



The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 68 ★ October 2018

Providing Emergency Aid to Severely Disabled War on Terror Veterans and their Families



“It is an honor to have served our nation but the true heroes are the ones who provide help when it is needed; such as your organization and your donors.”

— Disabled veteran Frederick M.

Give NOW to Help Disabled War on Terror Veterans This Holiday Season!

In many parts of the country -- like here in Virginia, at Coalition headquarters -- it feels like we're just getting into the swing of fall. The trees are losing their leaves, the weather is getting cooler, and kids are back to school.

So it may be hard to believe, but here at the Coalition, **we're 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.

So I hope your generosity will be inspired by your donor-exclusive *Road to Recovery Report*, and that you'll give what you can to help us prepare for Thanksgiving and 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.

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Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

This upcoming Veterans Day we pause to honor the brave men and women who paid a terrible price – and those who continue to pay that price – for our freedoms. In a just world freedom would be a natural right enjoyed by everyone, but we do not live in a just world; we live in this one.

Against a dark wave of terror, we stand behind a thin line of heroes in uniform – soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen – and some not in uniform in the clandestine services. When they pause from the struggle, they must find it discouraging to read about dissension on the home front – of citizens of a democracy who have forgotten how to compromise and lost respect for the opinions of others. It is surely hard enough to put your life on the line for a viable form of government that has inspired free people down through the ages. It must be infinitely more difficult to fight for a seemingly endless squabble about petty differences of opinion, exacerbated by extremist news organizations that make no pretense of impartiality.

Against that shameful backdrop, this sacred day offers us all an opportunity to reflect on what is going on in this country and our own acquiescence to it. The brave, mostly young, men and women carrying the battle have a better sense than we do about the true cost of freedom and the sacrifices it demands. If they could speak with one voice, they would say to the American people: “Knock it off!”

We are in a life and death struggle for our most vital values and our way of life, and there is no guarantee we will prevail. Indeed, if we cannot get back to our basic values of comity and respect for dissent, we will not prevail, and do not deserve to prevail.

So this Veterans Day, let us remember what our veterans fought for – and what *we* are fighting for. And let us not forget our youngest veterans – those who came home from the global War on Terror with missing limbs or shattered psyches, only to face a *new* struggle to survive.

I’m so grateful for the support of generous and patriotic friends like you – who show your gratitude this Veterans Day, not with platitudes or empty words, but through your generous and meaningful support of the Coalition and America’s suffering disabled War on Terror veterans.

With gratitude,

David W. Walker
President & CEO





From Easter to Christmas and Every Day in Between, Your Generosity Is Helping Severely Disabled Veterans!

\$500 Christmas Gift Checks Spread Holiday Cheer

“We were both caught off guard when a check [from the Coalition] appeared in our mailbox for \$500 right before Christmas. We had not bought any gifts, that money literally saved us from becoming homeless and even allowed us to buy some gifts for our granddaughter who is 4 years old.”

— Disabled veteran Matt I.

Our Secret Santa and Christmas Angel Projects 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 global War on Terror.

The severely disabled veterans your giving supports are financially 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 ... even those with small children.

As a faithful and patriotic Coalition friend, I know you can't stand the thought of little ones 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 nothing under the tree.

Feeding Severely Disabled Veterans and Their Families

Our Holiday Meals Projects provide thousands of severely wounded troops with \$60 each so their families – who have also made tremendous sacrifices in support of their veteran – 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 with all the trimmings. Our meals projects are

a special way you can tell a severely disabled veteran you're grateful for his or her 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 military families your generosity helped!



Your Emergency Aid Gift Helps Rescue Struggling Heroes from Hunger & Homelessness

The Coalition's Emergency Financial Aid program is at the heart of our mission to provide immediate, practical help to financially struggling, severely disabled War on Terror veterans.

A shocking number of disabled troops and veterans wait an average of 10 months (and often much longer) to receive their first government

disability check ... spelling disaster for wounded warriors who are unable to work – especially when a spouse has to leave his or her job to become a full time caregiver.

Your gift to the Emergency Financial Aid program has had a tremendous impact on the lives of these heroes and their families. It may help a severely disabled veteran avoid

foreclosure, put food on the table, or repair the car that gets him to his doctor's appointments. Sometimes she will use it for medical bills; sometimes he will pay overdue utility bills. But no matter the emergency, your gift will drastically change the life of a wounded hero who might otherwise go homeless, hungry, or suffer another frightening hardship.



Boxes and bags of food piled high to help hungry Washington, DC, veteran families.

Hungry Veteran Families Fed, Thanks to You!

In June, the Coalition successfully partnered with the Washington DC VA Medical Center, Feed the Children, America’s Adopt-A-Soldier, Amazon Fresh and local volunteers for our 2nd Annual food truck event. The groups joined forces to feed 400 homeless and at-risk veterans in the DC metro area. Lunch was generously donated by Hill Country BBQ to the entire staff, volunteers and veteran participants. Thanks to AmazonFresh and Feed the Children for donating all the much-needed food. Please contact us at 1-888-447-2588 to find out other ways you can volunteer your time to help a disabled veteran.

Disabled Veterans Spread Coalition Message at Warrior Games

This Summer, the Coalition’s Heroes Thanking Heroes (HTH) Assistant Director, U.S. Army veteran Juan Perez ran into U.S. Marine Corps veteran Rob Jones at the Warrior Games in Colorado. Rob, who lost both his legs in Iraq, made an incredible effort with #TeamMarineCorps in the men’s 800 meter!

Sgt. Juan Perez, U.S. Army (Ret.) pictured with Sgt. Rob Jones, USMC (Ret.) at the Warrior Games in Colorado.



Your Generosity Helping this Disabled Veteran Build a New Life & Business



Sgt. Jorge De Leon, U.S. Army (Ret.) pictured with Coalition President David Walker

Sgt. Jorge De Leon, U.S. Army (Ret.) is a familiar face to many Coalition supporters. After losing a leg in Afghanistan, his family struggled to survive -- and the generosity of Coalition supporters like you helped him rebuild. Today he serves as a Coalition National Spokesman, spreading a message of hope and healing to veterans across the country.

The Coalition recently awarded Jorge with a grant to help him build his own company, Shooter’s Defense, which teaches civilians how to protect themselves according to the laws in Texas and based on his experience as a police officer and infantryman.

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 Combined Federal Campaign Charity List. Selecting the Coalition as your CFC charity is an easy and exciting way to support our disabled heroes!



#12523

Combating the Suicide Epidemic

By Coalition President David Walker | excerpted from the Washington Times, June 13, 2018

The recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that our nation is in the throes of a massive suicide epidemic did not come as a surprise to those of us who work with troubled veterans. We deal with it every day. **We spend countless hours listening to unspeakable pain among those returning from the battlefields**, striving to counsel them through their darkness and consoling widows when our efforts are insufficient — all the time wondering if we had been more articulate, more sensitive, more wise, perhaps we could have altered the outcomes.

For the people we work with, inability to function in the civilian economy and earn a living are usually the elephants in the room — or at least that is the challenge most wounded veterans are preoccupied with. **They very much want to have productive lives and provide for their families, but many of them simply cannot.** They are impaired not so much by physical injuries, though many have lost limbs or sight, as by post-traumatic stress (PTS) that is not visible to the naked eye. Their inability to function in civilian life fosters frustration and desperation which can lead to suicide.

There is a widespread misconception that PTS is simply a matter of emotional distress, and without question that is part of it. But there is a growing body of medical evidence that proximity to violent explosions disrupts the

chemical composition of the human brain. PTS victims are wrestling with internal stresses they can neither understand nor control. They seek relief in alcohol and drugs which serve primarily to aggravate their affliction and do not address the root causes of their distress.

I find myself leaning on faith increasingly as I lend a sympathetic ear to wounded veterans in distress. “I am in desperate need of some advice or assistance, just someone to listen,” wrote one such fellow. He went on to detail a series of grinding setbacks that I believe would dismay anyone: His wife skipped town with the family money, leaving him with bills he cannot pay; the gas and water are about to be cut off; he can’t feed his kids or even the dog that helps him get around. This is a fellow who answered his country’s call to duty and was severely injured on our behalf. He needed temporary financial help, which I was able to provide.

But mainly he needed someone to talk to. We all do. The National Suicide Prevention Line (1-800-273-8255) is there in recognition of this basic human need. **We all need to know that our lives matter, that other people care, and that we are not alone.** Those of us who have our burdens in hand must reach out to those less fortunate. It’s up to you and me. This isn’t rocket science. Let’s turn off the TV, put away the phone and pull up a chair and listen.

Military Wife Recounts Husband’s Suicide Attempt

In this story, first shared on the Coalition’s “*Heroes Thanking Heroes*” blog, a caregiver speaks out about how her veteran husband almost became a statistic.

I have been married to my veteran/hero for nearly 12 years. We have been through a lot. After two deployments and three children, on the outside, we looked like the perfect American family – so happy and so blessed! It was a much different feeling inside of me though. I felt like I was drowning because our house had become shook by something I didn’t understand at the time. He had begun to drink ALL the time and seemed so blank. Not angry, not sad... just empty. I called close friends and family trying to ask for help and find out what I could do to fix what was wrong, but was given dead-end answers like, “People change, maybe you should just get a divorce and move on.”

One night I left for work. I had a busy night and didn’t have time to check my phone at all. As we were closing, my phone kept ringing so I finally answered. It was my husband’s Platoon Sgt. She said, “Please check your messages and go straight to the hospital, he needs you!” The next several hours are blurry. I hung up the call and

was on my way out the door reading a text from him telling me he loved me, there was something wrong with him and he needed to exit my life in order to give me what was best for me and the kids ... a chance to find someone not broken!

At the hospital a nurse told me, “He is alive but I do have to counsel you before I can allow you to see him. He did try to overdose and is not very coherent at this time.”

When I left for work, I had thought this was a good day. Things were getting back to where they were supposed to be. **I do not understand why this was the day that turned so wickedly to a nightmare where he was almost part of the 22 veterans a day who lose their battle at home.** I was almost a widow because of a war in his mind. My children were almost without their Dad because he thought for a split second that someone else would be better for them because of his wounds from war.

Our Veterans need to know we are here for them every day. I felt compelled to share my story because **I am proud of what the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes is doing to help lower the suicide rates within our Veteran families.**



Salute to a Special Hero: SSG Paul Brondhaver, U.S. Army (Ret.)



SSG Paul Brondhaver, U.S. Army (Ret.) being presented with \$5,000 by Coalition Heroes Thanking Heroes representative Ashlee Williams.

Staff Sergeant (SSG) Paul Brondhaver is a native of New Richmond, Ohio, a small town east of Cincinnati. Brondhaver joined the United States Army at age 17, before he even graduated from high school.

Brondhaver’s military career brought him all over the world to places such as Honduras, Germany, Panama, Kuwait, and Iraq, serving on active duty for 19 different missions and operations.

Brondhaver’s final tour was with the 216th Combat Engineer Unit and the 1st Infantry Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). His mission was cut short when his combat patrol was attacked with small arms fire and a rocket propelled grenade that exploded near his Humvee in Summara, Iraq, in July 2004.

During the attack Brondhaver’s body was riddled with over 300 pieces of metal shrapnel, and a fellow soldier

and friend was killed in the explosion. Since that day Paul has suffered from hearing loss, severe nerve damage, a traumatic brain injury (TBI), and severe post traumatic stress (PTS).

Paul credits the Lord, prayer, his fellow soldiers, the military and his American Red Cross training for saving his life – and, despite his horrific injuries, he still believes it was a true honor to serve his country. In 2007 Paul retired from the United States Army with 21 years of service, and he has since dedicated his life to serving other veterans.



SSG Paul Brondhaver, U.S. Army (Ret.) pictured in his new home with Coalition Ambassador and disabled veteran SSG JD Williams, U.S. Army (Ret.).

This spring Paul was awarded a home by another national veterans’ charity. Among those on hand to welcome the Brondhaver family to their new home was Coalition Ambassador SSG JD Williams, U.S. Army (Ret.) and his wife Ashlee. Williams presented Brondhaver with a check for \$5,000 on behalf of the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes, to help with expenses.

Leave a Legacy to Secure the Future of Heroes Who Went to War to Defend Yours

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.”

— President Ronald Reagan

Your past generosity has proven your commitment to helping America’s disabled War on Terror veterans. Now, won’t you consider taking your giving to the next level by supporting our heroes for years to come?

It’s simple and effective to do so by making a bequest to the Coalition in your will, insurance policy, or other planned giving option! Meaningful and generous options include donating stocks and bonds, transferring a life insurance policy, donating your home or other property, purchasing a gift annuity, or contributing part of your retirement plan.

Your legacy, in any amount, is a testament to your enduring commitment to America’s disabled War on Terror veterans. Now is the time to call – don’t wait! For a private and confidential discussion of how to leave the Coalition a charitable bequest, contact:

Zondria Seeley, Donor Relations Manager, Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes
Toll Free: (888) 447-2588, Ext. 109 • 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.



By the Numbers: Your Giving in Action

We at the Coalition put in lots of work behind the scenes to support America's disabled War on Terror veterans. But one of the most rewarding moments we experience is when we're able to deliver emergency financial aid to a struggling hero – meeting their specific financial need, down to the penny.

Here's 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.

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.



Army SPC Curtis S. from Waynesville, Missouri suffers from post-traumatic stress (PTS) after serving in Iraq. He desperately needed \$500.00 to put food on the table.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$500.00

Retired Army SPC Amanda S. from Chula Vista, California suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. She asked for \$533.04 to keep her cell phone and internet from being disconnected.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$533.04

Devin C., a retired Air Force Senior Airman from Wichita, Kansas suffers from PTS after serving in the global War on Terror. He desperately needed for \$796.64 for water, electric, and gas bills.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$796.64

Army veteran Darren M. from Colorado Springs, Colorado served our country in Iraq. He asked us for \$800.00 for auto repairs.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$800.00

Army Sergeant Andre G. from Milwaukee, Wisconsin suffers from post-traumatic stress after serving in Iraq. He needed \$912.42 to pay his mortgage and keep a roof over his family's head.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$912.42

Retired Army Sergeant David C. from Elyria, Ohio was paralyzed while serving in the War on Terror. He called asking for \$2,358.90 for rent and utilities.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$2,358.90

Retired Marine Corporal Freddie L. from Flagstaff, Arizona suffered a back injury while serving in Iraq. He needed \$3,000.000 to pay his property taxes and buy food.

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

Without \$3,143.83, Army Specialist Daniel D. from Wiggins, Missouri might have been evicted from his home. Daniel, who served in Iraq and suffers from severe PTS, called us desperate for emergency assistance.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$3,143.83

We Care About You, Too!

If you, a family member, friend, or someone you know is a disabled War on Terror veteran in need of assistance, please contact the Coalition by writing, calling, or emailing us using the information below.

552 Fort Evans Road, Suite 300
Leesburg, VA 20176
703-291-4605
Toll-Free: 888-447-2588
Email: info@saluteheroes.org



Relief and Gratitude from Disabled Veterans Who Thank You

Helping disabled War on Terror veterans can be heartbreaking – hearing a constant stream of stories of families on the brink of homelessness, hunger, and despair ... all after serving selflessly to defend our country. But it’s also infinitely rewarding, especially when we hear back from the grateful heroes we’ve helped. We want you to share in that reward, since it’s your generosity that makes it all possible – so please enjoy these words of relief and gratitude from disabled veterans thanking you for your giving!

“I was recovering from back surgery and was two months behind on rent and car payment ... It meant so much to my family when we received the financial assistance. **We were so grateful and it was truly a blessing...** Tears welled up in our eyes and I told my wife God is good always.”

— SSG Herman Tharpe, U.S. Army (Ret.)

“I wanted to take the time to thank you for your generous support over these last few months. It truly means a lot to know that there are people who are appreciative and support the American soldier and our endeavours. It is an honor to have served our nation but **the true heroes are the ones who provide help when it is needed; such as your organization and your donors.** Again I am touched and forever grateful of the donation I have received from your organization.”

— Disabled veteran Frederick M.

“As a family we have learned to deal with and manage the spontaneity and inconvenience the the post-traumatic stress disorder that followed my husband’s deployments during both OEF & OIF. **It is gifts such as yours that remind us that our struggles are recognized and appreciated.**”

— Josh & Amy G.

“There just are no words to truly express our gratitude for the emotional support and financial assistance at that time. The contribution helps us keep a roof over our head and food on the table. We had no words that we could speak so we held each other and wept tears of joy... Given the staggering number of veterans in need and the limited financial resources a lot of families suffer huge losses. **Your organization gives me hope for the future and reaffirms that we do in fact have angels that walk among us.** Thank you for your generosity and for your service.”

— Disabled veteran Matt I.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes Foundation Achieves Accreditation from BBB Wise Giving Alliance Highlighting Excellence in Leadership, Finances and Mission-Driven Work

By meeting key standards of board oversight, finances, results reporting and fundraising appeals, the Coalition achieved accreditation by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. This signifies that the Coalition is deserving of donor trust as they are a well-run nonprofit organization.



give.org

Meets all 20 BBB Charity Standards