

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: Nicole Daniels, Director of Public Relations**

Office: 719.266.8300

Cell: 616.260.6097

Email: [ndaniels@agrm.org](mailto:ndaniels@agrm.org)

## **Survey points to needs of Iraq, Afghanistan veterans**

*October research focuses on thousands seeking help at rescue missions*

Colorado Springs, Colo. (Nov. 13, 2012) – Twice as many veterans of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are seeking aid from rescue missions as were last year, according to the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions' 23<sup>rd</sup> annual *Snapshot Survey* of about 19,000 individuals. Although on the whole, the percentage of veterans (13 percent) has remained steady during the past year, this group has jumped from 6 percent in 2011 to 12 percent of those served at North American missions.

“Gospel rescue missions are beginning to see the effects of the war and a still-fragile economy as service men and women are discharged and return home unable to find work and affordable housing,” said John Ashmen, president of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions (AGRM). “These organizations play a critical role in the lives of veterans and many other individuals, who need healing from emotional scars, and someone to help the overcome homelessness and addiction.”

Typically, 6 to 10 years pass by after discharge before veterans might end up in the shelter system, said Anthony Love, Senior Advisor for the National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans. But for those who've served with the military in Iraq or Afghanistan, it's only taking six months to two years for them to seek aid.

Rescue missions offer multiple programs for veterans in need.

“As a former Marine, my heart is humbled by all of the veterans who serve our great country,” said Brad Meuli, president/CEO of Denver Rescue Mission. “Denver Rescue Mission serves thousands of veterans in various ways throughout the year. We provide meals, shelter and clothing, and offer rehabilitation programs for vets who want to change their lives.”

In Boise, Idaho, a mission involved with the Veterans Administration and the justice system provides transitional living services to homeless veterans who are participating in Veterans Court programs.

“The mission is an integral part of the Veterans Court program in two counties, providing shelter and recovery services with accountability to the participants,” said Bill Roscoe, executive director of Boise Rescue Mission Ministries. “Many veterans are able to avoid jail and get back into the mainstream as a result.”

The *Snapshot Survey*, completed at 115 North American gospel rescue missions in October 2012, provides a valuable snapshot of those seeking assistance from rescue missions, most (83 percent) of whom are currently homeless.

Also revealed in the 2012 data is that prior to coming to a mission, one in four people experiencing homelessness had been victims of physical violence in the previous year. This represents a 7 percent increase over the last three years.

Among the people surveyed, 81 percent were single individuals. Of those who came to a mission with a family, 51 percent were single women with children.

Eighty-four percent of the individuals daily come to the mission where they were surveyed; almost as many (81 percent) prefer to receive assistance from an agency with a spiritual emphasis.

Every year, faith-based ministries that are members of AGRM serve between 40 and 50 million meals, provide 15 to 20 million nights of lodging, distribute more than 25 million pieces of clothing, bandage the wounds of hundreds of abuse victims, and graduate close to 20,000 men and women from addiction-recovery programs and into productive living.

Founded in 1913, the Colorado Springs-based AGRM is North America’s oldest and largest network of independent crisis shelters and rehabilitation centers, offering radical hospitality in the name of Jesus. With approximately 275 member missions, AGRM exists to proclaim the passion of Jesus toward the hungry, homeless, abused and addicted, and to accelerate quality and effectiveness in member missions. For more information, visit [www.agrm.org](http://www.agrm.org) or call (800) 4RESCUE.

###

## Snapshot Survey Homeless Statistical Comparison

Individuals Surveyed: 18,776 | Participating Missions: 115 | Families with children: 2,189 | Individuals in long-term rehab: 5,306

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
<u>Gender</u> (of total mission population)					
Male	72%	74%	75%	75%	74%
Female	28%	26%	25%	25%	26%
<u>Age Groups</u> (of total mission population)					
Under 18	7%	7%	9%	9%	12%
18–25	9%	9%	9%	8%	9%
26–35	18%	18%	15%	17%	18%
36–45	23%	25%	22%	25%	26%
46–65	39%	39%	40%	38%	31%
65+	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%
<u>Race/Ethnic Groups</u> (of total mission population)					
White/Caucasian	50%	50%	-	-	-
Black or African American	34%	34%	-	-	-
Hispanic, Latin, or Spanish origin	10%	9%	-	-	-
Asian	1%	1%	-	-	-
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2%	2%	-	-	-
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	-	-	-
Other or 2+ races	3%	3%	-	-	-
Single individuals (of total mission population)	81%	86%	-	-	-
<u>Women/Children/Families</u> (of family units identified)					
Couples	23%	20%	12%	13%	15%
Women with children	51%	52%	57%	60%	66%
Men with children	11%	12%	9%	9%	5%
Intact families	16%	17%	22%	18%	14%
<u>Veteran Status</u> (of total mission population)					
Veterans (male)	13%	13%	16%	19%	18%
Veterans (female)	2%	1%	4%	4%	3%
Of veterans identified:					
Served in Korea	3%	5%	-	-	-
Served in Vietnam	21%	25%	-	-	-
Served in Persian Gulf	16%	13%	-	-	-
Iraq or Afghanistan War	12%	6%	-	-	-
<u>Homeless Status</u> (of total mission population)					
Not currently homeless	17%	17%	-	-	-
Currently homeless	83%	83%	-	-	-
Of currently homeless:					
Less than 3 months	30%	31%	-	-	-
3 to 6 months	24%	21%	-	-	-
6 months to 1 year	20%	20%	-	-	-
More than 1 year	27%	27%	-	-	-
Never before homeless	34%	35%	37%	37%	33%
Homeless once previously	26%	24%	25%	25%	24%
Homeless twice previously	17%	17%	16%	16%	18%
Homeless three-plus times previously	22%	24%	22%	22%	25%
<u>Other Information</u> (of total mission population)					
Struggles with mental illness	30%	30%	-	-	-
Victim of physical violence in last 12 months	24%	21%	15%	17%	18%
Prefer spiritual emphasis in services	81%	80%	82%	83%	76%
Comes daily to the mission	84%	82%	84%	80%	77%