



Heroes Thanking Heroes Newsletter

Rebuilding Lives. Restoring Hope.

March, 2016

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What is Heroes Thanking Heroes?

This program offers part-time, flexible employment to wounded veterans or their primary caregivers by enabling them to make thank you calls from their homes; most often to personally thank donors for their contributions and share the mission of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.

The program also offers participants some basic training and experience working in a "virtual call center" thereby preparing them for other potential jobs requiring similar skills.

Mike Bidwell



As a military brat, Michael Bidwell knew military life all too well. After graduating high school in Camas Valley, Oregon he decided to carry on the family tradition and joined the United States Army in August of 1999. Shortly after signing his enlistment papers Michael shipped off to boot camp at Ft. Leonardwood, MO where he was trained as a chemical operations specialist. In February 2000, Michael arrived at his first duty station, Ft. Carson. From Ft. Carson Michael deployed to Korea for a year and a half to help train the Korean nationals how to use chemical equipment. After Korea in 2003 Michael went back to Ft. Carson where he would later deploy to Iraq.

Six years after enlisting in the Army, Michael received his orders to deploy to Iraq with the 89th Chemical Company 3rd ACR. Two months into his deployment, Michael was setting up a holding area for suspected criminals in a small aircraft hangar in Tal Afar. Michael was told to look at the building's circuit breaker because some of the lights were not functioning properly. With a small flash light, he went into a dark room where the circuit breaker was. Michael brushed against some exposed wires and was electrocuted with 220 volts of electricity. All he saw was a bright light and the next thing he remembered was his team shouting his name and carrying him out of the building. Later Michael found out that the bright light he saw was a burst of flames going over his face.

Updates from the Coalition

We are doing a giveaway on our Facebook page once we receive 4,000 likes. Please check out our page to see what you need to do:

<https://www.facebook.com/HeroesThankingHeroes/photos/a.610340392310599.1073741826.610322142312424/1155207721157194/?type=3&theater>

We are still fundraising through the Yankee Candle Company for our HTH Program. Follow the link and use group number# 990093452 to place orders:

<https://www.yankeecandlefundraising.com/store.htm>

Donny D. is participating in his 4th Mud Run; all proceeds he raises from the run will benefit the Coalition. See more about event details and Donny's military background here:

<https://www.crowdrise.com/salutetheheroes/fundraiser/donnydaughenbaugh>

The Coalition sent out Easter gift checks to veterans & their families to help with the holiday dinner. It is something they do every year!

The Greater Washington Foundation of Insurance and Financial Advisors gave a donation to the Coalition at the Helping Hands Society Reception this month. The Million Dollar Round Table also made a donation at the same event. We are very thankful to have their support.

We would also like to thank all of our donors at this time for everything you do and hope you had a wonderful Easter holiday!

The injuries Michael sustained from the electrocution was flash burn on his eyes, traumatic brain injury, PTSD, and the skin from his left index and middle finger on his left hand were fused together. Despite the injuries Michael still completed his year tour in Iraq. After 2 years, in 2008, Michael had a serious melt down. He remembers very few details, but it was enough that he felt he had to admit himself into a hospital for care. He was in the hospital for 30 days when the doctors officially diagnosed him with PTSD. After being released from medical care Michael's commander felt he was not fit for duty. Michael was then discharged from the Army in April of 2008. When Michael was discharged from the Army he went into a downward spiral emotionally and financially. In 2009 he met Leanne, who is now his wife. She moved in with Michael to help provide the support that Michael needed. In 2010, Michael found out he had a traumatic brain injury leaving him unable to work outside the home, and his wife, Leanne, suffers from a seizure disorder, so she too is unable to work. Things began to tighten financially to the point that Michael and Leanne were about to be evicted from their apartment. Michael started searching the internet and that's when he came across the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes. After contacting the Coalition, they provided Michael with 3 months' rent and he was offered a job in the Heroes Thanking Heroes program. Michael has been working for the Heroes Thanking Heroes program for four years and is a part of the Quality Assurance Team.

"The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes has not only provided financial relief for my family but an ear to listen, help with any need that may arise, and resources to prevent and conquer the many obstacles that come along for our wounded veterans and families. The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes has truly upheld it's mission to restore hope and promise into my family." –Joan Cadena