



The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 60 ★ September 2016

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



“If I was able to thank a donor in person, I would give them a hug and let them know we truly appreciate all their help and support. Everything they do is helping each and every family throughout the Coalition.”

— Robin Freeman, whose husband Clayton suffers from post-traumatic stress (PTS) and a traumatic brain injury after serving in Iraq

Veterans Disabled Fighting Radical Islamic Terrorists Need Your Help This Christmas

As Fall approaches, the Coalition is hard at work preparing for our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas campaigns to brighten the holidays for our disabled heroes.

It might seem early to be thinking about the holidays, but planning and preparation are crucial to making sure we don't have to turn away *even one* severely disabled veteran who asks us for help putting a hot Thanksgiving meal on the table ... or Christmas presents

under the tree.

Your *Road to Recovery Report* takes a look back at how we celebrated the Memorial Day holiday (page 4) – and a look forward with an exciting announcement about our flagship event, the Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute (page 6). I hope these stories of the good you've done inspire you to continue your commitment to our American heroes with a generous gift to support our important holiday projects.

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Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

As we prepare to host 100 disabled War on Terror veterans and their families at our 9th Road to Recovery Conference this December, a recurring theme is the invisible injury of post-traumatic stress (PTS) – often called the “signature wound” of the War on Terror.

The soldiers of World War II had to endure severe stress, but if they could survive about a year – from D-Day to Germany’s surrender was about 11 months – their ordeal was over. They could go home and strive to return to normal life.

But today’s volunteer military enjoys no such reprieve. The same small band of heroes must return to the combat zones again and again. I know of some who have served more than 10 tours in Afghanistan or Iraq, often both places.

Their psychological wounds run deep, and affect their relationships, their ability to hold down a job and provide for their families, and their sense of self-worth and belonging in the civilian world.

At the Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute – which you can read more about on page six of your newsletter – we help heroes wounded while fighting against radical Islamic terrorists. We help them learn to cope with their PTS in every way we can.

We talk to them, listen to them, and build relationships that will help them in times of despair. We bring husbands and wives, parents and children struggling with the psychological impact of war closer together by providing a safe environment to enjoy quality time relaxing and having fun. We offer support through workshops, counseling, and motivational speakers. We provide resources to help veterans get the medical care they need, whether it’s working with them to get their VA benefits or providing relocation assistance to be closer to doctors.

Your patriotic support makes all that possible.

And your generosity also assists heroes exhausted and broken by the burden of PTS and other severe disabilities by providing a financial helping hand in times of crisis.

That remains the continuing challenge for all of us who care about the men and women who bear the burden of our nation’s defense. Because their battle doesn’t end when they return home and separate from service.

They need our support, our encouragement, and, in many cases, our generosity. And they’re so grateful to receive it from patriotic Americans like you.

Gratefully yours,

David Walker
President & CEO





Your Generosity Helps Severely Disabled Veterans at Christmas and All Year Long

\$500 Christmas Gift Checks Spread Holiday Cheer

“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.”

— Disabled veteran Paul S.

The Coalition’s **Secret Santa Project** and **Christmas Angel Project** provide \$500 Christmas gift checks to heroes who were maimed, burned, blinded, paralyzed, or suffered other severe injuries fighting radical Islamic terrorists in Afghanistan or Iraq – so they can buy Christmas presents for their family.

The severely disabled veterans your gifts go to are in financial dire straits – 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 – no matter how disappointed their children will be.

We can’t stand the thought of children being heartbroken on Christmas morning because their wounded parent couldn’t afford gifts from Santa ... and as a faithful Coalition supporter, I know you feel the same way. So please watch your mailbox in the coming weeks for updates on how you can help a disabled hero make sure his child doesn’t wake up Christmas morning with no presents under the tree.

Holiday Meals Projects Feed Hungry Heroes’ Families

The Coalition’s **Thanksgiving Meals Project** and **Easter Meals Project** provide hundreds of severely wounded troops with \$60 each so their families – who already sacrificed so much – can enjoy a special holiday meal.

As a faithful Coalition supporter, you know our veterans disabled battling radical Islam are struggling to put *any* food on the table – let alone a special holiday dinner of ham or turkey

with all the trimmings. Our meals projects are just another way your gift tells our severely disabled veterans you’re grateful for their sacrifices – brightening the holidays for families who might otherwise go hungry.

We’re already preparing for what I’m sure will be another successful Thanksgiving Meals drive. Stay tuned in upcoming months to read stories of the hungry military families *your* generosity helped.



Disabled veteran Juan Perez, his wife Christy, and their two young children enjoy a special holiday meal, thanks to the generosity of friends like you!

Your Emergency Aid Giving Rescues Heroes from Hunger & Homelessness

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 disabled in the War on Terror.

A sluggish bureaucracy keeps disabled troops and veterans waiting 10 months on average (and often

longer) for their first government disability check. That wait spells disaster for seriously injured veterans who are unable to work – especially when a spouse has to leave his or her job to become a fulltime caregiver.

Your gift to the Emergency Financial Aid program will help a severely disabled veteran keep a roof over his family’s head, put food on

the table, or repair the car that gets him to his doctor’s appointments. Sometimes he will use it for medical bills; sometimes she will use it to pay overdue utility bills. But no matter the emergency, rest assured your gift is drastically changing the life of a wounded hero who might otherwise go homeless, hungry, or suffer another frightening hardship.



Coalition Honors Our Nation's Veterans on Memorial Day

David Walker Honors America's Heroes at the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, D.C.



David Walker presents a check for emergency assistance to double amputee Army veteran Marissa Strock. (We shared Marissa's story in a recent edition of your *Road to Recovery* newsletter!)



Here David Walker addresses the 200,000+ parade attendees.

Once again Coalition President David Walker had the honor of delivering a speech prior to the start of the 12th National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, D.C. David joined several other high profile participants, including actors Gary Sinise and Joe Mantegna and legendary astronaut Buzz Aldrin.

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 spoke to the attendees before the parade began, and during the parade presented a check to War on Terror veteran and double-amputee Marissa Strock. David was joined by many Coalition friends to spread the word about the emergency financial aid the Coalition provides thanks to generous Americans like you. We were honored to represent our faithful supporters in this parade once again and we look forward to returning to D.C. next year!



David Walker with disabled veteran and past Coalition support recipient Kenny Adams, who lost his eyesight and sustained a brain injury while serving.

Coalition President David Walker's Memorial Day Op-ed

David Walker's Memorial Day editorial in the pages of The Washington Times has become something of a tradition on this very important holiday. This excerpted op-ed, entitled "Saluting the other 1 percent," first ran in The Washington Times on May 29, 2016.

"Combat stress is brutal and no one who hasn't experienced it can imagine what it is like – the daily stress, the constant explosions, the sight of comrades being blown apart, the uncertainty of knowing when your own time will come – will begin to gnaw.

Today as our seemingly endless wars in Afghanistan and Iraq continue well into a second decade, we are seeing even higher levels of what is today called post-traumatic stress often aggravated by traumatic brain injury. Our troops have wonderful armored vehicles that enable them to survive the ubiquitous improvised explosive device favored by the enemy, but they still encounter tremendous forces that impact their heads severely.

The Obama administration had hoped that by now that the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan would be over and done with. That is clearly not the case. In fact, our

commitments in both countries are on the increase. We are sending our heroes back to fight yet again for places they fought for only a few years ago.

We are today engaged in a ferocious conflict with an enemy every bit as savage and evil as those we faced in World War II. But this time we are not going to war together shoulder to shoulder with everyone involved. Instead, we must rely on a small cadre of professional military people representing less than 1 percent of our population. Few of us or our families are directly engaged or at risk.

This Memorial Day offers an opportunity for all of us in the fortunate 99 percent to express appreciation to the 1 percent who are shouldering the burden of our nation's defense, and to beseech our Creator to endow us with the strength and determination we need to withstand this assault on our values and way of life."

“ Memorial Day offers an opportunity for all of us in the fortunate 99 percent to express appreciation to the 1 percent who are shouldering the burden of our nation's defense. ”



Announcing the Coalition’s 2016 Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute

In December the Coalition will host our 9th Road to Recovery (R2R) Conference & Tribute, held this year in sunny Orlando, Florida.

Our signature R2R event is the largest of its kind, bringing severely disabled veterans and their families together from all across the U.S. to encourage hope, healing, and progress on the Road to Recovery.

The all-expenses-paid event will be attended by roughly 100 combat-wounded veterans and their families. R2R features seminars, workshops, and panel discussions



The smiling faces of grateful veterans whose lives were changed after attending the 2014 R2R conference in Coronado, California.

changed by your generosity enabling them to attend Road to Recovery. Look for updates on this exciting event in upcoming supporter-exclusive newsletters!

with experts from government, the private sector, and other veterans service organizations during which attendees learn about the vast array of resources and services available to them.

This event is truly life-changing. Our veterans severely disabled battling radical Islam are so grateful for your support – and their lives will be forever

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
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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.



Dollar by Dollar, Your Generosity at Work

It can be difficult to hear, day after day, tragic stories from veterans who were severely disabled while defending us against the threat of radical Islam and are now struggling to survive. But it all becomes worth it when we hear the relief in a hero's voice after we tell him or her we can help, right now, to make sure his children don't go hungry ... her electricity isn't shut off ... or he won't lose the roof over his head. The list below highlights a handful of severely disabled veterans who recently asked us for help – heroes we were able to help because of your generosity.



Army Sgt. Adam B. from Reading, Pennsylvania suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. He called in urgent need of \$500.00 to buy food and gas.

- ★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$500.00

Retired Army SSG Stephen M. from Colorado Springs, Colorado was paralyzed while serving in Afghanistan. He called asking for \$2,219.34 to pay his rent and for auto repairs and overdue utility bills.

- ★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$2,219.34

Disabled Army Pvt. Tyree H. from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma suffers from severe PTS after serving in Iraq. He needed \$3,508.47 to avoid homelessness.

- ★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$3,508.47

USMC LCpl Jesse B. from Spokane, Washington suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. He asked for just \$428.83 for auto repairs.

- ★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$428.83

Army veteran Jorge G. from Placentia, California suffers from PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He requested \$1,869.62 for medical expenses, auto repairs, and other urgent bills.

- ★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,869.62

Army veteran Anthony F. from Tucson, Arizona was medically retired after losing a limb serving in Iraq. He desperately needed \$595.00 for urgent expenses.

- ★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$595.00



Become a Partners for Heroes Member

Have you joined the Coalition's **Partners for Heroes program yet?** If not, it's a simple and secure way you can make an *even bigger* difference for our struggling severely disabled veterans.

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

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

- ★ You'll receive less mail from us – and the money we save on postage and printing helps your gifts go further each month. (We'll continue sharing important program updates and newsletters like this one.)

- ★ You're free to cancel your Partners for Heroes membership at any time.

Your monthly gift is life-changing in any amount. Because when you have lost a limb and can't work, or your spouse has quit his or her job to care for you as you battle PTS, *every* dollar matters. And every minute 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.



Changing Lives, One Hero at a Time

As you read on page 6, we're excited to be preparing for our 9th Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute. R2R is a highlight of our year, as we watch disabled veterans arrive discouraged and unsure – and leave with new friendships, better equipped for the journey ahead, and full of hope, often for the first time in years. Here are just a few testimonials from disabled veterans who attended our most recent R2R. Hopefully they'll get you excited for this year's conference, too!

“This conference is giving me tools to move forward in my life.”

— *War on Terror veteran Dennis Cabanting, who suffers from PTSD, a TBI, and multiple sclerosis*

“I've been suicidal the last month or two and to hear the hope that there's stuff out there for us and that I'm going to be okay ... how wonderful today is. Everybody's so genuine and you're surrounded by all different veterans with different injuries from the physical to the mental and you just know everybody here gets what you're going through. It gives me hope.”

— *Disabled Air Force veteran Colleen Hall*

“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.”

— *SPC Natasha Espinoza, U.S. Army (Ret.)*

“It's really a blessing to be here. Everything was thought about and taken care of for us and we had nothing to worry about. Now we actually have a family at the CSAH – we have a family now that has our back. I cannot thank the donors enough for sending my wife and I to [R2R].”

— *Disabled Army veteran James Davis, who served in Kuwait*

“Everything is done with the highest quality and the highest amount of care – not just for the wounded veteran but for the family. There's just no words to express how grateful I am that somebody would care about my family that much.”

— *Army veteran Chris Miller, who served in Iraq*

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 those featured in this **Road to Recovery Report** newsletter.

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 disabled heroes and their families.