



# The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 62 ★ March 2017

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



## Helping America's Heroes on the Road to Recovery

“This was a life changing week for us! Thank you so much!”

— M. Brown

**T**he War on Terror has in large part faded from the headlines. But for so many of the men and women who suffered painful, disabling injuries in the service of our country, the journey towards recovery is only just beginning.

Just a few short months ago in Orlando, Florida, we were privileged to gather with 90 severely disabled War on Terror veterans and their families, to help them recover and rebuild in a special,

*personal* way.

You can read all about it inside the pages of your supporter-exclusive *Road to Recovery Report*. I hope you're excited and encouraged to see how your faithful support and generous giving are making a difference every day in the lives of American heroes.

And it's *your generosity and patriotism* that makes it all possible. So thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

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# Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Disabled Heroes,

I'm continually grateful for the support of patriotic Americans like you, who remain steadfast in your determination to never turn your back on our nation's disabled War on Terror veterans.

But I'm especially grateful today, as I look back on our recent Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute (R2R), which we held just before Christmas in Orlando, Florida.

R2R is a critical component of our mission to help our heroes recover and rebuild lives torn apart by physical and mental disabilities suffered in the War on Terror.

Each time we hold one of these events, I'm reminded of how grateful I am for you and your selfless service of our nation's disabled War on Terror veterans, as each year after holding a Conference, disabled veterans tell us just what a huge impact it's had on their lives.

**"This conference is giving me tools to move forward in my life."**

***"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."***

**"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."**

Those words are grateful messages from disabled veterans to you, our faithful supporter. Because these heroes know generous friends like you are the reason they're able to attend this conference. So *thank you* for helping to make these wonderful events possible.

Our disabled veterans' struggles are also at the forefront of my mind as our nation is fresh off another milestone – the recent inauguration of a new president. And while it's too early to tell what a Trump Administration will mean when it comes to fixing the struggling Department of Veterans Affairs, there is one thing we do know:

As long as our disabled veterans face shocking waits for the disability payments they earned with their service, it's going to be up to patriotic Americans like you and I to help them in their time of need.

So *thank you* for being a faithful friend who's willing to give generously to make sure our heroes don't go hungry, lose their homes, or face other frightening financial disasters.

Happy Easter to you and your family from our family at the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.

Gratefully yours,

David Walker  
President & CEO





## All Year Long, Your Giving Supports Disabled Veterans! Emergency Financial Aid Averts Veteran Homelessness and Hunger

**O**ur Emergency Financial Aid program is the bedrock of our mission to provide direct, immediate financial assistance to America's veterans severely wounded in the War on Terror – with the help of generous Americans like you.

There are many reasons our disabled veterans may need our help. The most common is a sluggish bureaucracy that keeps our disabled troops and veterans

waiting an average of 10 months (and sometimes longer) for their first government disability check. The combination of delayed government benefits, disabilities that keep veterans from being able to work, and spouses who have to leave their jobs to become a full-time caregiver too often spells disaster for struggling heroes.

Your donation to the Emergency Financial Aid program is truly a lifeline

to these severely disabled veterans. Your gift goes to work quickly to help a disabled veteran with anything from putting food on the table to keeping a roof over his family's head ... paying medical bills or keeping the lights on. But no matter what the emergency, your gift *will* make all the difference to a wounded hero who might otherwise go homeless, hungry, or suffer another frightening hardship.

## From Easter to Christmas, Meals Brighten the Holidays for Veteran Families

**F**or a disabled veteran who's struggling to pay the bills each month, the holidays can be a time of stress and despair instead of joy. That's where our Easter Meals, Thanksgiving and Christmas Meals Projects come in.

Your gift helps provide thousands of severely disabled troops with \$60 to enjoy a holiday meal. In fact, in 2016, we distributed 2,046 meals checks to these wounded warriors. For a military



family struggling to put *any* food on the table, the gift of a special holiday dinner with all the trimmings provides a welcome respite from

worry and the opportunity to enjoy time together as a family. Our meals projects are another wonderful way patriotic supporters like you tell our severely disabled veterans that you're grateful for their sacrifice and that they're not alone – especially at the holidays.

Right now our 2017 Easter Meals Project is in full swing. Read more about it in the enclosed letter from retired Major General Singlaub.

## Your Holiday Generosity Gives Christmas Presents to Struggling Veterans' Families

**A**nother way we support our veterans through the holidays is our Secret Santa and Christmas Angel Projects. Generous donors like you chip in to provide \$500 Christmas gift checks, which we send to veterans who suffered severe, disabling injuries in Afghanistan or Iraq – so they can give their families a few Christmas presents.

Many severely disabled veterans

are already choosing between keeping their homes, paying the electric bill, and putting food on the table. They certainly don't have money for extras like Christmas gifts – especially heartbreaking when their little ones have already sacrificed so much due to their parent's service and disability.

That's why we created the Secret Santa Project – to give these heroes a



helping hand and make sure their kids get a few toys "from Santa"!



# Coalition Hosts 9th Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute in Orlando, Florida

The Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute (R2R) is the Coalition's flagship event, encouraging and preparing wounded veterans and their families for the challenges they will face in their new life with a severely disabling injury. The largest event of its kind, R2R brings severely wounded troops and their families together to participate in sessions on everything from post-traumatic stress (PTS) to VA benefits, attend a job fair, hear inspirational speakers, and spend time rebuilding as a family. This year 90 families – a total of 420 people! – attended R2R for a wonderful week of love, laughter, healing and connection.

**“Thank you is not enough to say. Our family will never ever forget the blessings that finding this amazing organization has given us. This week has brought hope back to our home.”**

— The H. Family



Several of our attendees had the pleasure of walking in the Universal Studios Christmas Parade to represent the Coalition and America's disabled War on Terror veterans. Loud roars could be heard throughout the park as the Coalition team passed by the viewing stands. And *all* of this year's Road to Recovery attendees were treated to a wonderful night at one of the world's greatest entertainment and theme parks!



▲ Retired Marine Corporal, Donny Daughenbaugh with his wife Sarah and their son. Donny is the VP of Coalition Field Operations and Sarah is Director of the Heroes Thanking Heroes Program.



▲ Coalition spokesman Sgt. Jorge De Leon



## Heroes Who Attended 2016 Road to Recovery Say **THANK YOU**

- ★ *“This was such an incredible experience and a huge blessing. Thank you so much!”*  
— Tim & Connie Crawford
- ★ *“Thank you for all your support and dedication, love and compassion. God bless you all.”*  
— The Pabon Family
- ★ *“May all that was given be returned to you.”*  
— The Laurence Family
- ★ *“Thank you for being a blessing to our family.”*  
— The Temple Family
- ★ *“There aren't words to thank you all enough.”*  
— The Costello Family
- ★ *“Thank you for making this amazing organization available to me and my family. Thank you & God bless.”*  
— The Inman Family

At this year's R2R we were fortunate to be joined by several incredible women warriors. You might recognize the Coalition's Mary Herrera and Jil Hinds mixed in with this group of remarkable heroes. These amazing veterans got together in their own breakout session and were able to share experiences truly unique to them.



We kicked off the 2016 R2R with a special award for a first class man and supporter of the Coalition and America's veterans. We presented Lt. Col. Thomas J. Orłowski, a board member and past chairman, with the Coalition's Hometown Hero Award. The same night he also learned that his alma mater, the University of Toledo, will be naming a brand new Veterans Lounge in his honor. Lt. Col Orłowski's selfless efforts have been crucial to the Coalition's advancements and positive growth, and we are so grateful for his support.



Sgt. First Class Dana Bowman



R2R's "Pain Management" Peer to Peer Session



Retired Marine Sgt. Rob Jones

Fun and games are a big part of R2R – but they aren't *all* of it! Much of our time was filled with education and information, as fantastic peer and expert panels had the complete attention of the audience. Many attendees took steps towards employment transitions, and sat with experts to work on resume writing skills. We also featured several speakers and focused breakout sessions on the subjects that truly matter to our veterans. One morning

we kicked off these sessions with two amazing men: Army veteran Dana Bowman and Retired Marine Sgt. Rob Jones. Dana, a double-amputee, spoke about his life's philosophy – “It's not the disability – it's the ability!” – and how that matters in everyday life. We also had the pleasure of hearing the always-inspirational Rob Jones, who also treated us to an incredible stand-up comedy routine later that evening.





# Your Coalition in Action

Day in and day out, we're committed to doing everything we can to support our nation's severely disabled War on Terror veterans. In addition to helping our heroes in their time of financial need, we also work hard to raise awareness about their struggles and reach out to help them in the community.

## War on Terror Veterans Tell Local Students, 'You Can't Quit!'

Three Coalition spokesmen – Donny Daughenbaugh, Matthew Pennington and Rob Jones – spent an afternoon talking to local school children about what it means to protect freedom. The three War on Terror veterans encouraged the students to express their appreciation to veterans, and to be strong in the face of failure. "You can't quit in life," Matthew told them. "You just can't."



## Coalition Recognizes Retired Veterans

Coalition spokeswoman and War on Terror veteran Mary Herrera is dedicated to helping her fellow veterans. She recently visited the Trails West Retirement Community in Tucson, Arizona to honor the home's residents who served our country in the military.



## Coalition Hosts "Salute Our Heroes Night"

On Veterans Day we hosted a "Salute Our Heroes Night." The evening was a fantastic success with more than 100 people in attendance including local veterans who were recognized throughout the event.

The event was co-hosted by Emmy Award nominee Jack Scalia and Coalition spokesperson Donny Daughenbaugh who shared his own personal story with the audience. Another veteran and spokesman Shilo Harris gave a stirring keynote speech, Matthew Pennington recited the "Fallen Comrade" poem, and Rob Jones brought down the house with a hilarious comedy set.



Donny Daughenbaugh



Shilo Harris



Rob Jones



## Your Generosity at Work

**F**inancial need has many faces. But whether someone is reaching out to ask us for \$150 to keep the lights on in their home, or \$3,000 to keep their home itself, financial need is always frightening. (It's even scarier when you're a disabled veteran who can't work and is already struggling just to get through each day.) That's why your giving is so important – because it's often all that's keeping a desperate disabled veteran from going hungry, becoming homeless, and – in many cases – losing hope.

When you donate to the Coalition, your gift goes to work right away to help a disabled hero facing frightening financial need. I hope you're encouraged to read the list below, which highlights just a few names of severely disabled veterans recently helped by generous Coalition supporters like you.



**Sausha P. from Fort Washington, Maryland** suffers from post-traumatic stress (PTS) after serving with the Marine Corps in Iraq – and asked us for just \$250.00 to pay rent.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$250.00

**Christopher is an Army veteran from Huntington, California** who suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. He was barely scraping by and urgently needed \$500.00 to buy food and gas.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$500.00

**Jean D. of Jacksonville, North Carolina** was paralyzed while serving in Iraq – and needed \$911.56 for urgent automobile expenses.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$911.56

**Willie P. is a Navy veteran who lives in Biloxi, Mississippi** and suffers from PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He desperately needed \$647.54 to pay overdue water and electric bills.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$647.54

**William B. is a soldier from Tampa, Florida** who suffers from PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He asked for \$1,500.00 to pay his rent and avoid eviction.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$1,500.00

**Patrick C. of Flemington, New Jersey** was paralyzed serving with the Army in Iraq. He called in desperate circumstances, needing \$3,065.71 to pay his rent and buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$3,065.71

**Phillip C. from Cullman, Alabama** was medically retired after serving our country in Afghanistan – and returning home with PTS. He desperately needed \$2,400.00 to pay his rent and avoid eviction.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$2,400.00

**Brian A. from San Antonio, Texas** was medically retired due to PTS from serving with the Army in Iraq. He needed \$2,660.92 to pay his mortgage and keep a roof over his head.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$2,660.92

### 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 2017 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 *Relief* Your Generosity Gives Disabled War on Terror Veterans

*Relief.* That's what your generosity brings to a severely disabled veteran who's at the end of his rope – facing the prospect of losing everything. Because when you provide emergency financial aid to a struggling War on Terror veteran, it helps him realize he's not alone ... that his country honors his service ... and that he no longer has to fear becoming homeless or watching his family go hungry. These heroes thank you for continuing to give generously!

“My husband was unexpectedly medically retired which threw our family for a loop. We were both unemployed and with our first baby on the way, the bills were piling up. But then someone from the Coalition contacted us and I can honestly say it was a **turning point for our situation.**”

— Kat S., wife of disabled veteran Matt

“**Thank you so much for helping me in 2016.** Especially with my vehicle, to get to my medical appointments and with my cell phone bill. It's appreciated. I can't afford a Hallmark thank you card, but at least I can thank you with 8.5x11 piece of paper, envelope, [and] stamp.”

— SSG Karl M., U.S. Army (Ret.)

“Like many veterans obviously I have fell on hard time but again **because of people like you I will strive on and be successful.** I want you to know that what you do not only changes my life but so many others. You do something that cannot be explained in words or even sufficiently thanked for.”

— SGT Jason W., USMC

“Thank you to your organization and to the donors for helping me and my family in time of need. I was desperate and came to you all with several needs. **You treated me with respect through the entire process and was able to assist me quickly with a \$2,000.00 check.** Also, this past holidays you sent me additional funds to help me cover expenses with food and Christmas shopping for my children. I am beyond grateful and very appreciative of your help and support to me and my family.”

— Matthew S.

“Priority mail just arrived with a \$500 check for food for my son, Brad. As you can imagine, my family is just overwhelmed with your Coalition's generosity, empathy and kindness to those who have served. **I know he'll be overjoyed to know that there's now extra money for food for his family,** especially now during the holiday season. You must have known they are struggling.”

— Jackie, mother of disabled USMC veteran Brad B.

### 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.