



# The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 70 ★ March 2019

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



“Your generosity had a direct impact to a medically retired veteran, injured on his ninth combat deployment. Feeding a family of six is difficult, especially on a fixed income, we are so humbled that we were not forgotten.”

— The “H” Family, Nashville, Tennessee.

## NOW Is Your Time To Help Struggling Disabled Veterans This Easter!

As you read this month’s Road to Recovery Report, you’ll see a common thread woven throughout its stories: **our holiday meals program, which provides checks for a special hot meal to America’s disabled veterans at Easter and Thanksgiving.**

Holiday meals checks are just one way we help our disabled veterans -- but it’s such an important way! The gift of a special hot meal brightens the holidays

for struggling veteran families ... and reminds our heroes that grateful Americans around the country haven’t forgotten their sacrifices. (Turn to page 8 to read heartfelt thank you messages from a handful of the more than 1,000 veterans who we sent a holiday meals check to this Thanksgiving!)

This Easter, we’re asking you to help feed our heroes again. Thank you for your generosity towards America’s disabled veterans and their families, who have already given so much!

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# Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

In the Battle of Britain, when Great Britain was saved by the heroics of a relative handful of fighter pilots, Prime Minister Winston Churchill said that *never before have so many owed so much to so few*. I believe that sentiment is appropriate for us today – never before have so many Americans owed so much to so few.

**The reality is that in today’s world, a very small percentage of Americans wear the uniform. That makes it all the more important that we should honor them** – to let them know the majority of their fellow citizens appreciate the sacrifices they make on our behalf.

One of their biggest challenges is contending with the effects of post-traumatic stress (PTS). This is not just a psychological phenomenon. Counseling is useful but PTS is also a physical issue. Recent studies confirm that proximity to explosions disrupts the chemical balance of the brain.

**The magnitude of this challenge cannot be overstated, and should not be ignored.** Veterans have a much higher rate of suicide than the overall population. At the Coalition, we spend a lot of time just talking to veterans in stress – listening, providing support and sympathy.

It is fitting that all of us should acknowledge the debt we owe to the people who serve in uniform, and make that consciousness part of our daily lives. It is all well and good to stand in their honor at ball games or salute veterans in parades, but there is a critical need, on a fundamental level, to recognize that our basic freedoms are daily won by their courage and sacrifice, and to convey that recognition to our children. It is the least that we can do.

It is unfortunate that many Americans no longer realize just how much care and support our global War on Terror veterans still need. The war has to a large extent faded from the headlines. But the heroes who continue to return -- and those who have already returned, no matter how many years ago -- still need and deserve our attention, gratitude, and, in some cases, financial support. The wounds of war, physical and psychological, can take years, decades, or a lifetime to heal ... and we must not turn our backs on these wounded warriors in their time of need.

I hope you’ll keep these thoughts in mind as you consider giving again to help a hero’s family this Easter. And I hope you know just how grateful I am to have the support of patriotic Americans like you as we do everything in our power to help those who gave so much to defend our freedom.

With gratitude,



David W. Walker  
President & CEO





## Easter is a Season of Sacrifice – and Salvation ... And Providing a Meal is a Great Way to Thank Our Wounded Warriors

The holidays can be a time of stress and despair instead of joy for a disabled veteran who's struggling just to pay the bills each month. That's why we created the Easter and Thanksgiving Meals Projects.

Your gift helps provide thousands of severely disabled veterans and their families with \$60 to enjoy a special holiday meal. For a hero struggling to put any food on the table, the gift of a

holiday dinner with all the trimmings provides a welcome respite from worry and the opportunity to enjoy joyful time with family. Our meals projects are a 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 2019 Easter Meals Project is in full swing -- and we're counting on your help!** Read



**Disabled veteran Arthur Wells and his family enjoy their Thanksgiving meal together.**

more about the Meals Project in the enclosed letter from retired Major General Singlaub.

## Emergency Financial Aid Averts Veteran Homelessness and Hunger

The Coalition's Emergency Financial Aid (EFA) program is the bedrock of our mission to provide direct, immediate financial assistance to American veterans severely disabled in the global War on Terror – with the help of generous friends like you.

The most common reason a disabled veteran may need our help is the sluggish bureaucracy keeping our seriously injured heroes

waiting months – and sometimes over a year – to receive their first government disability check after being released from the hospital and separating from the service. The combination of delayed government benefits, crippling disabilities that keep veterans from holding jobs, and spouses who serve as full-time caregivers can spell financial and emotional disaster for veterans who are already struggling physically.

Your donation to the Emergency Financial Aid program is truly a lifeline to these severely disabled veterans -- going to work in a matter of days to help a wounded warrior with anything from putting food on the table to keeping a roof over his or her family's head ... paying medical bills or keeping the lights on. Your generous EFA gift makes all the difference to a wounded hero who otherwise might go homeless, hungry, or suffer another frightening hardship.

## Thanks to Faithful Friends Like You, Hundreds of Struggling Military Families Received \$500 at Christmas



Another way we help our veterans is with our Secret Santa and Christmas Angel Projects, which support the many heroic veterans who 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 these holiday

projects – to give these disabled veterans a helping hand and make sure their kids get a few toys “from Santa”! Generous friends like you combine resources to provide \$500 Christmas gift checks, which we send to veterans who suffered severe, disabling injuries in the global War on Terror – so they can give their families a few Christmas presents. (Just look at the smiles on the faces of the Vassaur family, left, who received a Secret Santa check to brighten the holidays this past Christmas!)



## Veteran Heroes Represent Coalition at “Wounded Warrior Experience”

Coalition was honored to be part of the 2018 Wounded Warrior Experience on the Fox Business Channel hosted by Jennifer Griffin. The program spotlights stories of sacrifice & recovery among today’s wounded veterans and service members. We were represented by our disabled veteran ambassadors, J.D. Williams & Juan Perez. Immediately following on the Armed Forces Network, Coalition Ambassador Shilo Harris was honored for his service and sacrifice.



Retired Army SSG J.D. Williams, a Coalition Ambassador and triple-amputee, is shown here on the “Wounded Warrior Experience” discussing his experience fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan.

## Coalition Pushes for Change on Caregiver Eligibility Standards



HTH representative Ashlee Williams with Congressman Brett Guthrie.

The Coalition’s Heroes Thanking Heroes (HTH) team member, Ashlee Williams, was in Washington D.C., during National Caregivers Month (November) advocating on behalf of military caregivers across this nation. Ashlee, who takes care of her veteran husband J.D., shown in the article above, met with Congressman Brett Guthrie on the veterans caregiver program, which helps veterans like J.D. receive care from family members. Ashlee was also instrumental to leading the Coalition in joining 13 other organizations in a letter to Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) about the cutbacks in financial support from the Veterans Administration (VA). These cutbacks are causing serious hardship and undermining the veterans caregiver program which is essential to many veterans and their families. As a result, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie promised to do everything he can to make sure that those who need the caregiver program will not be kicked out of it.

## Coalition Retreat Aimed at Strengthening Marriages

Twenty-eight combat-wounded veterans and their spouses from across the nation converged on New York City for the 2nd annual Heroes Freedom Weekend. The four-day event was created by the Coalition exclusively for wounded veterans and their spouses. The all-expenses-paid retreat presents an extraordinary opportunity for veterans to develop stronger bonds with their spouse, build camaraderie with other veterans and tour some of America’s most sacred and historic landmarks.



A few of the Heroes Freedom Weekend attendees are shown here enjoying their time getting to know one another.

Army veteran Franchon Powell -- pictured at right with her husband, Air Force veteran Akio -- attended our 2018 Heroes Freedom Weekend Couples Retreat. Franchon told us, “The time I spent there made an enormous impact on our marriage. We are forever indebted to [the Coalition].”



Veteran attendees Akio & Franchon Powell

# New Coalition Workshop Aimed at Building Leadership Skills

At the inaugural Coalition Leadership Skills Retreat in Williamsburg, VA, Coalition CEO David Walker, and Dr. Johnny Parker, author of *Turn the Page*, led an energetic, lively three-day workshop which moved attendees -- 12 wounded and disabled veterans -- to write their stories about exceptional leadership. During their time at Colonial Williamsburg, they learned how to master their personal story so they're in control of the ending, and how to push themselves to be better, stronger, and more honest leaders both personally and professionally.



## Coalition Gets Attention at NASCAR Xfinity Series Race



In the fall, professional stock car driver Brandon Brown drove his Camaro sporting the Coalition's logo in the NASCAR Xfinity Series. The exposure offered an outstanding opportunity for great visibility for the Coalition, for several of our ambassadors who attended the race, and for the heroic men and women we are here to serve. We look forward to giving more

combat wounded veterans and their spouses/caregivers the opportunity to join us at certain tracks across the country in 2019!



## One More Reason to Give CONFIDENTLY: The Coalition is a Top-Rated Nonprofit 2nd Year Running!

The Coalition was named to the prestigious list of best nonprofit organizations in the world by the website GreatNonprofits.org. The Top-Rated Nonprofit award was based on the number of positive reviews the Coalition received from volunteers, donors, and clients. We work tirelessly to support our veteran community and it is incredible to be recognized!



Actor Ray Romano is shown here with Coalition President & CEO David Walker.

## Everybody Loves the Coalition: Ray Romano Endorses Coalition in Public Service Announcement Video!

Everybody Loves Raymond -- and we can see why! Ray Romano is as wonderful in person as he is on the screen! Coalition President & CEO, David Walker, caught up with him recently and Ray was genuinely touched by our mission! Stay tuned for more from Ray on his support and commitment to our veteran families!



## Make Your Life Easier & Do MORE For Our Veterans in 2019: *Become a Coalition Partner for Heroes Today!*

**S**treamline your giving in 2019 and make your gift go further by becoming a Coalition **Partner for Heroes** today. Our monthly giving program is a **simple and secure way you can make an even bigger difference for our struggling severely disabled veterans** -- and it gives YOU some great benefits that make it as easy as possible for you to continue your faithful support for America's heroes.

★ Each month your monthly donation is conveniently debited from your checking account or charged to your credit card. You don't have to waste time writing checks, searching for stamps, or keeping track of our letters.

★ We track your monthly giving for you; at the end of the

year you receive a convenient donation statement 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 still keep sharing important program updates and newsletters with you, just like this one!)

★ You're free to cancel at any time, no questions asked.

**Please, become a Partner for Heroes today.** It's easy to enroll -- just see your enclosed contribution form! You'll save

yourself time and energy, make your giving go further, and 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.



## Consider Remembering the Coalition in Your Will

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

— President Abraham Lincoln

The start of a new year is the perfect time to assess your charitable giving ... decide what really matters ... and resolve to make a difference. Remembering the Coalition in a charitable bequest is a wonderful way to keep your resolution to make a difference by supporting America's severely disabled War on Terror veterans for years to come!

Simple and straightforward 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.

Now is the time to call -- don't wait! For a private and confidential discussion of how to leave the Coalition a charitable bequest, please email us at [info@saluteheroes.org](mailto:info@saluteheroes.org) or call (888) 447-2588.

*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 Helped These Veterans Weather the Storm

**W**e 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.



**Former Marine Sgt Shannon E. from Gaston, South Carolina**, suffers from post-traumatic stress (PTS) after serving in Afghanistan. This veteran desperately needed \$500.00 to buy food for the family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$500.00

**Hercillia, a retired Army SSG from Riverview, Florida**, suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. She desperately needed for \$564.74 for car repairs and to keep her cell phone from being disconnected.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$564.74

**Marine veteran Cpl Chase D. from Mobile, Alabama**, suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. He asked for \$500.00 to buy food for his family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$500.00

**Retired Army SPC Paul B. from Pensacola, Florida**, served our country in Iraq. He asked us for \$677.16 for his auto insurance and to buy food and gas.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$677.16

**Veteran Army SGT David S. from Salt Lake City, Utah**, suffers from PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He called asking for \$1,493.13 for urgent auto expenses and to buy food and gas.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$1,493.13

**Retired Army SSG Shaun L. from Lakewood, Colorado**, suffers from post-traumatic stress after serving in Iraq. He needed \$992.40 for food and other necessities.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$992.40

**Former Marine Cpl Daniel R. from Goodyear, Arizona**, suffers from post-traumatic stress after serving in Iraq. He needed \$2,217.30 for urgent car expenses.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$2,217.30

**Army veteran Ramon A. from Camarillo, California**, was medically retired after serving in Afghanistan. He called asking for \$2,795.00 to pay his rent.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:  
\$2,795.00

### 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 2019 Combined Federal Campaign Charity List. Selecting the Coalition as your CFC charity is an easy and exciting way to support our disabled heroes!



#12523



## These Heroes Thank You for the Gift of a Holiday Meal

It's impossible to put into words the difference the gift of a special holiday meal can make to a disabled veteran who's lost all hope. So we'll let them tell you themselves -- by sharing the heartfelt thank yous we received from the heroes helped through the Coalition's \$60 Thanksgiving Meals checks project. I hope they inspire you to give generously again this Easter!

"I just wanted to let you know how much your gift for thanksgiving means to us. This year we've been struggling to make ends meet with so much going wrong. Our car's been in the shop for almost the last month with parts breaking down and failing. Trying to plan a decent Thanksgiving became our biggest worry for our kids because we pretty much have nothing left financially. Thanks to this gift we will be able to provide them a memorable dinner and be able to relax knowing people out there care for us."

— *Alexandr  and Izabelle G.*

"You have no idea how helpful this \$60 gift is to me. I have fallen on hard times as many of us have. With this money I'll be able to visit my mom and enjoy Thanksgiving with her. I have never been so broke inside and financially as I have been these past months. Thank you for your kind gift as it brings me hope to not give up."

— *Disabled veteran David D.*

"The holiday season can be tough financially. We are used to being on a fixed income but we have had several unexpected expenses recently that have stretched our budget big time. However, we were taken care of above and beyond what I could have hoped for, thanks to you! You made my kids' Thanksgiving dinner dreams come true!"

— *Laura S.,  
veteran's wife and caregiver*

"I just wanted to reach out and say a HUGE thank you. Today we were going to go grocery shopping for our Thanksgiving meal. Unfortunately, we were going to be short. It's been a rough few years for us... I felt terrible that though I've been trying to work extra to keep our family afloat, it wasn't going to work just how I had planned. My husband has not been able to work in almost two years. Tonight, I came home and checked the mail, when I opened the envelope, and found the check it brought tears to my eyes."

— *Heather & Shane E.*

"Thank you for the generous gift. My family has struggled due to a long term battle with the VA and we have learned to make the most of family time. It was the generous gift that gave us a chance to have a very nice dinner and a great family night. We don't get a chance to do this a lot because of crazy schedules so we made the most of our time together. I can't say enough about how thankful we are."

— *Jennifer, Steven, Travis and Rebecca H.*

### We'd love to keep in touch!

Please consider sharing your email address with the Coalition. Write your email address on the enclosed 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.