

# Springing Into Action

## Greetings Camp Centurion Family,

As May rolls in, it brings with it a fresh breeze of hope and renewal—a perfect time to celebrate how far we've come together and dream about where we're headed next. I feel incredibly lucky to be here with you as the President of our board, and I'm truly inspired by the passion and dedication you all show towards our mission.

This past month, we've really made some strides. Thanks to your commitment to helping others, we've been able to expand our outreach and kick off some exciting new projects. Each step forward is a step closer to the world we're working together to build—a brighter future for everyone we help.

Looking ahead, the world of philanthropy and social change is always changing, but I'm genuinely optimistic about what we can achieve together. With our collective efforts and continued commitment, we can make a big difference in the lives of so many people and families.

I want to say a heartfelt thank you to each of you. Your hard work, kindness, and unwavering support are what make all of this possible. Let's grab the opportunities this month presents and keep making a real difference in the lives of those we help.

In the spirit of working together, I'm reminded of a passage from the Bible, Ecclesiastes 4:9: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor." Let's keep this in mind as we continue our journey—working side by side, we can accomplish so much more.

With immense gratitude,

Joel Dalton

President, Board of Directors

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

May 18th Veterans Stand-down Event at Camp Centurion (11:30AM - 2:30PM), Camp Centurion has teamed with Veterans Bridge Home to host a Veterans Stand-down Event for Gaston, Lincoln, and Cleveland Counties. Lunch will be provided for everyone at no cost due to our generous donors. Our event aims to provide support, resources, and services to homeless and at-risk veterans. The primary intent is to offer Veterans a "stand down" from the challenges they face, particularly homelessness, by giving them access to essential services all in one location. The ultimate goal of our Veterans Stand Down event is to empower veterans to reintegrate into society, regain stability, and improve their overall well-being

Registration Link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/veterans-united-2024-tickets-860528623277?aff=oddtcreator>

## Introducing our newest board members



**Tommy Hughes** began his military career in Charlotte, North Carolina, serving in the 1-113 Field Artillery before transitioning to Cyber Command in 2013. Over 19 years, he has been deployed to the Middle East three times, demonstrating adaptability in field artillery and cyber roles. Outside the military, Tommy is the Director of Recruiting and Marketing at Waffle House Inc. in Charlotte, where he leads brand and college engagement, manages recruitment, and offers career counseling. He plans to use his experiences to support fellow veterans through the Centurion Veterans Organization, aiding their transition to civilian careers.



**Greg Dimmer**, a dedicated general contractor and community advocate, founded Dimmer & Sons Construction, Inc. in 1995. After serving in the Marine Corps from 1989 to 1994, he channeled his discipline and leadership into building a reputable construction firm. Greg is married to Shelli Dimmer and extends his commitment to community service through significant contributions. He has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in Gaston County, building homes and serving on its board. Additionally, Greg has held positions on the Belmont YMCA board and the Gaston County Home Builders Board, underscoring his dedication to community development and support.



**Cory Hinkle** (Secretary), Cory's distinguished 21-year military career began in 2002 as an engineer and a human resources specialist. He deployed to Iraq in 2005 as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, focusing on route clearance and crater repair, and again in 2011, working in Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Qatar with a brigade personnel office. Retiring in June 2023, Cory owns King's Legacy Transport, a nationwide company specializing in time-sensitive and specialized loads. He lives in Cliffside, NC, with his wife, Rachel, and their two daughters, Stella and Lyla.



**Kevin Evans** entered the U.S. Navy in 1984 and served as a Corpsman in active duty and reserve capacity until being honorably discharged in 1992. He currently serves as a North Carolina ambassador for Mission 22, an organization united in the war against veteran suicide. He is a member of the Patriot Guard Riders and American Legion. He has been employed by Caromont Health in Gastonia for over 36 years, currently as a health information specialist after working for the psychiatric department for 18 years.



**Dr. Evan Leonard**, a clinical anatomist with a doctorate in medical science from Lincoln Memorial University, has academic degrees in biology, anatomy, and medical science from the University of Miami, Barry University, and Nova Southeastern University, respectively. A former Marine Corps reservist, Dr. Leonard has practiced internal and emergency medicine at the University of Florida and published peer-reviewed research. He continues to teach as a professor at various universities.

**Note from our Director:**

Your support enables us to create a warm and welcoming environment where our veterans can thrive, find camaraderie, and receive the care they need. Whether through volunteering, donations, or advocacy, your contributions make a tangible difference in the lives of those who have served.

We have Camp Centurion workdays in July and October. Please let us know if you know of a church youth group or ministry that can help us. Dates will be determined based on workers' availability.

Also, we are in need of several items for the home. Here is the link to our Amazon Wish list if you are willing to help us out in these areas: <https://a.co/5idsFwm>. Otherwise please contact me if you wish to purchase items a different way.

Please contact me if you can help us with any of our needs. Again, thank you for helping us help others.

**Ken Heavner**

**704-734-7742**

## How many homeless veterans are there?

Although flawless counts are impossible to come by – the transient nature of homeless populations presents a major difficulty – [the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) estimates](#) that 40,056 veterans are homeless on any given night. Over the course of a year, approximately twice that many experience homelessness. Only 7% of the general population can claim veteran status, but nearly 13% of the homeless adult population are veterans.

The number of homeless veterans has decreased by about 50% since 2009, according to HUD's Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR).

To obtain the most up-to-date local estimates, contact the homeless coordinator at your nearest VA medical center or the Office of the Mayor or county government serving your area.

## Iraq and Afghanistan veterans

Combat veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the Global War on Terror who need help – from mental health programs to housing, employment training and job placement assistance – are beginning to seek help from the nation's community-based homeless veteran service provider organizations. Already stressed by an increasing need for assistance by post-Vietnam-era veterans and strained budgets, homeless service providers are deeply concerned about the influx of combat veterans who will eventually be requesting their support.

Approximately 12,700 veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation New Dawn (OND) were homeless in 2010. The number of young homeless veterans is increasing, but only constitutes 8.8% of the overall homeless veteran population.

## Why are veterans homeless?

In addition to the complex set of factors influencing all homelessness – extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income and access to health care – a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse, which are compounded by a lack of family and social support networks. Additionally, military occupations and training are not always transferable to the civilian workforce, placing some veterans at a disadvantage when competing for employment.

A top priority for homeless veterans is secure, safe, clean housing that offers a supportive environment free of drugs and alcohol.

## **What services do homeless veterans need?**

Homeless veterans need a coordinated effort that provides secure housing and nutritional meals; essential physical health care, substance abuse aftercare and mental health counseling; and personal development and empowerment. Veterans also need job assessment, training and placement assistance. NCHV strongly believes that all programs to assist homeless veterans must focus on helping veterans reach the point where they can obtain and sustain gainful employment. If not, clients will be unable to find and maintain safe, decent, permanent housing.

## **What are some of the risk factors for veteran homelessness?**

In May 2012, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released a report titled “Incidence of Homelessness among Veterans and Risk Factors for Becoming Homeless in Veterans.” The report presents findings from a study of roughly 500,000 men and women who separated from military service in 2005 and 2006 and were tracked through Sept. 30, 2010. These veterans had not experienced any episodes of homelessness before their separation from active duty, and utilized DoD (including TRICARE) or VA health care after their separation.

## **Homeless veteran demographics**

- 13% of the homeless adult population are veterans
- 20% of the male homeless population are veterans
- 68% reside in principal cities
- 32% reside in suburban/rural areas
- 51% of individual homeless veterans have disabilities
- 50% have serious mental illness
- 70% have substance abuse problems
- 51% are white males, compared to 38% of non-veterans
- 50% are age 51 or older, compared to 19% non-veterans

## **Who is helping homeless veterans?**

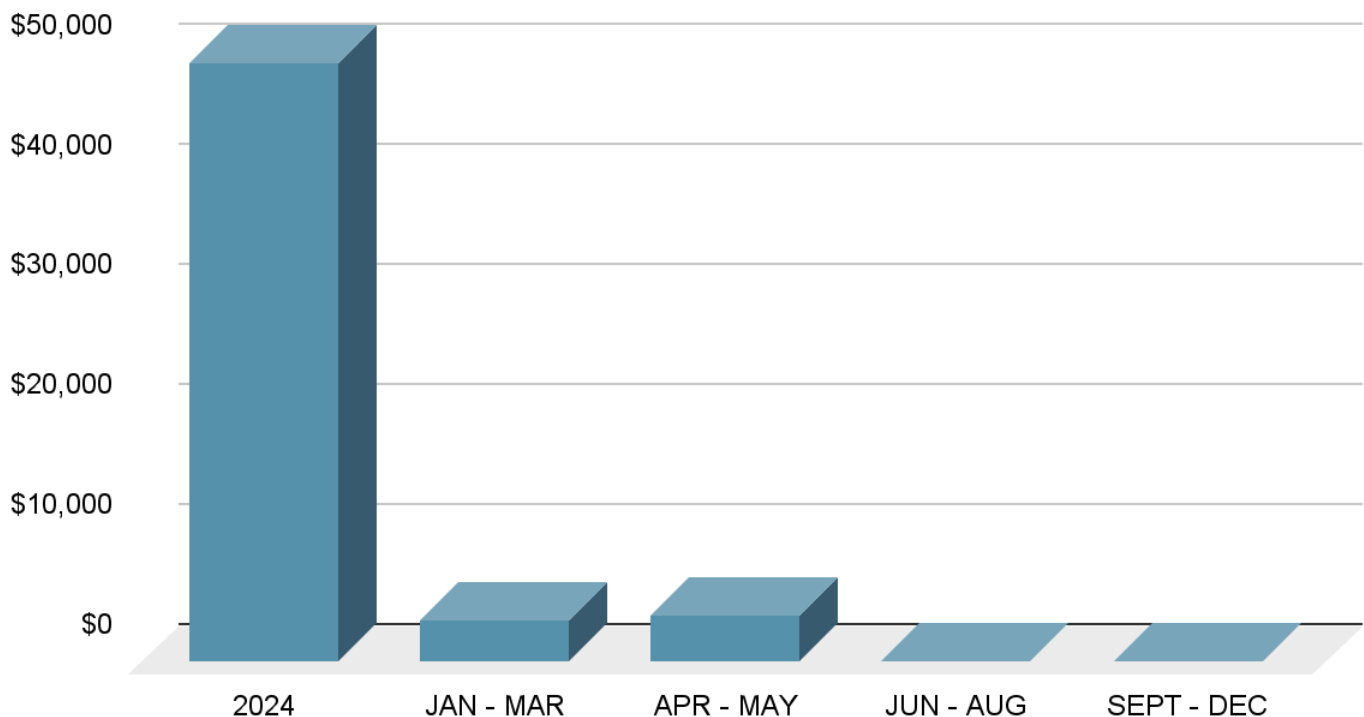
The most effective programs for homeless and at-risk veterans are community-based, nonprofit, “veterans helping veterans” groups. Programs that seem to work best feature transitional housing that offers the camaraderie of living in structured, substance-free environments with fellow veterans who are successfully regaining control of their lives. Because government money for homeless veterans is limited and VA serves less than half of this population, it is critical that community groups reach out to help provide the support, resources and opportunities most Americans take for granted: employment, housing and health care.

There are over 2,100 community-based homeless veteran service providers across the country and many other homeless assistance programs that have demonstrated impressive success reaching homeless veterans. These groups are most successful when they work in collaboration with federal, state and local government agencies; other homeless providers; and veteran service organizations. Veterans who participate in these programs have a higher chance of becoming tax-paying, productive citizens again.

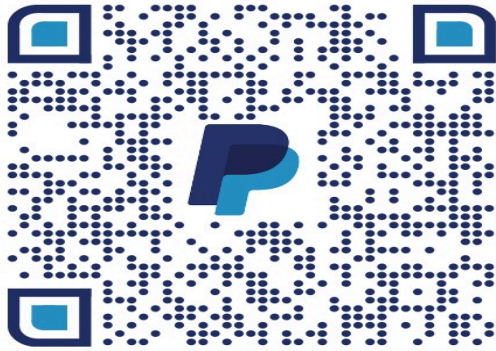
Source - [Veteran Homelessness – National Coalition for Homeless Veterans \(nchv.org\)](https://nchv.org)

We aim to raise **\$50,000** for our operating budget for 2024. These funds will cover the basic costs of what we do here at Camp Centurion. Please consider utilizing the link below and becoming a donor. If you feel led to donate, please send a check or money order made payable to Camp Centurion Inc. to PO Box 1008, Bessemer City, NC 28016 or you can utilize the paypal QR code at the bottom of this page.

## HELP US REACH OUR 50K GOAL!!!







If you would like to donate to our cause, please scan this QR code and become a one-time donor or a monthly recurring donor!!!

We could use your support!!!



# Camp Centurion

## **Veteran Support:**

Personalized individual support plans to help veterans become stable, and productive members of the community.





**Chaplain's Corner**

When speaking about the devil, in John 8:44 (NIV), Jesus says, "...He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." Jesus told us what Satan is like and has been like, "...from the beginning..." So, let's take a look at the beginning. Genesis 3:1 (NIV) "Now the serpent was more crafty [subtle] than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" That is the first question, the first time Satan speaks, and the first lie in the Bible. He has been lying from the beginning and He is still lying. Why does He lie? The answer is right there in John 8:44. He is a murderer. Among other things, his lies cause self-condemnation. Yet, in Romans 8:1 (NKJV) The scripture tells us "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." Self-condemnation causes people to decide that life is not worth living, and being self-condemned, they sentence themselves to death and carry out the sentence themselves. The suicide rate among veterans is 52% higher than it is among the general population. For many years after serving in Vietnam, I had horrible dreams on an endless loop. This happened even after I was a Christian because I was still believing Satan's lies, about events, about others, about myself, and even about God. Satan almost had me believing that I enjoyed what I did in war and therefore I must be a murderer. Because he always twists the truth, there is a bit of truth in his lies. I was and still am a warrior and I enjoyed being a Marine rifle squad leader, which was both the worst job and the best job I ever had. So, what changed? How did I defeat his lies? I didn't; Jesus did. When we receive Jesus, we receive all of Jesus, save for His divinity. This includes the ability to see from His perspective. The dreams no longer haunt me. I still have the memories. But now I view them as Jesus views them. Now I can see events and people, even myself, through the eyes of Jesus. The only defense against the lies is the truth. Jesus is truth. The next time you feel condemned, ask yourself, "Is this true or is this a lie of the subtle serpent?"

***Chaplain Bud***