



The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 61 ★ Christmas 2016

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



Your Generosity Makes the Holidays Bright for Our Heroes

“[You] have changed our lives for the best ... restored hope for my husband ... given us the knowledge and power to continue this journey and most importantly the **STRENGTH** to battle through it!”

— Jasmine Lindley

Tis the season to be jolly – unless you're a disabled veteran who's not sure he's going to be able to keep a roof over his family's head this Christmas, let alone put presents under the tree.

That's why your giving is more important than ever this time of year. Because no veteran who put his life and his future on the line defending our nation from radical Islam should face homelessness, hunger, and terrible financial strains at Christmastime.

I'm so grateful for patriotic friends like you – and I'm counting on you to help make the holidays bright for our wounded warriors and their families.

Your generosity helps turn despair into joy through holiday gift checks, and averts the foreclosures, evictions, and utility disconnections that might otherwise leave American veterans homeless or without heat in the dead of winter.

Thank you – and Merry Christmas!

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Dear Friend of Our Disabled Heroes,

This is a special time of year for us at the Coalition – and not *just* because we get to see distraught veterans' faces light up when we help put presents under their tree, after they thought their children weren't going to have any Christmas at all.

But it's also special because this is the time of year when we get to meet *in person* many of our disabled War on Terror veterans and their families at our Road to Recovery (R2R) Conference & Tribute.

Of course, we love helping the heroes who reach out to us by phone or online. But there's something truly life changing about getting to shake their hands ... share meals with them ... and hear their stories face to face.

In case you didn't know, R2R is the Coalition's flagship event, encouraging and preparing disabled veterans and their families for the challenges they face in their new lives with a severely disabling injury. R2R brings veterans together to participate in sessions on topics from post-traumatic stress (PTS) to VA benefits, hear inspirational speakers, attend a job fair, and spend time rebuilding as a family.

R2R also serves as a poignant reminder that the War on Terror veterans who were severely disabled battling radical Islam still need our help.

Their stories may no longer be in the headlines. But for a veteran who lost a leg in the War on Terror 15 years ago, the battle is still real. For a veteran who survived an IED blast 10 years ago, the battle is still real. And for a veteran diagnosed with PTS five years ago, I assure you, the battle is still real.

Unlike the news media coverage, they haven't "moved on." They *can't* move on. And they need our help.

For the men and women who went to war to battle radical Muslim terrorists, only to return home burned, blind, paralyzed, missing limbs, or battling PTS, the memories will never fade and the struggles will never go away.

So my plea to you today is not to forget our veterans as you celebrate the holidays with your friends and family.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at the Coalition.

Gratefully yours,

David Walker
President & CEO



Like you, the Coalition is committed to helping our nation's severely disabled War on Terror veterans on their road to recovery. To that end we are constantly working to raise awareness about the issues America's veterans face on a daily basis and reaching out to help them in our local communities.

Coalition Volunteers Distribute School Supplies, Books to Military Families



This summer the Coalition was pleased to participate in Operation Homefront's Back to School Brigade in San Diego, distributing school supplies to children of military families. We also distributed James Patterson

books, donated by the author to support our heroes. "Every day the men and women of our armed forces sacrifice on our behalf," Patterson said. "I can't think of a more deserving group to receive these books. I'm also grateful to the people at the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes ... that helped make this donation possible."

The Coalition Needs YOU!

The Coalition is often in need of volunteers at the events we host across the nation to raise awareness for veterans causes. While our need is greatest near the Coalition's headquarters in Leesburg, Virginia, there are opportunities to help all across the country! From staffing booths to participating in parades to helping organize fundraising events, there's a way for all our patriotic friends to help!



For more information, please contact:

Mary Price
(703) 348-9914

mprice@saluteheroes.org

Please Welcome New Celebrity Friends William H. Macy and Katharine McPhee!



William H. Macy, David Walker, and Felicity Huffman

Our celebrity friends help spread the Coalition's message to a broader audience, enabling us to help more heroes and educate more Americans about the plight of our nation's severely disabled War on Terror veterans. Coalition President David Walker recently filmed Public Service Announcements (PSAs) with two new celebrity friends – William H. Macy and Katharine McPhee. (Macy's wife Felicity Huffman joined him on set – and even brought everyone coffee!)

Check out the videos (along with our other PSAs) on our YouTube channel! You can find them at www.YouTube.com/user/SaluteHeroes. On our channel you can also watch emotional and inspirational firsthand accounts from veterans, their wives, and their children, sharing how your generosity changed their lives. Stories like these motivate us, day in and day out, to support America's disabled heroes – so I hope you enjoy watching them.



Katharine McPhee and David Walker



Back from the Brink: Your Generosity Saved Donald's Life

Sometimes when we reach out to you for help, we say your generosity is “life-saving.” **That’s not just talk.** For too many disabled veterans, financial struggles can be the final straw that leads them to consider suicide. Already burdened by post-traumatic stress (PTS) or debilitating physical issues, the prospect of losing their home or watching their children go hungry is just too much to bear.

Consider one hero we recently helped: Navy veteran Donald S. **Donald had been experiencing intense financial duress, and the strain was so great he was on the brink of suicide.** Thankfully, a community leader who was aware of Donald’s struggle reached out and

asked us to intervene.

Through the Coalition’s Emergency Financial Aid program, we were able to assist Donald with approximately \$2,000 in auto repairs. And thanks to the generous giving of patriots like you, Donald’s stress is now relieved and he is no longer suicidal.

At times like this we are so grateful for your generosity, which is truly lifesaving for disabled veterans fighting the demon of PTS and feeling desperate and forgotten. Your giving reminds them they are not alone – and that a grateful nation remembers their sacrifice. Thank you!



The Death Toll Rises

Coalition President David Walker in a recent op-ed on TheHill.com

“**B**etter late than never, but the unprecedented pressures on our volunteer soldiers being sent back to the battlefields again and again suggest strongly that we will be contending with increasing pathologies associated with PTS for many years to come.

The chosen few who shoulder the burden of our nation’s defense are paying a stiff price for their patriotism – a price we are only now beginning to recognize. They need and deserve our support while they are in the service, when they return home and for the remainder of their lives.”

To read the full article visit:

<http://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/may/29/david-walker-memorial-day-honors-the-few-who-defen/>



The Staggering Statistics on Veteran Suicide

- Roughly 20 veterans a day commit suicide nationwide. (That’s one every 72 minutes.)
- In 2014, the latest year available, more than 7,400 veterans took their own lives.
- That number accounts for 18 percent of all suicides in America – but veterans make up less than 9 percent of the U.S. population.
- Veterans have a 21 percent higher suicide risk compared to civilian adults.
- Suicide rates among female veterans rose more than 85 percent from 2001 to 2014.

Cheer Up a Hero: The Coalition’s Thank You Card Program

Your generous donations are critical to our disabled veterans who are fighting to survive – but to the many veterans who are struggling with the issues of PTS, your kind words can mean just as much.

Signing and returning the enclosed Thank You card can make a difference to a wounded warrior who feels forgotten, has lost hope, and thinks he or she has nothing

left to live for. (And if you have patriotic friends who would like to participate in our Thank You Card Program, please let us know. We would be happy to send you blank cards which they can then use to share their own message of gratitude and hope with our American heroes.)





Leave a Legacy of Love for Our Disabled Heroes

“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 legacy of service and sacrifice for America's severely disabled War on Terror troops and veterans for years to come. The Coalition has received just one bequest so far this year but it is making a tremendous difference to the families of struggling disabled veterans.

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.



Veteran Circle: Coalition's Membership Program for America's Heroes!

The Veteran Circle membership program is **an innovative way for the Coalition to connect with our disabled veterans** to help them more effectively.

Veteran Circle (VC) offers a wide range of benefits to support our nation's War on Terror combat-wounded veterans, including eligibility for holiday meals checks, scholarship opportunities, participation in Skillsoft online education, and updates about local events.

To be eligible for VC membership, veterans must have sustained an injury during combat in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, or Operation New Dawn, or in support of those operations in a hostile environment, and have a disability rating assigned by the

Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs of 30% or greater from a single, sustained injury.

If you or someone you know is an OIF/OEF combat-wounded veteran, you can apply for Veteran Circle membership at www.saluteheroes-vetcircle.org.

If you meet the requirements above you are eligible for free membership to the Veterans Circle. Pricing may change in the future but once you join you will not be charged for membership. Cancel your membership at any time by contacting us at 888-447-2588. Becoming a member of VC does not guarantee you will be selected to receive holiday meal checks or scholarships, but it does make you eligible. All members will be screened for approval through our criteria listed above.



“*The Road to Recovery Conference gave me and my wife tools to strengthen our marriage and our relationship with our children.*”

— Disabled veteran Brandon Boyd



As you read this newsletter, we’re preparing to hold our ninth Road to Recovery (R2R) Conference & Tribute in Orlando, Florida. R2R is our signature event, bringing together disabled veterans and their families from all across the nation. Severely disabled veterans and their families will spend four days attending sessions on many topics including: career counseling, VA programs, caregiver support, and personal development, as well as, attending a job fair, hearing inspirational speakers, and spending time relaxing and creating new friendships at special locations like Sea World or Universal Studios.

Each year after holding a Conference, disabled veterans tell us what a huge impact it’s had on their life. This year, we’re looking forward to hearing more heroes say things like ...

“**Speaking to the donor, I can only say thank you.** Thank you for noticing. For taking the time to donate and give back to me what I gave to you. I appreciate them so much. This weekend gave me so much hope – it refreshed me because I was tired. I was broken. But this weekend gave me so much – in just a few days – it gave me so much hope for my future.”

— Disabled veteran Quintellea Grant

“I’d like to say thank you to the donors who paid for the conference and made it possible for us to come out here – but ‘thank you’ isn’t enough. **They have no idea the impact this has not only for us but our kids.** They get to be kids for three days! There’s no words that can describe what that’s like for our kids. It just confirms to me that even though our government won’t take care of wounded warriors the way that they should, there’s great Americans

who will come together ... and do what the government should be doing. It’s just tremendous.”

— Disabled veteran Kevin Snow & wife Adrienne

“If I were to run into a donor of the Coalition, I would be so thankful that they cared enough for military members and their families. That’s a big thing to include the families ... to see donors and the Coalition to care about our families that much – to say we’re going to bring a family out and have a family experience and we’re going to provide all these high quality top notch accommodations and events, and then on top of all that to say we’re going to give you \$500 that you can have for your family – **there’s just no words to express how grateful I am that somebody would care about my family that much.**”

— Disabled veteran Chris Miller

We Asked ... You Answered ... We Listened!

Supporters Say the Treatment of Our Veterans is ‘Unfair and Outrageous’

The Coalition recently surveyed our patriotic supporters about the government’s disgraceful treatment of America’s wounded and disabled veterans. More than 16,000 Americans completed and returned this survey – and the results show our generous and patriotic friends care deeply about the shameful way the government is treating our disabled veterans.

We value your feedback and are eager to hear your thoughts on the work we are doing and the issues facing America’s veterans. Please read this sampling of survey results carefully – because the way our wounded and disabled veterans are being treated by our government is a national scandal.

- 97.6% of you believe it is ‘**Unfair and Outrageous**’ that it takes ten months on average (and sometimes more than a year) for our severely disabled troops from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to receive their first government disability check.
- 99.2% of you believe it is ‘**Unfair and Outrageous**’ that **scores of veterans have died** while languishing for months on “secret wait lists” of VA hospitals, instead of getting the medical treatment they needed.
- 98.4% of you believe it is ‘**Unfair and Outrageous**’ that **Al Qaeda terrorists are getting better medical care at Guantanamo Bay than our wounded heroes** are receiving from our government.
- 95.5% of you believe it is ‘**Unfair and Outrageous**’ that the **federal bureaucracy is minimizing the severity of battlefield injuries** suffered by our disabled heroes in order to keep their disability pay lower than it should be.



Your Generosity at Work

Our emergency financial aid program is at the heart of our mission to serve veterans who were severely disabled in the War on Terror – and are now struggling to make ends meet. And your giving allows us to respond quickly and generously to help our heroes in need.

The Coalition receives requests for help with all kinds of financial burdens. **In 2016 (through late July), our disabled veterans' top three categories of need have been housing (\$176,000), car payments (\$74,000), and food (\$27,000).** Utility bills, like gas and electric, are another common area of need.

Your gift to the Coalition goes to work right away to help a severely disabled veteran facing financial disaster. The list below highlights a handful of heroes who recently asked us for help – and whose lives you and I changed together.



Shaun G. from New Llano, Louisiana was medically discharged after serving in Afghanistan. He needed \$631.76 for urgent auto expenses.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$631.76

Mickey R. from Springvalley, Illinois is a veteran who suffers from post-traumatic stress (PTS) after serving in Iraq. Mickey called asking for \$1,026.16 for auto repairs.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,026.16

Kevin F. of Bettendorf, Iowa was paralyzed serving his country in Iraq. He needed \$3,008.00 to pay his mortgage and keep from becoming homeless.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$3,008.00

Willie W. of Riverview, Florida suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq – and needed \$1,428.66 to pay his rent and buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,428.66

Denny S. of Lakeport, California was paralyzed serving in Iraq. He fell behind on his bills and desperately needed \$3,000.00 to make ends meet.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$3,000.00

Stephen Y. of St. Matthews, South Carolina served his country in Iraq – and returned home with PTS. He asked for \$1,189.60 for car payments and other expenses.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,189.60

Important Update on a Letter General Singlaub Sent You

This summer you may have received a letter from us about an exciting matching grant opportunity that would **automatically double the impact of your gift.**

Some extremely generous Coalition friends (who asked to remain anonymous) offered **\$165,000 to match the gifts of other supporters** to help military families facing hunger, homelessness, and other financial disasters.

The Coalition relies solely on voluntary donations to fund our efforts to help our wounded warriors. And this generous matching grant came just in time to provide a boost during the summer – our critical slow season

for donations when many of our good friends are away on vacation or spending time with family, not reading their mail from us.

We're excited to update you that **faithful Coalition friends like you responded generously, to the tune of \$175,915 (with donations still trickling in) – successfully activating the matching grant!**

We are so grateful for the continued support of friends like you who don't hesitate to give generously to rescue a hero in need. They protected us against the threat of radical Islam in the War on Terror and you and our other generous supporters continue to show your appreciation. Thank you!

Changing Lives, One Hero at a Time

As you read on page 6, we're about to welcome disabled War on Terror veterans from all across the country to our ninth Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute. At R2R it's our privilege to help these veterans in their unique situations – whether it's through a \$500 gift check to help with Christmas, or by creating relationships that will help them through dark moments battling post-traumatic stress. That's why each veteran we meet at R2R has a unique reason to say "Thank you!" to you, our generous donors.

"We were blown away when we received the surprise \$500 check. Last Christmas was extremely hard ... Having to worry about that last year and having kind of the same worries coming up again this year – that's a huge kind of relief because I know ... **we can pay bills now [and] we'll actually have money for Christmas this year.**"

— Kristen & Dennis Wikoff

"From the moment we arrived here at the Road to Recovery Conference, it was a huge breath of fresh air ... just from the first second we were here. It's just such a good feeling to have people who understand. And it's not overwhelming – it's not pushy – it's easy to get all this information."

— Amanda Arwood, caregiver for a disabled veteran

"Here at the Road to Recovery Conference, the part that I liked best is that I've heard so many different stories from other wounded veterans ... [I've found] a new level of hope just hearing [their] story. **I'd like to tell the donors that you have our gratitude.** It's awesome that we're able to be here."

— Disabled veteran Marshall Lane

"I am rated as housebound by the VA. I don't leave my house unless I have to. **[R2R] is one of the few reasons I will leave my house.** It is actually a rare opportunity for our children to have a vacation of any kind with me included in it, and I do that as my way of trying to say thank you to the CSAH for everything that they've done for us. [R2R] gives us back that family time that we lost for so many years."

— Disabled Army veteran Dan Shannon

"Sometimes you don't get everything that you need as a vet, and it's sad because you served your country and you can't get anything out of it. **[At R2R] people just welcome you with open arms, like, 'I'm here to help.'** Hearing all these different resources and having people that I can turn to and call makes a lot of difference. At the end of the day when I lay down and I have no one to turn to, I can pick up the phone and call somebody from the Coalition that I met today and say 'Hey, this is what's going on, I need help.'"

— Disabled veteran Quintellea Grant

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.