

# The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 63 ★ May 2017

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



“The Coalition has been our only hope when hope was gone. The Temples will forever be thankful for the Coalition and its support.”

— Johnathan Temple,  
wounded Army veteran

## This Fourth of July, Don't Forget America's Heroes

Imagine you'll be spending the upcoming Fourth of July holiday much as we will – enjoying time with friends and family, and remembering the service of courageous patriots from the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror.

Inside your exclusive *Road to Recovery Report* you'll find plenty of inspiration to honor our War on Terror veterans. This issue is packed with stories from men and women who put their lives on the line to defend our country . . . and their heroic efforts to rebuild their lives after war.

It's our privilege to help these heroes, with your generous support. We're proud to have the support of friends like you to help them 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 a hero you appreciate his service in a very practical way – with a special gift for a severely disabled veteran who needs to know he isn't in this struggle alone.

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# Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

Last month the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes celebrated our twelfth anniversary of providing immediate, direct financial aid to heroes disabled battling radical Islamic terrorism – the distinguishing characteristic that sets us apart from other veterans' aid groups. Thanks to the hard work of our Board of Directors and staff, the Coalition's credibility is stronger than ever – making our *impact* stronger than ever.

But while our credibility is at high-mark, we are finding it ever more difficult to maintain our revenue stream. Charities across the spectrum report troublesome contribution downturns – and those of us helping wounded veterans are among the hardest hit. There is a widespread perception that the War on Terror is winding down and support is no longer needed (or at least is less critical than it once was).

But sadly, this perception is erroneous: The need for our work is constant, even though the news media is focused elsewhere. Our military reports more turbulence in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other nations in the grip of radical Islamic terrorism, and the stream of wounded Americans returning home continues. I fear this will continue indefinitely. And for as long as it does, we – with your help – will continue serving those who need and deserve our support: the wounded veterans who paid the high price of preserving our nation's freedom and way of life.

In a few weeks we will celebrate our nation's birthday – and as always, I'm reminded just how proud I am to be an American. Much of that pride stems from the determination and bravery of our troops and veterans – heroes who believe America, and our principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, are worth leaving families, losing limbs, and risking their lives to defend.

But YOU also make me proud to be an American this Fourth of July. Your compassion and generosity towards our nation's disabled veterans fills my heart with gratitude for the goodness of the American people and the values we together hold dear.

The Coalition comes into our thirteenth year with a strong reputation for effectiveness and transparency, and a growing audience of dedicated Americans who recognize the value of our work. This Fourth of July, I'm honored to stand with generous, caring friends like you, who refuse to forget the service and sacrifice of our severely disabled War on Terror veterans.

With gratitude,

David Walker  
President & CEO





## Hometown Hero Award: Major General John K. Singlaub

Coalition President David Walker recently spent some time with Major General John K. Singlaub, U.S. Army (Ret.), a war hero and proud American who has been a driving force behind the Coalition for many years.

During his military service in WWII, he parachuted into Nazi-occupied France to prepare French Resistance fighters for the Allied invasion. He also trained Chinese guerrillas for operations against the Japanese, ran covert operations against the North Koreans and the Chinese, and commanded all U.S. Special Operations Forces

in Southeast Asia.

David was honored to present General Singlaub with the Hometown Hero Award, which recognizes the selfless and extraordinary service of everyday Americans who give generously of themselves to support our efforts to serve the brave men and women who sacrificed so much in the War on Terror.

Thank you for everything you have done and continue to do Major General Singlaub! We appreciate your service, wisdom, and guidance.



## Coalition Grant to Boulder Crest Retreat for Veterans

The Coalition was recently privileged to make a \$25,000 grant to the Boulder Crest Retreat in northern Virginia – the nation’s first privately-funded rural wellness center dedicated exclusively to our nation’s combat veterans and their families.

Our grant helps fund Boulder Crest’s PATHH program – Progressive and Alternative Training for Healing Heroes. PATHH is the nation’s first non-clinical program designed to cultivate

and facilitate Post Traumatic Growth in American combat veterans. Created by combat veterans, *for* combat veterans, PATHH delivers the equivalent of 52 weeks of therapy in one immersive, self-paced, hands-on week.

We are honored to come alongside Boulder Crest in supporting our nation’s combat veterans battling post-traumatic stress (PTS)!



“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.”

— Coalition President & CEO David Walker, *TheHill.com*



## The Road to Recovery Conference has Ended ... But Its Life Changing Impact on Severely Disabled Veterans Continues

In December we hosted our ninth Road to Recovery Conference and Tribute (R2R) in Orlando, Florida. Nearly one hundred wounded veterans, their spouses, and their children assembled for several days of useful educational sessions, motivational seminars, advice and guidance on aspects such as career and family counseling – as well as much needed fun for the kids.

Second only to the pleasure of spending time with these heroes and their families is when, in the months following an R2R conference, the stories begin pouring in about how R2R changed a veteran's life ... brought hope and joy to their families ... and gave them all the courage to go on.

The generosity of donors like you make this wonderful conference possible, so we couldn't wait to share their stories with you. I hope you're encouraged and proud to read about the good your giving does for these grateful veterans and their families.

**“To many people, [ours] is a story of triumph. To us it is our real life.”**

### The Williams Family: Staff Sgt. J.D. Williams, U.S. Army (Ret.), wife Ashlee & daughter Kaelyn

“My family was given the opportunity to attend the 2016 Road to Recovery conference in Orlando, FL. Words truly do not express how grateful we are for this experience, the life changing friendships, and opportunities that we will forever remember and embark on.

“Life isn't always sunshine and flowers for us veteran families. Typically, I am very hesitant to agree to go on any kind of vacation or trip away from home. Will the place be accessible? How will we get the power wheelchair from place to place? What if the power wheelchair stops working? These are just a few of the excuses I create in my head as to why I shouldn't apply my family for a conference such as this.

“We have an interesting story you see. To many people, it is a story of triumph. To us it is our real life. My husband, J.D. stepped on a bomb in Afghanistan. Most people would have given up on life after losing three limbs, but not my stubborn infantryman. Oh no. Giving up is not a part of his vocabulary. He's way too hard headed for that. No, instead he perseveres and proves that he can and he will.

“So when my excuses started flowing out of my mouth to his ears, I might have been better off talking to a brick wall. We were going to Florida. The wheelchair AND the lift would be fine. We committed.

“What an incredible week we had. My own excuses almost made us miss out on an experience that will no doubt change the course of our lives. We were able to attend sessions tailored to our own needs and walk away feeling more informed than I have felt in our six years post injury. There were amazing motivational speakers that were able to get through to so many veterans in the room that may have experienced similar situations. **Not only did we feel empowered from the conference, it was heartwarming to watch as the faces around us were truly beginning to see that there really are people out there that do understand and care.**

“At the closing banquet on the final evening of the conference, we were presented with a life changing iBot motorized wheelchair. Through the efforts of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes and Independence Corps, many doors have been opened for my family and the limitations J.D. faces daily are looking more like possibilities for us now. He can reach cabinets in our home that he has never seen. We can take that trip to the beach now because his chair will make it through the sand. We can visit more family because the steps going into their homes aren't a deal breaker anymore. The possibilities are endless and we are so very grateful.”



### The Johnson Family: Retired National Guard Sgt. Nathan Johnson, wife Melissa and children

“As I read about the Road to Recovery conference, the experience sounded like it might be helpful to Nathan, my veteran husband, and our family, [and] we decided to apply. I [could] feel the stress of the last four years soul deep. Out of all the families in need, 90 were selected to attend this year and we were blessed to be a part of that number.

“Traveling with PTS is not easy [but] I am determined that 2017 is the year we move in big ways. In a tangled way, I could already sense a change in Nate upon arrival. He seemed ready to embrace all that this would encompass.

“We left Florida with many joyful moments. My husband left with words of wisdom to face his battle and new treatment options to help his healing. He is ready to try the unexpected and is embracing what has happened to him. He has accepted reality and is ready to figure out new ways to move forward when there were times he would have rather it had just ended.

“**The Road to Recovery restored our family. To us, that is priceless. How can one say thank you for a value of something priceless?** The life a soldier, heart, and will to cope and continue on does not hold a price tag. Happy to say, we are planning the future, not a funeral. The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes and those who make the organization possible saved one family's life and restored the drive to keep pushing forward. We all thank you for restoring hope and the help to rebuild our future. My husband is still smiling and now we know we have a brighter future to look forward to.”

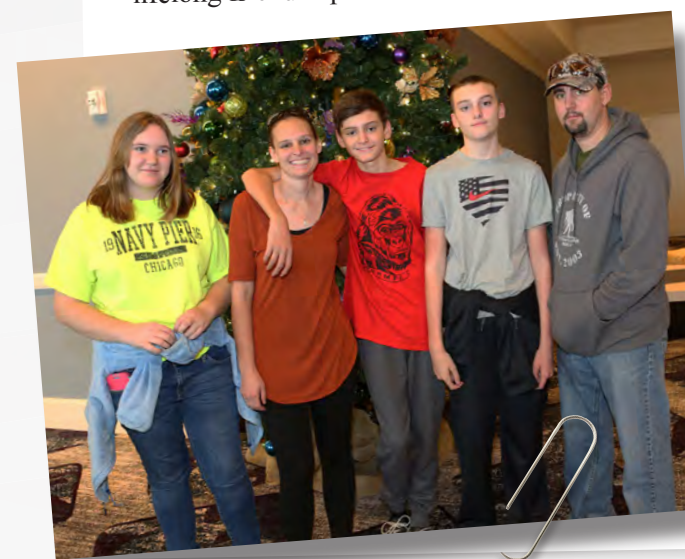


### The Alexander Family: Retired Army Sgt. Tim Alexander, wife Nicole and children

“My family and I had the most amazing time at the Road to Recovery Conference. We left feeling renewed and ready to face challenges. My husband and I connected with so many people and made lifelong friendships.

“Also, our three teenagers made friends with other children their age that can relate to them that will hopefully be a lifetime connection. The time we spent at the Road to Recovery conference brought our family closer and was a great time full of fun and helpful information.

“This event was so packed full of valuable information and resources to get you on and keep you on the right track. The speakers that attended were absolutely wonderful and really put things in perspective for my family. We loved hearing the other stories, and enjoyed sharing ours. **We are truly grateful for being able to attend the conference. It's a once in a life time experience that I recommend to other wounded veterans and their families should they ever have the opportunity.**”





## Wounded Veterans Honor Alive Day – Some with Joy, Some with Tears

**A**live Day / ə'liv dā / *noun* / The anniversary of a close escape from death, especially one involving permanent injury – a celebration or acknowledgement of a day when death was cheated in some way, shape or form.

For many veterans, Alive Day is a celebration of life; for others, it's a day of almost paralyzing sorrow, as they experience surges in post-traumatic stress (PTS) and survivor's guilt related to the day they were wounded. Some remember their Alive Day with joy or tears, gathering with family or retreating to honor it in solitude. These are the Alive Day stories – told in their own words – of two veterans who received emergency financial aid from the Coalition.

### November 8, 2003: Sgt. Mary Herrera, U.S. Army (Ret.)

“Like many, my ‘Alive Day’ varies from year to year. It has been well over a decade since my injury, the date that changed the course of my planned life. Some years it becomes a build up to November 8, and those years are the hardest. Those years it takes everything inside of me to get through the day and the days to follow as I remember the surgeries, the feelings of helplessness, and the thought that my life is over. Like many others I make it happen and put away another year. Until next year, I say.



“Other years my ‘Alive Day’ sneaks up on me. Another day like any other until someone reminds me of the date, November 8, and I think to myself, Where did the year go? I am not one to celebrate the day that may have been my last or the beginning of a wonderful life. To me, it is just another day – but it is a reminder. A phenomenal reminder of the life I have been gifted and bestowed. A life with extraordinary family, friends, and a career that helps me to help those who have walked a mile in my boots. My perfect life. The events that emanated on November 8, 2003 have been nothing less than a blessing.”

### August 17, 2004: Sgt. Richard Silva, USMC (Ret.)

“My Alive Day is filled with mixed emotions. That date is August 17, 2004. The place was Fallujah, Iraq. I had just lost two Marines and one had died in my arms two days prior. Filled with pain from the loss of my brothers, I was near the end of a day until things changed my life forever.



“Shrapnel and the [mortar] blast picked me up and tossed me against the Humvee. I was peppered with shrapnel from my back down my body. One Marine had lost his leg and I tied my belt around his leg as best as I could to stop the bleeding. I laid my body on top of his and was peppered again with shrapnel.

“We lost a lot more Marines that day, and I survived. I lost my hearing in my left ear, have nine pins in my right shoulder, six pins in my left elbow, lost my knee, and have PTS, TBI and severe survivor's guilt. I still have shrapnel in my back. My body is full of scars. Let me make this perfectly clear, at no point do I feel sorry or have any regrets of serving this great nation. I would do it all over again; in fact I would do it now if that were possible.

“I have bad days most days because of the pain but most days I turn those times into challenges. I turn those tears of pain into tears of joy. I look forward to be back with my brothers in a healthy body and relieving them for duty. Semper Fi!”



## Your Generosity at Work

One of the best parts of our job supporting disabled War on Terror veterans is the moment we write a check or send a wire transfer to a hero who desperately needs our help.

That's the moment "supporting the troops" goes from a warm fuzzy feeling to a practical, life-changing reality. And we know it's only through your generosity that we're able to make that difference.

So we're sharing the list below – highlighting a handful of severely disabled veterans who recently asked us for help – so you can see the practical and immediate ways your gift goes to work to help our heroes, penny by penny, and dollar by dollar.



**Retired Navy Petty Officer Willie P. from Biloxi, Mississippi** suffers from post-traumatic stress (PTS) after serving in Afghanistan. He asked for \$300.00 to buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$300.00

**Marine SSG Sausha P.** suffers from post-traumatic stress after serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,225.00 to keep his electricity on and buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$1,225.00

**Retired Army SSG Eric B. from Lithia, Georgia** suffers from severe PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He called in need of \$1,942.50 to avoid eviction.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$1,942.50

**Jeffery D., an Army veteran from Houston, Texas** suffers from PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He desperately needed \$500.00 to feed his family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$500.00

**Army SPC Michael V. from Houston, Texas** is now an amputee after being injured in Afghanistan. He asked us for \$663.21 to pay his rent and keep a roof over his head.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$663.21

**Army SGT Valisha L. from Milledge, Georgia** suffers from severe PTS and was honorably discharged after serving in Iraq. She needed \$2,150.00 to pay her rent and keep her home.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$2,150.00

**Army SPC Erica S. from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma** suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. She desperately needed \$1,653.07 for urgent auto expenses and to pay her electric bill.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$1,653.07

**Retired Army SSG Isaac G.** served in Iraq and suffers from severe post-traumatic stress. He needed \$2,385.00 to pay his rent and buy food for his family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$2,385.00

### Another Way to Help a Veteran

As you can see above, the financial aid you've given to these disabled veterans is critical. But another way you can make a difference in the life of a wounded warrior is by signing and returning the enclosed THANK YOU card. We can't stress enough how important it is to let these men and women know they have not been forgotten and that we appreciate the sacrifices they made to protect us and our families. So, please sign and return the enclosed card today for a wounded veteran who will be glad you did.



## These are *Thank You*s Like You've Never Read Before

If you've ever thought the War on Terror's impact might be over, you need only read these letters and emails we just recently received from disabled veterans still struggling to recover from the injuries and horrors they suffered in Iraq or Afghanistan. We regularly share these notes in your *Road to Recovery* newsletter, but these are thank yous like you've never read before – stories of heroes brought back from the brink by the generosity of supporters like you.

*A terrible family situation left disabled veteran Mike C. with three children and no money. You can just hear the fear in the words of the email he sent us asking for help:*

"I have no money for food and I do not qualify for food stamps. All of my utilities are going to be cut off this week and we are going to freeze. I am lost and my kids are scared to death. I am praying something will happen that is good. I don't know if you have kids but I have six eyeballs staring at me probably thinking to themselves that they are going to freeze and starve. I can't even type this without tears coming to my eyes."

*Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, we were able to send Mike funds to reduce his burden, keep his electricity on, and feed his family. After we helped him, he wrote back:*

"Thanks so much for thinking about me. I have things on the right path I think. I can be self-sufficient now. I am laying low, taking care of my kids and regrouping about my life. I can't thank you enough. God bless."

*I'm sure you've heard the news stories about veterans waiting long months for desperately-needed medical care. Well, disabled veteran Courtney J. recently encountered a wait like this, and reached out to us for help:*

"I am in a tight situation. I have to have some serious dental work done. I need a root canal and a crown. Both together cost \$1,904 dollars. I don't have civilian dental insurance. I went to the Department of Veteran Affairs in Washington D.C. (dental clinic) and they told me I have to wait until April. I'm in excruciating pain now."

*Of course we couldn't ignore Courtney's anguished plea. We responded immediately with emergency financial aid to cover the cost of his desperately-needed procedure. His thank-you response to Coalition President David Walker was as heartfelt as his request:*

"That makes you a totally awesome dude! I salute you!"

*Marine Corps Sergeant Daniel R. fought in Iraq and suffers from post-traumatic stress (PTS). He now lives in Sherman, Texas, and was struggling to feed his family and keep a roof over his head. After the generosity of Americans like you allowed us to send him \$2,136.65 for rent, electricity, and food, he sent us the following email:*

"I wanna thank you so much from the bottom of my heart. I received a check in the mail yesterday for food and it, on top of what [you] have already done, was just amazing. I can't thank you enough. You really have a huge impact for me and my family. This organization is amazing. The speed you guys have acted at is jaw-dropping."