

We'd like you to meet just a few of the veterans that Gold Coast Veterans Foundation's Mobile Veteran Outreach program rescued from homelessness... right here in Ventura County.

Brent Oleneck has been homeless for 9 of his 51 years... despite his having two honorable discharges (US Air Force Avionics Technician 1992-96), (US Navy Master at Arms 2002-04) and no criminal record.

Brent had been treated for **Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma**, but the radiation treatments for that gave him **Throat Cancer**. He's now too weak to work, and has \$18K in student debt.

He receives a small "Non Service-Connected" monthly pension from DoD or VA. But he's afraid that pursuing any other VA services or disability benefits will jeopardize or invalidate the small pension he has. He feels that the services he previously received at VA facilities in Los Angeles, Lancaster, were "useless"; Brent had lost all faith in the VA and government systems of care, saying "...the system is a threat to my survival."

Brent is in need of serious assistance in identifying, determining eligibility, and navigating through VA and other benefits. He is now or will soon be in need of substantial medical support to survive. His condition puts him at high risk for COVID-19. Brent and his dog were homeless; GCVF's Mobile Veteran Outreach program (MVO) has now placed him into a State funded motel room through a partnership with United Way.



Brian and Brandy - Brian is a US Army veteran (2007-09). Brandy was hit by a drunk driver in 2005, suffering significant brain damage. Brandy has frequent seizures, and Brian is not able to work because he's her full-time care-giver. They had been living in a vehicle with their dog Scrappy, but now their vehicle is disabled and needs repair. Brandy is in need of frequent transportation to medical appointments, and Brian often needs a ride to get her prescription medications. GCVF's Mobile Veteran Outreach program assisted them in applying to Ormond Beach Villa for low-income housing, and has now facilitated placing them into a hotel room as part of California's Coronavirus prevention effort. The MVO Director also worked with the staff at Ormond Beach to find parking for Brian's vehicle to prevent it from being impounded.



Donovan Thomas is a US Army Reserve veteran (1983-88). Donovan was recently laid off from his job at a car wash, due to Coronavirus. Gold Coast Veterans Foundation partnered with United Way to get him off the streets and place him in a hotel for the month of April.

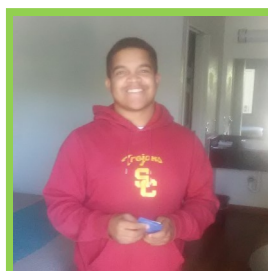
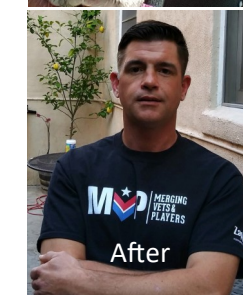


- ◆ **Aaron Wright**, US Navy Veteran, formerly homeless and addicted to methadone. Now recovered and sober, GCVF assisted in his placement into permanent housing.
- ◆ **Michelle and Richard Deviantier**, Michelle is a US Army veteran. Formerly living in a tent on a city sidewalk in Oxnard. GCVF facilitated their placement into Ormond Beach Villas subsidized housing.
- ◆ **James Jeffery**, US Marine Corps veteran, previously living in a tent at a park & ride in Simi Valley. GCVF facilitated placement into permanent housing at Ormond Beach Villas, and he is seeking full-time employment.

Ben Preston was a US Navy "Seabee", with deployments to Iraq, Somalia, Ethiopia, Japan, and a multinational rescue mission in Kenya when a building collapsed. He earned a Seabee Combat Warfare Designation, Good Conduct Medal, Expert Marksman Ribbon, Global War On Terrorism Service Medal, and Navy "Battle E" Ribbon.

After the Navy, Ben was in and out of jail for alcohol abuse and being drunk in public. GCVF's MVO Director (BA in Psychology & Certified Addiction Counselor) worked intensively with Ben to identify and engage in the resources and activities that got his life back on track. He is now **4 months sober** and in rehab. Ben is now seeking full time employment.

Ben credits GCVF as being a big part in his success: "Gold Coast Veterans Foundation bridged an invisible gap that I and other veterans can't locate, let alone get out of. I hate saying it, but I really just needed to accept f***ing up, change, and move on. In other words it helped me find the tools I didn't even know I needed, like cognitive behavioral therapy or a wellness recovery action plan... because of the courage and commitment you had to put *boots on the ground and get me here*. Sobriety is paramount to my being! I just needed to be reminded why, and thank you seriously for your part in finding myself. "



Marquise Holloway is a recently discharged veteran (US Army 2017-20). He has a good job at Lowe's in Oxnard, but alimony and child support left him unable to pay rent; this veteran *was forced to live in his car*. The MVO Program was able to place him in one of the State-funded motel rooms during the Coronavirus prevention effort, and provided gas money to get him to and from work until he gets paid. Marquise is smiling because he finally has a safe, clean place to sleep and continue rebuilding his life on an upward path.

Mike and Anna Garcia - Mike did *two combat tours* in Iraq. Anna served in Kuwait, and is a survivor of **MST**, but VA is delaying her claim. Mike has a 10% disability rating (for Tinnitus), but the VA denied his primary claim for PTSD. GCVF is working to help Mike see a Psychiatrist, to substantiate his PTSD claim, so we can assist him in re-filing the claim. Now **5 months pregnant**, Anna's military trauma has resulted in her barely speaking.

Mike had part time work as a carpenter, but this actually *disqualified them* for housing assistance. They've also been turned down for housing because of their dog; Wishbone is a very much needed service dog for Anna, but the paperwork is not complete. Mike has a great work ethic but he's very depressed because of the run-around they got from the VA, the difficult and confusing VA application process, and desperately looking for safe and affordable housing.

This pregnant veteran couple and their service dog have been living in a vehicle for two years; first in a car and now a small camper with no utility hookups. They were parked at the Pacific View Mall in Ventura getting several citations from the police.

GCVF's **Mobile Veteran Outreach** program provided emergency payment for them to park their vehicles and camp at the Lake Casitas campground for a short time, and have access to a hot shower.

The MVO Director began working on housing for them, quickly applying for subsidized housing at Ormond Beach Villa, but they did not qualify for a low-income 2 bedroom unit because their baby hasn't been born. With this pregnant couple being at **high risk for Coronavirus**, the MVO program was finally able to place them into one of the State-funded motel rooms, where they will have safe housing for the month of April. We're now intensely focused on finding housing for them in the critical period before and shortly after their child is born.

