



The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 64 ★ October 2017

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



“Thank you for assisting Matt and I. You and your organization have become one of our blessings. Thank you again for being our saving grace.”

— Tracey I.,
wife of disabled veteran

It's Not Too Early: Let's Help Struggling Disabled Veterans This Christmas!

Can you believe the Coalition is already hard at work preparing for the holidays? Our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas campaigns brighten the holidays for America's brave disabled heroes – and early planning and preparation are critical to their success.

Of course, that means we need your help to make sure we're ready for Christmas! We're counting on you to help make 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.

I hope your *Road to Recovery Report* illustrates just how critical your generous support is to rebuilding the lives of these deserving wounded warriors. This month we're featuring the inspiring stories of some amazing American heroes ... taking an in-depth look at your generosity at work ... and sharing thank yous from some of the struggling veterans your giving has already helped.

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Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

Spend enough time with veterans and you'll eventually hear an interesting term: "Alive Day." It's the anniversary of the day a service member stared death in the face – a day that tens of thousands of our American military men and women remember and reflect on the fragility of their commitment to America's freedom. (In fact, on page six you can read how one veteran, USMC Cpl. Donny Daughenbaugh, remembers his own Alive Day nearly 12 years ago.)

The young men and women still returning from the battlefields bearing grievous wounds – physical, psychological, or both – know firsthand the feelings and emotions Donny describes. They knew they were putting themselves in harm's way, but it's impossible to truly anticipate the gravity of serious injuries until they become reality. Like Donny, these heroes have to reach deep within to find the strength to carry on.

This is also true for those of us who are committed to helping wounded veterans work their way through readjustment to civilian life, dealing with missing limbs and scars they acquired in Afghanistan and Iraq, and – perhaps toughest of all – learning to cope with the trauma that impairs their ability to deal with daily challenges.

We have serious work to do. While our medical establishment takes remarkably good care of the physical injuries suffered by military personnel, it has as yet no effective treatment for post-traumatic stress (PTS). Indeed, there is increasing evidence that the passage of time brings little relief, and for many of our wounded this stress gets worse over time. Thus we see a troubling rate of suicides among veterans – especially wounded veterans suffering from PTS.

We are in the trenches doing all we can to provide assistance and support to the wounded veterans who need and deserve our aid. I hope and trust that in time the need for our services will decline, but for now the need is great. All of which leaves us struggling to provide support services to those in need with declining revenues.

We need your help today more than ever. The Coalition has been on the front lines when it comes to providing emergency financial aid and respite and helping to develop their post-injury professional lives. I'm honored to have the unwavering support of generous, patriotic friends like you, who do all you can to honor the service and sacrifice of our severely disabled War on Terror veterans.

With gratitude,



David W. Walker
President & CEO





Two Practical Ways Your Generosity Helps Severely Disabled Veterans All Year Long!

\$500 Christmas Gift Checks Spread Holiday Cheer

“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.”

— Disabled veteran Paul S.

Our Secret Santa Project and Christmas Angel Project provide \$500 gift checks for Christmas presents to heroes who were maimed, burned, blinded, paralyzed, or suffered other severe injuries fighting Muslim extremists in the War on Terror.

The severely disabled veterans your giving supports are stretched thin. They’re struggling just to keep their home, pay the electric bill, and put food on the table – and they certainly don’t have money for “extras” like Christmas

gifts ... no matter how disappointed their children will be.

As a faithful and patriotic Coalition friend, I know you can’t stand the thought of children being heartbroken on Christmas morning because their wounded parent couldn’t afford gifts from Santa. So 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.

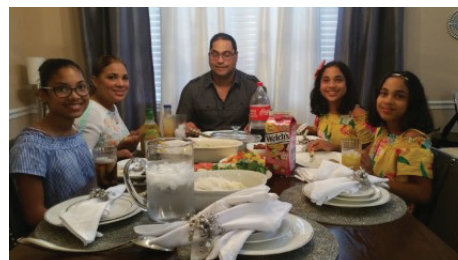
Holiday Meals Projects Feed Hungry Heroes’ Families

Our Thanksgiving Meals Project provides hundreds of severely wounded troops with \$60 each so their families – who also live daily with the reality of life with a disability – can enjoy a special holiday meal.

As a faithful Coalition supporter, you know our disabled veterans are struggling to put any food on the table – let alone a festive holiday meal. Our meals projects are a

special way you can tell a severely disabled veteran you’re grateful for his sacrifice – brightening the holidays for a family 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 Hugo Gonzalez and his family enjoy a special holiday meal, thanks to the generosity of friends like you!



Volunteers and Coalition staff distribute food to veteran families in need and pose for a picture after a job well done.



Your Generosity Supports Coalition Feeding Hungry Veteran Families At Washington, DC “Feed the Children” Event

In July the Coalition was honored to host the Washington, DC “Feed the Children” event on behalf of YOU and America’s disabled veterans! The event was a huge success and we were privileged to provide food to 400 veteran families in DC!

We thank AmazonFresh and the VA for their efforts as well as the Knights of Columbus who served lunch while volunteering. And as Daniel Hedrick, Senior Food Specialist with

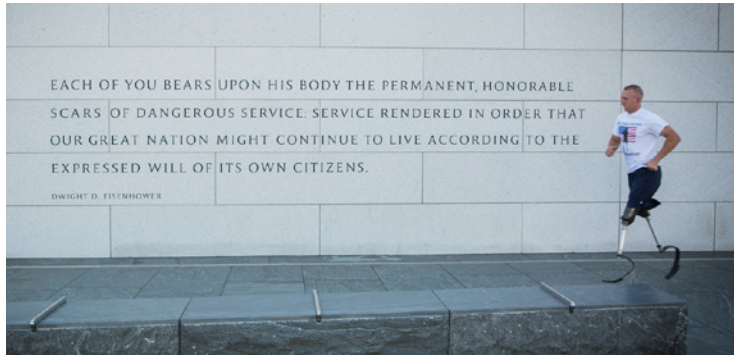
AmazonFresh said: “We are honored and proud of our veterans and to be able to serve the Washington DC area.”

The special event was attended by Ely Ross, the Director of Veterans Affairs for the Mayor of Washington DC and also received press coverage from local news, which is always a wonderful opportunity to get the word out about the needs faced by America’s veteran families.



31 Days, 31 Marathons: Marine Veteran Double-Amputee Rob Jones Won't Quit!

Do you remember our good friend Rob Jones, a Marine Corps veteran who lost both legs to a terrorist's IED in Afghanistan? After being disabled, Rob won a bronze medal in the Paralympics, then biked 6,000 miles across the country from Maine to California – using his journey to raise money for the Coalition and two other organizations that helped him during his recovery.



wake up one day, run a marathon – 26.2 miles – then travel to the next city and repeat until he's finished. Rob's Month of Marathons kicks off in London on October 12, 2017!

And of course, along the way, Rob will be raising money for the Coalition to

help his fellow disabled veterans.

We're so proud of Rob, and grateful for this unstoppable American who is committed to using his disability to raise awareness and funds for wounded veteran charities. We'll be sharing more about Rob's challenge in the months ahead, and you can read more about his plans at <http://www.robjonesjourney.com/schedule>.



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.

Lance Corporal Kevin Hanrahan, USMC (Ret.) Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Kevin Hanrahan joined the Marine Corps on March 10, 2008. He saw a good bit of the world as a Marine, visiting 11 countries during his first deployment. His second deployment took him to Haiti.

After each deployment Kevin rotated home to spend time with his wife and family, wondering what his next assignment would be, and well aware that a combat assignment would inevitably come up. And sure enough, on his third tour of duty in March 2011, Kevin was posted to the Helmand Province in Afghanistan.

Kevin was a machine gunner. His job was to walk about the disputed countryside looking for Taliban insurgents. He was in the country for five months out on a foot patrol when he stepped on an improvised explosive device (IED).

“He lost his left leg and the entire back of his right thigh, causing permanent nerve damage and a drop foot,” Kevin’s wife Whitney says. “He also has double vision from a fractured eye socket, a back injury, a traumatic brain injury (TBI), and seizures.”

Kevin would spend almost three years recovering at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. He was fitted with a prosthetic left leg and has had more than 50 surgeries on his right leg, which he is still in danger of losing.

During Kevin’s long recovery, Whitney and their daughter Riley – who was born right before Kevin’s first deployment – stayed by his side, doing everything they could to help him through what proved to be a long, arduous and painful process.

Kevin had wanted to make a career of the Marines, but it was not meant to be. “They told me there was no way I could do what I wanted to do,” he remembers. “I always appreciated the infantry role, always on the go. A desk job would not have suited me.” On December 30, 2013 Kevin retired from the Marines on 100 percent disability.

Today, the Hanrahan family live near family in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. They are building a house out in the country near the woods, and – as much as is possible – Kevin strives to live a normal life. Hunting is one way he gets out on his own and finds some peace. He has a track chair that helps him get about in the woods; he cleans the deer he kills and brings them home, saving his family money on groceries.



Kevin & Whitney Hanrahan with their children Riley (8) and Kayden (2).

Kevin and Whitney learned about the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes through a friend. While they weren’t in need of emergency financial aid, Whitney needed a job so she could work from home. Today she is working for the Heroes Thanking Heroes program. “I can stay at home and take care of Kevin,” she says. “We have two small kids at home. Being able to work at home enables me to

take care of them.”

Kevin is working to surmount the injuries to his legs, but the TBI is another matter. “The hardest thing has been the brain injury, more than anything else,” he says. “I have trouble sleeping. I can’t handle crowds. I prefer to keep to myself. I hope in time that will get better.”

Kevin plans to return to school and get a degree in a medical field. But he doesn’t regret his service in the military. “I would do it again in a heartbeat,” he says.

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.



Hero Celebrates Alive Day & a Second Chance at Life

Alive 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 veterans like Donny Daughenbaugh, Alive Day is a celebration of life. This is Donny's story – told in his own words – as he approaches the twelfth anniversary of his Alive Day.

October 12, 2004: Cpl. Donny Daughenbaugh, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)

“Most Americans only get to celebrate the day they came into the world once a year. A birthday is common practice and celebrates the change from youth to life, long lived. **For me, being a combat wounded Marine, I get to celebrate two days of coming into the world.** One that I thank my mom and dad for, and the other that I thank God, our Navy Corpsman, and my fighting spirit for.

“On October 12, 2004 I was on a foot patrol with my Marines and our base came under mortar attack. It wasn't unusual and happened regularly. This time though, my squad was in the area believed to be a traveled route for those launching the attacks. We established a vehicle checkpoint and had several successful stops.

“I didn't know it yet but **my family would learn to embrace this day as the day my fighting spirit, mixed with divine intervention, would stave off me losing my life.** I had been shot in the face, the bullet stopped in an



seizures, but I'm living my life to the fullest. I have to. **I've been given a second chance at life and the best way to deal with that is to live for those we've lost and lead a life my children will be proud of. My Alive Day is a day to celebrate a second chance at life. To learn from and grow from the worst thing that's ever happened to me.**”

unreachable spot near my brain and my Marines thought I was going to die.

“**Every year on my alive day my family treats it as an actual second birthday.** We spend time together as a family, we go to dinner and cherish that I've been given another year with them. My family has been the driving force behind my recovery and my avoidance of the common pitfalls that cause some wounded veterans to succumb to: dark nightmares, horrific flashbacks, survivor guilt and even suicide.

“I've dealt with nightmares and occasional flashbacks but I've never considered the worst. I live with chronic pain and the fear of debilitating

Leave a Legacy of Love for Our Disabled Heroes

“*To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.*”

— President Abraham Lincoln

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 • **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 with your attorney and financial advisor before making any important decisions regarding your estate.



Your Generosity at Work

The list below highlights 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.

Let me explain how our emergency financial aid process works. Every emergency request we receive is entered into a spreadsheet. Next, we verify the disabled veteran's service record with his or her branch of service, then rush the approved aid amount requested directly to the utility company, mortgage firm, or whoever is owed money by the disabled hero.

I know that because our severely wounded troops are full of pride, they tend to ask for only what they need – not a penny more. By checking our spreadsheet, we can see exactly how much of our donors' money went to each individual disabled serviceman or woman, and its exact use ... and now you can, too!



Retired Army Sergeant Joshua M. from Swansea, South Carolina was disabled while serving in Afghanistan. He asked for \$250.85 to keep the electricity on in his home.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$250.85

USMC Staff Sergeant Todd T. from Rosenberg, Texas was paralyzed serving in the War on Terror. He asked us for \$500.00 to buy food for his family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$500.00

Air Force Staff Sergeant Ricky J. from Clearfield, Utah suffers from post-traumatic stress (PTS) after serving in Afghanistan. He desperately needed \$753.84 for urgent utility bills and to put food on the table.

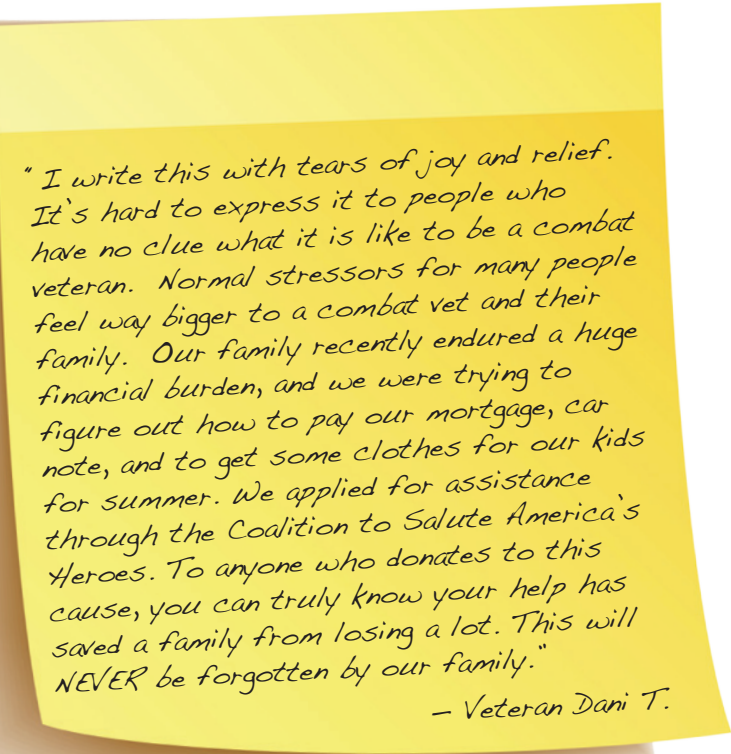
★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$753.84

Retired Army Sergeant Daniel H. from Gap, Pennsylvania suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) while serving in Iraq. He called asking for \$1,781.35 to avoid foreclosure and make urgent car repairs.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,781.35

Army Sergeant Brian B. from Pinellas Park, Florida suffers from severe PTS and was medically retired after serving in Iraq. He needed \$2,491.39 to avoid eviction and repair his vehicle.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$2,491.39



Army Specialist Aaron M. from Colorado Springs, Colorado would have been evicted from his home without \$3,000.00. Aaron, who served in Iraq and suffers from severe PTS, called us desperate for emergency assistance.

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

Reminder: Coalition is a CFC Charity!

If 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



Tears & Joy as Disabled Veterans Say “Thank You”

The privilege of helping America’s disabled War on Terror veterans with emergency financial aid brings with it many surprises. No two days are alike ... and we never know what requests we may receive when we open our email or answer the phone. What we DO know is that the disabled veterans we help are so thankful for your support ... and the proof is in the heartfelt, often tearful messages of gratitude we receive after helping a struggling hero.

“Thank you for consistently being the most compassionate people and remembering our heroes! My husband was feeling forgotten and fighting a bad bout of depression ... but you helped him so much (and in turn helped our whole family by lifting his spirits where we couldn’t). Thank you from all of us for being awesome!”
— Della W., wife of disabled veteran Jamie

“On behalf of my wife and I: THANK you! Thanks to your generosity ... [I] paid our gas and electric bill and still have money for groceries.”
— Steven B., USN (Ret.)

“Asking for help is something that is very hard to do. [Thanks to the Coalition] we were able to get our house, car, and bills caught up and food in the cupboards and fridge”
— Kacy R., wife of a disabled veteran

“A BIG thank you for the assistance you provided our family in our time of need, it really relieved a ton of stress on us. It really is warming to receive such generous help when times are so tough, and so many ... need it. It’s even more assuring to know there are people in vets’ and our families’ corners when at times it can feel very lonely. Maybe most importantly it relieved a huge chunk of stress off of my, and my family’s shoulders, which allows for coping to be easier and easier to handle. People like you are something special.”
— Disabled veteran Chris T.

“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 [were] able to assist me quickly with \$2,000. I am beyond grateful and very appreciative of your help and support to me and my family.”
— Matt S., disabled Army veteran

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 more thank you notes, photos, and updates about how your generosity is improving the lives of our disabled heroes and their families.