



The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 74 ★ Christmas 2019

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

“Not knowing how we were going to have a Christmas for our children or even groceries this gift came as a miracle. Now our children will have a Christmas to remember complete with a turkey for dinner. This completes our peace at Christmas.”

— The Ross Family



How Your Generosity Brings Christmas Cheer to Wounded Heroes

It's the most wonderful time of the year ... unless you're a disabled veteran who's afraid he won't be able to keep a roof over his family's head this Christmas, let alone put a present or two under the tree for his child.

That's why your generosity is more important than ever at this time of year. Because (I know you agree): No

veteran who put his life and his future on the line defending America from terrorists should face homelessness and hunger at Christmastime, with no hope of holiday cheer.

So I'm counting on your help to make this “the most wonderful time of the year” for America's wounded warriors and their families. Your giving turns fear, despair, and hopelessness into JOY through holiday gift checks – helping avert the foreclosures, evictions, and utility disconnections that could otherwise leave brave disabled veterans homeless or without heat in the dead of winter.

Thank you – and Merry Christmas!

Inside Your Road to Recovery Report:

Letter from President David Walker
page 2

Coalition News: Your Giving in Action Helping Heroes Around the Nation!
page 3

Salute to a Special Hero: Brie Entralgo
page 4

An Easy Way to Help MORE Veterans in 2020
page 6

By the Numbers: Your Generosity at Work
page 7

Christmas Thank You from Grateful Heroes
page 8



Letter from President David Walker

Board of Directors

Chief Master Sergeant Stephen Page*
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
Chairman of the Board

Colonel Charles Bogle*
U.S. Army (Ret.)
Vice Chairman

Bruce Kelly*
Secretary & Treasurer

Tom Sircher*
Chairman Emeritus

David W. Walker
President & Chief Executive Officer

Matthew Cary*
Director

*Independent Voting Board Member

Ambassador Corps

Major General John K. Singlaub
U.S. Army (Ret.)
Chairman

Sgt. First Class Dana Bowman
U.S. Army (Ret.)

David Wetherell
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Staff Sergeant J.D. Williams
U.S. Army (Ret.)

Master Sergeant Leroy Petry
U.S. Army (Ret.)
Medal of Honor recipient

Senior Airman Daniel Acosta
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Jack Scalia

Bonnie S. Tyrrell

Jimmy Gunn

Jeff Senour

Field Management Team

Donny Daughenbaugh
U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)
Vice President, Field Operations

Mary Jessie Herrera
U.S. Army (Ret.)
Field Representative, West

Jorge De Leon
U.S. Army (Ret.)
National Spokesperson

Shilo Harris
U.S. Army (Ret.)
National Spokesperson

Colonel Martin L. Badegian
U.S. Army Reserve (Ret.)
Special Projects Officer



Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

History records that after the famous Battle of the Armada in 1588, Queen Elizabeth I ordered her ships to remain at sea for months. There was no military reason – only an economic one. Had the ships come ashore, all those military personnel would expect to be paid; but, given the deplorable living conditions on the ships, every passing day at sea meant hundreds more would die, reducing the demands on the Queen’s treasury. (There was no financial reward in those days for soldiers and sailors who died on duty.) When they finally made it to land, the force was greatly diminished and Her Royal Highness saved a lot of cash.

Today we live in a somewhat more enlightened age, and our wounded veterans returning from the War on Terror can count on financial assistance from the government. But still, it takes Uncle Sam a while to process all the paperwork – during which time our vets are on their own. That was and remains a major thrust of this organization – to help wounded veterans bridge the gap between active service and disability retirement.

Sadly, even when the government benefits come through, they rarely amount to more than survival wages. And disabled veterans are rarely able to shift quickly into the private sector. In fact, many of them entered the service at a young age with little or no experience in the private sector. Anyone who has made the transition from the military to the civilian world can tell you they are two different worlds – each with its own unique challenges.

While we welcome the slowdown in combat and a declining flow of wounded veterans returning to our country, we find an increased challenge helping the wounded (especially those with PTSD) adapt to the civilian workforce and surmount their impediments. Because we have spent the past several years supporting wounded veterans, it is only natural those still struggling to adapt would call on us for help – and that we respond to this task with no slowdown in sight.

In a similar vein, the plight of caretakers – the spouses and others who take care of wounded veterans – is one that demands our attention. The VA provides some financial support to some caretakers, but there are periodic efforts within government to reduce it or cut it off. We are in the first line of defense against these efforts; we have formed the Caretakers Alliance with other groups to provide a forum for supporting caretakers and defending their already limited government support. Subsequently, we have also formed our own Veteran’s Caregiver Alliance to provide support for those who care for our nation’s severely wounded servicemen and women. (Read more on page 5 of your newsletter.)

In sum, the Coalition has much on its plate in addition to providing direct financial aid to wounded veterans returning from the battlefields. We have much work to do and thanks to you, we are doing it. Your support is vital to our work. My plea to you today is not to forget our War on Terror veterans – and their struggles – as you celebrate the holidays with your friends and family. Working together we can continue to provide these heroes the aid and support they deserve, in 2020 and beyond.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at the Coalition!

Gratefully yours,

David W. Walker
President & CEO





Donors Providing Scholarships to Severely Disabled Veterans

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes continues to make long-term investments in wounded warriors – especially in regard to their education. One such investment is a “fellowship” grant program that provides funding to wounded veterans who are now enrolled in graduate level education programs at the University of Notre Dame and a handful of other universities. We are providing financial support to Staff Sergeant Luis Morales (U.S. Army, Ret.) and Medical Specialist Jayme Hentig (U.S. Army, Ret.) at a critical time when they are completing requisite studies to earn their degrees.

Luis is one year away from earning his Ph.D. in physics. “Not bad for a guy who cleaned guns for four years,” the self-deprecating Luis said. As for Jayme, he traces his interest in neuro stem cell regeneration research to his own brain injuries incurred in an explosion in Afghanistan when he was deployed there. He suffered a traumatic brain injury and a leg injury as well as cognitive issues that still require continuing therapy for post-

traumatic stress. Jayme is seeking a Ph.D. in “bio regen” therapies. If all goes as planned, by the time you read this, he will be leading a national effort focused on brain imaging and stem cell research -- made possible in part by the Coalition’s fellowship grant and the generous support of patriotic Americans like **you!**



Coalition President David Walker recently met with Luis and Jayme to hear firsthand about their studies and the importance that the Coalition’s fellowship grants are to their studies. This is a wonderful investment in the future of our country, and an affirmation of the potential of wounded veterans to contribute to society on many levels. We tip our hats to Luis and Jayme and wish them the best in achieving their goals.

Your Coalition Considered for Distinguished Service Award



The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes was selected as a finalist for the Distinguished Service Awards Veteran Service Organization Award by Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce! The Distinguished Service Awards honors individuals, companies, and

non-profit organizations for their service to veterans in the Greater Washington business region. By doing so it recognizes those making major contributions to help veterans succeed. This is really a tribute to **you** and our other caring supporters of our severely wounded servicemembers.

Thanks for Helping to Feed Military Families in Colorado!

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes is proud to have taken part as a sponsor in this awesome collaboration at Colorado State University-Pueblo! We were able to supply many military families in the southern CO area with a generous supply of food, home goods & essential items!

The Coalition had representatives on site including our Special Projects Officer Col. Martin Badegian (Ret.) & Board Member, Col. Charles Bogle (Ret.). Thank you to all the volunteers and everyone involved in doing their part to support the veteran community -- including you, our generous and patriotic donor!



The Veterans Crisis Line

You can call 800-273-8255 option 1 or Text 838255 or Chat at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/> and select Confidential Veterans Chat. Please share

this number with any Caregivers who you think needs assistance: 1-855-260-3274. Caregivers can also call this number if they just need someone to talk to.



Coalition's One-of-a-Kind Program Helps Veterans Rebuild Lives

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

(HTH) Program helps directly and indirectly with all of these issues and more? Among the 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!

Caregiver Describes 'Emotional Roller Coaster' of Caring for Husband Forever Changed by Injury in Afghanistan

With No One to Turn to, Coalition 'Seemed Like a Miracle to Me'

Our disabled veterans are heroes -- and so are the caregivers who juggle jobs, families, and disability support day in and day out. These are the deserving families you're helping through the HTH program. Here, one caregiver and HTH employee -- Brie Entralgo -- tells her family's story in her own words.



My name is Brie, and through fate I became a caregiver to a wounded warrior. I played the part of caregiver for nine years before ever coming to terms with the role -- and I never quite figured out that what I was doing had a name until recently.

My husband is a combat veteran who served three tours, two in Iraq and one in Afghanistan spanning between 2005-2011. As an OIF/OEF veteran, my spouse and I are blessed with countless resources at our disposal. To say we are fortunate is a complete understatement.

Enlisting in the Army at age 17, fresh out of high school with his GED, my husband set out to serve his country. At 19, he had his first child and married for the first time. We have been together for eleven years now, with three amazing and beautiful children (and a whole LOT of ups downs and in-betweens along the road.) I know our story is not uncommon... and I find peace knowing I am not alone.

In 2011, outside Kandahar, my husband's platoon came under heavy fire. I do not believe I will ever know the extent of this horrific scene. What I do know is that this moment would forever change the carefree, naïve (as he calls his former self) soul I once knew.

As an outsider looking in, I can say that these men and women endure and face firsthand unspeakable human destruction on a cellular level, and are forever changed moving forward.

Speaking of moving forward -- adjustment into

civilian life has been anything but "the recommended process" and lacked transition altogether. An emotional rollercoaster of the disability process, seeking veteran communities, losing our home, and moving state-to-state left us in emotional disarray. It may have taken almost seven years post-service but I can finally say, with a sigh of relief, that I think I can see some light. I think we are going to be okay, and I think we are beginning to find "our tribe."

[About a year ago], we were facing an electric bill that was roughly 80% of our rent payment. We had gone seven weeks not paying an already large bill from the last month of summer, on top of having moved and needing to put down an additional deposit. It was nearly going to be shut off weeks before Thanksgiving. We had no one to turn to and no idea how we were going to keep the electricity on in our home.

I was introduced to the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes as the very first and only veteran organization we had ever used or known of. I was in absolute awe that something like this even existed -- to support veteran families who are struggling. This seemed like a miracle to me.

After receiving the assistance for our electric bill, I dug into the Coalition's website to learn more. I came upon the Heroes Thanking Heroes program by chance and something called me to keep looking. I quickly typed up an email and submitted the necessary documents. Ten months later I received a phone call. I don't typically answer numbers that I don't recognize, but I decided to answer the call -- and I am so glad I did. I knew right away the purpose of the call, and I was instantly given a renewed sense of purpose and a priceless opportunity to personally thank the people of our country who selflessly give to support families like yours and mine. I am honored to add this experience to my journey.

New Coalition Program Aims to Rescue ‘Burned Out’ Caregivers

Your giving reminds them they are not alone in their battle

As Coalition President David Walker shared in his letter to you on page 2 of your newsletter, the Coalition is committed to a critical new way we’re working to help the military community. The issues threatening military caregivers -- stress, burnout, and loss of critical benefits -- desperately demand the attention of dedicated patriots like you, who understand how important the health and well-being of veteran caregivers is to our veteran families.

The mission of the **Veteran’s Caregiver Alliance (VCA)** 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. 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. Membership benefits include discounts to national retailers, access to caregiver resources, caregiver & family support programs, mental health and suicide prevention, and more.

We are so grateful for your generosity, which is improving the quality of life for the caregivers of our nation’s combat-wounded veterans. Your giving reminds them they are not alone in their battle -- and that a grateful nation remembers their sacrifice and is supporting them every step of the way.



“*I was struggling trying to find a real balance between being my husband’s caregiver and being his wife. Then I read about a condition known as ‘caregiver burnout’ and realized that is what was happening to me! I was so burned out by caring for J.D. and Kaelyn that I had forgotten to take care of myself! Just when I felt like I was at the end of my rope, I discovered an organization filled with people just like me.*”

— Ashlee Williams,
wife of triple amputee Army veteran Sgt. J.D. Williams

Be on the Lookout for Letters from Our New Chairman CMSgt. Stephen Page

Some time ago now we shared with you that our beloved Major General John K. Singlaub would be stepping back from some of his responsibilities at the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes. We’ve been fortunate that Major General Singlaub has remained faithfully involved in the good work of the Coalition, and since then you’ve continued to receive updates from him on how your generosity is helping disabled War on Terror veterans with emergency financial aid, holiday meals, Christmas presents, and more.

These days, as Major General Singlaub continues to scale back his involvement with the Coalition, and enjoy retirement, we’d like to share with you that more of our communication with you will be coming



**Major General
John K. Singlaub
U.S. Army (Ret.)**



**Chief Master Sgt.
Stephen Page
U.S. Air Force (Ret.)**

(continued on page 6)



Your Generosity Helps Save Veterans' Marriages

Innovative Project Offers Weekend Getaways for Wounded Heroes & Spouses

In early November the Coalition sponsored its third annual Heroes Freedom Weekend (HFW) to strengthen marriages in our veteran community. Veteran couples gathered for four days in historic colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, to bond with their spouses, build veteran friendships and tour some of our country's most famous historic and honored landmarks.

A major goal of HFW is preventing divorces within our wounded veteran community and by doing so, preventing the desperation that occurs when a family crumbles around them -- often leading to the tragedy of veteran depression and suicide.

These events give wounded veteran couples the opportunity to have a marriage building experience together, surrounded by other veteran couples and without the kids, and give these marriages tools to help strengthen it by exploring communication, conflict resolution, and situation de-escalation -- all made possible by kind, patriotic friends like you! Thanks to corporate donations and the generosity of caring Americans like you, the Coalition was able to provide round-trip transportation and cover all program costs, accommodations, food, entrance fees, and tours for the couples attending.



These photos were taken at last year's Heroes Freedom Weekend event in New York City. Look for photos from our 2019 event in a future newsletter!

Chairman CMSgt. Stephen Page *(continued from page 5)*

from the Coalition's new Chairman of the Board, Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt.) Stephen Page, U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

A few months ago we asked you to join us in welcoming CMSgt. Page to our Coalition family. We've been extremely fortunate to have him working side-by-side with us to support our unique mission, and we look forward to sharing his commitment and vision for the Coalition with you directly. Page's heart for our disabled heroes is evident in the words he once shared with a young combat-injured Airman, who remembers CMSgt. Page telling him, "When you're physically weak, I'll carry you on my back if necessary."

In addition to his personal dedication to helping our heroes, Page's career (both as an Airman and as a veteran) has been characterized by distinction that makes us proud to have him as a vital part of the Coalition team. He

earned the distinction of the *Air Force Times's* Airman of the Year award just before his retirement in 2008, and was hand-selected as program manager for the first-ever Air Force Recovery Care Coordination Program for Wounded, Ill & Injured Airmen and their families, a program which provides a comprehensive non-medical case management system to ensure Airmen and their families can return to their "new normal" in the recovery and rehabilitation process. He currently serves as the Financial Coaching Program Manager for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, providing financial coaching services to veterans and economically vulnerable communities in 60 locations across the U.S.

CMSgt. Page will be sharing important updates with special Coalition friends like you in the near future, so be sure to watch your mailbox for his letters!



By the Numbers: Your Generosity in Action!

As you read in your page 2 letter from Coalition President David Walker, our emergency financial aid program is at the heart of our mission to serve veterans who were severely disabled in the War on Terror – and are now struggling to make ends meet.

The Coalition receives requests for help from veterans with all kinds of financial burdens. In 2019 (through September 2019), our disabled veterans' top three categories of need have been housing (\$175,905.87), car payments (\$55,023.75), and electric (\$20,993.97). Food and utility bills are other frequent areas of need.

And it's your generous giving that allows us to respond quickly and generously to help our heroes in need. Your gift to the Coalition goes to work right away to help a severely disabled veteran facing financial disaster – and is especially critical during the holidays and cold winter months. The list below highlights a handful of heroes who recently asked us for help – and whose lives we were able to change together.



Army Staff Sergeant Dustin P. from Fort Worth, Texas, suffers from PTSD after serving in Afghanistan. Dustin, who has three young sons, desperately needed just \$179.00 to pay his electric bill and keep the lights on in his home.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$179.00

Army Specialist Cedric A. from Cincinnati, Ohio, suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. Cedric, who has a six-year-old daughter, asked for \$500.00 to buy food and gas.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$500.00

Paralyzed Marine veteran Paul M. from San Diego, California served in Iraq. He needed \$2,500.00 to cover the mortgage on his home.

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

Army Staff Sergeant Jermaine W. from Houston, Texas, suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. He desperately needed \$995.00 to pay his rent and avoid eviction.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$995.00

Army veteran Randolph W. from Port St. Lucie, Florida, suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. He desperately needed \$1,516.65 to pay the mortgage on his home he shares with his wife and six children.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,516.65

Army Sergeant Latasha C. from Ridgeland, Missouri, suffers from PTSD after serving in the global War on Terror. Latasha, who has three young children, called us urgently asking for \$1,800.00 to pay her rent and buy food for her family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,800.00

If you or a loved one need assistance, please email us at info@saluteheroes.org. If you are 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.

How You Can Leave a Legacy of Generosity & Patriotism

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

— President Ronald Reagan

By leaving a charitable bequest to the Coalition, you help secure freedom by caring for those who went to war to defend our country, our freedom, and our families. Your past generosity has 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.



Coalition's Family of Supporters Have Huge Impact at Christmas

'When I received your check it reminded me that God is good and he didn't forget me'

It's nearly impossible to enjoy the holidays when you're worried about losing your home ... having your heat shut off in the dead of winter ... or watching your children go hungry. But that's exactly what the disabled War on Terror veterans whose names are below were experiencing last Christmas ... before the Coalition and generous friends like you stepped in to help. I hope these heartfelt words of thanks inspire you to give again and help more struggling heroes this holiday season!

"I would like to thank [Coalition donors] for this unexpected Christmas gift. I will be putting it towards filling up my propane tank for my house as it is desperately low and was actually struggling to come up with a way to fill it as well as buying Christmas presents for my family. Thank you so very much."

– Disabled veteran Jason S.

"Thank you to everyone at [the Coalition to] Salute America's Heroes. I was truly amazed to get the Secret Santa Gift. Since being retired in 2014, I am now battling cancer for the third time and unable to work. The gift will make Christmas for my family a memorable one. God bless each of you."

– Disabled veteran Daryl J.

"So there I was, rifling through the mail, sighing heavily at the bills and the constant stress of balancing which overdue bill to pay while still putting food on the table and gas into the car... By the second week of December my girls knew we didn't have enough money for life and Christmas presents. As I rifled, I saw a letter -- not a bill -- peeking out at me. Unsure of its contents, I opened it ... a check for \$500. Overwhelmed with surprise and immediate gratitude, I cried and cried on the steps. You saved us and my daughters and I are eternally grateful for the assistance."

– Disabled veteran Rose F.

"Yesterday I opened my mail and found a gift from you in the amount of \$500. The gift could not have come at a better time. I had two cars in the mechanic shop and I didn't have any money to pay for the repairs. So when I received your check it reminded me that God is good and he didn't forget me. He used you to remind me of that by sending me a gift from you. It's moments like this that reminds me of the wonderful country and people who are there for veterans. It's moments like this that made it worth it to serve in the military and combat."

– Disabled veteran Anthony P.

"I opened your letter today and was in complete shock. There are no words to express my gratitude ... It's been nine years since I returned from Afghanistan and every day is harder and harder than the last. This year has been a VERY humbling experience for me. The check for \$500 is exactly what can help me right now. I still am not ahead to be able to buy Christmas gifts for the family, but I am able to pay my rent in full on January 1st, which to me just made my whole month."

– Disabled veteran Howard S.

Coalition Accredited by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance

The Coalition is accredited by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance, which highlights our excellence in leadership, finances, and mission-driven work. We are proud to meet all 20 BBB Charity Standards! Learn more by searching for "Coalition to Salute America's Heroes" at www.give.org.



give.org
Meets all 20 BBB
Charity Standards