial Day event, honors America's fallen heroes from the Revolutionary War through the present conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was broadcast live to troops stationed around the globe and to 1,500,000 national TV viewers from 400 unique media outlets. Hundreds of thousands of spectators lined the streets of D.C. to watch it live.

Walker took the opportunity to remind his national audience about the on-going crises today's wounded veterans of the global War on Terror are facing. As our faithful Coalition supporters know, while many of these brave men and women have returned from multiple tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan with obvious external injuries – including lost limbs, severe burns and other grievous physical trauma – others bear scars the rest of us cannot see. These include the “hidden” wounds of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), which make it very difficult to lead what most people consider “normal” lives.



At the Memorial Day parade David Walker spoke with the family of quadruple-amputee veteran John Peck. The Coalition made a \$5,000 grant to John's fund for arm and leg transplants.



Sgt. Mary Herrera represents Coalition at event honoring veterans

On May 21 Coalition's Field Representative (West) Sgt. Mary Jessie Herrera, U.S. Army (Ret.), represented us at a *Washington Times*-hosted event honoring military veterans who are now serving in the United States Congress. The evening included a number of awards in recognition of achievements on behalf of America's Armed Forces, and entertainment by world-renowned Irish tenor Anthony Kearns.

Sgt. Herrera spoke on the Coalition's support for female combat veterans, who are facing combat for the first time and often suffer from post-traumatic stress and other conditions too-often resulting in homelessness. She highlighted the Coalition's participation in the construction of a transitional facility for female combat veterans in Washington D.C.

Sgt. Herrera, who was wounded in combat during her tour in Iraq, also shared the story of why she was awarded the Purple Heart. While serving in Iraq in 2003, she was the automatic weapon gunner on the lead vehicle in a convoy that was attacked. Sgt. Herrera was immediately hit with one AK-47 round on her right bicep, but continued fighting

until she was hit with a second AK-47 round on her right forearm. Those wounds were so severe that she now has no feeling in her right arm.

After she returned to the United States, extraordinary surgical efforts saved Sgt. Herrera's arm, and she endured numerous surgeries, skin grafts, and physical therapy at Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Sgt. Herrera's story and demeanor touched those who heard her speak. A *Washington Times* article following the event said Mary is “small in stature but she possesses gigantic courage. [Her] story was delivered in a low key, matter of fact voice, and created an enormous impact on those present.”



Sgt. Herrera and Army veteran Tony Arterburn present an award for outstanding public service to Rep. Ralph Hall (TX), a Navy veteran who served in World War II.

Photo courtesy of The Washington Times

Coalition represented at Duanesburg, New York Memorial Day event

While Coalition President David Walker was representing us in our nation's capital on Memorial Day, the Coalition was also represented at a small hometown parade in Duanesburg, New York.

New Hampshire Coalition Heroes Thanking Heroes team member, Raymond Brown, took the opportunity to represent wounded veterans and share the Coalition's message and mission at an event honoring our nation's heroes.

The Heroes Thanking Heroes (HTH) program provides part-time, flexible employment to wounded veterans or their primary caregivers by enabling them to make phone calls from their homes, personally thanking donors for their contributions to the Coalition. Caregivers can even make their calls from hospitals, so they can stay by their veteran's side during treatment or surgery.



New Hampshire Coalition employee Raymond Brown represented wounded veterans at the Duanesburg, NY Memorial Day parade.



Coalition donors save family of severely disabled veteran from homelessness

“We were literally four days away from losing our house completely. The Coalition stepped in and was able to stop that from happening.”

— Christa C., wife of disabled veteran

When her husband Tony came home from Iraq, Christa C. says people told them, “Well, at least he came home alive. It could have been a lot worse.” But their daughter knew better. “She looked at this one kid and she goes, ‘My dad came home dead,’” Christa recalls. “That guy that comes home every day – he’s not my dad anymore. It’s a complete stranger that walked in the door.”

Christa broke down in tears more than once as she shared that story. “It just incredibly hit home on how much he changed and how much of a different person he was, even though he looks like the exact same guy that left,” she says.

Tony knew war had changed him, but felt powerless to stop it. “Nobody wanted to be around me, and I didn’t want to be around anybody else,” he says. He recalled a time when his daughter was teasing him and he started screaming at her. Tony doesn’t remember much about the incident, something that is all too common. “My memory is like watching a DVD movie that’s scratched up,” he says. “Every now and then, if I’m trying to replay those memories I get to one of those scratch points that it just skips.”

Tony’s first tour of duty was in Afghanistan, where his experiences precipitated a battle with PTSD. But that didn’t stop him from heading to Iraq three years later. In Iraq his vehicle was hit by an IED, causing a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and a back injury. The TBI made his PTSD worse, and brought on a host of debilitating symptoms: tinnitus, migraines, memory loss, and night blindness.

Tony had been a manager at a grocery store before going off to war, but his injuries made returning to his old job out of the question. And Christa had to leave her job as well, after a frightening incident when she returned home to find Tony passed out on the couch, with no idea where their three-year-old was. “I couldn’t leave him home,” she says. “He’d catch the house on fire, lose the kids, not eat, wander off, forget where he was. I pretty much had to be



Tony and Christa C. and their children smile with country singer Darryl Worley at the 2013 Road to Recovery Conference (R2R). Christa had this to say about R2R, “It’s an amazing experience to be here. And the information we get – you couldn’t get it anywhere else.”

with him 24/7.”

Tony had served in the National Guard, and his active duty paychecks stopped as soon as he returned from his deployment. “We literally got nothing, no income, zero. Savings went really quick after that,” Christa recalls. Representatives at the VA warned her that getting a disability rating could be an 18-month process. “They told me, ‘Well, you’ll get back pay,’” Christa says. “I ended up despising those words. Because what’s a \$40,000 check going to do when I’m homeless? We need money *now*. We need help *now*.”

Their family was on the verge of losing their home when someone put them in touch with the Coalition. Thanks to generous donors, the Coalition was able to send them enough money to pay their back mortgage and a few months ahead. “We were literally four days away from losing our house completely. The Coalition stepped in and was able to stop that from happening,” Christa says. The much needed-money hit their bank account on Christa’s birthday – the day before Thanksgiving. “It just made the whole holiday better that we didn’t have that stress,” she says.

A month later, Tony and Christa received another surprise from the Coalition – a \$50 Christmas check. “I sat on the bed and just cried,” Christa recalls. “I said, ‘Tony get in here, look at this! This isn’t Christmas, this is food and bills AND presents!’”

Tony and Christa expressed intense gratitude for the financial and emotional support provided by the Coalition and its donors. “For [the Coalition] to be able to come in and provide for us was just amazing,” Christa says. “It was so heartwarming that they would even think of us. [They asked], ‘Can we help you? Are you ok? What’s your stress level like?’ How I was coping and how I was feeling – not just, ‘Okay, here, we’ll give you a check, leave us alone.’ They were really concerned with how the family unit was.”



By the numbers: Your generosity at work

Because every situation is different, the amount of emergency aid we give to severely disabled troops and veterans, and what they use it for, varies widely from case to case. But no matter the amount, your gift goes to work right away to help a disabled hero on the brink of financial disaster.

Sometimes we make back payments to help avoid a foreclosure. Sometimes it's paying rent so a disabled veteran and his or her family isn't turned out into the street. Sometimes it's a check to put food on the table. Sometimes it's making a car payment, catching up on auto insurance bills, or putting gas in the car that makes sure a wounded hero can get to his or her doctor appointments for treatment.

But what's most important is this: Every dollar you give represents peace of mind to a disabled veteran with nowhere else to turn.

Here are just a handful of examples of severely disabled troops and veterans who reached out to the Coalition on the brink of financial disaster – and who we've been able to help, thanks to your generous giving and commitment to the Coalition and our veterans of the war on terror.



Christopher W. of Florence, South Carolina was paralyzed after serving in Afghanistan. He was in desperate need of \$1,354.25 to pay rent and make his car payment.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,354.25

Frederick W. from Longwood, Florida was medically retired after serving in Afghanistan. He needed \$580.07 to pay his phone bill and buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$580.07

Tino U. of Las Vegas, Nevada was medically retired after serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,295.00 to pay his rent and avoid eviction.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,295.00

Tessa S. from Georgetown, Texas suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. She desperately needed \$1,535.61 to make her car and insurance payments and pay her electric bill.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,535.61

Alphonsa W. of Alexandria, Louisiana, who suffers from PTSD after serving in Afghanistan, needed \$1,619.42 to buy food, avoid foreclosure, and catch up on car insurance and Internet bills.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,619.42

Bobby Z. from Starkville, Missouri served in Afghanistan and now suffers from PTSD. He needed \$500.00 for

essential school supplies.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$500.00

Michael G. of Schertz, Texas served in Iraq and suffers from PTSD. He needed \$2,478.00 to keep the bank from foreclosing on his home.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$2,478.00

Joshua B. of Haslet, Texas served his country in Iraq – and returned home with PTSD. He needed \$1,525.70 to pay his mortgage and buy food for his family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,525.70

Mitchell V. from Fayetteville, North Carolina severely injured his back while serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,488.39 to pay overdue utility bills and buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,488.39

Robert M. from Shawnee, Oklahoma suffered from PTSD after serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,409.98 to keep his car from being repossessed.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,409.98

Joseph P. of Stockton, California served his country in Iraq – and returned home with PTSD. He called the Coalition to tell us he needed \$2,857.91 for emergency car repairs.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$2,857.91



Actor Joe Mantegna joins Coalition celebrity friends

Joe Mantegna speaks with Coalition President David Walker.

Coalition is pleased to announce the recent addition of actor Joe Mantegna (*Criminal Minds*, *The Godfather Part III*, *The Simpsons*) to our growing list of celebrity friends.

In an interview with Coalition President David Walker, Joe said the reason he feels it's important to support our men and women in uniform is simple.

"I've had a pretty good life," Joe said. "If we're going to start looking for who we're going to thank to allow us to live the lives we live in this country, it's those men and women who since 1776 have sometimes given their lives and their bodies to allow us to live this kind of lifestyle we have in this country. I feel really blessed. And part of that blessing has to be passed on to those that made it all possible."



Double Amputee Parachutist Dana Bowman Spreads Coalition's Message

SFC Dana Bowman gives an inspirational message to veterans and troops at the 2013 Road to Recovery Conference.

Coalition is proud to have partnered with Army veteran, double amputee, and parachutist Dana Bowman for several recent and upcoming events.

On February 6, 1994 the world was shocked when Bowman and his teammate Sgt. Jose Aguillon collided in midair during an annual training session for the Golden Knights, the Army's elite parachute team.

Bowman and Aguillon were practicing a maneuver known as the Diamond Track, which calls for the jumpers to streak away from each other for about a mile and then turn 180 degrees and fly back toward each other crisscrossing in the sky.

The pair had demonstrated the Diamond Track more than fifty times without error – but this time was different. Instead of crisscrossing past each other mid-air, the two skydivers slammed into each other at a combined speed of 300 miles per hour. Aguillon died instantly; Bowman's legs were severed from his body.

Nine months later, Dana turned his tragedy into a triumph when he became the first double amputee to re-enlist in the United States Army. He re-enlisted in the United States Army and skydived into the ceremony with his commander – just one example of Bowman's many successes under adverse circumstances.

Dana eventually retired from the Army in 1996, after serving as the U.S. Parachute Team's lead speaker and recruiting commander. Now he spends his time working with other amputees and disabled or physically challenged people.

Dana's personal history, military background, and boundless determination make him uniquely suited to spreading the Coalition's message across the country. Last December, he shared his story and message of inspiration with the troops and veterans who gathered at the Road to Recovery Conference. Later that month Dana parachuted into two college bowl games on a special parachute bearing the Coalition logo – a feat he intends to repeat at upcoming sporting events.



Show your patriotic Coalition support with new mailbox wraps

You've been a generous friend of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes – and we're excited to announce a new way for you to show your support for the Coalition and our nation's severely disabled troops and veterans!

Coalition has partnered with My Support Mailbox to offer custom-printed mailbox wraps. These high-quality vinyl wraps tell the world you support the Coalition and our mission to provide emergency financial aid to disabled troops and veterans in desperate need.

To order, please visit www.mysupportmailbox.com. Yard banners are also available for purchase. We hope you'll consider purchasing a wrap or banner to show support and raise awareness of the Coalition's mission and the desperate plight of our nation's severely disabled veterans wounded in the war on terror.



Creative ways you can help our troops severely disabled in the war on terror

Your *Road to Recovery Report* is chock full of success stories, thanks to generous donors like you. Together we've provided financial aid and other assistance to more than 30,000 troops and veterans severely disabled in the war on terror. Your generous support shows you care deeply about our wounded heroes – so here are additional ways you can help.

- ★ **Volunteer your time and energy as a caregiver** to give the spouse or parent of a severely disabled service member a much-needed break.
- ★ **Offer to run errands** for a wounded service member or his/her spouse.
- ★ **Share your one-of-a-kind knowledge and skills with severely disabled troops** who need help developing new skills for job training, or networking and finding new career opportunities.
- ★ **Be a friend to a severely disabled hero.** The transition to civilian life can be difficult for severely disabled service members. Help them forget their pain and discomfort for a while and aid in their mental and emotional recovery by getting them out of their home or hospital room for an afternoon or evening.
- ★ **Show your support and raise awareness** by displaying Coalition-branded products like t-shirts, coffee mugs, and baseball caps. Visit www.saluteheroeswebstore.org to check out all the ways to proudly display your support for the Coalition and our severely disabled veterans of the war on terror.



You've met our heroes . . . now please introduce us to yours!

Our country has a long and proud tradition of heroic men and women who go above and beyond to answer the call of duty by joining the U.S. military.

In the pages of our newsletters, we've been honored to introduce you to some of our heroes – like double amputee Rob Jones, who pedaled 5,400 miles to raise money to help other wounded heroes, and Matthew Pennington, who speaks and writes about PTSD in an effort to raise awareness about coping with the invisible wounds of war (read more about Matthew on page 5).

But we realize you probably have a military hero of

your own, whether it's a grandfather who served in World War II or a daughter who served in the war on terror.

If you share your own or a loved one's photo with us, we just might use it in an upcoming newsletter! Just drop it in the enclosed reply envelope with a few words about his or her story. And please consider making a donation in honor or in memory of your own hero.

By returning your signed and dated photos and stories to the Coalition, you are authorizing us to use it in our email and direct mail efforts. We regret that photos cannot be returned, and we cannot feature all photos and stories.



Have you remembered our wounded heroes in your Will?

“What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.”

— Albert Pike, American Writer

Leave a legacy of love and support for America's troops severely wounded in the war on terror by remembering them in your Will or insurance policy. 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 with your attorney and financial advisor before making any important decisions regarding your estate.

We'd love to keep in touch!

Please consider sharing your email address with the Coalition. Write your email address on the enclosed newsletter reply form to hear more heartwarming stories like Tony and Christa's. (Read their story on page 10.)

When you share your email address with the Coalition, you'll start receiving thank you notes, photos, and updates about how your generosity is improving the lives of our wounded heroes and their families.



How monthly giving makes your gift go farther to help more severely disabled troops

As a loyal supporter of the Coalition, you already know severely wounded troops and veterans across our country are facing homelessness, hunger, and other hardships.

I'm sure you agree this isn't the way we should "thank" our wounded troops for their service – especially those who have sacrificed life and limb for our freedoms.

With that in mind, I hope you'll consider joining **Partners for Heroes**, the Coalition's monthly giving program, which allows you to automatically and securely donate to the Coalition by checking account or credit card.

Your monthly gift will ensure the Coalition has the much needed funds to provide emergency aid to wounded heroes and their families – right away, when they need it most. Because every moment counts when you're facing homelessness or your child is going hungry.

Having a predictable monthly income stream enables the Coalition to plan more efficiently. And that allows us to rescue more disabled troops facing evictions, utility cutoffs, and other financial disasters.

And participating in **Partners for Heroes** has great benefits for *you*, as well:

- ★ Your monthly donation will be conveniently debited from your checking account or charged to your credit card each month. There is no need to waste time writing checks or searching for stamps and you can cancel at any time.
- ★ The number of Coalition mailings you receive will be reduced, so the money saved on postage and printing will make your gift go farther each month.
- ★ Your monthly giving will be tracked and at the end of the year, you will receive a statement of your donations for tax purposes.

Your monthly gift is important no matter the amount. 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.

Please consider becoming a **Partners for Heroes** contributor today so your monthly gift can start making a difference right away for more severely wounded service members and their families. For more information on how to enroll, please see your enclosed reply form.

Your monthly gift helps severely disabled veterans like these:



Service in Iraq and Afghanistan left retired Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Mickle suffering from PTSD and painful physical afflictions, including back and leg injuries which keep him on crutches. The Coalition "gave me financial help when I needed it," says the disabled veteran.



"I don't eat the last 10 days of the month because I can't afford to," Marine veteran Andrew Smith told us, who suffers from severe PTSD and TBI after serving in Iraq. Coalition supporters like you provided Andrew with money for groceries, rent, and medical bills for his son, Laren, who has muscular dystrophy.



Marine veteran Chadd Jackson, pictured with his service dog, was severely wounded when an IED blast sent shrapnel tearing through his right arm and left him with a severe concussion. Chadd now suffers from nerve damage and has limited use of his arm, as well as TBI and PTSD as a result of the blast. Generous Coalition donors helped Chadd make his mortgage, car, and utility payments.



Disabled heroes say “THANK YOU” for emergency financial aid

If you need proof that your generosity is changing lives, you need look no further than the grateful “thank yous” of disabled troops and veterans your generosity has already helped. When these brave men and women come to us, the desperation in their words is absolutely heartbreaking. And when they say “thank you” after we help them, their relief and gratitude is just as apparent. Your generous giving provides more than just financial help: it tells America’s heroes that their sacrifice has not gone unnoticed, and that they have somewhere to turn when they need a hand up.

“Thank you so much for helping me get out of a devastating situation. I was about to drop out of school and try and find somewhere else to live. The Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes is the best thing that’s happen to me since I’ve become disabled.”

— Mack C.

“Thank you for all of your help that you have given me and my family and that you do for all the other deserving veterans out there. We are in a good place right now thanks to all your help. You were the light at the end of the tunnel for me and you made me feel like a person not a burden.”

— Tim W.

“Words cannot express the gratitude and thankfulness I have towards the financial assistance the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes has provided. I have a lot of pride and it took me many months to work up the courage to ask for help. I am just at a point right now where I could no longer do it all on my own.”

— Christian W.

“We didn’t expect this much help and we are so grateful for what you just did for us. Our family is ecstatic to be able to sleep comfortably and take a hot shower. Thank you tremendously.”

— Amanda E., a veteran who told us,
“We have no heat in our home and the electricity is falling behind on payments. We are desperate.”