



January, 2020

Open Letter to Donors

The Bible says there will always be wars and rumors of wars, and so it is. Our military people are out there thousands of miles from home all around the world defending our interests. The death toll today is less than a few years ago, but we still lost about 20 of our heroes last year. Many more come home wounded – missing arms and legs and suffering from post-traumatic stress because they have been in the firing line for too long. The volunteer military means that fewer people must serve, but those few bear an extraordinary burden.

In other words, our work is not done – or even nearly done. The grim reality is that the terrorists – the Taliban, al-Qaeda, ISIS and other assorted groups – are still very much in the field wreaking death and havoc around the world. This is war without end – something new in our history. Previous generations of Americans have fought bloody wars but they tended to be short, at least compared to what we're dealing with today. World War II lasted several years, but from the time our soldiers stormed ashore in Normandy on June 6, 1944, until Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945, was less than a year.

By contrast, the War on Terrorism that launched on September 11, 2001, has gone on for 18 years and counting. The hard truth is that this war is by no means winding down; it is expanding. We are currently fighting terrorists in 80 nations on six continents. This war is not just being waged by the Pentagon which has spent \$1.9 trillion during that time. The State Department has spent \$127 billion to train police, military and border patrol agents in many countries, and to develop antiterrorism education programs. The 80 nations participating in our war against terrorism include 40 military bases, 65 counterterrorism training facilities, 26 U.S. military exercises, 14 with troops actively engaged in combat and 7 where we manage air and drone strikes.

Today our forces – that includes U.S. Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard – but also agents of other federal and state agencies working under cover, identifying threats and dealing with such threats. They all need and deserve our support. We all hope and pray that the casualty lists will disappear, but there is no end in sight. The wounded may not command as much media exposure today but they are still coming home with missing limbs and broken spirits. They often must wait weeks or months for the benefits they have earned and need. We remain one of the few organizations available to fill that void in addition to helping wounded veterans cope with post-traumatic stress and acquire useful employment in the private sector.

This year we have launched something new – a Caregivers Alliance – along with other organizations to provide support to the legions of caregivers who dedicate their lives to our wounded warriors. Most of these caregivers are spouses of wounded warriors many of whom bear extraordinary burdens caring for their husbands who are unable to work, taking care of the kids, paying the bills and otherwise keeping their families together. They need and deserve all the support they can get.

Everyone here at the Coalition is devoted to serving those who bear the burden of our freedom, and we will continue to do so for as long as we have your support. Without your support we would have to close our doors. Please let us know if you have questions about our work. Today, as always, we – and the veterans we serve -- depend on your support.

David W. Walker
President and Chief Executive Officer
Coalition to Salute America's Heroes