



The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 72 ★ Summer 2019

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



“ [The Coalition] helped my family and I so much with our mortgage and I cannot thank you enough for your generosity and kindness. We appreciate you all and thank you for giving us hope and providing financial assistance during our time of need.

— Disabled Army SFC **”**
Lima Pula

Veterans Disabled Fighting Radical Islamic Terrorists Desperately Need Your Help This Summer

While many of us look forward to summer as a time for fun and relaxation, the warmer months can be difficult ones for veterans severely disabled in the War on Terror. Heat intensifies the pain of burns and scars, irritates sores caused by prosthetic limbs, and causes debilitating headaches.

And just as crushing as the physical pain is financial pain. For some families it's the quiet pain of not being able to take their kids on vacation or send them to summer camp. Other military families are struggling to put food on the table with the kids home from school, or facing

electricity cutoffs that would leave them without air conditioning in sweltering heat.

With these urgent needs, we're eager to rush emergency financial aid to every wounded hero who needs it. But with many supporters on vacation and not reading their mail, fundraising suffers – increasing the suffering of our disabled heroes when they're most vulnerable.

So as you relax and enjoy your summer, please don't forget the American heroes who gave so much to defend the land we love. Because without their painful sacrifices, you and I might not be free to enjoy the America we know and love!

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Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

As a faithful donor you know the Coalition is the preeminent group providing direct financial aid to wounded veterans when they return from the combat zones. For many of them our help is a Godsend because they typically must wait months until they receive their government pensions. In the meantime, they still have to pay the rent, make the car payment, and put food on the table. We also conduct programs to help them readjust to the civilian sector and find worthwhile employment in the private sector.

In addition, we work with hundreds of veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress (PTS). You have no doubt heard on the news that suicide rates among young veterans are soaring, and much of that has to do with PTS. We spend a good bit of time counselling veterans in distress who are considering suicide. I personally have devoted much of my time to this because we are a small organization and when those calls of desperation come in, I want to make sure they are not put on hold or diverted into voice mail.

We actually have had significant success in this effort. I believe that much of the time, if not most of the time, these distressed veterans just need someone to talk to, someone to listen to their pain. The reality is that a great part of the wounds borne by these young patriots are not missing limbs or lingering shrapnel wounds, but rather wounds to the spirit. They have seen things no one should ever have to see, and suffered wounds no one should have to suffer. It takes a toll.

Despite the critical nature of our work, these are hard times for most charities, with many people anxious about the economy and changing tax laws. Adding to the Coalition's unique fundraising challenges, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are not commanding much news attention these days and hence many people believe the need we serve is no longer important. In reality, we are still fighting terrorism in at least 80 countries around the world, and there are still many young Americans being killed and wounded. Unfortunately, the global War on Terror is far from over. All around the world thousands of radical activists are indoctrinating a new generation of terrorists committed to destroying our way of life.

With these battles to fight every day -- battles for the lives of our disabled heroes, and for the attention and generosity of the patriotic Americans who make our work possible -- I'm more grateful than ever for faithful friends like you who never tire of doing good. Your compassion and generosity fill my heart with gratitude for the goodness of the American people and the values we together hold dear. I'm honored to have the support of generous, caring friends like you who are saving the lives of American veterans who desperately need our help.

With gratitude,



David W. Walker
President & CEO





20 Veterans a Day: Fighting the Scourge of Veteran Suicide

“I was almost a widow because of a war in his mind.” *One veteran wife’s story of the battle against suicide*

“I have been married to my veteran/hero for nearly 12 years ... 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.”

One night at work she received a text message from her husband telling her he loved her but there was something wrong with him and he needed to leave to give her what was best for her and the kids ... a chance “to find someone not broken.” At the same time she received a phone call from her husband’s Platoon Sergeant telling her to go to the hospital -- her husband had tried to overdose. She describes the hurt, fear, and

confusion she felt in that moment:

“This was a good day I had thought when I left for work. 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 [20] 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.”

Suicide Epidemic Takes Heavy Toll on Active Duty Military, Veterans, and Family Members

In 2018 the U.S. military experienced its highest number of suicides among active-duty troops in six years. 321 active-duty members took their lives during the year, including 57 Marines, 68 sailors, 58 airmen, and 138 soldiers.

The deaths equal the total number of active-duty personnel who died by suicide in 2012, the record since the services began closely tracking the issue in 2001.

From 1999 to 2016 the suicide rate among active-duty troops doubled to nearly 22 per 100,000 service members. Navy Captain Mike Colston, Department of Defense (DoD) mental health director, called it the

DoD’s “biggest public health problem.”

Suicide is an epidemic among the veteran community, as well. Statistics show as many as 20 veterans commit suicide each day. Recent government reports show that 530 veterans in Texas died by suicide in 2016 alone -- a suicidal likelihood double that of the general population. A recent troubling trend of “parking lot suicides” has seen veterans traveling to VA hospitals to commit suicide.

To contact the Veterans Crisis Line, veterans, service members or their families can call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1.



Coalition Awards \$10,000 Grant to Farmer Who Feeds Veterans

Coalition President & CEO David Walker recently caught up with veteran Peter Scott, founder of Fields 4 Valor Farms in Brandywine, Maryland. We presented Peter with a \$10,000 grant, the third such grant we've provided to Peter during his time in operation.

Peter expanded his operation last year and now anticipates he can serve up to 40 veteran families to ease the financial burden of transitioning to civilian life. Fields 4 Valor expects to be providing healthy foods to approximately 140 veteran families within a few years!



Coalition President & CEO David Walker (right) presents a Coalition grant check to Fields 4 Valor Farms founder, veteran Peter Scott, and farm operations manager, Antoinette LaForce.

David Walker named to the HillVets 100 of 2018

Coalition President David Walker was honored to be named to the very prestigious HillVets 100 of 2018. HillVets also recognized the Coalition as one of a select few "Non-Profits on Fire."

HillVets is a community of veterans, service members, and their supporters interested in governance, international affairs, policy, and politics. The organization strives to open doors for its members and to provide them with contacts, education and resources to continue positive career progression.

The award is just the latest recognition of the work being done by the outstanding team at the Coalition -- which includes everyone from the Board of Directors to the part-time staff working with our Heroes Thanking Heroes program. Our improvements and advancements over the last several years are bearing fruit, and this is another proud moment for all of us -- including generous donors like **you!**

Coalition President Receives Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition

Coalition President & CEO David Walker was honored to receive Congressional Recognition from Virginia Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton for dedicated service to America's veterans.

We are so appreciative to Congresswoman Wexton for her kind letter commending David and the Coalition, which reads in part:

Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition

Presented to

David Walker

*For dedicated service to America's veterans with the
Coalition to Salute America's Heroes*

"Your efforts have impacted hundreds of families including increasing the amount of emergency assistance to our nation's wounded and disabled veterans ... You are an example of service to our nation for our great Commonwealth for the next generation of leaders."

This recognition is really for **YOU** and our other patriotic supporters. On behalf of our severely wounded veterans around the nation, Thank You!

Heroes Thanking Heroes (HTH): Part of the Coalition's Unique Mission!

Veteran unemployment. Caregivers being dropped from VA support program. Rise in veteran homelessness. Skyrocketing veteran divorce rate. Veteran Suicide. THESE topics should be in the headlines with a national cry for support – but they barely get a mention.

Did you know that our Heroes Thanking Heroes Program helps directly and indirectly with all of these issues and more? Out of thousands of veteran service organizations across the country, the Coalition is the only one with a flexible, remote employment program for wounded veterans, spouses, and caregivers to help give them a mission, financial support, and self worth!

Here's how one of our HTH representatives describes the significant value of the HTH program:

“The Coalition has given me a part-time job with the Heroes Thanking Heroes program. The little extras aren't as hard to handle and I can assist my Love through those hard days and nights with a little more ease. I have great flexible hours, so I am still able to help him to all appointments.

I have to say, while I am working it is like no other job I've had so far. It has become more of a blessing than just the pay. Speaking with those who have been so generous gives my heart a little extra strength just by hearing how much they care and support my family and millions of others!

I have now worked with the Coalition for four years. What began as a temporary part-time job to help us get back on our feet has become a full-time life changing experience and a forever-expanding extended family.”

— HTH representative & veteran spouse Lacy Mullen

The Lifesaving Power of Your Donation How You're Helping War on Terror Veterans and Family Members Battle Depression, Suicide, and Post-Traumatic Stress

For veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress (PTS) and accompanying feelings of depression and suicidal thoughts, financial troubles can often be the “straw that breaks the camel's back” and drives them to do the unthinkable. Already burdened by PTS or debilitating physical issues, the prospect of losing their home or watching their children go hungry is just too much to bear.

That's where your gift and the helping hand of the Coalition come in.

Another way we're working to help the military community is through a new Coalition initiative: the Coalition Caregiver Alliance, whose mission is to improve the quality of life for the caregivers of our nation's combat-wounded veterans. We will guide caregivers through all services available while identifying and filling gaps in those services, and work

with like-minded veterans service organizations, government agencies, and community initiatives to assure that the needs of caregivers are being met, both privately and publicly.

The key to our success will be strengthening the care and compassion caregivers share with each other, and doing all we can to support them -- while partnering with faithful friends like you to lighten their load!

We are so grateful for your generosity, which is truly lifesaving for disabled veterans fighting the demon of PTS and feeling desperate and forgotten. Your giving reminds them they are not alone – and that a grateful nation remembers their sacrifice.





Simplify Your Life & Let Your Gift Do MORE for Our Veterans: *Become a Coalition Partner for Heroes Today!*

Streamline your giving and make your gift go further by becoming a Coalition **Partners 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.

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.



- ★ 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

Please, become a Partner for Heroes today. It’s easy to enroll -- just see your enclosed reply 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.

What Kind of Person Are You? Choose Your Legacy Today!

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

— President Abraham Lincoln

By leaving a charitable bequest to the Coalition, you help care for those who “have borne the battle” to defend our country, our freedom, and our families. Your past generosity has already proven your commitment to helping America’s disabled War on Terror veterans. Don’t you want to continue that legacy of patriotism and support long after you’re gone?

Your legacy gift to the Coalition in any amount is more than a donation; it’s an investment in your ongoing commitment to our heroes. **To talk about how to make a gift annuity, or to donate stocks, bonds, property, or insurance, email us at info@saluteheroes.org or call (703) 348-9914.** Now is the time to call – don’t wait!

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 Generosity in Action!

We are so grateful for your faithful support – and so are the veterans severely disabled in the global War on Terror. It's important to us to keep you updated on the practical and immediate ways your gift helps our heroes. Because we put your gifts to work in a very real way to help American heroes facing very real problems.

Whether they needed “just” \$419.31 to keep the lights on, or \$2,500.00 to avoid eviction, together we changed the lives of the heroes listed below. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to helping our disabled veterans, penny by penny, dollar by dollar, to make sure they don't lose their homes, go hungry, or face another financial disaster.



Marine Lance Corporal James M. from Boise, Idaho, suffers from post-traumatic stress (PTS) after serving in Iraq. He desperately needed \$300.00 to buy food for his family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$300.00

Retired Army Captain Abraham K. from Kansas is an amputee as a result of his service in Afghanistan. He asked for \$419.31 to pay past-due utility bills.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$419.31

Amanda F., an active-duty Army Staff Sergeant from Oak Harbor, Washington, suffers from PTS after serving in Iraq. She desperately needed \$731.30 for car payments.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$731.30

Retired Marine Sergeant Steven W. from Houston, Texas, suffers from PTS after serving in the global War on Terror. He asked us for \$1,037.66 for car expenses and utility bills.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,037.66

Retired Army Sergeant Lindsey P. from New Caney, Texas, suffers from post-traumatic stress after serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,507.76 for car payments.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,507.76

Army Sergeant James B. from Miami, Florida, was medically retired due to disabilities from serving in Afghanistan. He called asking for \$1,537.00 to pay his rent.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,537.00

Army Sergeant Thomas C. from Savannah, Georgia, was medically retired due to PTS after serving in Afghanistan. He needed \$1,623.44 for mortgage payments.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,623.44

Army Sergeant Daniel E. from Largo, Florida, was disabled while serving our country in Iraq. He called asking for \$2,500.00 to pay his rent.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$2,500.00

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



Your Generosity Helped These Heroes During their Darkest Hours

America's veterans of the global War on Terror experienced horrors on the battlefield -- and many returned home only to face a new nightmare. As General Lloyd J. Austin III said, "Suicide is the toughest enemy I have faced in my 37 years in the Army." The stories below come from disabled heroes who served our country bravely ... but struggled to face down the demons of post-traumatic stress (PTS) and financial despair when they returned home. I hope their stories of hope and the saving power of your patriotic donations, inspire you to give generously again!

Veteran Gregory G. reached out to us for help, describing the "black hole" of anxiety and depression into which his financial struggles were sending him. In an email he wrote:

"Electric is going to be shut off here and I have balance in electric that on top of [the] normal bill I pay \$109 extra each month to pay down the balance. **I'm struggling and things are getting tough.** I'm gonna be seen for depression and anxiety issues I was diagnosed with. And have still heard nothing about SSDI or my VA rating being changed which when that happens if it does I would be [in] a better place financially wise. **Which is a huge part of my depression and separation of friends and family and keeping to myself in a dark hole. I feel like I'm failing my children and family because of the constant struggle of money each month trying to make ends meet."**

After we helped Greg, he wrote back: "Thank you so much for helping lift the troubles and struggles I am having ... I can't express the amount of thankfulness and gratitude for all the help during these ... bumps in the road during my recovery."

One particularly heartbreaking email we received came from disabled veteran Michael C. He wrote, "On December 22 my wife announced to the family, including my kids, that she was leaving us. **Later that day I tried to kill myself but I couldn't even do that right. I swallowed a bunch of pills and woke up in the hospital with my kids laying next to me ...** 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... Still, I cannot believe that this is happening and I cannot believe I tried to kill myself and add to the statistic but I was in that bad of a place."

After we helped him with emergency financial aid, Mike wrote us again, the simple relief clear in his words: "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."

Tracey, wife of disabled veteran Matthew I., described to us his battle against suicidal thoughts: "I was afraid we were going to lose him. **I had nightmares about finding him hanging from a rope.** I just about lost it. . . . I never thought that Matt could or would be one of the [20 veterans who commits suicide every day] until I found the goodbye letters. My world came crashing down."

After we helped their family Matt and Tracey told us: "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."

If you or a loved one need assistance, please email us at info@saluteheroes.org. If facing an eviction, a shut-off of utility services or an emergency need due to a natural disaster, please call our emergency hotline at 703-291-4605 and choose option 110 to speak with a Case Manager.