



The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 77 ★ March 2021

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



“My family and I benefited from emergency aid in a major way. My mortgage loan was paid for two months. I cannot thank you enough. It possibly saved my family and I from . . . losing my home.”

— Retired Army SGT Moses L.



Help the Coalition Feed Struggling Disabled Veterans This Easter!

As Easter quickly approaches, we're hard at work on our **Easter meals program**, sending checks for a special hot meal to America's disabled veterans this holiday season.

We've given War on Terror veterans the gift of an Easter meal for more than ten years now. But **your Easter gift is more important than ever this year** as the Coronavirus crisis causes an unprecedented number of these heroes to face food insecurity, or just forces them to tighten their belt a little more.

And the impact of our holiday meals

checks goes beyond “just” food on the table for our struggling veteran families! The gift of a special hot meal brightens the day for military families fighting to pay their bills and feed their families . . . and reminds our heroes that grateful Americans around the country haven't forgotten their sacrifices.

So 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 sacrificed so much – and who are relying on your help during this challenging time!

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Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

As I write to you, the Coronavirus pandemic continues to leave its deadly mark on our nation. Winter lingers in most of the country, including the Coalition’s headquarters in Northern, Virginia.

But my heart is still full from the good you and I did together to help our disabled heroes in 2020 – one of the most difficult years in recent memory.

An indicator of just how hard the effects of the pandemic hit our disabled War on Terror veterans can be seen in the **32% increase in the average monthly number of requests we received for food**, that most basic of human requirements. We saw an even greater increase (77%) in the average amount of emergency financial aid given, up from \$340 to \$602 at the beginning of the pandemic.

And today, calls to the Coalition continue to pour in. Catastrophically wounded veterans and their families are worried about their financial conditions and how they will pay their bills after losing their income due to COVID-19. The financial stress and social isolation along with lack of support have pushed many disabled veterans into a mental health crisis.

So it’s critical to remember that together we can help. We can make a real difference to real injured veterans in need. With your support, through our programs, we are providing real direct assistance to disabled veterans and their families facing crisis.

Take, for example, the email we received below from disabled veteran “Justin.” After we helped Justin’s family with a meals check last Easter, he wrote:

“With everything that’s happening in the world and how COVID-19 is affecting the nation, **this Easter card and check for \$60 will be used to ensure my family has the essentials to survive.** I feel very blessed to have someone donate a card and money to us. Thank you so much.”

I hope you’ll keep Justin’s words 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, especially when they need our help the most.

The needs are great; the process is simple; the gratitude is abundant – and your generosity is changing lives. And it only takes ONE person – YOU – to make one veteran’s day easier and life more hopeful!

Despite the pandemic and economic disruption, we continued our work uninterrupted last year. Today, our work is needed more than ever. Let us all recommit to our mission in good spirits, as together we look forward to better times ahead!

Gratefully yours,

David W. Walker
President & CEO





Your Gift is Making A Difference All Year Long! From Easter to Thanksgiving, Meals Brighten the Holidays for Severely Disabled Veterans

For a disabled veteran who’s struggling to pay the bills each month, the holidays can quickly become a time of stress and despair instead of joy – especially for veterans with young children. That’s where our **Easter and Thanksgiving Meals Projects** come in.

Your gift helps provide thousands of severely disabled veterans with \$60 to enjoy a holiday meal. For a military family struggling to put any food on the table, the gift of a special holiday dinner with all the trimmings provides

a welcome respite from desperate worry and the opportunity to enjoy time together as a family. Our meals projects are one 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 during the holidays.

Right now our 2021 Easter Meals Project is in full swing – and your help is urgently needed to make it a success! Read more about it in the enclosed letter from retired Major General Singlaub.



The Batchelor family enjoys a special holiday meal provided by the Coalition and donors like you!

Emergency Financial Aid Helps Rescue Veterans From Homelessness and Hunger

“If it wasn’t for your generosity I would be living on the streets. I am very grateful for your kindness and support.”

Our **Emergency Financial Aid program** is the bedrock of our mission to provide direct, immediate financial assistance to America’s veterans severely wounded in the War on Terror. And it’s made possible only by the generosity of patriotic Americans like you.

There are many reasons a disabled veteran may need our help.

The most common is the sluggish bureaucracy that keeps our heroes waiting long months for their first government disability check. The combination of delayed government benefits, crippling disabilities that keep veterans from being able to work, and spouses who serve as full-time caregivers too often spells disaster for struggling heroes.

Your donation to the Emergency

Financial Aid program is truly a lifeline to these severely disabled veterans. Your gift goes to work overnight to help a disabled veteran with everything from putting food on the table to keeping a roof over his family’s head . . . paying medical bills or keeping the lights on. But whatever the emergency might be, your gift will make all the difference to a wounded hero.



Your Holiday Generosity Provides Veterans’ Children with Presents “From Santa”

Another way we support our veterans is through our **Secret Santa and Christmas Angel Projects**. Generous donors like you chip in to provide \$500 Christmas gift checks, which we send to veterans who suffered severe, disabling injuries in the War on Terror – so they can give

their families a few Christmas presents.

Many severely disabled veterans 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. The Secret Santa Project gives these heroes a helping hand to make sure their kids get a few toys “from Santa!”



Salute to a Special Hero Army Veteran Curtis C.

My name is Justina C., and I have been a caregiver for my combat-wounded husband Curtis since 2014. We are a hard-core military family where the majority of those who have served have done so in the Army. **Serving our country in one way or another is at the heart of our family. It is who we are,** and neither Curtis nor myself could imagine another way.

On January 1, 2006, Curtis took a sniper round to the chest while out on patrol in Iraq. He was 38 years old and in the best shape of his life. Back then, flak jackets didn't have side armor, and that is where the bullet found its mark. **Curtis came home on life support.** Twice the flight crew had to land for emergency stops en route from Iraq due to him flat-lining and needing emergency surgery.

Curtis spent more than six months at Walter Reed Medical Center. He contracted a flesh-eating fungus from the bullet, adding to his many internal injuries. The fungus, along with multiple surgeries, probably would have killed him except for the grace of God and the great physical shape he was in when hit. **It is a miracle he is alive.**

In 2008, Curtis was medically discharged from the Army. **Losing his military career was a devastating blow.** The Army had been his family, heart, and soul for decades.

Curtis is a two-time Purple Heart recipient who, like many combat veterans, struggles with PTSD, TBI, depression, spine and joint disease, and survivor's guilt. Added to all of this is what is known as "moral injury." Being forced to see and do things that go against a moral code ingrained from church since infancy has taken its toll.

Recovery means something different for every person. There are certain areas where recovery isn't possible. Curtis was upgraded to traumatic brain disease (TBD) from a traumatic brain injury (TBI) in 2017. He will continue to decline and will need increased care as the years go by. I used to work full time in ministry. In 2017 Curtis's health issues forced me to quit my job and stay at home full time as his caregiver.



I heard about the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes in 2019 from a fellow caregiver. She encouraged me to apply for the Heroes Thanking Heroes (HTH) program. In September 2020, the Coalition brought me on board to work part time as an HTH representative. Being given the opportunity to supplement our income while keeping my resume current has been a huge blessing. **The Veterans' Circle has aided us by sending money for an Easter dinner and gave us groceries at Christmas. The aid from the Coalition has come at a time when we have most needed it.**

Curtis and I both know that our lives will continue to change, and **there will always be challenges to overcome. The key is to have a strong support network, and the Coalition has become part of ours.**



Coronavirus and the Coalition: A Look Back at 2020, and How You Can Help NOW!

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a dramatic increase in the number and amount of emergency financial aid requests. Through the generosity of supporters like you, we were able to help every veteran who reached out to us for help!

- 2020 brought a **29% increase in aid for home assistance** – mortgage, rent, foreclosures, insurance, and repairs – over 2019.
- We also saw a **30% increase in aid for utility payments** since the previous year.
- In the ten months following the COVID-19 outbreak, we saw a **32% increase in the average monthly number of requests for food**.
- In that same period **the average amount of emergency financial aid we sent to individual veterans rose 77%**.

Your continued generosity is needed now more than ever. Your giving allows us to continue helping these heroes throughout these unprecedented times during which they need our support more than ever!



Your Generosity Is Helping Keep Military Families From Going Hungry



The generosity of donors like you helped end the difficult year that was 2020 on a high note by providing special Thanksgiving meals checks to heroes in need. We received the following thank you messages from struggling disabled veterans we helped feed together:

“Thank You so much for the [\$60 meals check] for Thanksgiving. I am a disabled veteran and a single father of 6 kids. **Often my disability from the VA is barely enough to get us through the holidays.** This helped so much.” (Chris F.)

“Thank you for the \$60 gift. It really means a lot to me and my family to receive the unexpected needed help. I cannot express enough how grateful I am for this. **I really did not know what we were going to do for Thanksgiving.**” (Demetrius D.)

Food insecurity is a serious issue, especially as the coronavirus crisis continues. Through our **National Food Truck Program** the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes is doing its part to ensure military and veteran families are cared for by distributing boxes of non-perishable food and essential items. With the help of Blue Star Families of Missouri & Feed the Children, over 100 families were assisted in their latest drive-through event held on November 20 in Saint Robert, Missouri, outside Fort Leonard Wood. Despite the pandemic, the Coalition helped sponsor three of these events in 2020, providing food to thousands of struggling military families around the country. Currently, five of these important events are scheduled for 2021.





They Need Your Help Now More Than Ever – So In 2021, Resolve to Do More for Our Disabled Heroes

“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 are helping care for those who bore the battle 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.



Become a Partners for Heroes and Help MORE Veteran Heroes in 2021

The start of a new year is the perfect time to join **Partners for Heroes**, the Coalition’s monthly giving program – and enjoy the great benefits that make it as easy as possible to continue your faithful patriotic support for America’s heroes.

Best of all, Partners for Heroes is a simple and secure way you can make an even bigger difference for our struggling severely disabled veterans of the global War on Terror.

- ★ Your monthly donation is conveniently debited from your checking account or charged to your credit card each month, so you don’t have to spend time writing checks or searching for stamps.
- ★ We track your monthly giving; at the end of the year you receive a convenient statement of donations 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 continue sharing important program updates and newsletters like this one.)

- ★ You’re free to cancel your Partners for Heroes membership at any time.

Your monthly gift is life-changing in any amount – especially today, when more veterans than ever need our help because of the coronavirus crisis. Because when you’ve lost a limb and can’t work, or your spouse has quit his or her job to care for you as you battle PTSD, every dollar matters . . . and every minute counts when you’re facing homelessness or your child is going hungry.

So I hope you’ll become a **Partner for Heroes** today – to 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. To enroll, please see your enclosed reply form.



By the Numbers: Your Generosity in Action!

Emergency financial aid is at the heart of our mission to serve our struggling disabled War on Terror veterans – and these days, they need that help more than ever.

We've seen firsthand the impact the Coronavirus crisis has had on our heroes, including a 32% increase in the average monthly number of requests for food. No doubt about it: 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.

The list below highlights a handful of severely disabled veterans who recently asked us for help, so you can see the urgent and immediate ways your gift goes to work to help our heroes, penny by penny, and dollar by dollar.



Retired USMC Gunnery Sergeant Aaron M. from Jacksonville, North Carolina, suffers from PTSD after serving in Afghanistan. He desperately needed \$279.22 to pay his water and electric bills.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$279.22

Veteran Army Staff Sergeant Juan R. from Killeen, Texas, suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. He asked us for \$345.46 to pay his electric and water bills and keep the utilities from being disconnected in his home.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$345.46

Army Specialist Donald S. from Bay Springs, Mississippi, was medically discharged after serving in Iraq. Donald asked for \$500 to buy food and gas for his family.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$500.00

Retired USMC Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jerod M. from Cape Coral, Florida, suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. He desperately needed \$863.95 to buy food and keep his car from being repossessed.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$863.95

Army Corporal Jillian L. from Stone Mountain, Georgia, suffers from PTSD after serving in Afghanistan. She asked for assistance paying \$1,011.87 in past due electric bills.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,011.87

Honorably discharged after serving in the Army, Sergeant Reymundo H. from Snyder, Texas, suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) in Iraq. He desperately needed \$1,818.93 for his mortgage, utilities, and car payment.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$1,818.93

Army Specialist Amyan N. from Park Ridge, Illinois, suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq. Amyan urgently needed \$2,451.35 to make his mortgage payment.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$2,451.35

Retired Airman First Class Savon R. from Humble, Texas, served in Iraq and now suffers from PTSD. He desperately needed \$4,174.68 to pay his rent and avoid eviction.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors: \$4,174.68

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

One More Reason to Give CONFIDENTLY: The Coalition is a Top-Rated Nonprofit 3rd 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!





These Heroes Thank You for the Gift of a Special Meal At Easter

It's difficult 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 heroes you and I helped together last year with \$60 Easter Meals Checks. I hope they inspire you to give generously again this Easter season, and give more severely disabled veterans the simple but outlook-changing gift of a holiday meal!

“It took several attempts at this but I could never get the words right. **You have no idea what it means to me to be remembered** and it is especially extraordinary, with what all is going on in the world today, someone took the time to think about me and my family.”

— Disabled veteran Seth H.

“We recently received one of your checks, **this year is hard as we are without jobs due to the virus.** It's been very hard. We are very appreciative of the check. We were able to pick up items to cook a great dinner for our family of 4. We baked some favorite desserts. Hubby is disabled veteran and smiled for the first time in days, he has been having a hard time because he is unable to walk for long period of time.”

— Glenda W. (wife of a disabled veteran)

“I just wanted to take a moment and thank you for the monetary gift. **This will certainly help our Easter, especially with the current situation.** It is truly appreciated!”

— Disabled veteran Sargent E.

“I wanted to thank you for the thoughtful and generous check for the Easter holiday. That gift allowed me (the Easter bunny) the opportunity to buy my wounded warrior (my husband) a lawn chair to sit outside comfortably while watching our little ones play outside.”

— Tara C. (wife of a disabled veteran)

“In these trying times, it's organizations like this that truly gives us hope. . . . **So thank you so, so very much.** May God continue to bless this organization.”

— Vernon M.

