

## Recent war vets face risk of homelessness

By **Gregg Zoroya**, USA TODAY

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More than 10,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are homeless or in programs aimed at keeping them off the streets, a number that has doubled three times since 2006, according to figures released by the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#).



By Evan Eile, USA TODAY

Military officials celebrate Veteran's Day at the Central Union Mission in D.C. with some of the area's disadvantaged veterans.

The rise comes at a time when the total number of homeless veterans has declined from a peak of about 400,000 in 2004 to 135,000 today.

"We're seeing more and more (Iraq and Afghanistan veterans)," says [Richard Thomas](#), a [Volunteers of America](#) case manager at a shelter in [Los Angeles](#). "It's just a bad time for them to return now and get out of the military."

The VA blames the rise on a poor economy and the nature of the current wars, where a limited number of troops serve multiple deployments.

The result is a group of homeless veterans where 70% have a history of combat exposure with its psychological effects, says [Pete Dougherty](#), a senior policy adviser on homelessness at the VA.

Among all homeless veterans, perhaps 20% to 33% were in combat, he says.

LaShonna Perry, a former Army mechanic who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, was homeless for more than year after leaving the military. She rented an apartment last year with a federal voucher.

"Some soldiers still have issues they're dealing with from what they've seen, what they've experienced," she says. "Some think, 'There's nothing wrong with me.' They can deal with it on their own. Until it gets out of control."

As of May, there were 10,476 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans either living on the streets, in temporary housing or receiving federal vouchers to help pay rent for an apartment.

About 13% are women, the VA says.

The spike in Iraq and Afghanistan veterans seeking

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### Homeless vets

Number of U.S. veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan wars who are homeless or in programs to prevent homelessness:

2006: 1,297

2007: 2,167

2008: 3,495

2009: 5,881

2010: 9,750

2011: 10,476 (through May)

Source: [Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

shelter comes at a time when the government and non-profit groups are pouring more resources than ever into fighting veteran homelessness.

The VA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development are spending \$46.2 million to expand the voucher program.

The VA is set to announce Tuesday that nearly \$60 million will fund a program of grants to veterans with families who are homeless or at risk of losing their homes.

"There are places to turn to for help that did not exist before," says [John Driscoll](#), president and chief executive officer of the [National Coalition](#) for Homeless Veterans.

He said more than 2,400 non-profit organizations across the country now have homeless veteran programs.

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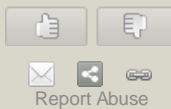
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7:53 PM on July 25, 2011

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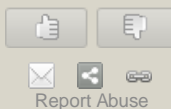
[diamondback 55](#)

8:04 PM on July 25, 2011

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This is Criminal, and this Socialist Government is responsible, they are passing Laws right and Left to allow more illegals to gain Citizenship, these People are draining our System from Social Security to Medicaid, they take our Jobs, they Flood our Schools and they complain, they have flooded our Prisons, no more immigrants from anywhere, NO MORE.

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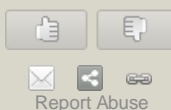


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8:30 PM on July 25, 2011

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This is disgraceful. We have do good organizations that fund bringing thousands of refugees into our country with housing assistance on the tab of taxpayers and yet we forget about our vets.



[Tom-hawk](#)

9:16 PM on July 25, 2011

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

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 <p>15 to 20 million Americans unemployed &amp; 50 million + with no Health Benefits &amp; that includes "Veterans" But yet our government sends billions of American dollars overseas &amp; our unpatriotic companies sends millions of American JOBS overseas.!!!</p> <p><a href="#">1 reply</a></p>	
 <p><b>seaobuster</b> 9:33 PM on July 25, 2011 <span style="float: right;">Score: 27</span></p> <p>So, let's cut the funding to the countries around the world for a time and focus on US! Let's cut the unnecessary funding of illegal aliens and their families that are here illegally. Let's cut the programs that fund illegal aliens and help our vets! These people deserve more - they fought for our country and are citizens! They did not fight for the illegal aliens to live better than they can! Wake up America. Vote 2012! Renew America!</p>	     Report Abuse
 <p><b>BigBearcatBill</b> 9:36 PM on July 25, 2011 <span style="float: right;">Score: 6</span></p> <p>Republicans use them, abuse them and then don't put a roof over their head when they get done protecting your butts. They will not create jobs until they have control of all parts of government. The Billionaires bought off the votes in November and will do it the rest of eternity. This country is only going to take care of Little Kings and they don't even take care of their soldiers that made them rich.</p> <p><a href="#">4 replies</a></p>	     Report Abuse
 <p><b>TapUSMC</b> 10:03 PM on July 25, 2011 <span style="float: right;">Score: 1</span></p> <p>Idiots...Billionairs bought votes?The unions bought the votes...They just got ther 30\$.00 an hour jobs saved by the President they bought...Wake up Bigbare!!!!</p>	     Report Abuse
 <p><b>TapUSMC</b> 10:12 PM on July 25, 2011 <span style="float: right;">Score: 3</span></p> <p>This is an all vounteener military...Most are working class kids from working class families...None from politicians..The American public would rather give illeagles anmistry,and none fighting none working professional welfare people free insurance then help these young men and women...Time to start drafting the privledge kids of money and political privledge...Maybe that would change some things...</p> <p><a href="#">3 replies</a></p>	     Report Abuse
 <p><b>bajahard</b> 10:23 PM on July 25, 2011 <span style="float: right;">Score: 40</span></p> <p>when an illegal has more rights and programs than a veteran we lost our sights of right and wrong in this country.</p> <p><a href="#">1 reply</a></p>	     Report Abuse
 <p><b>57girl</b> 10:39 PM on July 25, 2011 <span style="float: right;">Score: 23</span></p> <p>With all of the empty houses across America, even having one homeless vet is a crying shame. Our Government can provide housing for umpteen illegal aliens, but our own troops live in the streets? What is wrong with this picture? And I just read a headline that California's "Dream Act" was passed . . . wow, and just in time for the elections. Isn't that what it is really all about? Our leaders don't care about the common citizen or our troops. It is all about re-election. We should give them all the boot.</p> <p><a href="#">1 reply</a></p>	     Report Abuse

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