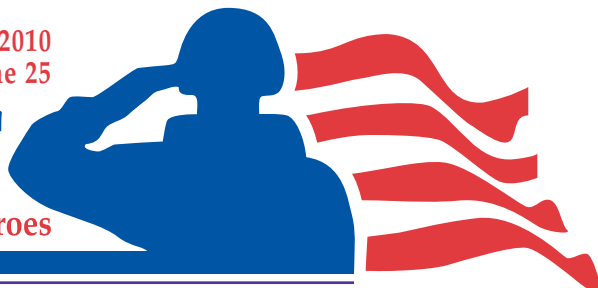


THE ROAD TO RECOVERY REPORT

March 2010
Volume 25



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

Donors asked to rush emergency Easter meals to disabled GIs sometimes forced to rely on public food pantries



With the deadline rapidly approaching, the Coalition's **Emergency Easter Meal Project** appears to be falling short of its goal of providing \$60 for a nice meal to as many severely wounded GIs as possible over the Easter weekend.

Earlier this month Coalition donors received an emergency appeal from Major General John K. Singlaub, U.S. Army (Ret.), who is spearheading the drive to provide \$60 to seriously injured servicemen and women who urgently need help feeding their families this Easter.

In order to identify the families most in need and ensure emergency aid is rushed to them before Easter, donations must be collected in the next few weeks, according to Patrick Norberto, the Coalition's general manager.

"We can't send out any Easter meal gift cards until we have the funds in hand," Norberto says. "That's why we're asking all Coalition supporters to help us once again at this key time to give as many severely wounded GIs and their families as possible a real helping hand this Easter."

A family like the Didions, for example. Blair Didion suffered multiple spinal fractures from a roadside bomb in Iraq. In a letter to the Coalition he said sometimes he is forced to rely on "food from public pantries" to help feed his family.

The Didions' story is common among the growing number of severely wounded GIs returning from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan.

As Coalition supporters know, the recession has hit America's severely wounded troops and their families especially hard.

Currently, the 17 percent unemployment rate among men ages 15-24 with a high school degree is far above the national average of 10 percent – meaning many GIs severely wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan are returning to civilian life facing a cutthroat job market.

In addition, the double-digit unemployment rate makes it hard for spouses to not only find a job – but find a job that can support a family.

Not only is the job market difficult for these seriously injured young soldiers, but recent casualty rates in Afghanistan have skyrocketed. The latest Defense Department figures show the number of servicemen and women wounded in Afghanistan increased nearly fivefold during October 2009 compared to the previous October.

So even as the hundreds of thousands of wounded and mentally impaired Marines, soldiers, sailors and airmen

wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan struggle financially, hundreds more are joining their ranks every month.

"These servicemen and women served our country honorably and now must live with sometimes painful or debilitating injuries," said Norberto.

Sending \$60 to buy a nice meal over the Easter weekend is the perfect way to say 'Thank You' for their service. So please rush a gift in support of our Emergency Easter Meal Project today if you can." ■



Sgt. Josh Johnson injured both shoulders and lost most of his hearing in an ambush that occurred when he was taking an injured Iraqi to the hospital. His wife Stacy contacted the Coalition because "the truck payment was going to be late and we were not going to be able to buy groceries for our daughters," she said. "I was almost ashamed to ask for help, but the Coalition was so helpful and understanding that it made it easy."

Providing
Emergency Aid
to Severely
Wounded Troops
and Their Families
in Crisis

Key Programs:

Emergency
Financial Aid

Homes for Heroes

Family Support
Network

Career Network

Road to Recovery
Conference & Tribute

INSIDE:

The Coalition
at Work.....2

Making a
Difference.....3

In Their Own Words:
Thank you letters from
our severely wounded
troops.....4

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By the numbers: Your generosity at work



Here's a brief sampling of severely wounded troops who have been helped by your generous donations to the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes. These U.S. servicemen and women have fallen into desperate circumstances and need more assistance than we've been able to provide thus far, so please send a special Easter donation to help them and their families if you can.

- Marine Sgt. Luke H. of St. Robert, Missouri is suffering from partial paralysis from his tour of duty in Iraq. He has called in need of \$500.97 for groceries and other bills.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$500.97**
- Injured Army SPC Rigoberto S. of Norwalk, California was behind on his mortgage. He needed \$1,200.47 to get caught up.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,200.47**
- A painful shoulder injury left Army Sgt. Joshua J. of Delta, Colorado unable to complete urgent repairs to his home.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,142.08**
- Army SPC Ryan F. was forced to relocate to Orlando, Florida and needed \$3,889.85 to complete the move.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$3,889.85**
- Overdue phone and car payments of \$663.26 were dogging Army SPC Grant S of West Plains, Missouri until Coalition donors stepped in.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$663.26**
- Army Sgt. James C. of San Antonio, Texas lives with burns suffered during his time in Iraq. He found himself \$1,591 behind on car, utility and rent payments.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,591.00**
- Army Sgt. Joshua W. of Curtis, Washington lost a limb while serving in Iraq. He was \$3,615.95 behind on his mortgage when he contacted the Coalition.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$3,615.95**
- Marine CPL Brett D. of Louisville, Kentucky was struggling with \$1,824.39 in overdue utility and car bills.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,824.39**
- Army Sgt. Joel D. returned from Iraq with severe asthma. He found himself \$1,447.23 behind on his mortgage.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,447.23**
- Army Sgt. John T. of Pomerene, Arizona owed \$750 in back rent.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$750.00**
- A traumatic brain injury suffered while serving in Iraq has made life tough for Army SSgt. Robert J., who needed \$1,500.97 to catch up on his rent and buy groceries.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,500.97**
- Army SSgt. Carlos D. of Evans Mills, New York is suffering from a severe shoulder injury suffered while serving in Afghanistan. He needed \$948.93 to pay back rent and buy groceries.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$948.93**
- Army SSgt. Raphael P. of Deltona, Florida owed mortgage and car payments amounting to \$3,994.02.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$3,994.02**
- A debilitating paralysis of his sciatic nerve has left Army SPC Justin C. of Penryn, California \$2,200 behind in his rent payments.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$2,200.00**
- Air Force SSgt. John K. of New Britain, Pennsylvania needed \$1,590 to make good on overdue rent payments.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,590.00**
- Double amputee Nathan H. of San Antonio, Texas needed \$1,419.62 for past due rent and vehicle payments.
▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,419.62**





MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Young families hit bumps on the road to recovery



Coalition Donors "Bless the Lives of A Young Family in Need"

I began my civilian career in hopes of moving forward with life. But within the first year, my symptoms worsened. I missed many days of work and spent time in the ER trying to breathe.

I ended up back in the hospital twice. These experiences were frightening to my family as we came to grips with the thought of my disability affecting my ability to work for a living. My wife is working as hard as she can, but she just cannot replace my income. She has taken on all the responsibilities of the home.

Just in this last week, I was again hospitalized. My wife missed work to be at my bedside. We did not worry about making our house payment because we knew the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes was going to help us out this month. It could not have come at a better time. We are grateful for the help to pay our mortgage and household bills.

I am unable to receive unemployment because I am unable to work, so we are working on a plan to downsize and be self-sufficient. That has been a challenge for my family emotionally and financially. We are working very hard with a team of doctors to try and stabilize my health.

It is hard to talk about a disability, and even harder to ask for help when you are down. But this experience was very positive for my family. We gave the Coalition staff our info. and within days we were discussing details of our situation. They helped us fill a gap that could not be filled any other way for us. Great staff and thank you again.

*-Kyle S.
Manhattan, Kansas*

We are one of the families that your organization has impacted in a way that we can't even put into words. We want to thank you and all the team members that contributed. Even though my husband fought in the war almost four years ago, he fights it every day of his life.

Due to his disability he is not the same man he used to be. But he tries so hard to provide for his family and be a great man. His TBI and PTSD got so severe he had no choice but to do an inpatient program at the VA. Due to unfortunate situations we encountered we ended up in a hotel. We had no home for my son and nowhere to turn.

Without the help of your program I really don't know what we would have done. You have blessed the lives of a young family in need and put us into a home where our son can ride his bike in the back yard. You have given us a brand new start on our journey in life and one day we hope to be a blessing to you.

*- Kimberly, Lee and Hunter Jancar
Hudson, FL*



A sniper's bullet lodged in Blake Johnson's spine causing him temporary paralysis and chronic pain. Today he struggles to support his young family while also earning a degree. Blake says Coalition donors have helped the Johnson family with a variety of bills and have "been a blessing to our family."





IN THEIR OWN WORDS



Thank you letters from our severely wounded troops



► I had to receive a vertebra fusion. After my surgery, I was unable to work and couldn't afford my bills. My parents felt helpless, and were unhappy that they couldn't help me financially.

The Coalition was extremely generous and were able to pay my monthly expenses. This help was overwhelming. Words cannot explain how grateful I am to receive these donations. The Coalition is truly a program a wounded soldier can count on in a really rough moment in life.

– *Charles Ireland*
Roseville, Michigan

► I really appreciate all the help my family and myself received. Times are real hard right now. They helped me get caught up on my truck payments and also paid one month of my electric bill. This was a blessing. I really can't explain how much this was greatly appreciated.

– *Joshua E. Taylor*
Clute, Texas

► It means a great deal for any help from people who care about the sacrifices we have made and how much families have to go through every time we are deployed. Thank you so much for your support for my family and myself.

– *Benjamin D.*
Middleburg, Florida

► We still struggle to make ends meet and do the best we can and take it day by day. I feel like I have let my family down sometimes. I feel sorry for all the other soldiers that are going through this. I did not choose to get injured, nor did they, and it is a continuing struggle for all of the wounded vets but thanks to the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes we know someone out there cares.

– *Alvin G.*
Ekron, Kentucky

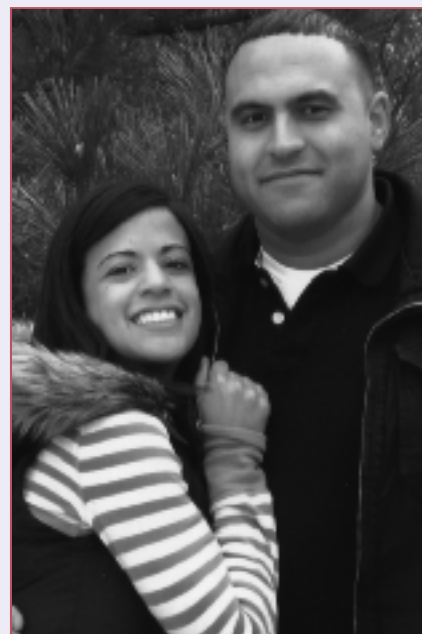
► The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes helped us in a way no other organization could. I have an extremely difficult time transitioning into the civilian world due to my injuries from my deployment to Iraq. We were unable to pay our utilities and mortgage at one point and that is when CSAH helped us. It was a very big blessing as we

were able to keep our home, and keep our utilities turned on, and prevent our car from being repossessed. We were also able to buy groceries and much-needed clothing for our two young children. We are so thankful for CSAH, an organization that truly cares about soldiers and their families and meets their individual needs. Without you, we would not have been able to transition successfully back into a normal life. Thank you so much from all my family and keep up the great work.

– *Abraham P.*
Flagstaff, Arizona

► The Coalition helped my family and me in a huge way. They backed us up in a time of need. My wife had just lost her job and I keep losing jobs because of my injuries. My family had lost our apartment, my van broke down, and our bills were getting further behind. The Coalition was fantastic. They paid rent for our new place, paid our electric and even put \$2,000 in on our van. Without them we would not have a home or vehicle to find a job and we couldn't ask for more. We thank you all very much for your help and support during these hard times.

– *John M.*
Sidney, New York



Luis Duran suffered hearing loss and shrapnel wounds from a car suicide bomber in Fallujah, Iraq. After returning home he had trouble finding work, and his car was repossessed. He couldn't even afford books for college classes he was taking. Coalition donors supplied him with a \$500 gift card to help him buy his school books.

