

The Road to Recovery Report

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

Volume 80 ★ July 2022

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

“ I can't stop crying over the help the Coalition gave my family. We almost lost our home. Our electricity was also shut off. They paid for all of this to help us get back on track. Thank you, Coalition donors, and the amazing people working there.

— Disabled veteran
Margaret

”

This Fourth of July, Don't Forget America's Heroes!

As a patriotic supporter of the Coalition, I know you honor and celebrate America's veterans and their sacrifices all year long. But with the Fourth of July holiday right around the corner, this is the perfect time to show our severely wounded veteran heroes and their families a little extra care and compassion.

Your generous and much-needed gift will tell a hero in distress that you're grateful for their sacrifice – and that he is not alone. That's especially important now, as our heroes and their struggles

have largely faded from the headlines, and many feel like they've been forgotten by the country they sacrificed so much for to serve.

So, this Fourth of July, as you enjoy time with friends and family, I hope you'll also consider honoring the holiday – and our veterans – by making a special patriotic gift to the Coalition today. And thank you for reading your supporter-exclusive *Recovery Report*, which is full of hero stories and updates on your generosity in action!

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Letter from President David Walker

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Dear Friend of Our Wounded Heroes,

The Red Badge of Courage, a novel by Stephen Crane, is widely considered one of the best war novels ever written – despite the fact that its author, a journalist with a vivid imagination, never wore a uniform.

Like Crane, I never served in the military. But also like him, I was from an early age fascinated by military life and inspired by the courage and dedication of military people. I strongly felt a sense of duty to wounded veterans, even though I had never worn a uniform. Throughout my life, I immersed myself in various veteran support activities, and volunteered for the Coalition in its formative days. At the height of a successful corporate career, I was invited to join the Board of Directors of the Coalition, and eventually my dedication to that job led the Board to put me in charge of the organization.

The British poet John Milton wrote, “They also serve who only stand and wait” – and I believe that famous phrase encapsulates my own service. I never dodged bullets and IEDs on the battlefield, nor have I earned a Purple Heart. But my heart is now and forever with the real heroes who defend our country and their spouses who cover the home front and care for the kids while the fighters are on foreign fields in harm’s way.

In the nearly ten years I have been at the helm of this proud organization, I have had to steer us through some choppy waters. I inherited a burden of disregard for the Coalition among the charity ratings groups because of some poor choices made by my predecessor. It took time and hard work but today the Coalition enjoys widespread support for our efficiency and transparency. And through it all I have been richly blessed in getting to know so many real-life heroes, like those Crane celebrated in his book.

More recently, our veterans have had to contend with weakened engagement and public support, driven by a perception that the foreign wars have subsided and also by the Coronavirus pandemic that threw the economy into a tailspin, leading to less public support for small charities like ours. But together we have tightened our budget and reduced spending without curtailing the services we provide.

And every day my job is made easier, richer, and more rewarding by the generous support of friends like you. Some of you are veterans who faithfully served our country, and now want to continue that legacy of service to help your less fortunate brothers and sisters in arms. Others, like me, are simply patriotic Americans with a dedication to supporting our struggling heroes.

And I’m so grateful, through thick and thin, to stand alongside patriotic, caring friends like you. Your compassion and generosity fill my heart with gratitude for the goodness of the American people – and I know the severely disabled veterans we serve together feel the same.

With gratitude,

David W. Walker
President & CEO



Salute to a Special Hero: Veterans Steve & Angela Bultje

My name is Angela, and I am a veteran, wife, and mother, as well as a caregiver to my husband Steve, a disabled veteran. Steve and I met while I was on duty Easter Sunday 2011. As a Navy Corpsman, Petty Officer 3rd class, I had just been assigned to his Wounded Warrior Battalion after PCS-ing from Okinawa, Japan, to Portsmouth Naval Medical Center in Virginia just a few weeks prior. Steve and I hit it off immediately.

Steve had been injured March 5, 2011, while on his second deployment to Sangin, Afghanistan. While on foot patrol, he was injured by an IED. He was an 0351 assaultman and was carrying 30 pounds of explosives that amazingly did not go off in the explosion. Due to the IED not being properly waterproofed, Steve was thankfully the only one injured in his unit. We are forever thankful for the rain from the day prior!

When the IED went off, Steve was thrown into the air. From the explosion, he got a second traumatic brain injury (TBI), a tib/fib fracture, and a calcaneus (heel bone) fracture. Steve endured over two dozen surgeries trying to prevent amputation to try and save his leg. Unfortunately, due to the severe injury to his foot and heel, he did eventually need a right leg below-the-knee amputation.

Steve's recovery was slow due to the years spent in the hospital trying to save his leg. He underwent treatment for his traumatic brain injuries and his PTSD. But difficult though it was, it was really once he had the amputation that life was on its way to our new normal.

Following the amputation, we moved home to Ohio, and both became full time students while raising our two children. Steve is now working as a Dental Hygienist at a practice he loves, and I am happily working from home with the Heroes Thanking Heroes (HTH) program.

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes has been so helpful for my family and me. And I have to say thank you to all the donors who have allowed the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes to implement the HTH program. Working from home in the HTH program has allowed me to work, while also raising my family and caring for Steve. Thanking the donors is such a rewarding experience, and I am so thankful for the opportunity.

The Coalition's one-of-a-kind Heroes Thanking Heroes (HTH) program is a flexible, remote employment program that employs wounded veterans, spouses, and caregivers to make calls to thank donors like you for your generosity! HTH gives these heroes job experience, financial support, and the flexibility to care for their families – while also providing a sense of purpose and self-worth.



David Walker Receives Inaugural Frank Prautzsch Lifetime Achievement Award

On April 23, 2022, Coalition President David Walker received the inaugural Frank Prautzsch Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was presented at the 7th Annual Veterans Awards, in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Frank Prautzsch Lifetime Achievement Award is the most prestigious recognition of excellence in public service within the veteran's community. It rewards the achievements and contributions of public service by an individual that leads to a more effective and responsive public administration in every corner of our land. This award is presented to an individual with philanthropic involvement for a minimum of 20 years, honoring those with a proven record of exceptional public service who continue to demonstrate outstanding civic and charitable responsibility. The award seeks individuals whose community service and leadership encourage others to take such roles in philanthropic activities across the globe. This award honors extraordinary distinction in lifetime achievement and exceptional contributions to the military community and beyond.





Coalition News: Updates on



Veteran's Caregiver Alliance: A Critical Way You're Helping Veteran Families

The Caregiver's Battlefront: A Special Message from Coalition President David Walker

Several years ago, at a Coalition Road To Recovery Conference and Tribute, my friend Hank Cox and I were discussing progress on the project that would become our book, *Profiles in Character*. Out of the blue, Hank mentioned that he thought **some of our most memorable heroes were the wives of wounded warriors**.

Hank had spent some time talking to these wives. They told about juggling jobs and homemaking, taking care of the kids, and paying the bills while their husbands were still coping with their mental and physical injuries. Hank was impressed, even humbled, at the dedication of these women who stood by their men no matter what. We all see the bravery and dedication of women coping with husbands who have lost legs and arms, sight or hearing, or bear severe burn scars, but the sacrifices of dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder – it seemed to him – were perhaps an even greater hurdle.

resources to help wounded warriors. In a short period of time, it has become a key component of our programs, while the support we provide varies greatly from family to family based on need and our resources.



I can say with pride that this new program has touched the hearts of many of those who contribute to our work, and even a few who were unaware of us before. At a time when the news rarely reports injuries to our military personnel in harm's way, this outreach on behalf of caregivers fills a void in our appeals for support. Unfortunately, it has *not* touched the hearts of certain Veterans Administration employees who are proceeding with plans to curtail the VA's support of caregiver programs such as ours. We continue to press for a more enlightened approach, but thus far without success. In the meantime, I am proud to say that **this program brings overdue attention to some of our country's bravest heroes – caregivers**.

The caregivers we support – along with their combat-wounded veteran heroes – are so grateful for your generosity. 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 had been working with the spouses of wounded warriors for years and knew well the hard road they traveled. But Hank's words put me to thinking that we were overlooking a major issue that demanded attention. In the ensuing years, the Coalition has tackled that issue with our Veteran's Caregivers Alliance (VCA), which focuses on spouses, family, and friends who give of their time and

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE VETERAN'S CAREGIVER ALLIANCE

Interested in joining our free membership program for veteran caregivers, or know someone you want to refer to us? E-mail: caregiversupport@saluteheroes.org. Questions? Call us at (888) 447-2588.

n Your Generosity At Work!

Veteran's Caregiver Alliance: Providing Training and Support to those Who Care for Our Nation's Severely Disabled Veterans

A major oversight in our nation's support for our wounded veterans is the needs of the legions of caregivers who care for our wounded veterans day in and day out. While activity on the battlefield tends to wax and wane, the demands on caregivers are constant and unceasing. And the spouses of wounded warriors often carry a disproportionate share of the workload associated with supporting a household; when a wounded veteran is physically or mentally disabled, the caregiver raises the children, provides the food, pays the bills, and maintains the house, often with little-to-no backup or breaks.

Enter the Coalition's Veteran's Caregiver Alliance (VCA), with a mission of improving the quality of life for the caregivers of America's combat-wounded post 9/11 veterans. The Coalition's Veteran's Caregiver Alliance program is a carefully considered decision to formally embrace the challenge of supporting caregivers as one of our organizational priorities.

We accomplish this by guiding our caregivers through all services available, while identifying and filling gaps in services. We work with like-minded Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), government agencies, and community initiatives, to assure the needs of our caregivers are being met, both privately and publicly. And perhaps most importantly, we offer mentor support and facilitate caregiver camaraderie – connecting the care and compassion from one caregiver to another that form bonds that are not easily broken.



Patriotic Friends of the Coalition and America's Veterans

"Anyone who has the bravery to go out and protect the American citizens is a hero in my book."
~ Actor Ray Romano

The Coalition is grateful for the support of our patriotic celebrity friends, who help spread awareness about the needs of America's disabled War on Terror veterans and their families and bring attention to their cause.

TRACE ADKINS
JASON ALEXANDER
SCOTT BAKULA
DESHAUNA BARBER
ASHLEY BELL
JACK BLACK
DREW BREES
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MARK HARMON
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MICHAEL KELLY
KATHARINE McPHEE
WILLIAM H. MACY
JOE MANTEGNA
CRAIG T. NELSON
BEBE NEUWIRTH
JACK NICKLAUS
OAK RIDGE BOYS

ROBERT PATRICK
RICHARD PETTY
CAL RIPKEN
RAY ROMANO
J.K. SIMMONS
RICKY SKAGGS
RUSTY WALLACE
And Many More!





Simplify Your Life While Doing 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.

- ★ 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 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.

Choose to Leave Your Legacy As A Veteran Supporter Today!

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

Your past generosity has proven your commitment to helping America’s disabled War on Terror veterans. And by leaving a charitable bequest to the Coalition, you are continuing that legacy of patriotism and support long after you’re gone, by helping care for those who bore the battle to defend our country, our freedom, and our families.

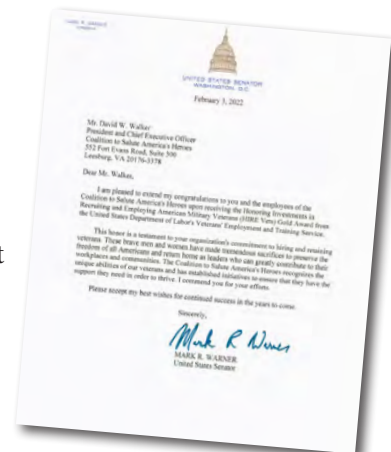
Your legacy gift to the Coalition in any amount is more than a donation; it’s an investment in your ongoing commitment to our heroes. **To talk about how to make a gift annuity, or to donate stocks, bonds, property, or insurance, email us at info@saluteheroes.org or call (703) 348-9914.** Now is the 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 Recognized for Dedication to Hiring Veterans

The Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes is deeply honored to be recognized by United States Senator Mark Warner of Virginia for our honor from the United States Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service. For the second year in a row, the Coalition was one of the 849 recipients of the 2021 HIRE Vets Medallion Award, the only federal award program that recognizes employers that successfully recruit, hire, and retain veterans.

Senator Warner wrote, “This honor is a testament to your organization’s commitment to hiring and retaining veterans. These brave men and women have made tremendous sacrifices to preserve the freedom of all Americans and return home as leaders who can greatly contribute to their workplaces and communities. The Coalition . . . recognizes the unique abilities of our veterans and has established initiatives to ensure that they have the support they need in order to thrive. I commend you for your efforts.”





By the Numbers: Your Generosity in Action!

Here's how our emergency financial aid process works. First, every emergency request we receive (by phone, email, or word of mouth) is entered into a spreadsheet. Next, we verify the disabled veteran's service record with his or her branch of service. Finally, we rush the approved aid amount directly to the utility company, mortgage firm, or whoever is owed money by the disabled hero. The numbers below represent both a disabled veteran's story, and your generosity in action.

Corporal Curtis D. (U.S. Army, Ret.) from **Rancho Rio, New Mexico**, was medically retired after serving in **Iraq**. He is married with three teenagers and was about to have the water in his home shut off after falling behind on payments.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$131.91 to pay his water bill

Corporal Amina H. (U.S. Army, Ret.) from **Palm Bay, Florida**, was disabled while serving in **Iraq**. She also struggles due to Military Sexual Trauma. When Amina lost her mother and had to pay the funeral expenses, the unexpected costs on top of the rising cost of groceries left her and her husband struggling to buy food.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$250.00 for food

Sergeant Eileen I. from **Crosby, Texas**, has two children and currently serves in the Army National Guard. Eileen served in **Afghanistan** and returned with severe PTSD. When her spouse was laid off from her job, their family was left struggling to pay their bills.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$617.00 for a month of utility bills

Army Specialist Christophe from **Lancaster, California**, did two tours in **Iraq** and is a single dad to two children. His service left him with a traumatic brain injury and PTSD, but when Veterans Affairs reevaluated his disability rating, his payments stopped temporarily. During that time, Christophe's car – which he needed

to get his kids to school and himself to his medical appointments – was repossessed.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,185.60 to get his car back

Master Sergeant Zachary R. (U.S. Air Force, Ret.), from **Holly Springs, North Carolina**, is married with three children under the age of seven. Zachary did six overseas tours before being injured in **Afghanistan**; he received a Purple Heart after being shot in the hip and paralyzed below the knee. Zachary's family began struggling financially when they found out their home had a massive mold problem, forcing them to leave their home for their safety. We assisted with their rent to ease some of the burden of paying for mold repairs, their home's mortgage, and rent for their temporary living situation during the repairs.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,500.00 for rent

Lance Corporal Gabriel D. is a **Marine Corps** veteran from **Jacksonville, Florida**. Gabriel was injured by an IED blast while serving in **Iraq** and suffers from PTSD and arthritis. His family has been struggling due to the pandemic and inflation and fell behind on their rent while living paycheck to paycheck. Gabriel, his wife, and their three children all under the age of three were about to be evicted from their rented home.

★ Emergency financial aid from Coalition donors:
\$1,600.00 to avoid eviction



Coalition Selected as a *NonProfit Times* 2022 Best Place to Work For

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes was recently selected as one of *The NonProfit Times*' 2022 Best Places to Work For! Even better – not only did the Coalition rank among these 50 prestigious organizations, the Coalition placed in the top 5!

"This is a genuine tribute to the character, ethics, and performance of our entire team, whose commitment



to wounded veterans and their caregivers is second-to-none," said Coalition President & CEO David Walker.

For the survey, employers and employees ranked their organization based on statements such as, "I feel I am valued in this organization," "I have the confidence in the leadership of this organization," and, "This organization treats me like a person, not a number."



These Heroes Thank You for the Easter Gift of Help, Hope and a Hot Meal

It's hard 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 in recent years with an Easter Meals Check. I hope these messages of heartfelt gratitude inspire you to give generously once again!

*"First off my family and I would like to thank Coalition to Salute America's Heroes for this wonderful Easter surprise check. This will allow my wife and I to purchase Easter baskets with lots of goodies for my three children. **We don't have to stress about how to provide a good Easter celebration for our family.** Your organization has stuck by my family since reaching out last year. I was let go of my job two months ago and I am truly thankful for your continued support."*

— The "S" family

*"Thank you so much for sending [the] Easter money. **It helped us to fill our kids' baskets extra full this year . . . our [three] kids were really happy.** Jessie was Security Forces in the Air Force and fought in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom."*

— Tara M.

*"I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to you on behalf of Coalition to Salute America's Heroes for donating the Easter check to my family and I. Your donors' help during this time is truly appreciated. **This donation will help me with traveling to and from my VA appointments** that is currently still helping me with my treatments."*

— Disabled veteran Melvin M.

*"With everything that's happening in the world and how the COVID-19 is affecting the nation, **this Easter card and check 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."*

— Disabled veteran "Justin"

*"You all have always been there for me and my family in so many ways . . . because it's been so hard for us, and **thanks to you all, I will have food on my table for Easter.** I love the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes."*

— Retired U.S. Army SGT P.

Are You A Veteran Who Needs Our Help?

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.

