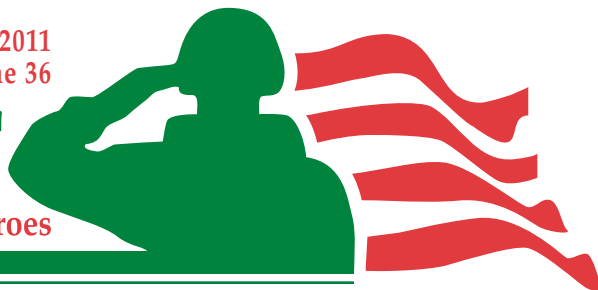


# THE ROAD TO RECOVERY REPORT

December 2011  
Volume 36



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

## Chairman's Report

### **Secret Santa Project endangered by 26% increase in emergency aid requests**

I'm David Walker and I am proud to be serving as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.

One of the things I am most proud of is the Coalition's **Emergency Secret Santa Project**, which gives our wounded heroes \$500 each so they can provide their families with Christmas presents.

It's always heartbreaking to hear the stories from our severely wounded servicemen and women who contact the Coalition pleading for emergency financial aid.

The simple act of giving a \$500 gift check gives these brave heroes some of their dignity back and puts a smile on the face of little ones who simply don't understand why Santa can't come or why Mommy or Daddy can't do what they used to do.

Thanks to the generosity of Coalition donors, 4,935 Christmas gift checks worth \$500 each have been distributed to the families of severely wounded service members over the past six years.

However, as retired Army Major General John K. Singlaub mentioned in his recent letter to you, we may have to exclude some of the families who we were hoping to send a gift check to this Christmas.

And here's why: So far this year the Coalition is receiving 26% more emergency requests from injured servicemen and women than we did last year. And soon our budget will run dry.

That's why the General recently asked Coalition supporters to dig just a bit deeper this holiday season and help these children of severely wounded servicemen and women have a Merry Christmas by giving to the **2011 Emergency Secret Santa Project**.

I hope we'll get enough support to send a \$500 gift check to everyone on our Secret Santa list. Thank you for your support for the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.



*Coalition to Salute America's Heroes Chairman David Walker (center) greets Army SGT Gabriel M. and his family. Gabriel lost his left leg during a firefight in Afghanistan and needed assistance after returning. He describes the Coalition's help as "amazing," and says its donors are "people worth fighting for."*

Providing  
Emergency Aid  
to Troops Severely  
Wounded in  
Afghanistan or Iraq

#### **KEY PROGRAMS:**

Emergency  
Financial Relief



Partner  
Appreciation  
Program



Road to Recovery  
Conference and Tribute

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**Providing Emergency Aid to Troops Severely Wounded in Afghanistan or Iraq**

Coalition to Salute America's Heroes ★ PO Box 96440 ★ Washington, DC 20090-6440 ★ [www.saluteheroesproject.org](http://www.saluteheroesproject.org) ★ (888) 447-2588

## 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.*

- Army CPT David W. of Columbus, Georgia lost his right leg while serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,584.69 to pay an overdue utility bill and to buy food.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,584.69**
- Army SPC Rodney P. of Gardner, Kansas was hit by shrapnel during his tour of duty in Iraq. He needed \$1,878.01 to pay his rent and overdue utility bills.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,878.01**
- Army SPC Joshua S. of Silver Spring, Maryland suffered severe facial injuries, including the loss of an eye. He needed \$3,250.00 to pay a security deposit and first month's rent on a place to live.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$3,250.00**
- Army SSG Michael L. of San Antonio, Texas came back from Afghanistan with a severe lower body injury. He needed \$1,121.84 to prevent repossession of his vehicle.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,121.84**
- Marine Cpl. Ritchie B. of Anaheim, California needed \$878.52 for overdue medical bills and a car payment.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$878.52**
- Army SPC Jacob L. of Jacksonville, Florida lost a limb overseas while serving his country. He needed \$1,600.00 for overdue rent and to buy some groceries.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,600.00**
- Marine Sgt. Aaron W. of Aurora, Missouri was severely injured while serving in Iraq. He needed \$1,589.16 so he could pay a slew of overdue bills and put some food in his pantry.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,589.16**
- Army SPC Bernard D. of Grand Junction, Colorado was shot in the left leg during his tour of duty in Iraq. He needed \$1,726.97 for groceries, utilities and car payments.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,726.97**
- Air Force SMSgt. Waco B., of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma is recovering from a severe injury suffered when he served in Iraq. He needed \$2,214.16 for an overdue mortgage payment.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$2,214.16**
- Army SPC Christopher G. of Ft. Carson, Colorado had a bullet lodged in his chest during his tour of duty in Afghanistan. He needed \$673.63 for utility bills and for groceries.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$673.63**
- Air Force TSgt. Erik L. of Rock Springs, Wyoming called the Coalition because he didn't have the \$2,200.00 he needed for a deposit and first month's rent on a place to live.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$2,200.00**
- Marine LCpl. Michael S. of Pico River, California returned from serving in both Iraq and Afghanistan with a severe injury. He needed \$1,442.85 to get his vehicle fixed, make an overdue car payment and put some food on his table.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,442.85**
- Navy PO2 Tyrone B. of Indianapolis, Indiana suffered a severe back injury during his tour of duty overseas. He needed \$2,514.98 to buy groceries and bring his rent payments up to date.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$2,514.98**
- Army SPC Shemeka M. of Orlando, Florida was severely injured while serving in Iraq. She needed \$1,081.13 for rent and groceries.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,081.13**
- Navy PO3 Alejandro S. of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida is battling a brain tumor. He asked the Coalition for \$1,914.98 to help with rent and groceries.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$1,914.98**
- Army SGT Moses S. of Converse, Texas is missing one leg below the knee after being wounded while serving in Iraq. He needed \$399.00 to repair his air conditioner.  
 ▶ **Coalition Paid: \$399.00**



## IN THEIR OWN WORDS



### Thank you letters from our severely wounded troops



*“Without your help, we’d still be cold and tired.”*



*Army National Guard PFC Richard Lee W. couldn't pay his medical bills stemming from severe head injuries suffered while serving in Iraq. Coalition donors helped him pay his bills while he is waiting for his government disability checks.*

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes helped me out by paying my rent, power and sent me a gift card to help me get things I need and for food. Because of my brain injury, life is very different and a lot more difficult. Many people have no clue what any soldier or wounded soldier goes through every day. The Coalition does, and they were there for me when nobody else was and I needed help. The Coalition has given me new hope. Thank you so much for what you've done for all the men, women, family and friends of our armed services and myself. When it seems all else has failed, the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes makes it happen and supports you the whole way.

*— Army National Guard PFC Richard Lee W.,  
Grants Pass, Oregon*

We didn't have heat for a few months this winter; we used space heaters and electric blankets. You all stepped in and covered the installation costs for a new furnace. I can't describe how you helped my family by giving us a safe, warm home. Without your help, we'd still be cold and tired. Thank you doesn't seem to even begin to cover it! We are still struggling and trying to get on track, but we can do it from a warm house now. God Bless You All!

*— Retired Army SSG Paul B. Cornett,  
Clayton, Ohio*

The assistance I received from Coalition to Salute America's Heroes has meant a great deal to me and my wife. I don't have the words to explain how much this has meant. It has helped us keep a place to live and saved my truck for a few more months. There are still a lot of challenges me and my wife face, but I just thank God there are people out there that still care. Ya'll have meant the world to my wife and me. I can't ever thank ya'll enough. We are forever grateful. God Bless.

*— Retired Army SPC Larry B. Bostick,  
Cheyenne, Wyoming*

This is a great organization. They act quickly to provide assistance to the family in need. Words are not enough to express how truly blessed we are. We were to the point where we were really stressed out thinking about what our future and life will be. Thank you very, very much. Thank you for making our life easier. We are so grateful for the help you have given us.

*— Retired Army SSG Reginald B. Toney,  
San Antonio, Texas*

The Coalition was the first time we ever had any real financial help and it was a huge blessing. We were running behind on just about everything and it has taken a lot of stress off to not be worrying about the utilities being turned off or how we are going to get caught up. If you had not helped us I don't know where we'd be! It took some (a lot) of the stress off of us during this time. Thank you so much! You do not know how much it meant to us. Thanks Again.

*— Retired Army SPC Gary W. Hughes Jr.,  
Joplin, Missouri*

### Policy on using troops' names and photos

Readers of "The Road to Recovery Report" may wonder why some service members are identified by their full names and, in other cases, only first names and last initials are used. The reason is that the U.S. Department of Defense has asked the Coalition to refrain from using the full names of active military personnel, and we are complying with that request by using only their last name initial, when applicable. In the case of retired service members, in order to protect their privacy, the Coalition uses their full names and/or photos only with their permission.





## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



***'Thank you for helping my Uncle Ben when he needed it most.'***



Recently, a package arrived at the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes' office.

Inside were two letters, along with a hand-drawn thank you card and a basket of Amish peanut brittle.

The package was from the Wiley family of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, who wanted to show how much they appreciate Coalition staffers and donors who helped their severely wounded family member in his time of greatest need.

Retired Army SGT Benjamin Wiley was fortunate enough to be able to work as an electrician despite having suffered a serious brain injury while serving in Iraq. But even though he worked hard, he couldn't seem to get ahead. There were times when he couldn't even afford to put gas in his truck to get to work.

His mother Jane did what she could, but as she wrote, "I felt so helpless during that time because I wasn't able to do very much to help him."

Wiley began to fall behind in his bills and his truck, that he needed as a lineman for an electrical contractor, was repossessed.

That's when he contacted the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.

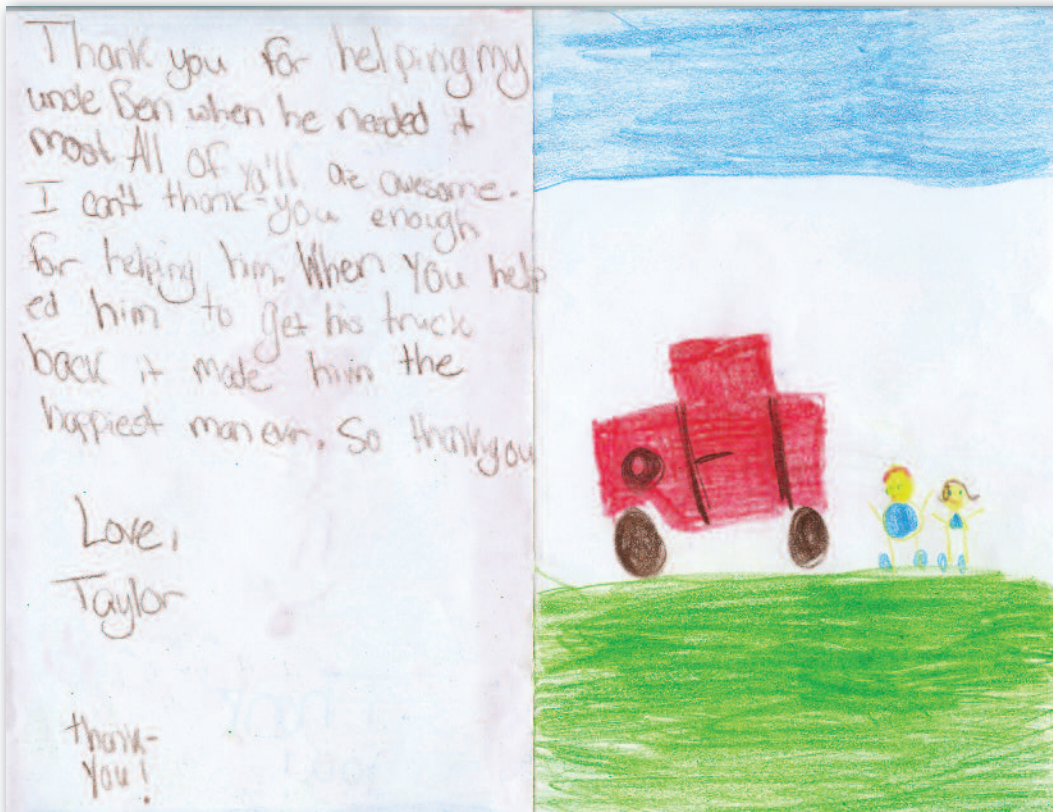
Coalition case manager Neida Sotomayor handled Ben's request. Taking time from her vacation, Neida made sure Ben could keep his truck and climb out from under other overdue bills.

Now, Ben Wiley is part of a crew of electrical contractors who are rushing to areas hit by natural disasters and restoring electricity to thousands of Americans.

"Things really began to turn around for Ben after you [Neida] took the time from your vacation to help him," Jane Wiley wrote.

"Thank you for being there to help Ben at a time when he had nowhere else to turn. I hope all of you realize the amount of gratitude you deserve for the job you do and the great need that is met by the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes."

Wiley's own letter says, "I'm sorry for taking so long to thank you for all you've done to help me. I hope that I have not made you all feel like I have not appreciated your help. I don't think there are any words that can describe the relief from worry that weighed so heavy on me without your help. I can't imagine how much worse things would have been."



***Taylor, Ben Wiley's young niece, created this artwork to thank Coalition supporters for helping her Uncle Ben get his truck back.***

