

# The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 58 ★ May 2016

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

JULY

3

4

## Remember a Hero this Fourth of July

“It is people like you that lets me know that there are mortal angels on this earth. I will never forget the kindness you have shown my family and I.”

— SFC Sylvester C.,  
Disabled Army veteran

It's our privilege to share this special Fourth of July *Road to Recovery Report* newsletter with you – a generous friend and a patriotic American who cherishes this day and honors the founding of our great nation, just as we do.

Inside your exclusive *Road to Recovery Report* you'll read stories of heroes you've already helped – and how grateful they are to be remembered by generous Americans like you. I hope you're excited and encouraged to see how you are making a difference every day in the lives of American heroes.

Especially on patriotic days like the Fourth of July, our severely disabled heroes are proud of their service. And *we're* proud to have the support of friends like you, and to do our part together to **help our wounded warriors recover and rebuild after laying it all on the line to defend us from radical Islamic terrorists.**

This Fourth of July, I hope you'll consider showing our heroes you remember and appreciate their service in a very practical way – with a special gift for a disabled veteran who needs to know he or she isn't in this struggle alone.

## Inside your Road to Recovery Report:

Letter from President David Walker  
page 2

A Home for These Heroes  
page 3

Heroes Thanking Heroes:  
A One-of-a-Kind Program  
page 5

How You Can Leave a Legacy of Support  
page 6

You're Helping: Here's the Proof  
page 7

You Showed Them You Remember ...  
page 8



# Letter from President David Walker

## Board of Directors

**David W. Walker**  
President & Chief Executive Office

**LTC Thomas J. Orłowski**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Chairman

**Tom Sircher**  
Director

**Bruce Kelly**  
Secretary and Treasurer

**Command Master Chief Stephen Page**  
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)  
Director

**Matt Cary**  
Director

**Colonel Charles Bogle**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

## Ambassador Corps

**Major General John K. Singlaub**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Chairman

**Master Sergeant Leroy Petry**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Medal of Honor recipient

**Senior Airman Daniel Acosta**  
USAF (Ret.)

**Colonel Evan G. Miller**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

**Michael Meyer**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

**SFC Dana Bowman**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

**David Wetherell**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

**Jimmy Gunn**  
Entertainer

**Jack Scalia**  
Actor

## Field Management Team

**Donny Daughenbaugh**  
U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)  
Vice President, Field Operations

**Jorge De Leon**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Field Representative, Southwest

**Shilo Harris**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)  
National Spokesperson

**Mary Jessie Herrera**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Field Representative, West

**Jil Hinds**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Field Representative, Southeast

**Rob Jones**  
U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)  
Field Representative

**Matthew Pennington**  
U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Field Representative, East



Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

As the Fourth of July approaches, the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes continues the important work of providing direct financial support to wounded veterans returning from the battlefield. As you know, these heroes often wait months to receive their government benefits – in the meantime struggling to make the rent, cover the costs of medical care for their families, and put food on the table.

With your help, the Coalition provides a variety of critical services to wounded veterans – helping them find new careers in the private sector, link up with other wounded veterans who share their experience, and even find places to live. But providing immediate, direct financial aid to heroes disabled battling radical Islamic terrorism is our distinguishing characteristic that sets us apart from other veterans' aid groups.

When I joined the Coalition in 2012, I immediately began a thorough top-to-bottom review of all of our activities with an eye to reducing overhead and directing a greater proportion of our resources to the wounded veterans we are here to help.

Over the past four years, the dedicated Coalition team has taken this organization to a new level. We operate with a lean budget and mind our spending carefully. In fact, many of our employees are themselves wounded veterans. And each and every one of us is motivated by a desire to help disabled veterans, *not* to enrich ourselves.

Since I assumed the helm, the Coalition has increased our direct giving by nearly \$1 million a year, despite a decline in revenues. We've been able to do this by cutting back on administrative costs and achieving other efficiencies. Every day we are improving, and we are proud of how much we've achieved. (On page 7 you can read an update with actual numbers – down to the penny – of how we've recently helped some of our disabled heroes.)

And sadly, the need for our work has not diminished. Daily news comes of more turbulence in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other nations in the grip of radical Islamic terrorism. The steady stream of wounded Americans returning home continues unabated. I fear this traffic will continue indefinitely. For as long as it does, we – with your help – will be there for our heroes in their hour of need.

As we celebrate our nation's birthday in a few weeks, I'm reminded just how proud I am to be an American. Much of that pride I attribute to the determination and bravery of our men and women in uniform – heroes who believe America, and our principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, are worth losing limbs, leaving families, and upending their lives for.

But there's one more thing that makes me proud to be an American this Fourth of July – you. This Fourth of July, I'm honored to stand with friends like you – generous, caring Americans who would never let a hero's service go forgotten on this patriotic day.

With gratitude,

David Walker, President & CEO





## Coalition Grant Helps Give Hero a Home, Independence

**A**rmy Sgt. Rob Easley first deployed to Iraq for 14 months in 2008 as an infantryman. Shortly after deployment, Rob attended the yearlong school at Eglin AFB, Florida to become an elite Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Technician. He was assigned to the 787th EOD unit, out of Fort Lewis, Washington, and in January 2012 his unit deployed near Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Rob was severely wounded in action on October 15, 2012 when he stepped on an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) while out on foot patrol. The blast resulted in the loss of both of his legs, leaving Rob a bilateral above-knee amputee.

After more than



three years of recovery, numerous surgeries, and countless hours of intense physical therapy at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Rob, together with his wife Megan, is now on track to medically retire in 2016.

But Rob's challenges are just beginning. Without the use of his legs, Rob needs a special home that is designed to accommodate his disability and give him the independence he desires. Rob and Megan are working with the Tunnel to Towers Foundation to build a fully-accessible home in the Destin,

Florida area, which will help Rob regain his independence, and keep him close to family and the strong support system offered by the military's EOD community.

Thanks to your generosity, the Coalition is proud to have made a \$5,000 grant towards the Easleys' dream lot where they wish to build their forever home. It is our hope to help Rob regain his independence, as he and Meg continue their journey of healing.

## Coalition Grant to HeroHomes to Honor, House Severely Disabled Veterans

**T**he Coalition was also privileged to make a \$10,000 grant to the HeroHomes project – a new initiative to provide homes for disabled military veterans in the Loudoun County, Virginia area near Coalition headquarters.

HeroHomes is led by Matt Lowers and Aimee McGranahan, together with custom home-builder Jason Brownell, who want to put a local touch on efforts to support those who lost limbs fighting overseas. The project kicked off with a fundraiser reception in February

at the West End Wine Bar in Purcellville, Virginia.

Representing the Coalition at the event was Sgt. Jorge De Leon, U.S. Army (Ret.). Jorge's own home in Texas was built for his family by a similar organization supporting wounded warriors – so he knows firsthand the importance the independence a fully-accessible home can make to a disabled veteran. "I cannot explain how important it is to know that my wife and kids will never be missing a roof over their heads," he said.



## With Your Help, the Coalition is Committed to Doing All We Can to Change the Lives of Our Nation's Severely Disabled War on Terror Veterans

### Coalition grant supports disabled heroes' health and fitness



The Coalition recently provided a grant for the Adaptive Adventures Military Operations Program. Our Special Projects Officer Colonel Martin Badegian was there to represent us and observe the program in action.

The focus of this particular day in Denver was the Mile High Indoor Rowing Championships. Veterans had the opportunity to train in the Indoor Rowing and Fitness program as a winter engagement series to continue their skill and fitness progression in paddlesports. The program offers veterans the opportunity and tools to explore and learn about resting heart rate, perceived exertion, impacts of sleep and nutrition, baseline fitness tests, and ways to adapt workouts at home for all abilities. This event was a culmination of their training efforts!



### Donny Daughenbaugh to compete in Tough Mudder, raise funds for Coalition



This month Coalition representative and disabled veteran Donny Daughenbaugh will be competing in his fourth Tough Mudder event to raise awareness and funds for his fellow War on Terror veterans.

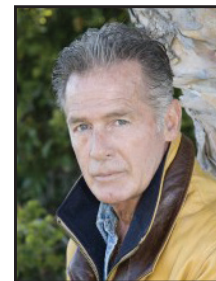
Donny's injury causes him constant pain, but he refuses to let that keep him from his mission. He told us, "I can feel the chronic nerve pain, I can feel the voice in my head saying to slow down, to stop or maybe even quit all together. Never

gonna happen! I live every day of my life with the injury and it has caused a lot of damage since then but I keep going. I keep fighting and I keep serving as a positive role model for my wife and my two kids."



### A great new way to connect with the Coalition

Are you listening to our radio program, *Today's American Veteran*, hosted by actor, Coalition friend, and veteran-supporter Jack Scalia?



If you aren't, you're missing out! Recent guests have included award-winning sportscaster Jim Gray, 9/11 first-responder retired FDNY Lieutenant Joe Torrillo, and aspiring singer and female veteran Jess Love.

To listen, visit <http://radioactivebroadcasting.sbc-inc.net/directory-page/itemlist/category/242-bet-on-a-vet> or look for updates on our Facebook page!



### Coalition and Uno Pizzeria raise 'dough' for disabled veterans



Always on the lookout for new ways to raise funds for the Coalition and spread awareness about the issues facing America's disabled War on Terror veterans, James Davis, David Walker, and Matthew Pennington raised some "dough" for combat wounded veterans with Uno Pizzeria & Grill. Thank you to Uno and the community for stepping up once again. We are grateful for your support!



**“** *I am so grateful for the opportunity to work from home, all while reaching out to donors who help families in the same situation as ours. Until March of this year, I have always worked. My husband’s diagnosis of Trauma Induced Dementia due to his multiple TBIs, has made it impossible for me to work outside the home. This opportunity will allow us not to struggle for the necessities.* **”**

— Sgt. Gregory and Krystal Butacan

**F**or ten years the **Heroes Thanking Heroes (HTH) program** has provided part-time, flexible employment to wounded veterans or their primary caregivers by enabling them to make phone calls from their homes – most often to personally thank donors for their contributions to the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes. HTH offers qualified participants experience working in a “virtual call center,” providing valuable training for future jobs.

Those enrolled in the program find increased self-worth and continued healing from this opportunity. Many HTH employees would not otherwise be able to work due to ongoing medical appointments and treatments, or caregiving responsibilities. Caregivers may even make their calls, if they choose, from a military hospital setting, enabling them to remain by the side of veterans while they undergo treatment or surgery.

**“** *The Heroes Thanking Heroes program is very therapeutic – to be able to say, ‘Thank you for your donation, thank you for everything that you’ve done, you’ve helped my family.’* **”**

— Christy Perez, whose husband Juan (right) sustained blunt force trauma to the head in Iraq



For regular updates and heartwarming stories on the heroes you’re helping through HTH, visit [www.facebook.com/HeroesThankingHeroes](http://www.facebook.com/HeroesThankingHeroes).

## Did you know the following celebrities are friends of the Coalition, just like you?



- ★ Danny Aiello
- ★ Jason Alexander (above left)
- ★ Ashley Bell
- ★ Jack Black (above center)
- ★ Lynda Carter
- ★ Tim Conway
- ★ Larry Csonka
- ★ Charlie Daniels



- ★ Tony Danza
- ★ Jamie Farr
- ★ Jeff Foxworthy
- ★ Kelsey Grammer
- ★ Lee Greenwood
- ★ Wayne Gretzky
- ★ Charles Grodin
- ★ Valerie Harper



- ★ Tommy Lasorda
- ★ Brenda Lee
- ★ Joe Mantegna
- ★ Craig T. Nelson
- ★ Jack Nicklaus
- ★ Oak Ridge Boys
- ★ Arnold Palmer
- ★ Robert Patrick

- ★ Burt Reynolds
- ★ Kenny Rogers
- ★ Jack Scalia
- ★ J. K. Simmons (above right)
- ★ Ricky Skaggs
- ★ Joe Theismann
- ★ Rusty Wallace



## Gifts from Coalition Donors Helped this Veteran and Mother Find Hope and Healing

**“There was a time that I could only see the dreadful now, but today I look forward to what’s to come.”**  
— SPC Natasha Espinoza, U.S. Army (Ret.)

**S**PC Natasha Espinoza, U.S. Army (Ret.) enlisted in 2001 and was stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado until her unit was deployed to Iraq. In May of 2003 Natasha sustained burn and blast injuries while on a convoy mission. As her unit traveled through northern Iraq, the convoy’s lead vehicle turned onto an unpaved road. Without warning, the tail vehicle of the convoy was blown apart when a landmine detonated beneath the vehicle’s front passenger seat – right where SPC Espinoza was sitting.



And she counts herself fortunate to have had the Coalition on her side as she fights to recover and rebuild. “The Coalition came into my life long ago when I first came home,” Natasha says. “I went to a Road to Recovery Conference with my mother and met several people who motivated me to stop feeling sorry for myself. We all have a story and to each of us our own is the most real and most devastating; but being able to see how other people handled his own reality and her own truths was amazingly motivational.

The resulting burn and blast injuries led to Natasha’s retirement from military service in 2006. Today, after 23 surgeries, over a year of in-patient care at several hospitals, and a decade of therapy, Natasha has regained some sense of normalcy.

“After being exposed to other soldiers’ and veterans’ stories I began to see hope and while it was not instantaneous I crept back out of the darkness.

But her journey hasn’t been without its dark moments. Still struggling with a host of VA and Army diagnoses, her recovery process is a continuous one and will likely remain that way into the future. Despite that, Natasha looks at the future with hope. “The brilliance of recovery is that it is ever changing and an adventure for one to embrace in a new way every day,” she says.

“Today, because of my own will and the assistance and inspiration that I received from the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes I am working on becoming the veteran example, the mother, and the woman I feel like I was intended to be. I am thrilled to be working with the Coalition, I am so thankful for what I have gained from the organization and what I continue to gain from each veteran, widow, family member and thoughtful donor that I have the opportunity to come into contact with. There was a time that I could only see the dreadful *now*, but today I look forward to what’s to come.”



**“What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.”**  
— Pericles, Greek Orator

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](mailto: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.*



## Your Generosity at Work

**A**s a generous and faithful friend of the Coalition and America's severely disabled War on Terror veterans, we feel it's important you know the practical and immediate ways your gift goes to work to help our heroes.

Because your gifts go to work in a very real way to help American heroes facing very real problems.

When a hero contacts us asking for help, there's a specific number that's keeping him from sleeping at night, or making her fear for her family's safety – whether it's \$96.65 to keep the lights on or \$1,912.84 to make a past-due mortgage payment.

And thanks to your generosity, we're able to help them – penny by penny, dollar by dollar – to make sure our heroes don't lose their homes, go hungry, or face another disaster. The list below highlights a handful of severely disabled veterans who recently asked us for help – and whose lives you and I changed together.



**Retired Marine Corporal Antonio M. from Costa Mesa, California** suffers from post-traumatic stress (PTS) after serving in Afghanistan. He asked for just \$249.97 to keep his electricity and Internet on.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$249.97

**Cassandra, a retired Army SSG from Tennille, Georgia** was paralyzed while serving in Afghanistan. She asked for \$629.18 to avoid eviction.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$629.18

**Air Force veteran Andrew P.** served in Afghanistan and suffers from severe PTS. He needed \$1,989.43 for urgent health care costs.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$1,989.43

**Army veteran Jamuel B. from Hampton, Virginia** suffers from post-traumatic stress after serving in Iraq. He needed \$932.81 to keep his electricity on and buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$932.81

**Army veteran Matthew B. from Colorado Springs, Colorado** suffers from PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He desperately needed \$1,000.00 to buy food for his family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$1,000.00

**Retired Army SSG Joseph W.** suffered a severe shoulder injury serving in Iraq. He called asking for \$4,657.26 to pay overdue bills, including rent, electricity, and auto insurance.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$4,657.26

**Retired Army SSG Shanika M. from Katy, Texas** suffers from severe PTS after serving in Afghanistan. She called asking for \$1,348.93 to avoid foreclosure.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$1,348.93

**Retired Marine Corporal Nemesio L. from Ocala, Florida** was medically retired after serving in the War on Terror. He desperately needed \$500.00 to buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$500.00

*See page 6 of your newsletter to read about an important way you can have a long-term impact in the recovery of our disabled military heroes ... by leaving a legacy of love for America's severely disabled War on Terror troops and veterans.*

### Reminder: Coalition is a CFC charity!

**I**f 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



## You Showed Them You Remember

Many disabled veterans tell us they feel forgotten by the American people they gave so much to defend. So when we're able to help them – thanks to your generous giving – they often tell us how much it means to be remembered and to know that they're not alone in fighting the new battle of a disability.

“My family would like to take a moment to thank all of you for the gift that you have given us. **This is a welcome gift that helps us during a time of need** ... Your organization has always been gracious and caring to our family. We want to thank you so much for having that much heart to always remember this family.”

— Bohanan B.

“I just want to say Thank You for this huge blessing that I received today. Being a disabled veteran on a limited income, some bills are missed during the month or I personally may go without. My car insurance had canceled last night and I was stressing as to how it would get paid. This had been on my mind all this month, but today when my wife checked the mail and told me I had a letter. I opened it and saw how much it was, it was unbelievable. **This is what I had been praying for.** I cannot say Thank You enough for this blessing.”

— C. Cotton

“I just wanted to personally thank [the donors] for being so kind and caring. It came in a time of need and I am extremely grateful. I was literally negative in my bank account due to bills that are set to automatic deduction and I did not make enough through my day job. **I'm barely making it** and when I opened the mail and saw what was inside, it felt like a big burden was lifted off my shoulder. Now not only is the negative not there anymore but, I can now buy more groceries.”

— Shawn A.

“I would like to thank [CSAH] from the bottom of my heart for your generous gift ... I was let go from work back in August ... My VA disability is my only income and after rent, that is half gone! **My electricity was in danger of being shut off again**, so I will 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!”

— Luke B.

“I would like to write and just say Thank You! To receive this money is a blessing and helps to restore my faith in people and our fellow American brothers and sisters. **This gift has reaffirmed that our military brothers and sisters are not forgotten** and our sacrifice still means so much to so many.”

— The P. 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.