



The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 57 ★ March 2016

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



“ I know I will have an uphill battle from now on [but] it's nice to know that in a nation where most have forgotten, or don't care about what happened in Iraq, there are still some that do. ”

— SPC Shea G., U.S. Army (Ret.)

How you can honor a hero this Memorial Day

Across our nation this Memorial Day, patriotic Americans will be remembering the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice preserving our families' safety and freedom.

We're doing the same at the Coalition. And we're also working tirelessly to remember and help those who *did* come home from war ... but came home broken. Because it's unthinkable that on Memorial Day of all days, *even*

one disabled hero should go without food ... should have his car repossessed ... or should live in fear of becoming homeless.

This Memorial Day it's my prayer that you'll consider honoring a hero who fought to protect us against radical Islam. And you can honor them in a very practical way – with a special gift to help a severely disabled veteran who needs a helping hand ... but fears his sacrifice has been forgotten.

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Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

This Memorial Day, as I pause with other Americans across the country to remember the heroes who died serving our great nation, I'm also remembering the ones who *did* come home from war.

In many ways these heroes also lost their lives – at least, the lives they had before they left. For many who return home, it is easier to accommodate a missing arm or leg than it is to heal a shattered spirit.

Because we depend on such a small number of professional military people to carry the flag, many of them must return to combat zones time and time again. Too often they come home with both physical injuries and invisible afflictions that render them unable to participate in normal life and that continue to haunt their dreams at night.

Memorial Day offers an excellent opportunity for the rest of us to express our appreciation for the sacrifices these heroes have made, and to listen to their testimony – the words of men and women who went through hell so we didn't have to.

Memorial Day is also the perfect time to express support for the spouses or caregivers of these victims of Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) and TBI. They often bear full responsibility for their households, caring for children and paying the bills, while their wounded warriors struggle to return to normalcy. These caretakers are heroes, too, and they also need someone to listen. If you know one of them, today would be a good opportunity to take time from your busy schedule and lend an ear.

I know these heroes and their families are so grateful for your support. It is my honor to serve them – side-by-side with faithful friends and patriotic Americans like you.

Time and time again I have heard War on Terror heroes say, "The aid I received from the Coalition saved my family – and it let me know that my service hasn't been forgotten."

This Memorial Day, I'm honored to have by my side friends like you – patriotic Americans who could never let a hero's service go forgotten on this day of remembrance.

With gratitude,

David Walker
President & CEO





“At the Road to Recovery we learned that we are not alone, and it’s not just us.”



The Road to Recovery Conference is our signature event, bringing together disabled veterans and their families from all across the nation. At the Road to Recovery Conference, wounded veterans and their families spend multiple days attending sessions on everything from Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) to VA benefits, attending a job fair, hearing inspirational speakers, and spending time relaxing and creating new friendships at fun, family-friendly locations such as Sea World.

We’ve held eight of these events in our eleven-year history, and we’re already gearing up to knock it out of the park in 2016! To get you excited about this upcoming event, we wanted to share with you the story of disabled veteran Josh Newhart, whose life was changed after attending a Road to Recovery event.

Josh joined the Army in 2002 and served tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. He was wounded in 2008 while serving a 15 month tour. Here’s what his wife told us about how the Road to Recovery Conference changed things for their family:

“We were honored, blessed, and chosen to take an amazing journey to Orlando, Florida to attend a Road to Recovery Conference. This was truly the game changer. After so many years of not feeling normal and like we couldn’t relate to the other parents in our community, we found: hope, trust, and people that were just plain honest. Honest about this not being fair, why us, and what next.

At the Road to Recovery we learned that we are not alone, and it’s not just us. Since then, when we need someone to talk to, we can pick up the phone and reach out to people who can relate, and give helpful advice or just lend an ear to listen. PTS is the wound no one else can see, it’s hard for people to relate and it’s hard to deal with. We were a young couple trying to figure out the ‘new us’ and after years of therapy, medications, and feeling off we are just now getting on track.

Josh and I have now been married for 10½ years, we have 3 kids, and [I’m] working for the Coalition to Salute Americas Heroes. In May Josh is starting the police academy and graduating in August!”



At the Coalition we put our heart and soul into doing everything we can to improve the lives of America’s severely disabled War on Terror veterans. To effectively further our mission we look for every opportunity to raise awareness on the issues they face and reach out to them in their local communities.

Coalition represented in El Tour de Tucson cycling event

Rob Jones and Bryan Kelsey with Mary Herrera raising donations for the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes at the Tucson Medical Center’s El Tour de Tucson, one of America’s largest and most premiere road cycling events.



Coalition participates in national Wreaths Across America ceremony



“Every fallen hero deserves a wreath.” This is the mission of Wreaths Across America.

This year’s National Wreaths Across America Remembrance Ceremony was held in Arlington National Cemetery on December 12. The Coalition was represented by our incredible group of local volunteers and supporters.

Volunteer Christy Tyrrell, who helped represent the Coalition at the ceremony, told us “It was an amazing, solemn event with over 240,000 volunteers coming out. As we placed the wreaths on each tombstone, we were instructed to say the name on the tombstone aloud. Our fallen are not forgotten!”

First annual Christmas fundraiser benefits Coalition



In December, our friend Larry Popowich organized an amazing fundraiser and entertainment event in Florida to benefit the Coalition. The event included an auction, a raffle, and some impressive musical acts (including our own Cassidy Diana). Our CEO David Walker and VP Donny Daughenbaugh were on hand to thank Larry and all of the supporters who came out to raise money and awareness for the cause.

American Health Journal features Coalition ambassadors

Jack Scalia and Sgt. Matthew Pennington were recently featured by *American Health Journal*, sharing the work offered by the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes. View the video at www.thedoctorshow.com/featured-video/coalition-to-salute-americas-heroes/ or find it on our Facebook page!





Coalition aid helps disabled female veteran find home, attend school

Corporal Marissa Strock joined the United States Army in 2004, trained to become a Military Police Officer, and was sent to her first duty station at Ft. Lewis, Washington with the 170th Military Police Company.

Her unit had already deployed to Baghdad, Iraq and Marissa quickly joined them. Her unit was tasked with the training and security of multiple Iraqi police stations. On Thanksgiving Day 2005, the vehicle Marissa was in was struck by four artillery rounds buried in the road. The blast killed two Americans and an Iraqi police colonel. Marissa survived, but lost both legs, and suffered multiple broken bones and a traumatic brain injury which left her in a coma for four weeks.

After leaving the Army, Marissa and her fiancé needed help finding a place to live in Michigan, where she is currently taking general education classes with hopes of attending the University of Michigan for Kinesiology.

Marissa reached out to the Coalition and explained her situation. We sent her funds for first and last month's rent and security deposit, as well as a Secret Santa Project gift



to help with her Christmas.

Marissa says, "Thank you to the [Coalition] for making it possible to have a place to live while I work towards accomplishing my goal. My goal is to graduate from U of M with a Bachelor's Degree in Sports Medicine to be able to help other people with similar injuries train and stay active."

Homeless wounded women warriors: *America must honor all who serve and safeguard the country* by David Walker

Excerpted from Washington Times op-ed, November 9, 2015

The American people profess great affection for their military and well they should because it is a tiny sliver of the population – less than 1 percent – that is bearing the burden of national defense. That disproportionate responsibility says something troubling about our commitment to our country. We can only thank God so many women are picking up the slack. Were it not for women, all of the services would be short-handed.

Like all the veterans coming home from the battlefields bearing the scars of war, female veterans must contend with long waits for their paperwork to be processed while they struggle to pay their bills and readjust to civilian society. In my work, I have come to know and admire many of these women when we reach out to help them make the transition, learn to cope with their physical and psychic injuries, and make new lives for themselves.

In our work, we are encountering a disturbingly high

level of homelessness among wounded female veterans. At a time when the overall veteran homeless rate is declining, female veteran homelessness is increasing from about 1,400 in 2006 to just over 3,300 in 2010. Overall, the homelessness rate for female veterans is four times that of men. They are more often burdened with responsibility for small children that imposes tremendous demands on their resources and time, making it more difficult for them to find productive work in the civilian world.

The wounded veterans – male and female – are the best of us. They have borne the battle on our behalf and now need our support. It is frankly amazing to me how far a little support can go in helping these worthy people regain control of their lives and resume productive places in our society. Veterans Day provides us all a solemn opportunity to consider how fortunate we are to live in a free society and how much we owe to the veterans who safeguarded our freedoms."



Leave a legacy of love for our disabled heroes

“*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

By remembering the Coalition in your will or insurance policy, you continue your proud and patriotic 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.



Have you joined Partners for Heroes yet?

Have you joined the Coalition’s **Partners for Heroes** program yet? It’s a simple way you can make an *even greater* difference in the lives of suffering severely disabled veterans across our great nation.

Partners for Heroes is our safe and secure 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 wounded 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 sharing 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 in any amount. Because when you’ve lost your legs and can’t work, or your wife quit her job to care for you as you battle post-traumatic stress, every dollar matters. And every moment counts when you’re facing homelessness or your child is going hungry.

So I hope you’ll become a **Partners for Heroes** member today – to help 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.



By the numbers: Your generosity at work

Just imagine the urgency felt by a disabled veteran who calls us knowing if we can't help, his family will be turned out into the street or her children will go hungry. That's why when we send you a letter appealing to your generosity, it's always with a tone of urgency: "Won't you help today?" Because the heroes who write to us often don't have a week, or a month, to keep their lives from falling apart.

When you make a gift to the Coalition, we put it to work immediately to help a disabled veteran on the edge of disaster. The names below are just a few of the heroes whose lives we changed recently – with your help.



Timothy G. from Wickliffe, Ohio suffers from PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He needed \$700.00 to buy food and gas.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$700.00

Skeeter D. of Hephzibah, Georgia suffers from PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He asked for \$1,750.00 to avoid eviction.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,750.00

Reinaldo B. from Watertown, New York was medically retired after serving in the War on Terror. He needed \$3,326.97 to avoid a foreclosure, make his car payment, and buy food and gas.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$3,326.97

Rudy R. from Victorville, California suffers from post-traumatic stress after serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,593.60 to pay desperately overdue bills.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,593.60

Amie M. from Jacksonville, Florida served in Iraq and suffers from PTS. She desperately needed \$2,475.00 to pay her taxes and buy food for her family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$2,475.00

Jennifer G. from Madison, Virginia was medically discharged after serving in Iraq. She called asking for \$1,283.46 to avoid eviction and pay for her car insurance.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,283.46

Gregory M. from Rockwood, Tennessee suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. He desperately needed \$500.00 to buy food and gas.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$500.00

Chanelle J. from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. She called asking for \$2,371.00 to buy school supplies and avoid an eviction.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$2,371.00

See page 6 of your newsletter to learn more about an easy way you can help make sure we always have the funds on hand to help our desperate heroes right away, when they need it most ... not in days or weeks, when it may be too late.

Reminder: Coalition is a CFC charity!

If you're a federal employee, we'd like to remind you that the Coalition is on the National/International 2016 Combined Federal Campaign Charity List. Selecting the Coalition as your CFC charity is an easy and exciting way to support our disabled heroes!



#12523



The difference YOU made this Christmas

This past holiday season, your faithful generosity allowed us to send \$500 Secret Santa and Christmas Angel gift checks to disabled veterans around the country. Since then the grateful – and often tearful – “thank yous” have been pouring in from heroes whose lives you touched. I hope your heart is warmed as you read these notes from struggling heroes whose holidays you brightened.

“I am a Purple Heart recipient ... and a terminal cancer patient. I spend a lot of my money paying bills and funding my trips to Houston for my [cancer] treatment because there is no help available to me. **So I didn't really do anything for the holidays before [receiving your Christmas gift check] because I couldn't justify spending the money on it.** But thanks to your much appreciated gift I don't have an excuse not to embrace the Holidays even if I am by myself. Thank you for everything you have done for me. I appreciate it a whole lot.”

— Sgt. Jon A., U.S. Army (Ret.)

“I really want to thank you from my heart. It's like you knew my circumstances. **I was so excited to be able to buy some food.** I love the holidays, but when [you aren't able to] give to someone, it makes me feel down and sad. Thank you for thinking about me.”

— Jackie M.

“This Christmas check has me in tears with gratitude! We have struggled this year to provide gifts to our four kids. I got presents for them but I didn't pay some of my obligations to do it. With this more than generous check I will get caught up and put a nice meal on the table. From my heart, thank you.”

— Paul S.

“I would like to thank Salute Heroes from the bottom of my heart for your generous gift this Christmas! I was let go from work back in August and I have four daughters. Needless to say, December is a tough month financially ... especially being unemployed! My VA disability is my only income and after rent, that is half gone! I was able to get all of my kids a gift card this Christmas and it was all due to your generous gift! My electricity was also in danger of being shut off again, so I will also be able to make a payment on my past due amount to get caught back up! I was literally in tears when I received your check. Your organization is amazing and this veteran cannot thank you enough!!!! **I was able to give my daughters a Christmas gift thanks to your generosity.**”

— Luke B.

“It's been very hard for me to adjust to being a civilian, even after all these years. Being disabled adds to the challenge. I don't fit in in most jobs, others won't hire someone with limited abilities or time availability. Needless to say it has been a rough time since I was discharged. We knew it would be a tight Christmas. **I had planned on pawning what I could tomorrow to make sure we had a few gifts under the tree.** When I got home and got your letter, my wife and I both fell into tears. It literally saved our Christmas.”

— SPC. Shea G., U.S. Army (Ret.)

“**We were brought to tears when opening the mail today.** Thank you so much for the gift! Here we were wondering how we were gonna finish up the kids Christmas shopping or feed the family. You and the donors are amazing and special to us.”

— The B. Family

Please consider sharing your e-mail address

By providing your e-mail address on your enclosed newsletter reply form you'll start receiving thank you notes, photos and updates about how your continued generosity is improving the lives of our disabled heroes and their families.