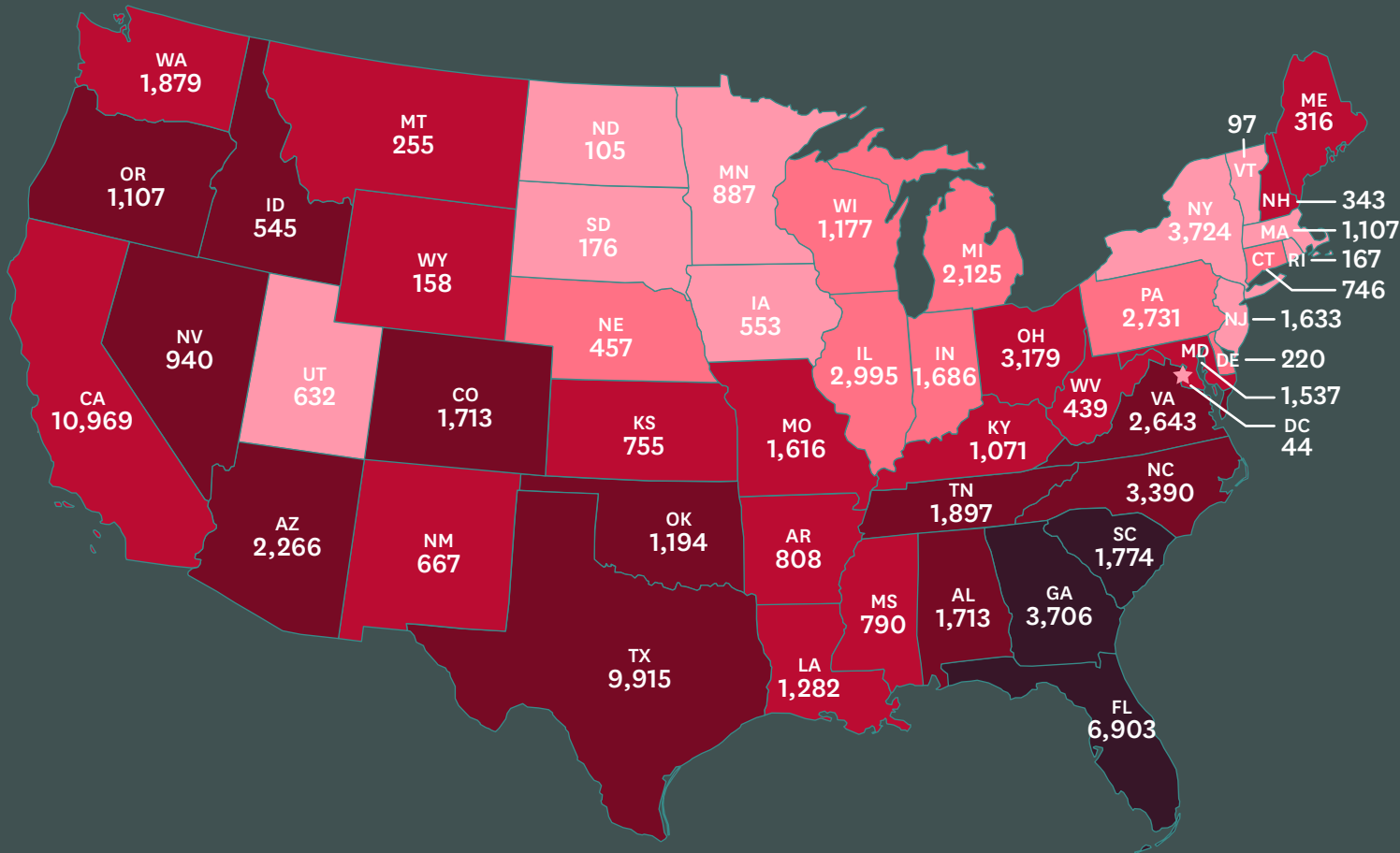
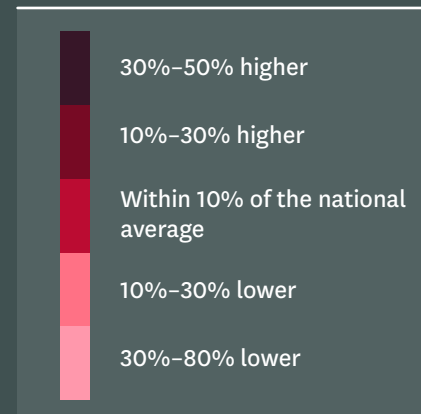


Numbers and Per Capita Distribution of Troops Serving in the U.S. Post-9/11 Wars in 2019, By State



KEY: Per Capita Burden



ABOUT THIS MAP

Each state displays an estimated number of service members from that state currently serving in the United States' post-9/11 wars. The color of each state shows the relative burden borne by that state in relation to its population size.

TOP TEN

in relation to population size

- 1 South Carolina
- 2 Hawaii
- 3 Alaska
- 4 Florida
- 5 Georgia
- 6 Colorado
- 7 Alabama
- 8 Texas
- 9 North Carolina
- 10 Nevada

TOP TEN

in raw numbers

- 1 California
- 2 Texas
- 3 Florida
- 4 New York
- 5 Georgia
- 6 North Carolina
- 7 Ohio
- 8 Illinois
- 9 Pennsylvania
- 10 Virginia

Numbers and Per Capita Distribution of Troops Serving in the U.S. Post-9/11 Wars in 2019, By State

Stephanie Savell and Rachel McMahon¹

Graphic Design by Maria Ji

RESEARCH STATEMENT

This infographic displays an estimate of the raw number of service members from each state operating in the United States post-9/11 wars in 2019 and the relative burden borne by each state in making this contribution. The ‘post-9/11 wars’ refers to U.S. military operations around the world, including in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, that have grown out of President George W. Bush’s “Global War on Terror” and the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. The color coding on the map shows the broader context of each state’s contribution of service members in relation to its population size. The darkest color, for instance, shows that South Carolina, Hawaii, Alaska, Florida, and Georgia send the highest numbers of troops, per capita, to war. Since there is no publicly available government data that lists service members involved in the U.S. post-9/11 wars by their state of origin, the research team estimated the figures using a combination of various government data sources. The Methodological Appendix, below, lists sources and methods.

The map’s numbers are based on the Congressional Research Service’s conservative 2019 estimate of the total number of military personnel serving in the U.S. post-9/11 wars, this despite a few flaws in the estimate, for reasons detailed below. Because the total number may fluctuate based on current events, the numbers on this map should be taken as general indicators of nationwide patterns.

The inequalities in per capita contributions by state reflect several geographic trends in the U.S. First, there is a rough alignment between the top contributing states, by population size, and the nation’s distribution of military bases and network of defense contractors, which cluster in the South and along both coasts. In general, states with a higher number of bases and contractors tend to have a higher number of military enlistments (though there are outliers to this pattern).² Second, there is a loose correlation between the highest per capita contributors and the nation’s poorest states.³ (The ten poorest states are: Mississippi, New Mexico, Louisiana, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, South Carolina, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina.) There are also important differences within states in relation to enlistment. The military recruits heavily among young people, often targeting those from poorer neighborhoods. In a 2017 Pentagon poll, 49% of respondents said that one reason they were motivated to join the military was in order to pay for future education. Signing bonuses and the prospect of American citizenship are also motivators for new recruits from low-income families.⁴

Over time, geographic trends are consolidated by a strong tendency towards intergenerational military service. According to Pentagon data, 80% of new recruits come from families with at least one parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, sibling or cousin who has also served in the military. More than 25% have a parent who is a service member or veteran.⁵

Though casualty rates are not shown on this map, an extension of this research is that the unequal contribution of troops by state is paralleled by an unequal distribution of service members’ deaths across their states of origin. That is, the viewer can assume that certain states are more touched than others by war casualties. In a study of various towns and communities across the U.S., scholars have called this a “casualty gap” and showed that this inequality has deep ramifications, both symbolically in American political life and for policymaking. In an experiment conducted in 2007, Douglas Kriner and Francis Shen demonstrated that Americans who live in communities with higher casualty rates are disproportionately more likely to hold negative views of government and withdraw from political life.⁶

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² See Markusen, Ann, Peter Hall, Scott Campbell, and Sabina Deitrick. (1991). *The Rise of the Gunbelt: The Military Remapping of Industrial America*. Oxford University Press. See also the similarities with the 2014 map by Business Insider: Kiersz, Andy. (2014, November 10). *Here’s How Much Land Military Bases Take Up in Each State*. Business Insider. <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-much-land-military-bases-take-up-in-each-state-2014-11?IR=T>.

³ See the map by Kolmar, Chris. (2020, January 3). *The Ten Poorest States in America for 2020*. Roadsnacks. <https://www.roadsnacks.net/poorest-states-in-america/>.

⁴ See Zong, Jie and Batalova, Jeanne. (2019, May 16). *Immigrant Veterans in the United States*. Migration Policy Institute. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/immigrant-veterans-united-states>; Chiesa, James. (2010). *Do Bonuses Affect Enlistment and Reenlistment?*. Rand Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9539/index1.html; Corcione, Adryan. (2019, January 22). *The Military Targets Youth for Recruitment, Especially at Poor Schools*. Teen Vogue. <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/the-military-targets-youth-for-recruitment>.

⁵ See Thompson, Mark. (2016, March 10). *Here’s Why the US Military is a Family Business*. Time. <https://time.com/4254696/military-family-business/>; JAMRS. (2013). *New Recruit Survey Wave 1 Findings*. https://time.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/new_recruit_wave1_briefing_final_7-23-2013.pptx.

⁶ Kriner, Douglas L. and Chen, Francis X. (2010, April 28). *The Casualty Gap: The Causes and Consequences of American Wartime Inequalities*. Oxford University Press.

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

For the total number of military personnel currently serving in the post-9/11 wars, this report uses the figure of 87,822, established by the April 18, 2019 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report, “U.S. War Costs, Casualties, and Personnel Levels Since 9/11.” This number is based on numbers of personnel serving in Department of Defense “Overseas Contingency Operations,” a budgetary category of defense spending on the U.S. post-9/11 wars. This CRS figure includes U.S. troops serving in the post-9/11 wars in permanent stations abroad, in support of counterterror operations via temporary assignments (what the Department of Defense calls “Temporary Enabling Forces”), and in support roles from the U.S.

This map draws on the CRS figure despite its imperfections, which are important to delineate here. First, according to the CRS author, Christopher Mann, the estimate does not include U.S. military personnel operating in counterterror operations outside of the Middle East, Southwest Asia, and select countries in Northwest Africa and the Horn of Africa. Yet in other research, the Costs of War Project has established that the U.S. is conducting counterterror operations in 80 countries, a much larger number than the one the CRS includes in the scope of OCO operations. To counterbalance this undercounting, however, the CRS estimate includes between 9,000–10,000 U.S. military personnel serving in the European Deterrence Initiative, which is not a counterterror operation. Finally, the total number of personnel will have changed since April 2019 because of recent events in Syria, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, and those changes are not captured here.

The research team verified that the CRS number was relatively accurate, however, by crosschecking it against two sources. First, a New York Times article from October 21, 2019, titled, “Despite Vow to End ‘Endless Wars,’ Here’s Where About 200,000 Troops Remain,” gives a list of war locations abroad and numbers of U.S. troops serving in them.⁷ While most of those locations are sites involved in the U.S. post-9/11 wars, the Times article also lists troops in Japan, South Korea and NATO countries, which do not have the primary aim of counterterrorism. Minus these latter cases, the Times documents a subtotal of 71,200–91,400 troops serving abroad in the U.S. post-9/11 wars, a range that includes the CRS total used here.

Second, the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) publishes a monthly report on the number of Active Duty Military Personnel who are permanently stationed in each country where there is an American military presence.⁸ The research team added together the DMDC troop numbers for each country with evidence of American military activity to combat terrorism, as documented in the Cost of War Project’s 2017–2018 map of U.S. counterterror activity around the world.⁹ The research team used the Active Duty Military Personnel numbers from September 2017, which is the most recent month the DMDC has published troop numbers for Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. Adding together the DMDC’s troop numbers for each of the eighty countries included in the Cost of War Project’s 2017–2018 map gave a total of 93,061 troops permanently stationed abroad. This number is relatively close to the CRS total of 87,822, upon which this Costs of War report is based. Yet it does not include troops on temporary assignments, who are often responsible for conducting counterterror operations. This suggests that the 87,822 figure is a conservative estimate, and that the actual number of service members engaged in the post-9/11 wars is likely higher.

While there are no public documents that list active duty military personnel’s states of origin, CNA, a nonprofit research organization located in Arlington, VA, prepares an annual Congressionally-mandated report for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel, and Readiness, “Population Representation in the Military Services Report.” This report lists each year’s number of “accessions,” or U.S. citizens joining military service for the first time, including new recruits to the army, navy, marine corps, and air force, and their state of origin, as well as each state’s percentage of total recruits.¹⁰ The research team has assumed that these percentages of total new recruits from each state are roughly equivalent to the percentages of service members from each state serving abroad in the post-9/11 wars. This is, if 11.3% of the total new recruits are from the state of Texas, then the assumption is that approximately the same percentage of military personnel serving in the post-9/11 wars are from Texas. The percentages here are taken from the CNA’s percentages by state of total accessions in 2017. The research team verified that these percentages were remarkably stable in the three years prior to 2017, so the assumption is that the same percentages continue to be stable through to the present.

⁷ Gibbons-Neff, Thomas and Schmitt, Eric. (2019, October 21). *Despite Vow to End ‘Endless Wars,’ Here’s Where About 200,000 Troop Remain*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/21/world/middleeast/us-troops-deployments.html>.

⁸ Defense Manpower Data Center. (2017, September 30). *Counts of Active Duty and Reserve Service Members and APF Civilians By Location Country, Personnel Category, Service Component*. https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_reports.jsp.

⁹ Savell, Stephanie. (2019). *This Map Shows Where in the World the U.S. Military is Combatting Terrorism*. Costs of War Project, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University. Graphic designed and published by Smithsonian magazine, January/February 2019.

¹⁰ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness. (2018). *Population Representation in the Military Services: Fiscal Year 2017. Appendix B: Active Component Accessions and Force. Table B-46: Non-Prior Service (NPS) Active Component Enlisted Accessions, Quality, and Mean AFQT, FY17: by Census Region, Division, and State with Civilian Comparison Group*. Retrieved January 10, 2020, from <http://www.cna.org/research/pop-rep>.

In order to confirm that these percentages are an accurate representation of each state's contribution of service members to the post-9/11 wars, the research team turned to another non-government data source that lists personnel by state, this time specifically in relation to the post-9/11 wars. The website iCasualties tracks U.S. service members from each state who have died in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001.¹¹ This is an incomplete data source in that the post-9/11 wars takes place in countries beyond Iraq and Afghanistan, but it serves as an important reference point with which to crosscheck each state's percentage of the total, taken from CNA data. The chart on page 4, below, shows, by state, the iCasualties numbers of fatalities from each state as a percentage of total fatalities. The second column compares these percentages with the percentages taken from the CNA accessions data described above. The third column shows the difference between the two sets of percentages, showing that in most cases, these two sets are relatively closely matched. (Some discrepancies may arise from the fact that the iCasualties list includes American territories (American Samoa, Micronesia, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands) as well as an 'Unknown' category, while the Accessions list only includes U.S. states, not territories.) This confirms the general validity of the CNA percentages used to calculate the state-specific numbers on this map.

The research team applied the CNA percentages of recruits from each state to the CRS total to arrive at the numbers of U.S. troops from each state serving in the U.S. post-9/11 wars that are displayed on the map. In drawing the map's color gradient of the states' relative burden in relation to its population size, the research team drew on the "representation ratios" in the CNA's 2017 Population Representation in the Military Services Report.¹² These ratios represent each state's percentage of all "non-prior service accessions" divided by the state's percentage of civilian 18 to 24 year-olds.

¹¹ iCasualties.org. (2019). *U.S. Fatalities by State*. Retrieved June 1, 2019, from <http://icasualties.org/USMap>.

¹² Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness. (2018). *Population Representation in the Military Services: Fiscal Year 2017. Appendix B: Active Component Accessions and Force. Table B-46: Non-Prior Service (NPS) Active Component Enlisted Accessions, Quality, and Mean AFQT, FY17: by Census Region, Division, and State with Civilian Comparison Group*. Retrieved January 10, 2020, from <http://www.cna.org/research/pop-rep>.

icasualties.org Data:
Iraq and Afghanistan
Fatalities (% of total fatalities
from all states combined)

Center for Naval Analyses Data:
Area's Contribution All NPS
Accessions 2017 (%)

State/Territory			Column 1 – Column 2
ALABAMA	1.51	1.95	-0.44
ALASKA	0.36	0.31	0.05
AMERICAN SAMOA	0.16		0.16
ARIZONA	2.17	2.58	-0.41
ARKANSAS	1.32	0.92	0.4
CALIFORNIA	10.7	12.49	-1.79
COLORADO	1.52	1.95	-0.43
CONNECTICUT	0.74	0.85	-0.11
DELAWARE	0.24	0.25	-0.01
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	0.1	0.05	0.05
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA	0.04		0.04
FLORIDA	5.09	7.86	-2.77
GEORGIA	3.1	4.22	-1.12
GUAM	0.26		0.26
HAWAII	0.6	0.6	0
IDAHO	0.7	0.62	0.08
ILLINOIS	3.64	3.41	0.23
INDIANA	2.17	1.92	0.25
IOWA	1.04	0.63	0.41
KANSAS	1.12	0.86	0.26
KENTUCKY	1.63	1.22	0.41
LOUISIANA	1.81	1.46	0.35
MAINE	0.67	0.36	0.31
MARYLAND	1.81	1.75	0.06
MASSACHUSETTS	1.84	1.26	0.58
MICHIGAN	3.29	2.42	0.87
MINNESOTA	1.4	1.01	0.39
MISSISSIPPI	1.1	0.9	0.2
MISSOURI	2.09	1.84	0.25
MONTANA	0.54	0.29	0.25
NEBRASKA	0.87	0.52	0.35
NEVADA	0.79	1.07	-0.28
NEW HAMPSHIRE	0.54	0.39	0.15
NEW JERSEY	1.84	1.86	-0.02
NEW MEXICO	0.81	0.76	0.05
NEW YORK	4.4	4.24	0.16
NORTH CAROLINA	2.8	3.86	-1.06
NORTH DAKOTA	0.29	0.12	0.17
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS	0.09		0.09
OHIO	4	3.62	0.38
OKLAHOMA	1.9	1.36	0.54
OREGON	1.53	1.26	0.27
PENNSYLVANIA	4.21	3.11	1.10
PUERTO RICO	0.79		0.79
RHODE ISLAND	0.29	0.19	0.10
SOUTH CAROLINA	1.43	2.02	-0.59
SOUTH DAKOTA	0.37	0.20	0.17
TENNESSEE	2.03	2.16	-0.13
TEXAS	8.76	11.29	-2.53
UTAH	0.69	0.72	-0.03
VERMONT	0.36	0.11	0.25
VIRGIN ISLANDS	0.1		0.1
VIRGINIA	3.05	3.01	0.04
WASHINGTON	2.19	2.14	0.05
WEST VIRGINIA	0.57	0.50	0.07
WISCONSIN	1.78	1.34	0.44
WYOMING	0.31	0.18	0.13
UNKNOWN	0.38		0.38
TOTAL	100	100.01	-0.01