Every once in a while we receive a call that touches our hearts and propels us to a higher level of action. USAF Colonel Shawn "Norm" Pedersen (Ret) was a distinguished Command Pilot with extensive awards and achievements in his 24 years of service to our country, including flying with the Thunderbirds. Soon after he retired in 2014, his life took a dramatic turn. Shawn suffered a traumatic cerebral aneurysm. Since that life altering moment, he has been fighting to regain his independence. Immediately following the incident, his parents flew to John Hopkins Medical Center to be by his side and advocate for him. Shawn spent 8 weeks in ICU fighting off pneumonia and other infections, moved to Walter Reed for another 8 weeks to recover and then to RIC for therapy before being moved to a long term care rehabilitation facility in Prophetstown, IL. It was imperative that his parents be present regardless of the cost. Being far from their home in Tennessee and with nowhere else to turn, they reached out to SALUTE, INC. for support.

SALUTE, INC. was honored to have this opportunity to cover the cost of 9 month’s rent. Allowing the Pedersen’s to be actively involved as Shawn continued his arduous recovery.

SALUTE, INC.’s commitment on this lengthy journey is to see the Pederson’s through their healing process. We have walked beside them through the passing of Shawn’s father and the move from their temporary home in Illinois back to Tennessee. They have truly become a part of the SALUTE, INC. family. Recently, we got word from Shawn’s mom and now sole caregiver, Karen, about the difficulty she was having transporting him from bed to chair. Shawn’s recovery would be compromised without the purchase of a tram that could aid him in this transition. Simultaneously, SALUTE, INC. was approached by the Palatine Hills Golf Association (PHGA). They organized a charity golf tournament which raised $26,000 for SALUTE, INC. A portion of those proceeds paid for the Rifton Tram propelling him into his next phase of recovery. This tram provides Shawn with assistance daily in sit to stand transfers, seated transfers and gait training. In a heartfelt letter to PHGA and SALUTE, INC. Karen says, “We appreciate your support in the journey to encourage Shawn to overcome adversities. Your generosity bolsters our hope just when we were searching for new means of therapy.” Karen and Shawn face many trials but these contributions have helped ease some of that burden, giving them a greater quality of life and hope for the future.

www.saluteinc.org