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Walking, waving veteran of Gold Country brings his cause to Big Apple *Vietnam Vet Walks to Raise Funds for Wounded Warriors*

A Vietnam Veteran from a tiny town in California, who has been humbly raising money to support a program that helps severely injured vets from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars (along with military personnel wounded in training), received a surprise invitation to walk alongside them in the upcoming America's Parade in New York City on Nov. 11. Produced by the United War Veterans Council, the America's Parade is the oldest and largest event in the nation honoring those who have defended our freedoms.

Ric Ryan, 68, U.S. Marine Corp (1964-'68) began with a quest – walking every day hoping to escape the demons of Vietnam. But then he added a twist –each time someone waved at him while walking in his rural hometown of Murphys, Calif., Ryan would 'wave back' and donate 25 cents to a program called [UCLA Operation Mend](#) that provides surgical, medical and mental health services for soldiers disfigured by war.

A man of modest means, the "Walking Man of Murphys" donates money from his own disability checks for the cause. His wife said it helps him mentally, physically and emotionally to fight demons from his own war while helping the wounded from the latest wars.

Soon local residents found out about Ryan's '25 cents a wave' walks and began opening up their wallets to help him with his cause. The trickle of donations became a flood. In 3 years since he started walking in July 2011, Ryan has raised over \$48,000 through gifts he has inspired. Out of his own pocket one quarter at a time, and from personal and cash donations received along the way, Ryan has raised over \$19,000 equalling over 30,000 waves!

To thank him and honor his 'simple act of kindness,' Operation Mend surprised Ryan with an invitation to join them this year in New York City to walk alongside UCLA Operation Mend patients in the Parade.

Operation Mend is following Ryan's story through social media and encourages everyone to post a selfie photo waving their support of America's wounded warriors and to the UCLA Operation Mend program in honor of Ryan's 'wave' fundraising efforts at [#Wave4OperationMend](#).

For more information on UCLA Operation Mend, visit www.operationmend.ucla.edu. If anyone would like to make a donation to supplement Ryans's efforts, they can go to www.operationmend.ucla.edu/support to donate.

To download b-roll and photos: <http://bit.ly/10sqqHf>