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**WOUNDED SOLDIERS AT BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER TO RECEIVE MORE THAN \$85,000
IN HOLIDAY GIFT CHECKS FROM COALITION TO SALUTE AMERICA'S HEROES**

Backpacks from Coalition sponsor T-Mobile also to be distributed

WILTON, CT – December 15, 2011 – For nearly 175 soldiers recovering at San Antonio's Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) from the severe wounds they suffered in Afghanistan and Iraq, the holiday season should become a little more joyous on December 16 when each is presented with a \$500 Christmas gift check from the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes (CSAH).

Retired Army Sgt. Jorge DeLeon, a national spokesman for the CSAH, will pass out the majority of the gift checks during BAMC's Warrior Transition Battalion Christmas Party where attendees also will receive backpacks provided by T-Mobile, a corporate sponsor of the Coalition. The gift checks, which are among hundreds of identical value being issued nationwide by the CSAH this week, reflect contributions made by the organization's many donors to ensure disabled service members from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom can enjoy the holidays and, in particular, buy presents for their children.

While at BAMC, DeLeon further plans to visit with some two dozen soldiers in their hospital rooms so he can individually deliver their Christmas gift checks and T-Mobile backpacks since their injuries will prevent them from attending the party.

"Distributing these items will be a privilege for me because I know better than most what these wounded service members have sacrificed and what they are going through now as they progress along their road to recovery," he says. "It was at BAMC that I spent considerable time recuperating after losing my right leg in Afghanistan in 2004 when the vehicle I was riding in was blown up by a roadside bomb."

Recipients of the Christmas gift checks across the country have been identified based on criteria that the CSAH has used for awarding financial assistance since the non-profit was formed in 2004. Service members must not only have sustained an injury in either the Afghanistan or Iraq wars, but also have at least a 30-percent disability rating as assigned by either the Department of Defense or Department of Veterans Affairs.

Funds for the Christmas gift checks were raised through an annual appeal the CSAH calls its "Secret Santa Program." In addition to BAMC, the checks are being handed out at a number of other military facilities, including Fort Riley in Kansas and the Balboa Naval Medical Center in San Diego, CA.

"On behalf of our generous donors, I am pleased that during the holiday season the CSAH can provide these brave men and women with a sign of gratitude for their willingness to defend our nation's freedom at their own peril,"



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says DeLeon. "Given how memorable Christmas is for children, we think it's especially important that no service members' sons or daughters be denied a gift from Santa just because their parents may not be able to afford one."

For more information on this holiday check distribution program or the CSAH, contact the organization's media representative, Chip Warren, at (203) 645-4529 or cwarren@saluteheroes.org, or visit the Coalition's website at www.saluteheroes.org

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About the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes is a leading non-profit organization dedicated to helping severely wounded troops from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The mission of the organization is to enable these servicemen and women to transition from the battlefield to the home front and to provide them and their families with the assistance needed to get their lives back on track.

Since it was founded in 2004, the CSAH has partnered with corporate sponsors, individual contributors and volunteers to contribute millions of dollars in aid and support services in more than 21,000 cases. Among the organization's other initiatives is its all-expenses-paid Road to Recovery Conference & Tribute, at which those disabled during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as their families, can attend seminars and job fairs, receive career counseling and evaluations, and hear inspirational success stories.

For more information on how the CSAH can help you or to learn how you can help, please visit the organization's website at www.saluteheroes.org.