

POW finds new hope at Fourth Quarter Apartments

By Hunter Williams

After traveling west and living out of a car, Anthony and his wife, Madeleine, ran out of gas and slept in a car in a Walmart parking lot for close to six months. Although they never made it to their ultimate destination, this fact revealed itself to be the lucky break they had been desperately seeking.

Because many homeless shelters do not allow couples to stay together for safety concerns - and the two did not want to leave each other's side - they sought refuge in their car, as instead of spending nights at separate shelters. Anthony, a special-operations-trained officer for 12 years and a POW, was used to sleeping in holes and bushes, but his wife was not. "This is when worry began to set in," Anthony said.



"There is a similarity between being a soldier and being homeless that I felt prepared me, but I knew we needed to find a way out for my wife and our well-being."

Two years ago, Anthony, a former U.S. Army First Lieutenant, and Madeleine walked into Denver Human Services not knowing what to expect. "Denver Human Services and Denver's Road Home acted extremely fast," he said. That day, they caught their lucky break and heard about an apartment complex that was slated to open in a month, Fourth Quarter Apartments. Even more astounding was that it would house people in the same situation as Anthony: homeless veterans and their families.

They received a call exactly one month later explaining that they had been accepted into the housing complex and could move in that day. "We were constantly inspired, from walking into the [DHS] office to moving into our new apartment," Anthony said. "Even the simplest gestures made the biggest impacts."

While serving his country, Anthony was a POW for six months and became permanently disabled due to a traumatic brain injury. He was fortunate to be freed and walk out with his lieutenant, but he watched many comrades as they were beaten, tortured and murdered during his time as a prisoner. After finally finding a home and stability, Anthony began to tell his story, which he finds to be quite therapeutic. He started blogging and has even begun writing a book telling of his journey from coming home a hero to becoming homeless.

Today, he hopes to move out of the veterans' apartment complex, which is run by the Bo Matthews Center for Excellence and transition into something more family-oriented. He hopes to use the foundation he started, "Brother's Keeper Organization," to help veterans like himself find temporary shelter until they can "move off base and find normalcy again."

Anthony describes his journey as "quite amazing," but gives much credit to the selfless organizations of Denver that helped him fight and win the tremendous battle that faced him and his wife. "We are so extremely blessed," he said. "Even as my memory fades me, this is something I will never forget."