



Chapter 12

Military Service

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This chapter addresses current or former active-duty members of the armed forces in the United States. According to Census 2000, 1.2 million active-duty members of the armed forces resided in the United States. Census 2000 also counted 208.1 million civilians 18 and older in the country, of whom 26.4 million (12.7 percent) were veterans. A civilian veteran was defined as someone 18 or older who was not currently on active duty but who once served on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard, or who served in the Merchant Marine during World War II. (Active duty does not include time spent training in the military reserves or National Guard, such as the 4 to 6 months of initial training or yearly summer camps.) This definition includes people who served for even a short time.

Census 2000 collected data about the periods and length of service for veterans. Period-of-military-service data distinguish veterans who served during wartime from those who served during peacetime. Questions about period and length of military service provide information necessary to estimate the number of veterans who are eligible to receive specific benefits.

Since 1840, many decennial censuses have included a question on veterans. The Census 2000 long-form questionnaire asked respondents about any active-duty service in the U.S. armed forces, military reserves, or National Guard; about periods of service; and about the number of years of active-duty military service.

Veteran Status by Period of Service

Vietnam-era veterans constituted the largest group of veterans in Census 2000, accounting for 8.4 million people, or 31.7 percent of the total veteran population

(Figure 12-1). World War II veterans made up the next-largest group (5.7 million people, or 21.7 percent of all veterans), followed by veterans who served from February 1955 to July 1964 (4.4 million or 16.5 percent) and those who served during the Korean War (4.0 million or 15.3 percent). Veterans who served during the period from September 1980 to July 1990 accounted for 3.8 million people, or 14.4 percent of the veteran population. Finally, those who served between May 1975 and August 1980 (2.8 million or 10.5 percent) and those who served in August 1990 or later (3.0 million or 11.5 percent) made up the smallest percentages of the total veteran population. This last group includes Gulf War veterans. (The percentages sum to more than 100 percent because some veterans served in more than one period.)

In 2000, the median age of all veterans living in the United States was 57.4 years. The median age ranged from 33.3 years for those serving since August 1990 to 76.7 years for World War II veterans. In total, 16.7 million veterans were under the age of 65 and 9.7 million were 65 or older.

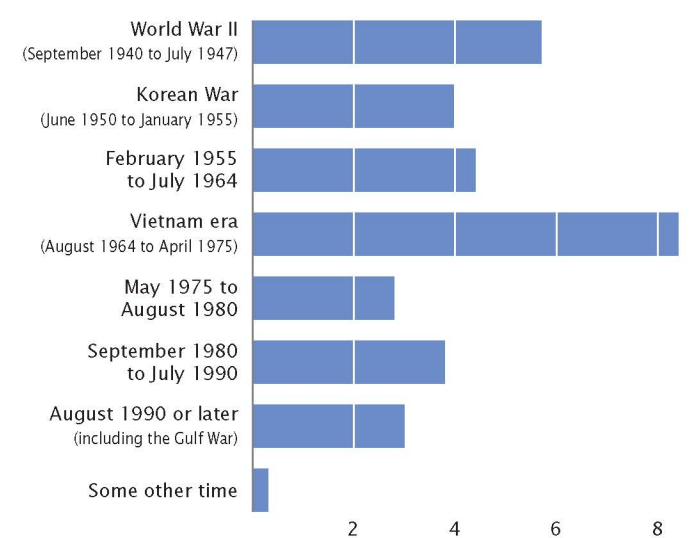
Recent Declines in the Veteran Population

During the last 20 years of the twentieth century, the veteran population declined as older veterans, particularly Korean War, World War II, and World War I veterans, died. The number dropped from 28.5 million in 1980 to 27.5 million in 1990 and to 26.4 million in 2000. The declines occurred exclusively among the male veteran population, which fell from 27.4 million in 1980 to 24.8 million in 2000.

Regional and State-level Patterns

The veteran population in 2000 was largest in the South (9.9 million) and the Midwest (6.1 million), the

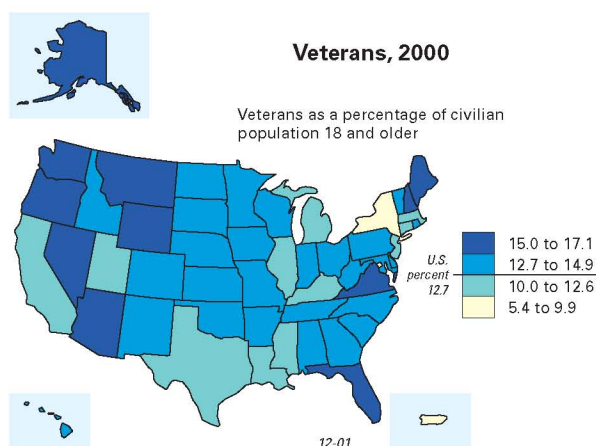
Figure 12-1.
Civilian Veterans (millions) by Period of Service, 2000



two most populous regions of the country in 2000. The West and the Northeast had veteran populations of 5.7 million and 4.6 million, respectively. The percentage of civilians 18 and older who were veterans varied slightly among the regions, ranging from 11.5 percent in the Northeast to 13.4 percent in the South.

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of veterans decreased in every region except the South, where it increased by 6.7 percent. The largest decline was in the Northeast, where the number of veterans dropped from 5.5 million to 4.6 million, or 15.4 percent. The veteran population fell 7.6 percent in the Midwest and 2.7 percent in the West.

Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Alaska had the highest percentage of veterans in 2000, 17.1 percent (map 12-01). Veterans



accounted for 16.2 percent of the adult population in Montana, followed by Nevada, Wyoming, and Maine (percentages were not statistically different in the four states). New York state (9.5 percent) and the District of Columbia (9.8 percent) had the lowest percentages of veterans in their populations (again, the two percentages were not statistically different). Map 12-15, appearing later in the chapter, shows the proportion of veterans in 2000 at the county level nationwide.

Even though the number of veterans fell nationwide between 1990 and 2000, some states saw increases. The state with the most rapidly growing veteran population was Nevada, the state that also had the fastest-growing total population. In Nevada, veterans increased by 30.8 percent, from 182,000 to 238,000. Increases of 10 percent or more were recorded in the veteran populations in Arizona, Idaho, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Utah.

Twenty-five states and the District of Columbia recorded declines in their veteran populations during the 1990s. Among the states, New York had the largest decline, falling by 20.3 percent. The 23.1-

percent decline in the veteran population in the District of Columbia was not statistically different from declines in New York, New Jersey, or Connecticut.

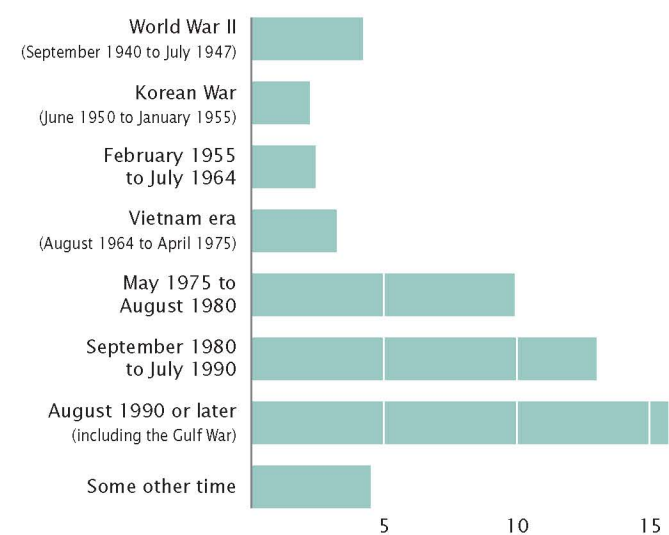
The percentage of the civilian population 18 and older who were veterans fell in every state and the District of Columbia between 1990 and 2000. Nevada, the state with the largest percentage increase in the number of veterans, was also the state with the largest decline in veterans as a percent of the total population 18 and older. Because of rapid growth of the nonveteran population in Nevada, the veteran population dropped from 19.7 percent to 16.1 percent.

Veteran Status by Sex and Employment Status

Of the 26.4 million veterans in the United States in 2000, 24.8 million were men and 1.6 million were women. Women made up 6 percent of the total veteran population in 2000 and their percentages have steadily increased in recent decades (Figure 12-2). Nearly 10 percent of veterans who served from May 1975 to August 1980 and 13 percent of those who served from September 1980 to July 1990 were women. In the most recent period of service, August 1990 or later, 15.7 percent were women. In contrast, in 2000, women made up 4.2 percent of the World War II veteran population and 2.2 percent of the Korean War veteran population.

The majority of U.S. veterans (54.7 percent) were employed in 2000. This was slightly below the figure of 59.7 percent for the general population aged 16 and above. Reflecting the relationship between age and employment, veterans who served most recently were most likely to be employed in 2000. Among veterans serving in August 1990 or later, 81.4 percent were employed, while 82.7 percent of those who served from September 1980 to July 1990 were

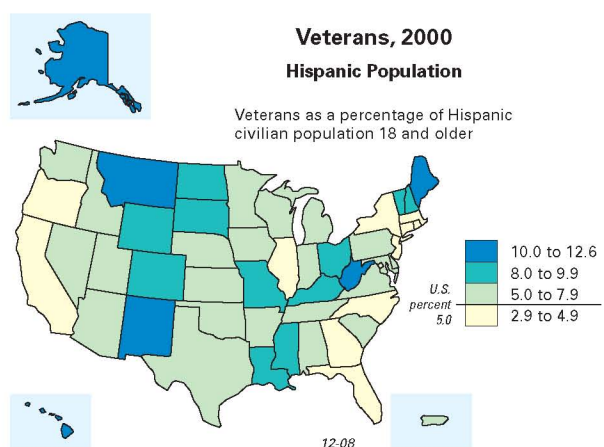
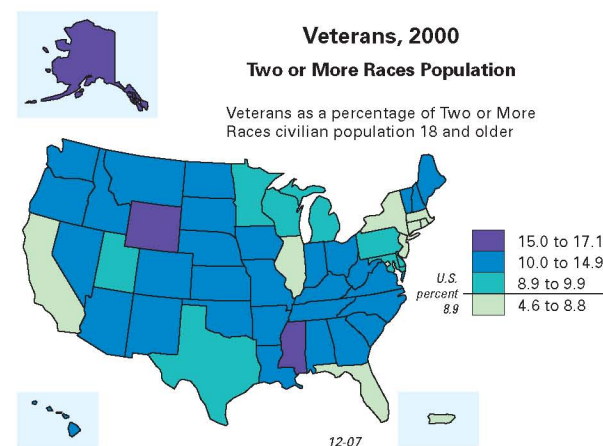
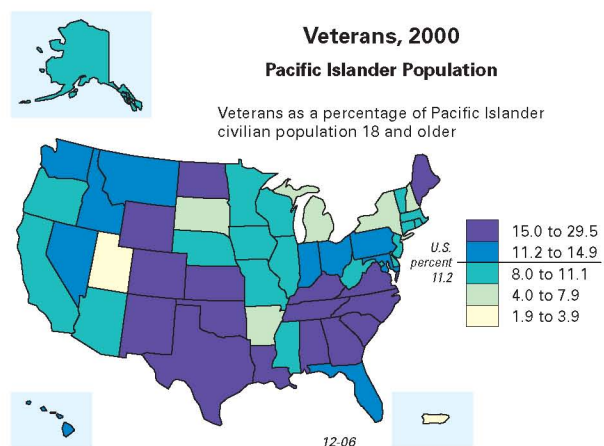
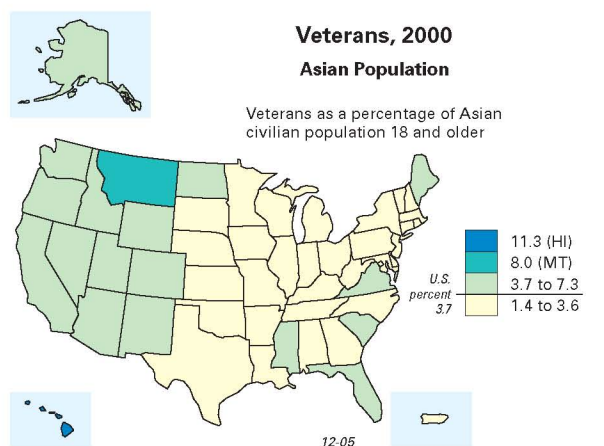
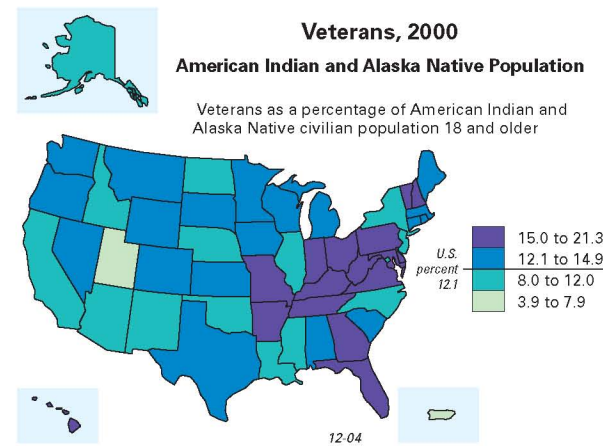
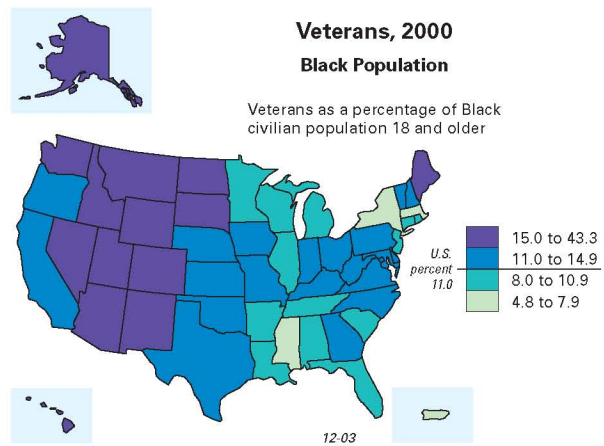
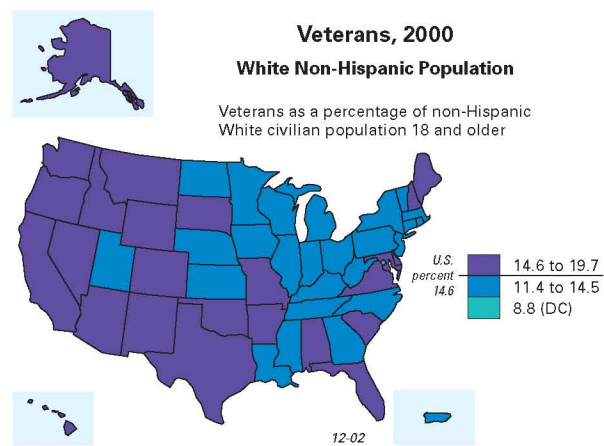
Figure 12-2.
Percent Women of Civilian Veterans by Period of Service, 2000



employed. They were closely followed by veterans who served from May 1975 to August 1980 (78.0 percent). More than three-quarters (75.4 percent) of veterans of the Vietnam era were employed in 2000, as were more than half (51.4 percent) of those who served from February 1955 to July 1964. The percentage employed was lower for Korean War veterans (24.6 percent) and World War II veterans (11.6 percent), most of whom were of retirement age.

Veteran Status by Race and Hispanic Origin

Veteran status for the civilian population 18 and older varied by race and Hispanic origin, as seen in maps 12-02 through 12-08. In 2000, 3.7 percent of the civilian Asian population 18 and older had veteran status;



the corresponding figure for the non-Hispanic White population was 14.6 percent.

Geographic patterns are also visible in the maps. For the Black population, for instance, veteran percentages were higher in most states in the West and lower in most states elsewhere. For the non-Hispanic White population, too, most states in the western half of the country displayed elevated percentages of veterans.

This Chapter's Maps

The maps in this chapter present both the historical and the contemporary portraits of the veteran

population, including changes in the active-duty military population living in group quarters, the total veteran population, and the proportion of military households with an employed spouse or partner.

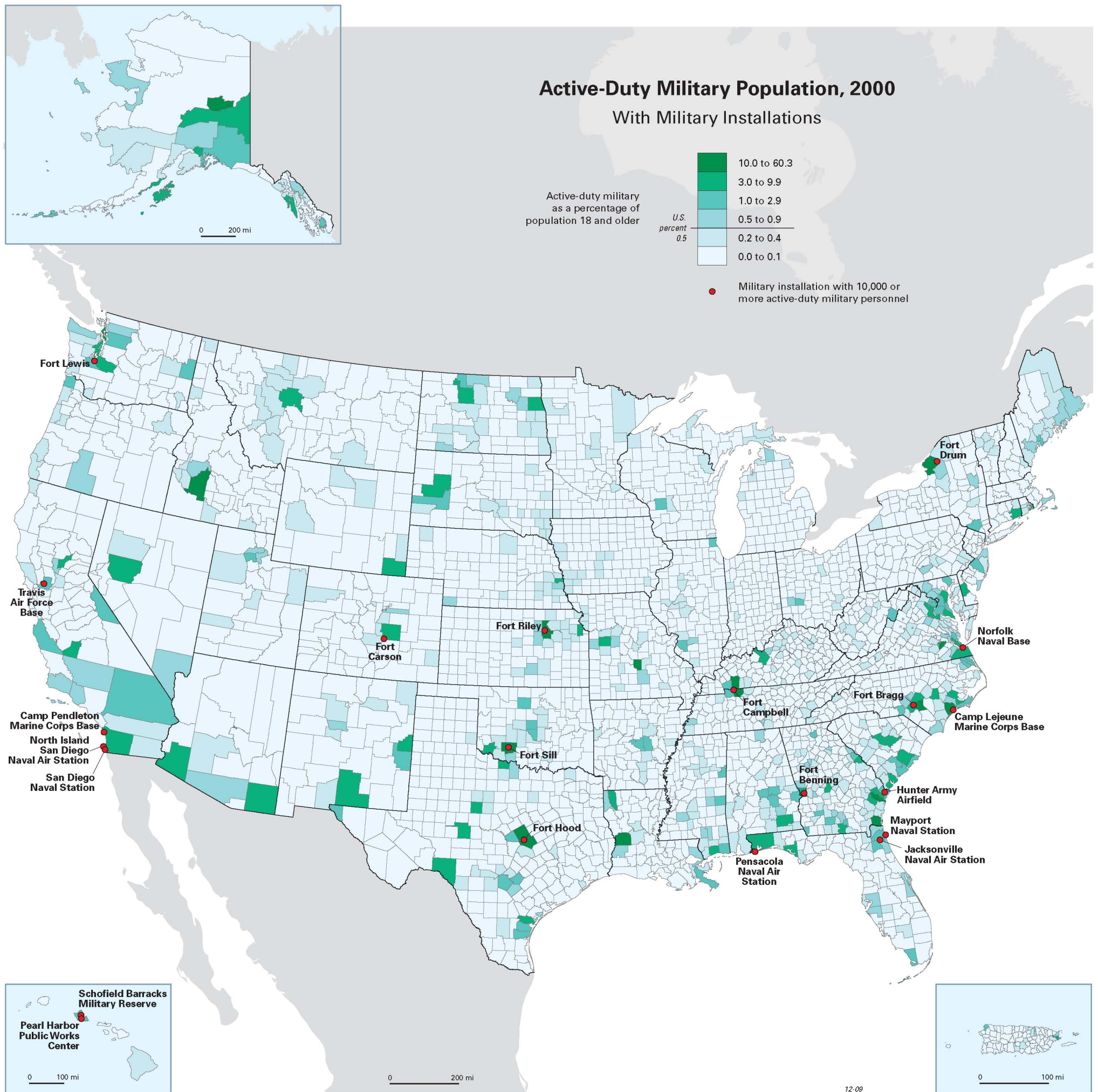
The active-duty military population represents less than 1 percent of the nation's total population but is sometimes a far higher share in those parts of the country—including the southeastern United States, southern California, and Hawaii—where there are military installations with large numbers of active-duty personnel (map 12-09). Maps 12-10 and 12-11 use graduated symbols to indicate the locations of the largest military group-quarters populations in 1990 and 2000.

While there was a decrease in the total number of veterans between 1990 and 2000, many counties had high percentages of veterans in both decades, particularly in parts of the southeastern United States, Florida, the Ozark region of Missouri and Arkansas, the northern Great Lakes region, and the West (maps 12-14 and 12-15). Some of these counties also are locations of military installations, while others—such as those in Florida, the Ozarks, and the northern Great Lakes—have become popular destinations for retirees.

Maps 12-24 through 12-28 show the distributions of veterans by state from 1960 to 2000. The declines in the overall veteran population between

1970 and 2000 are due to deaths of World War I, World War II, and Korean War veterans.

The veterans' share of the population, according to period of service, varied geographically. The series of maps 12-18 through 12-21 show the distribution of veterans as a percentage of civilians who would have been 18 or older in the last year of the selected period of service. World War II veterans—representing 23.9 percent of the civilian population aged 71 and older in 2000—were a higher share in popular retiree destinations. Veterans of the Korean War (10.2 percent of the civilian population aged 63 and older in 2000) and Vietnam-era veterans (7.8 percent of the civilian population aged 43 and older) had broadly similar geographic distributions. Veterans of the Gulf War had a different spatial distribution. While their share of the population was low (1.5 percent of the population 23 and older in 2000), the percentages were higher in a handful of counties containing large military installations, a reflection of the recency of their service.

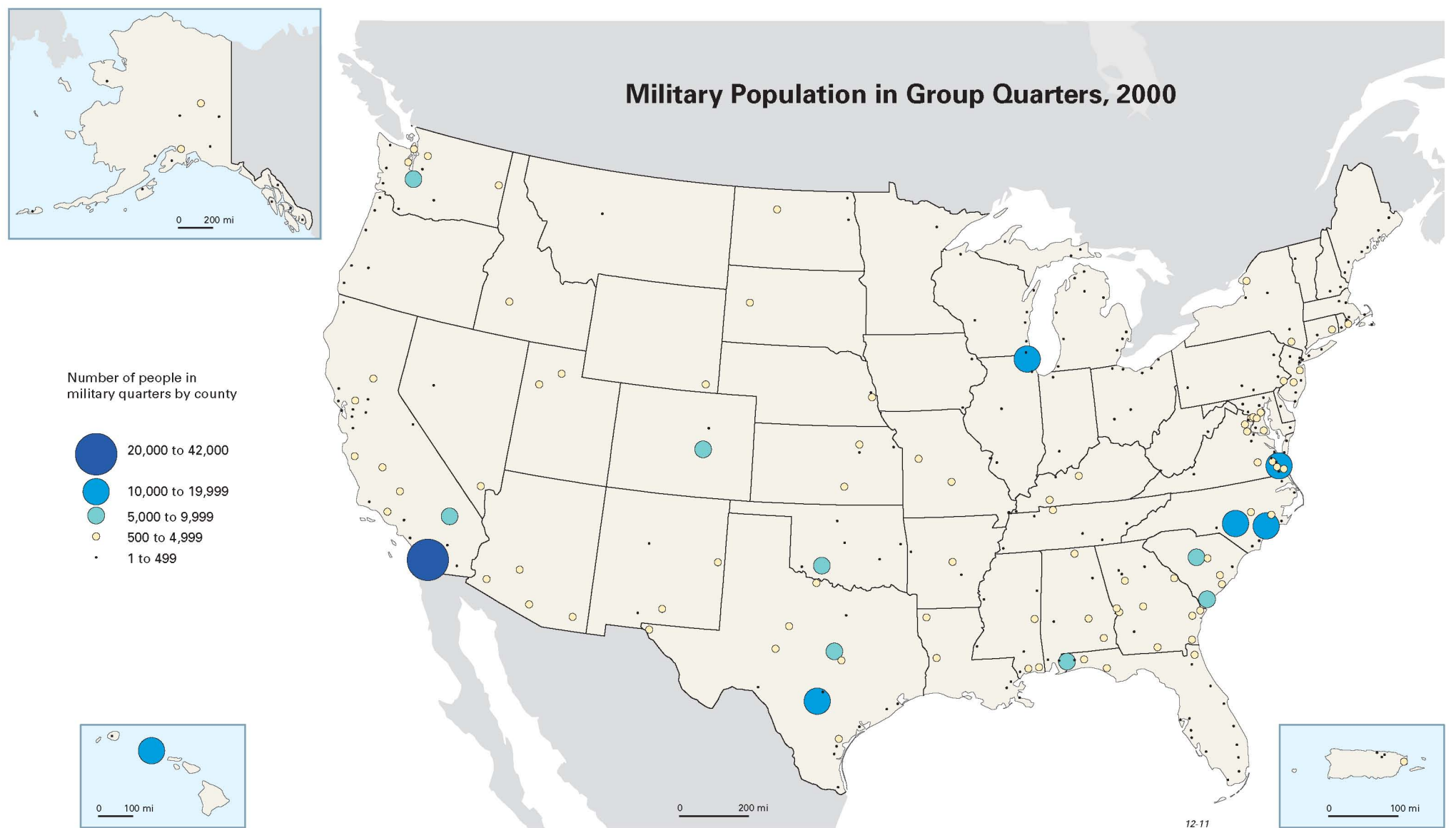
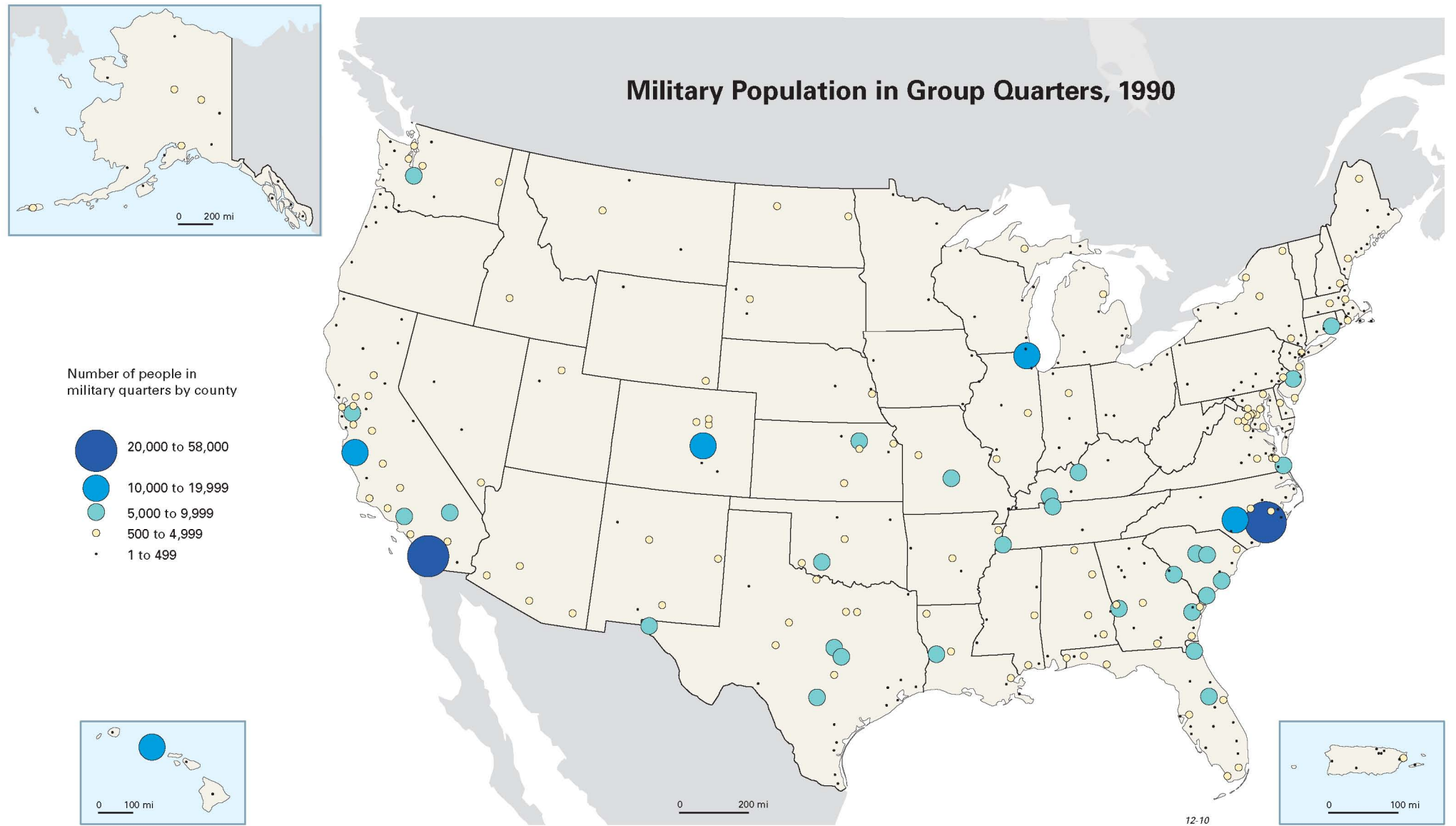


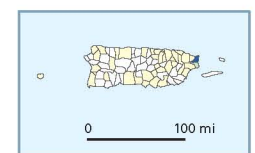
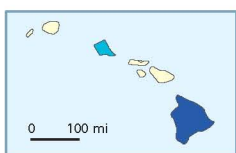
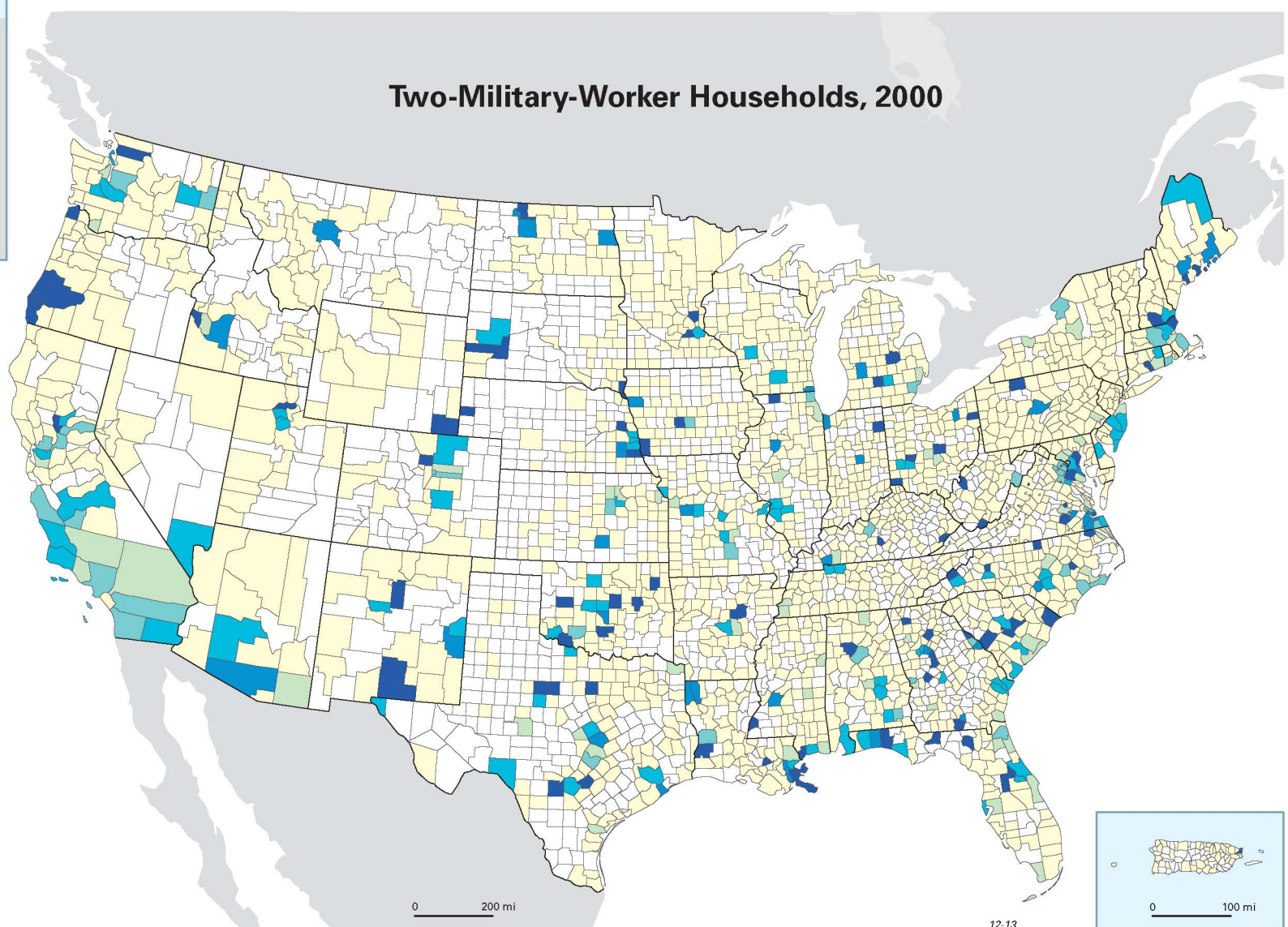
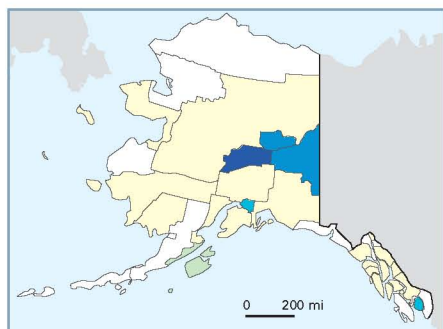
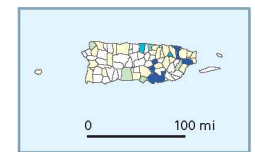
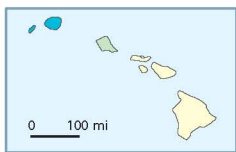
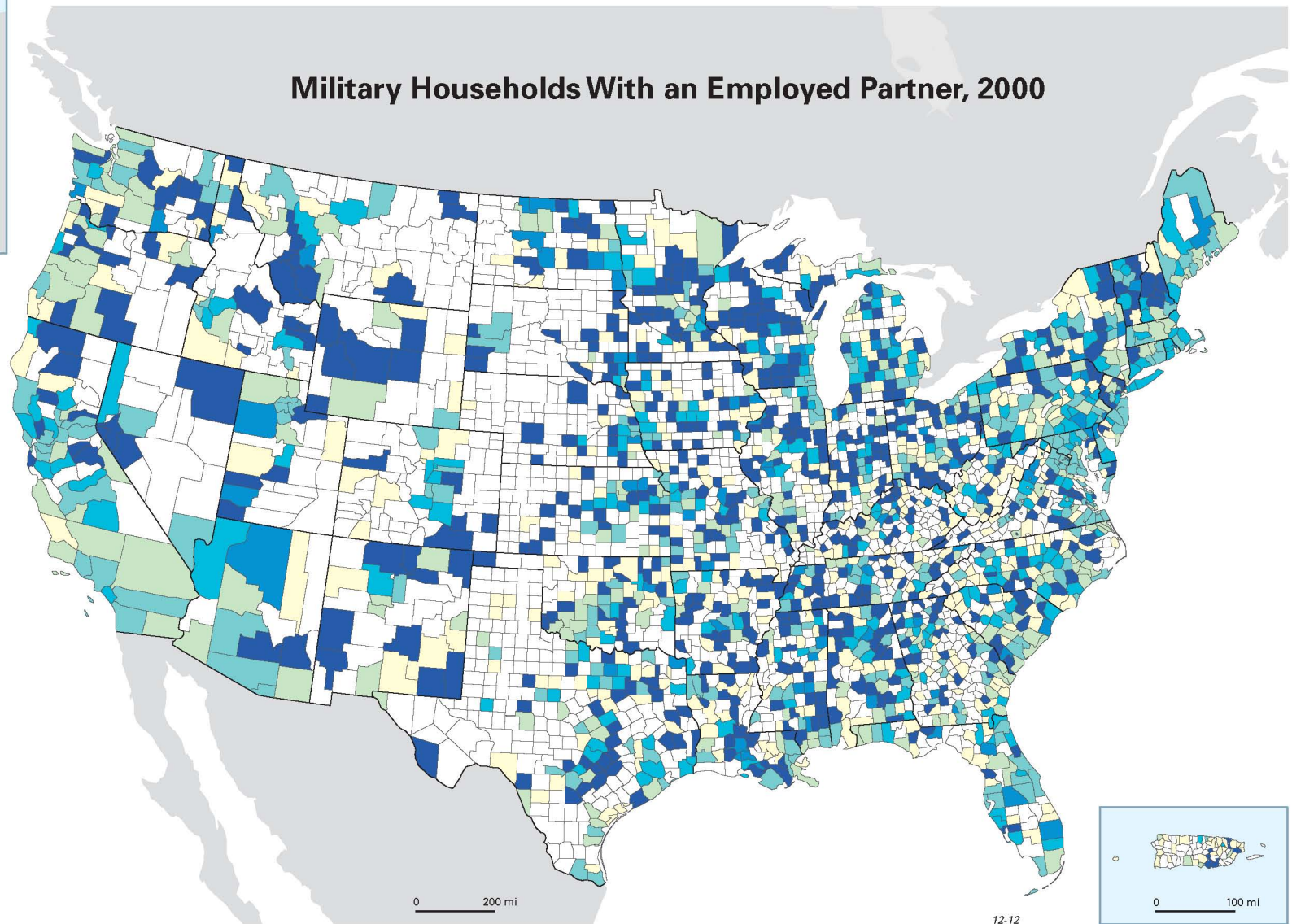
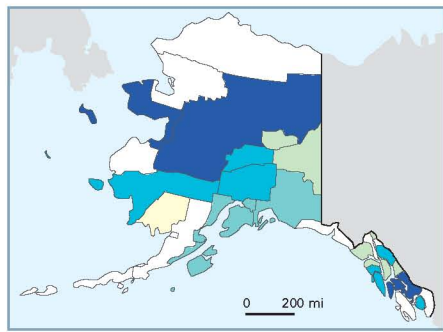
According to Census 2000, the active-duty military population in the United States was about 1.2 million, roughly 0.5 percent of the population 18 and older. In a small number of counties across the country—shaded darkest in the above map—the active-duty military population constituted 10 percent or more of the population 18 and older. These counties often contained one or more large military installations (symbolized by a dot in the above

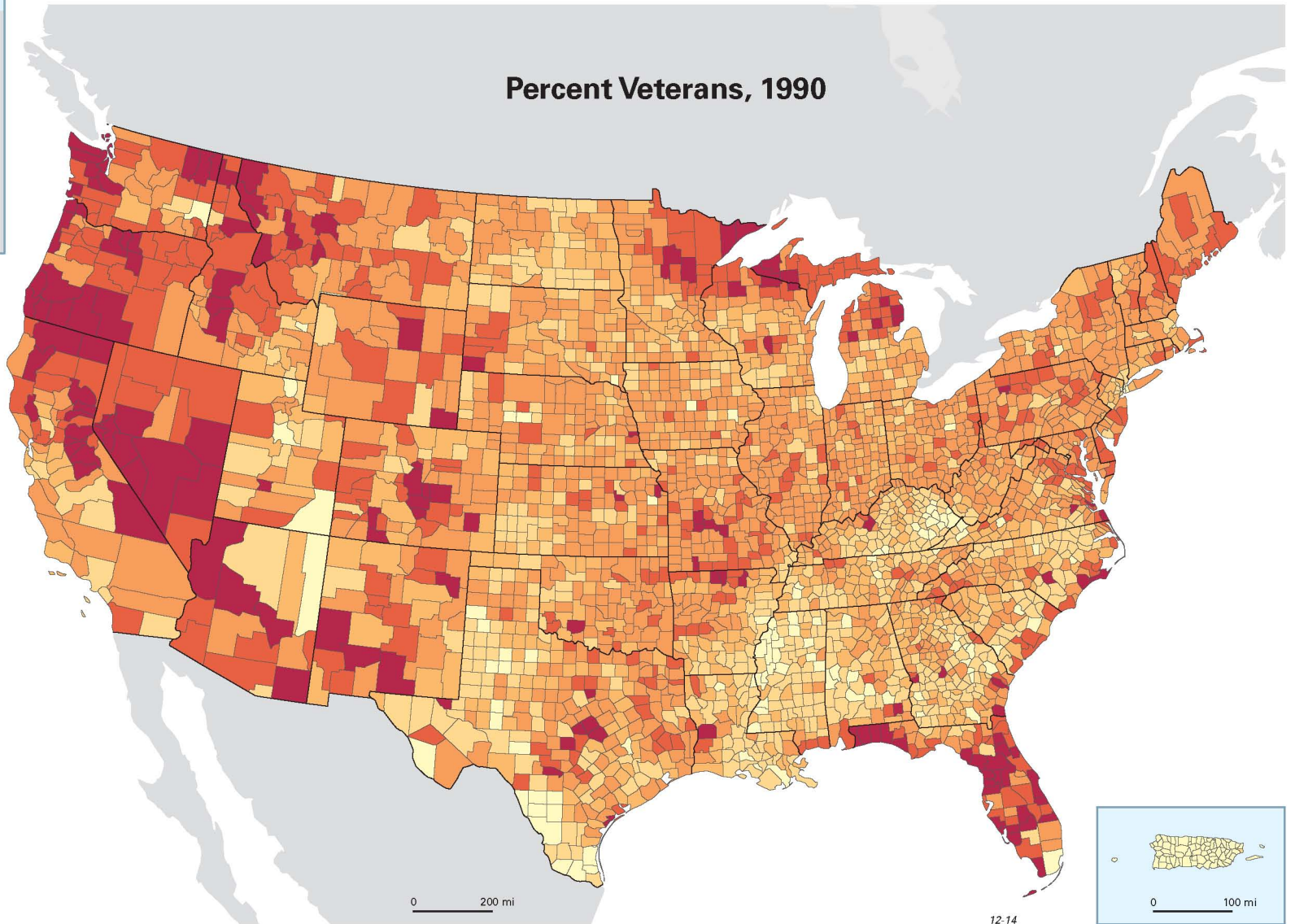
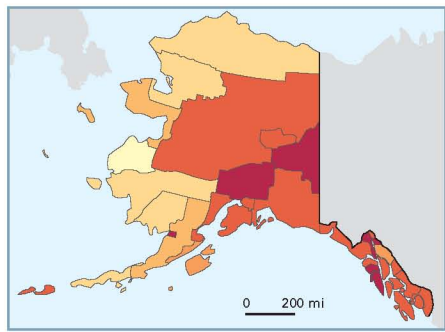
map), and the high proportions of active-duty military can result in unusual demographic profiles for the county, such as distinct age-sex structures. In a majority of counties, no military installations were present and the active-duty military population represented less than 1 percent of the population.

Counties with a large percentage of their population consisting of active-duty members of the military are

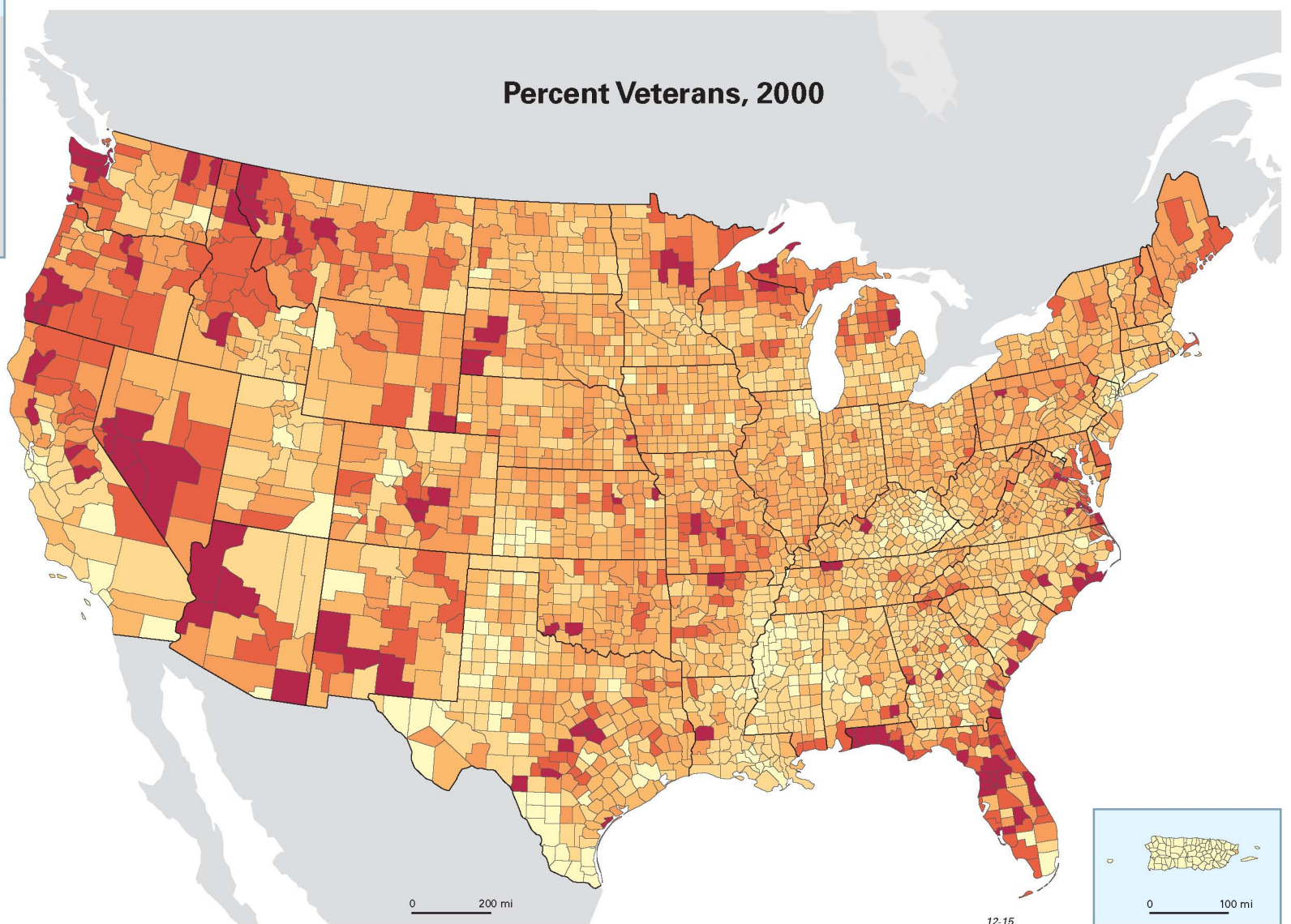
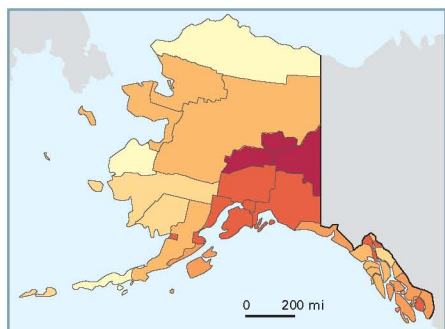
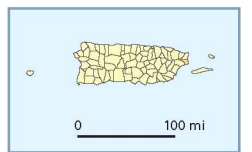
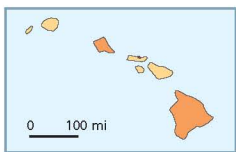
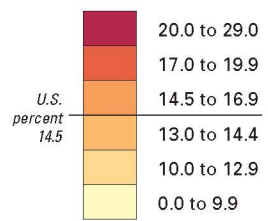
found in nearly every state, from populous California and Texas to sparsely populated Wyoming and North Dakota. Higher-than-average percentages of active-duty military populations are found in Washington, DC and its Maryland and Virginia suburbs, as well as in a number of coastal counties stretching from southeastern Virginia to northern Florida.



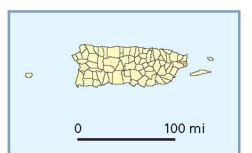
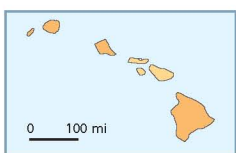
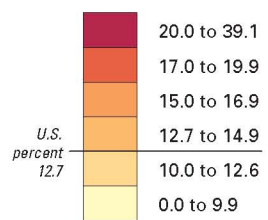


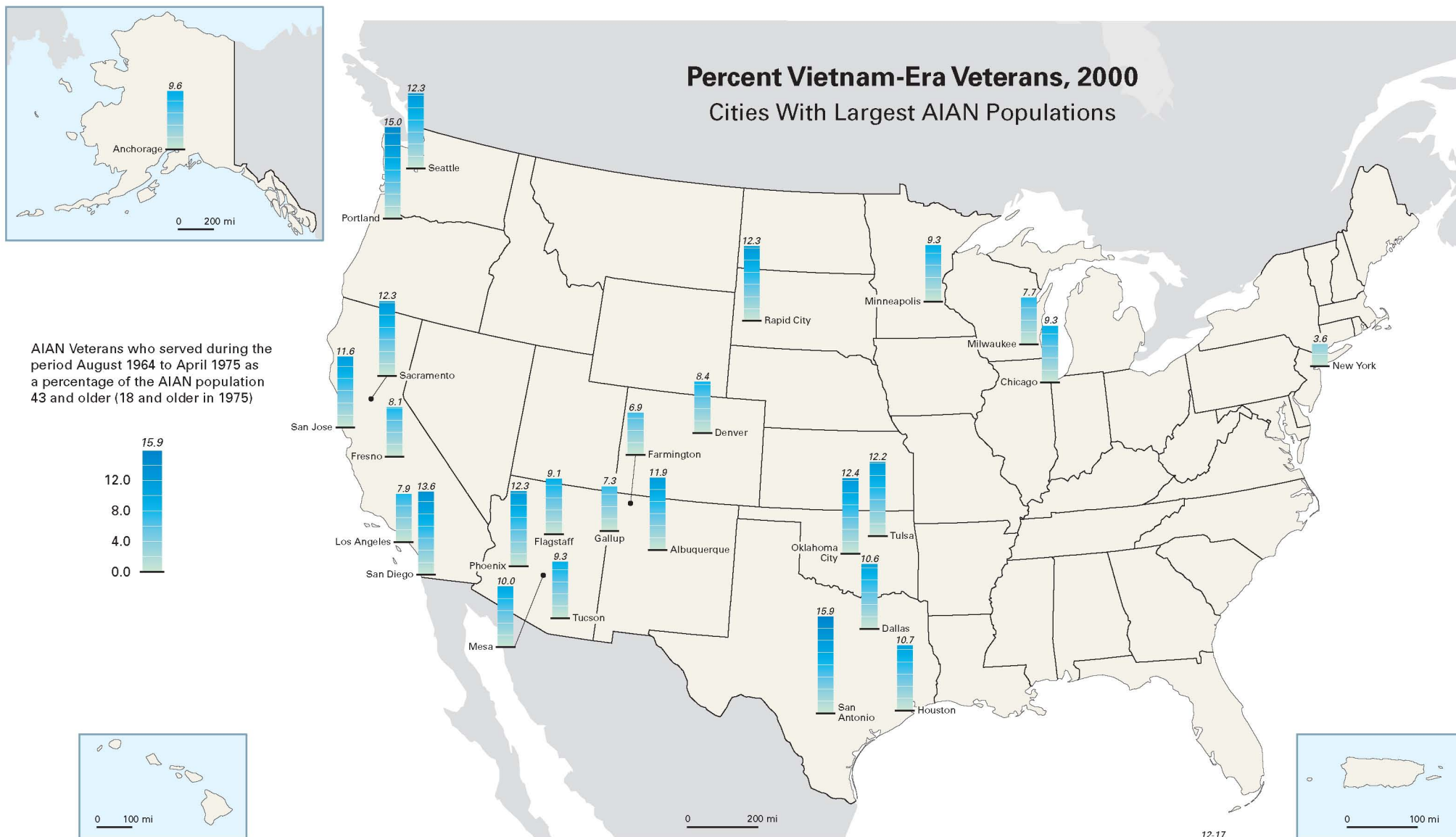
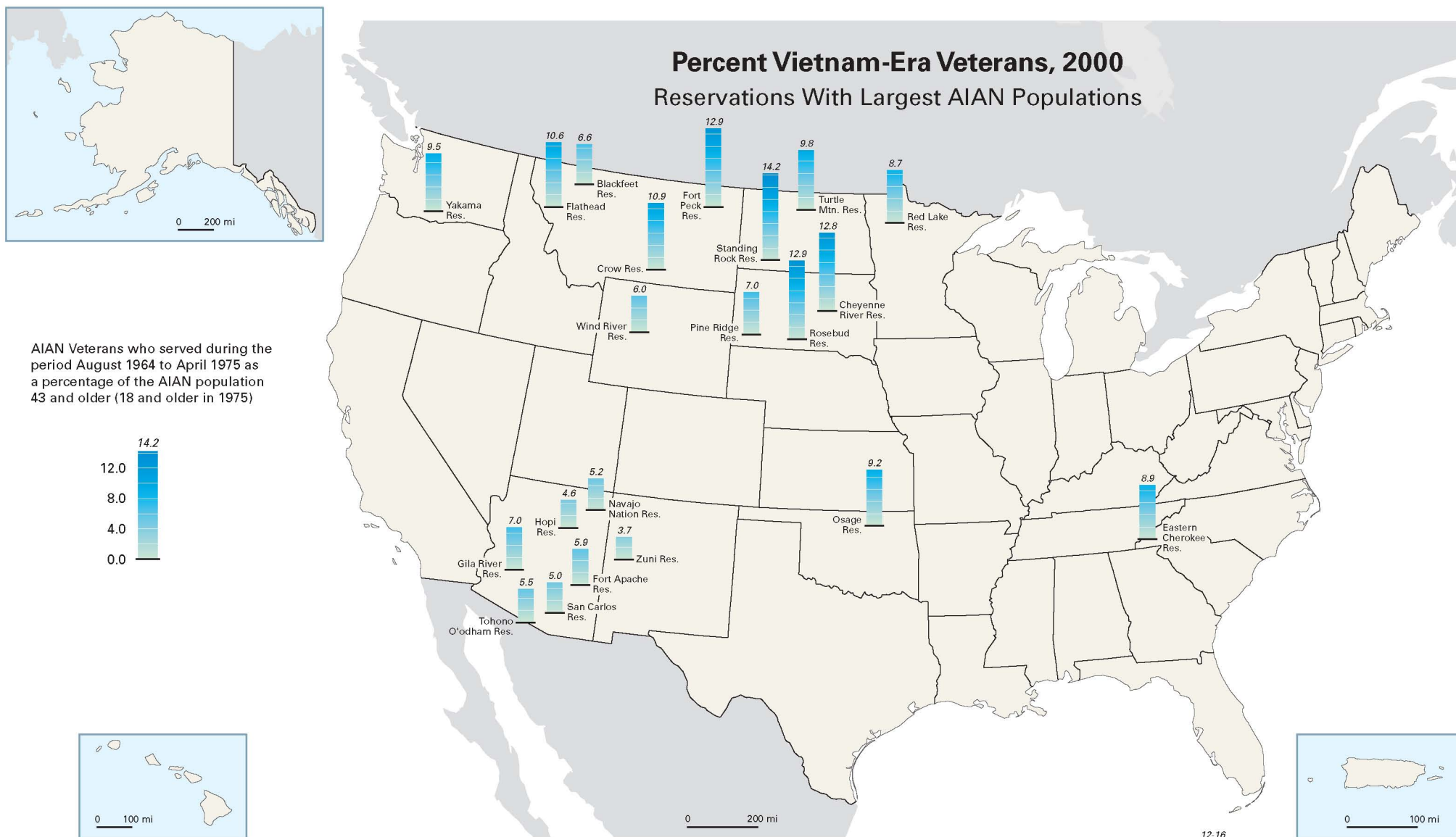


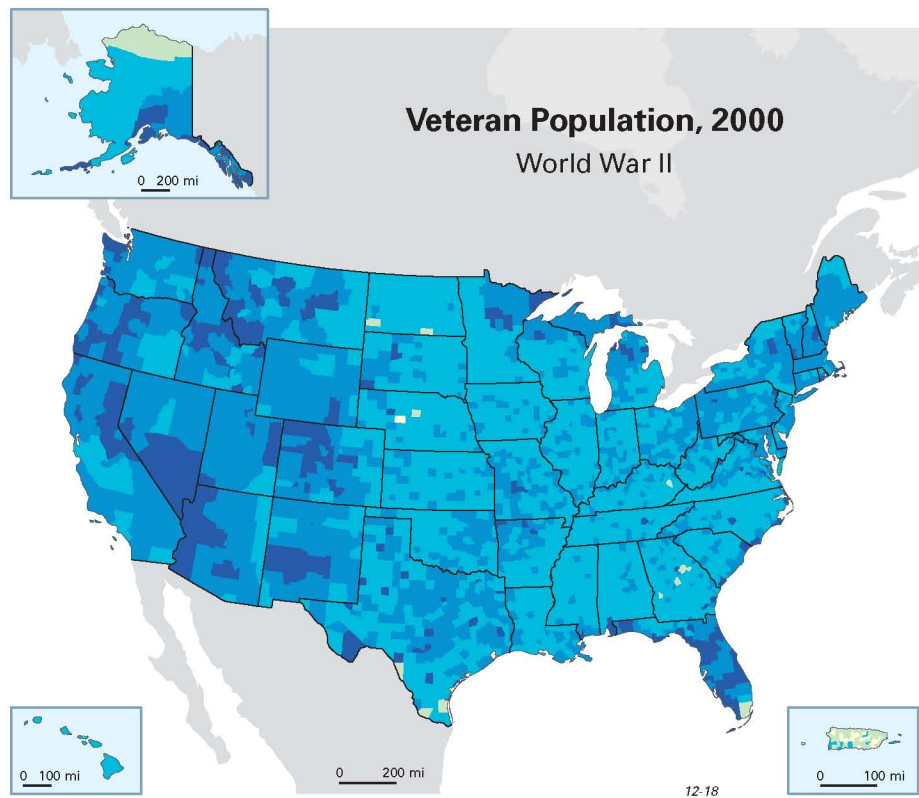
Veterans as a percentage of civilian population 16 and older



Veterans as a percentage of civilian population 18 and older



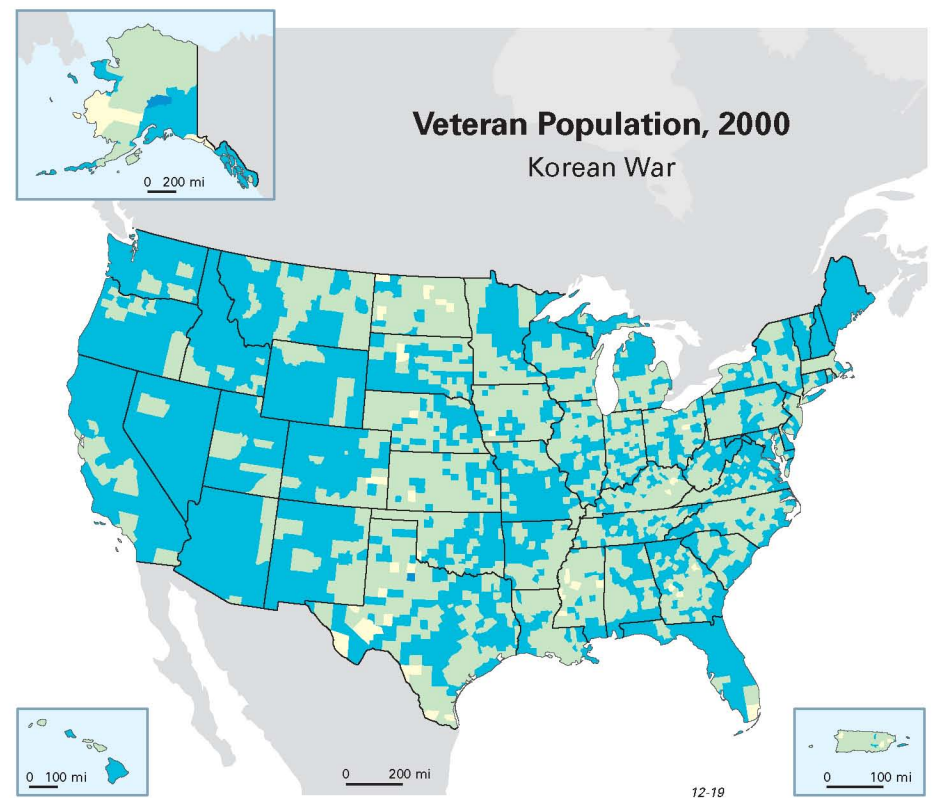




Veterans who served during the period September 1940 to July 1947 as a percentage of the population 71 and older (18 and older in 1947)

U.S. percent	Range
Dark Blue	30.0 to 50.0
Blue	23.9 to 29.9
Light Blue	10.0 to 23.8
Light Green	5.0 to 9.9
Yellow	0.0 to 4.9

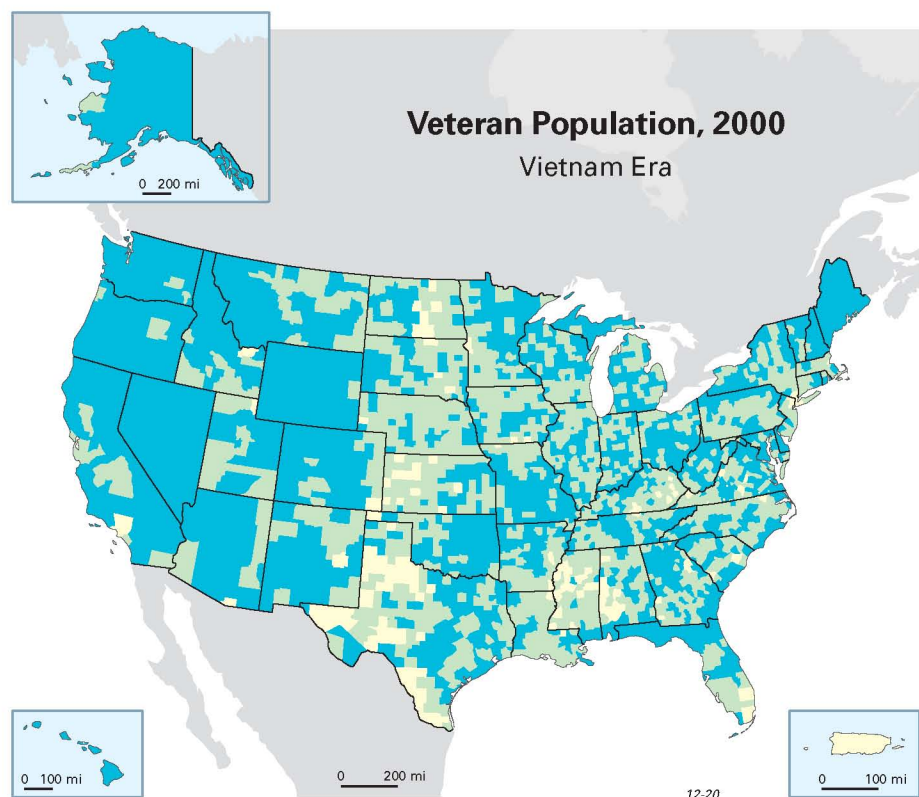
U.S. percent 23.9



Veterans who served during the period June 1950 to January 1955 as a percentage of the population 63 and older (18 and older in 1955)

U.S. percent	Range
Dark Blue	25.0 to 27.4
Blue	10.2 to 24.9
Light Blue	5.0 to 10.1
Yellow	0.0 to 4.9

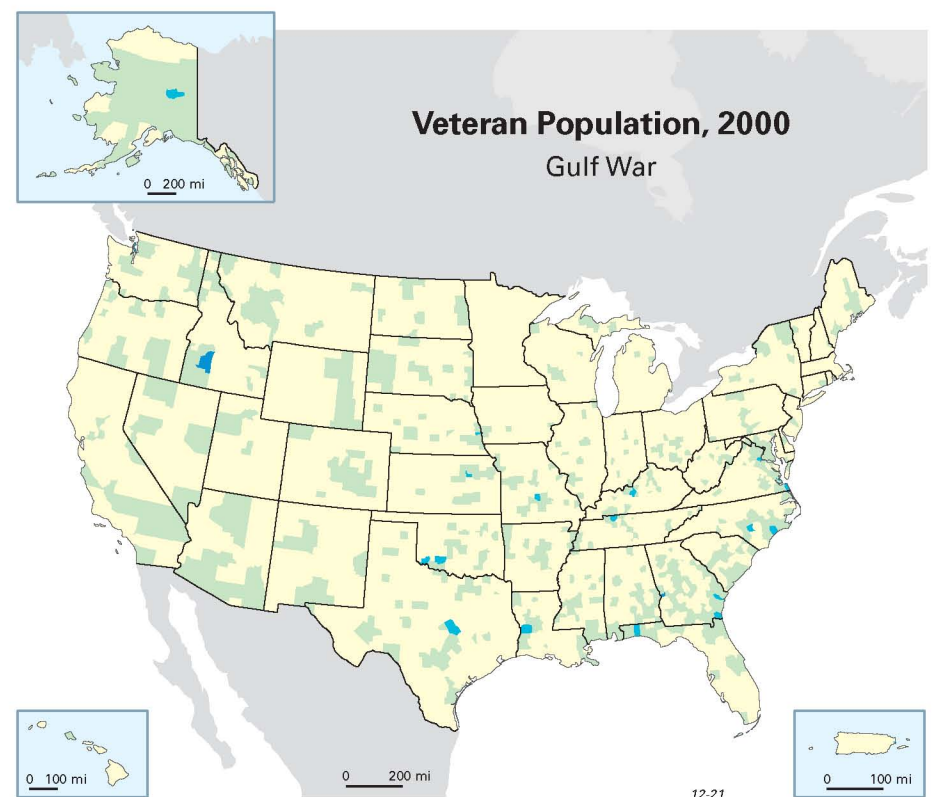
U.S. percent 10.2



Veterans who served during the period August 1964 to April 1975 as a percentage of the population 43 and older (18 and older in 1975)

U.S. percent	Range
Dark Blue	7.8 to 22.4
Blue	5.0 to 7.7
Yellow	0.0 to 4.9

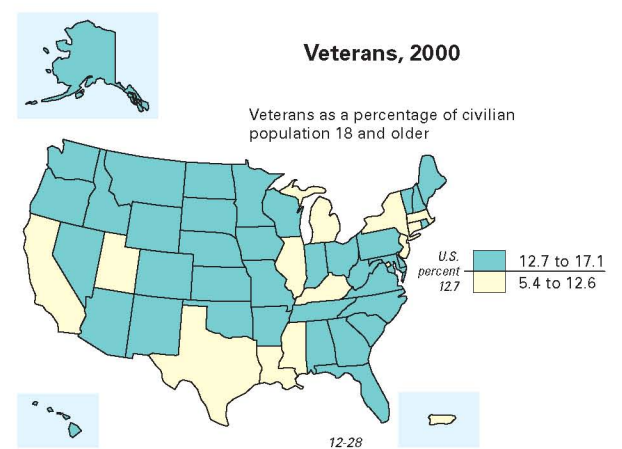
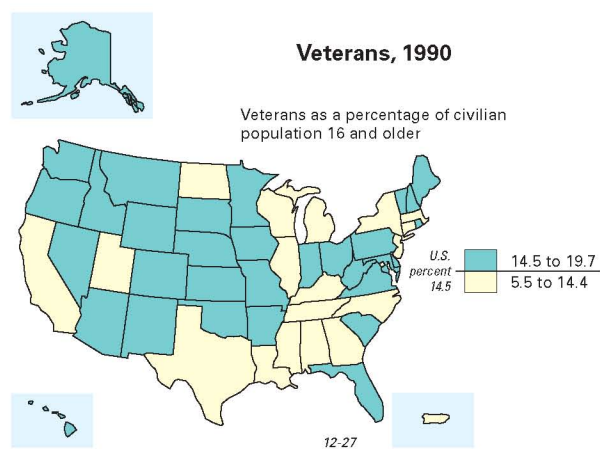
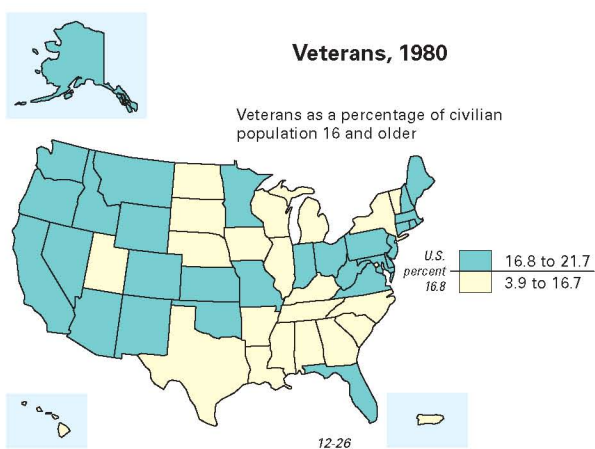
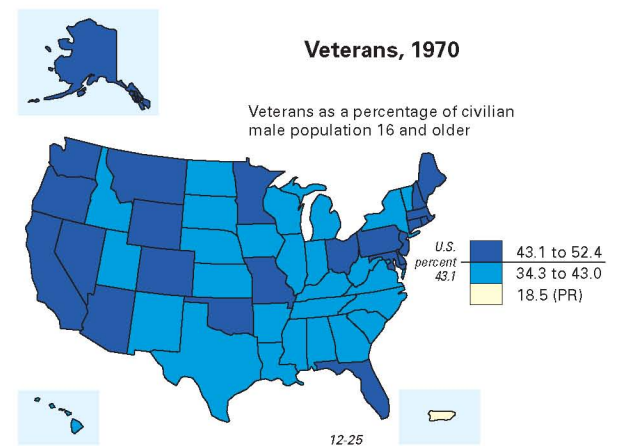
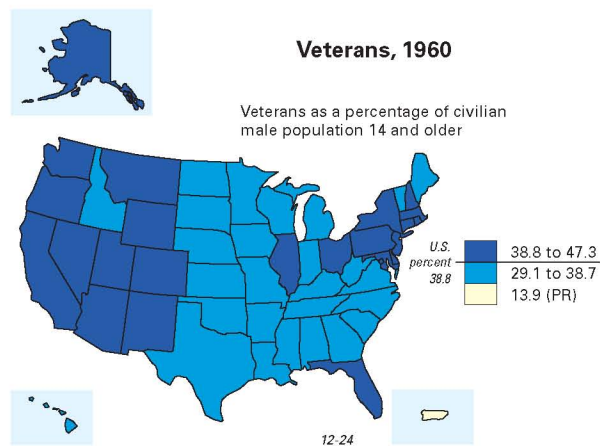
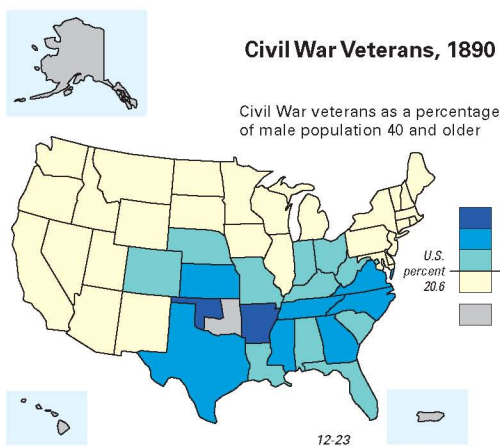
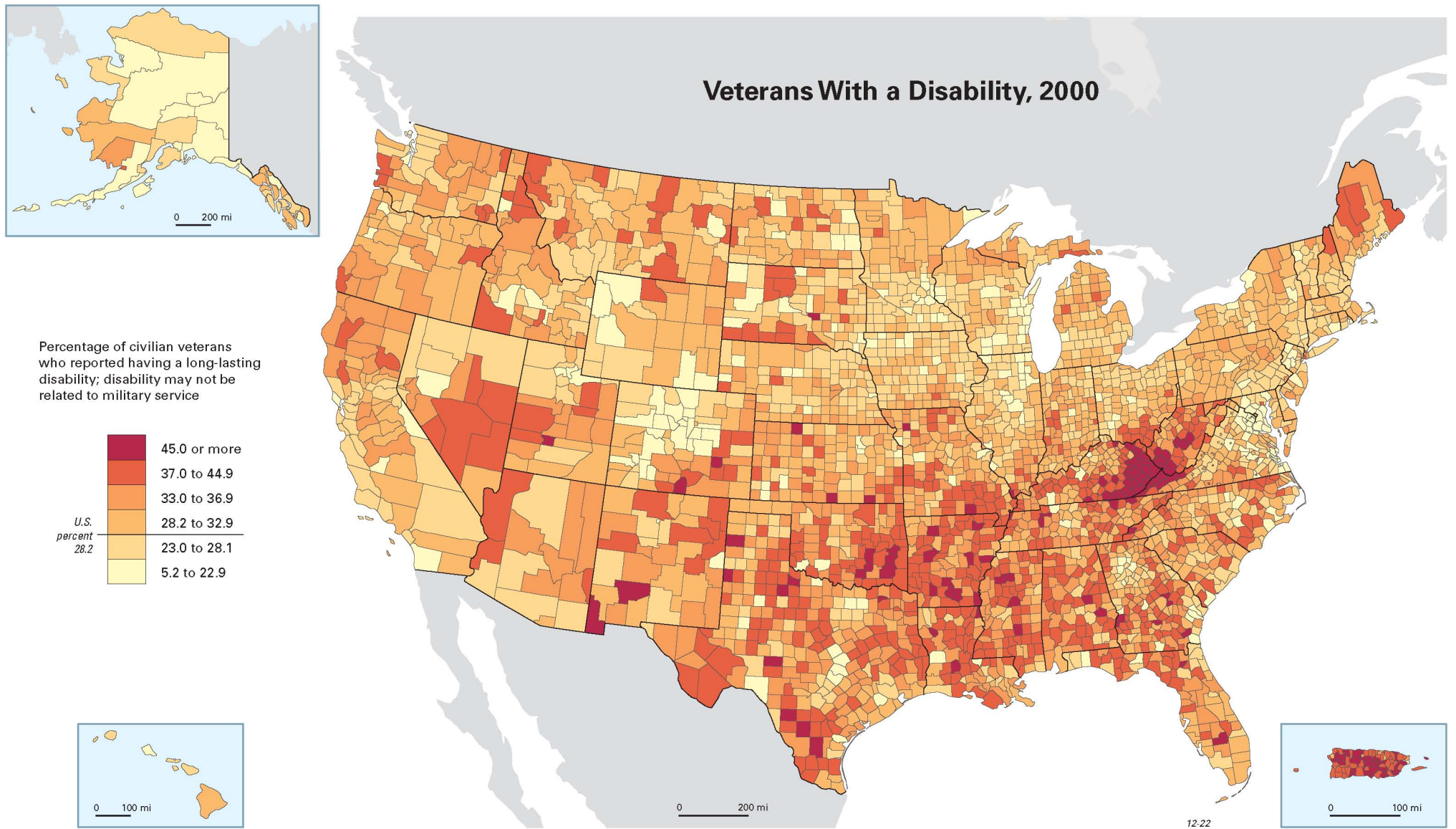
U.S. percent 7.8



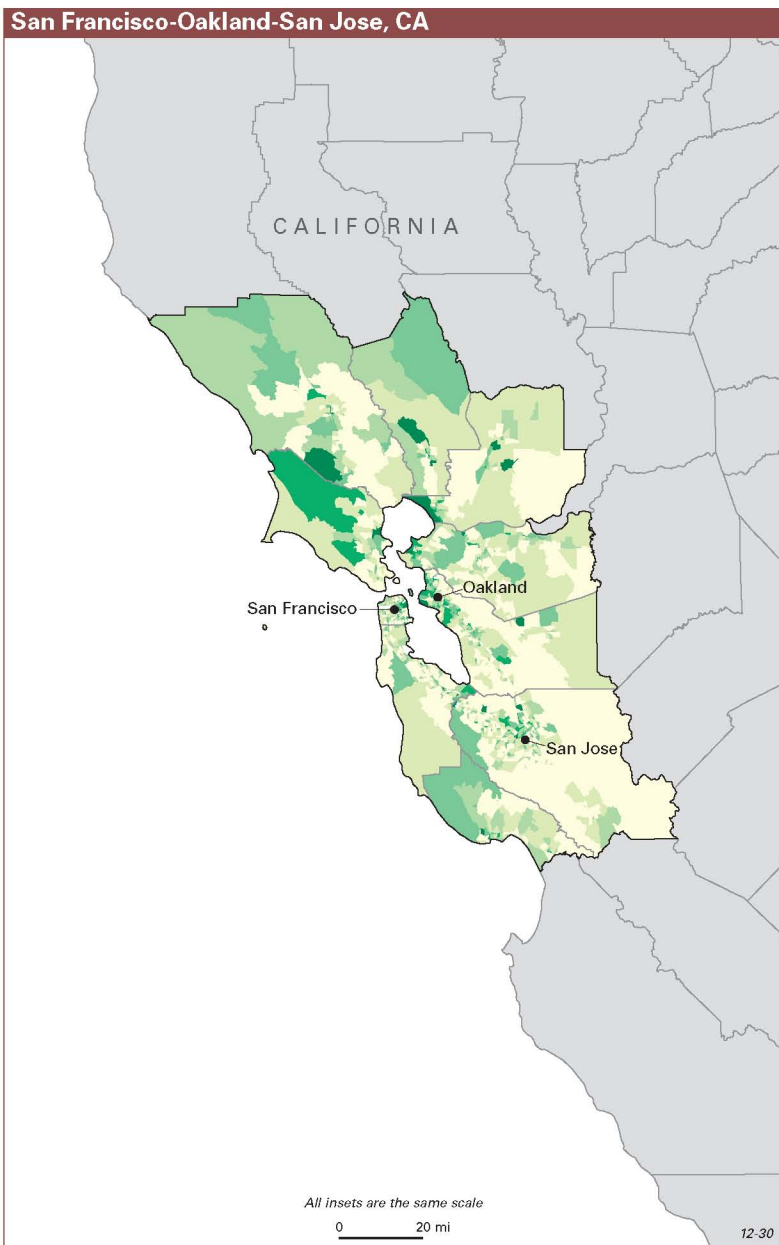
Veterans who served during the period August 1990 to March 1995 as a percentage of the population 23 and older (18 and older in 1995)

U.S. percent	Range
Dark Blue	25.0 to 30.2
Blue	10.0 to 24.9
Light Blue	1.5 to 9.9
Yellow	0.0 to 1.4

U.S. percent 1.5

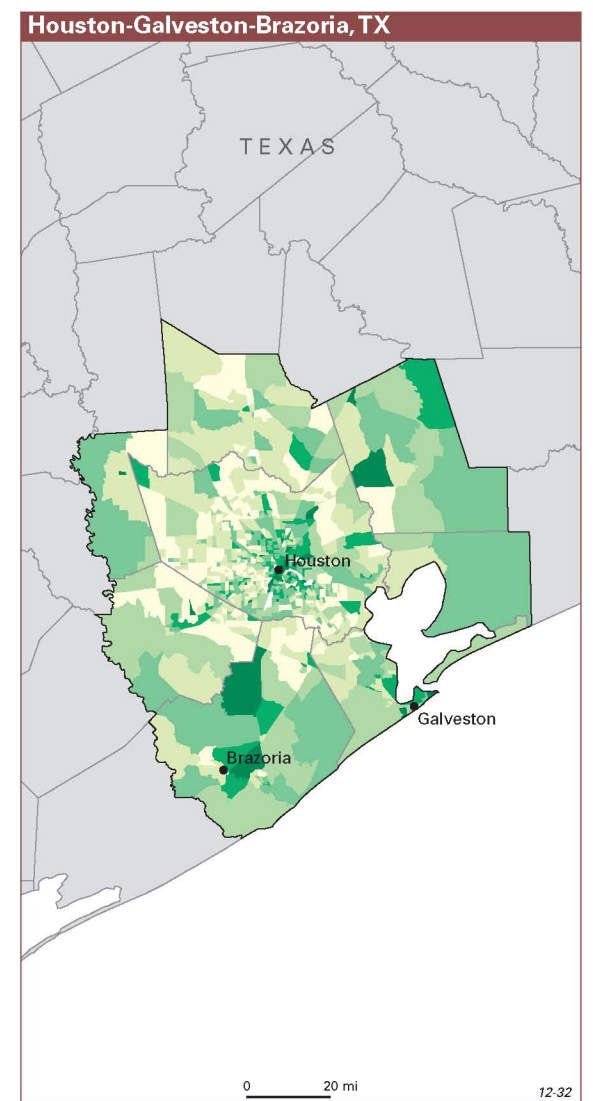
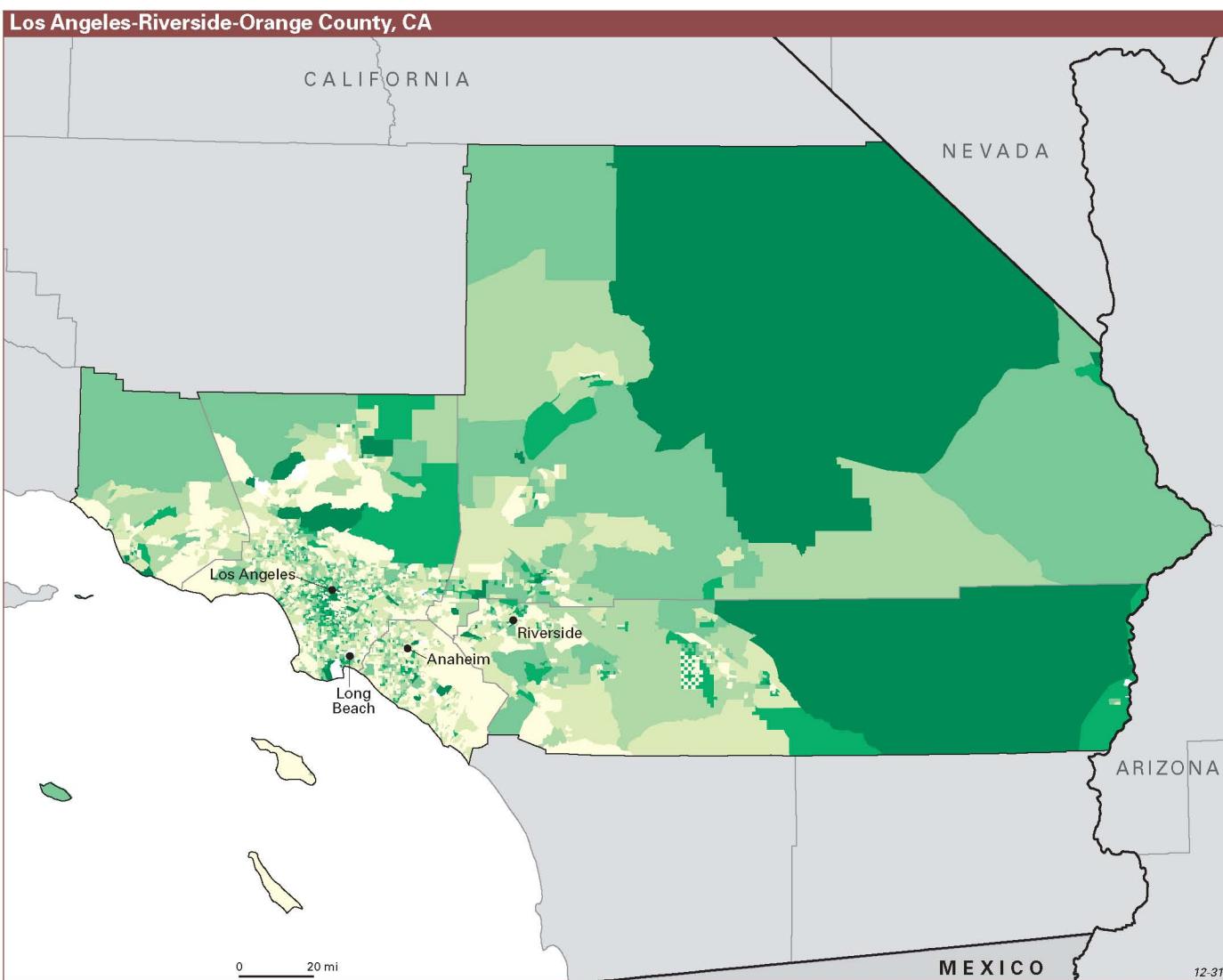
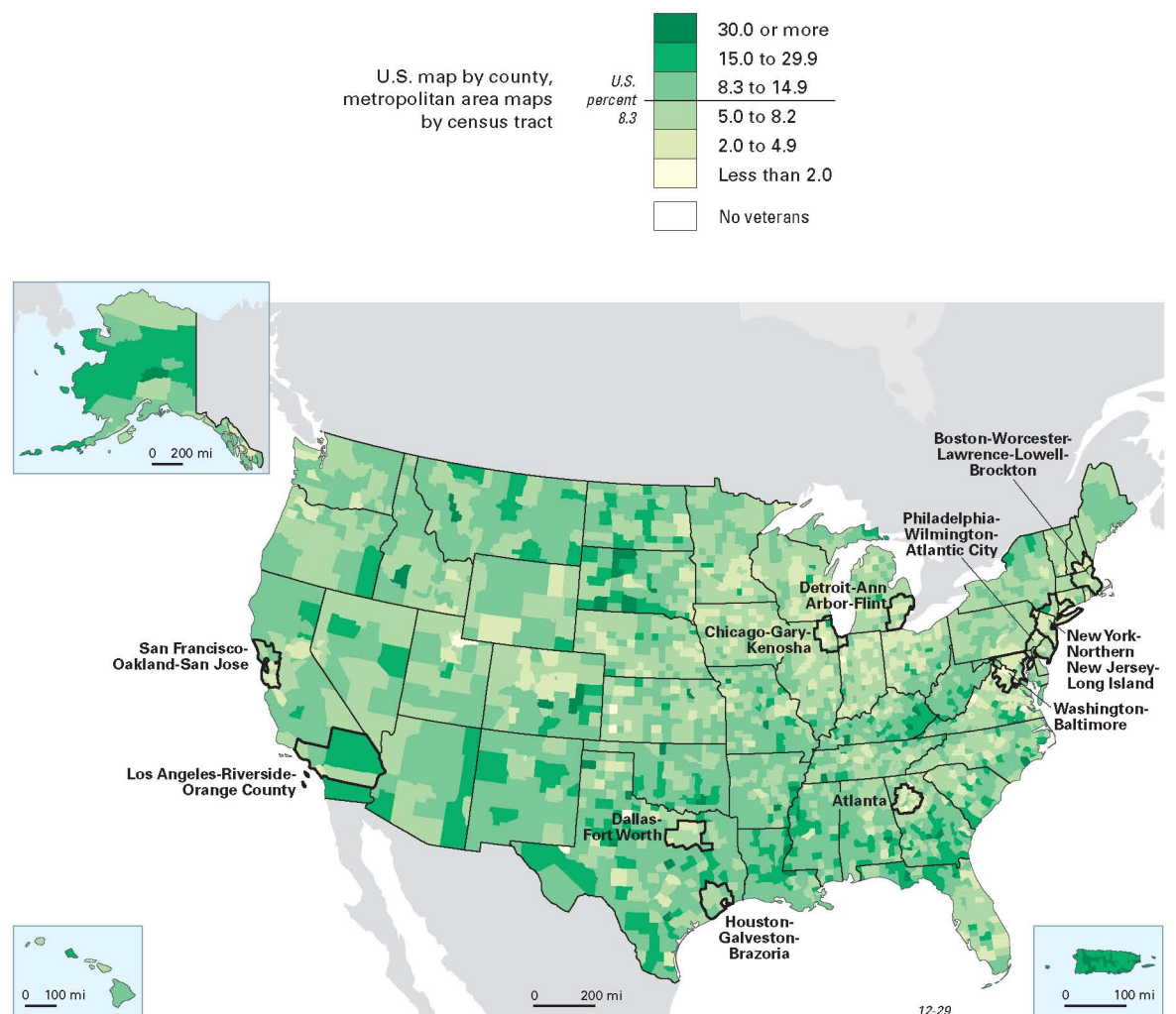


METROPOLITAN AREAS

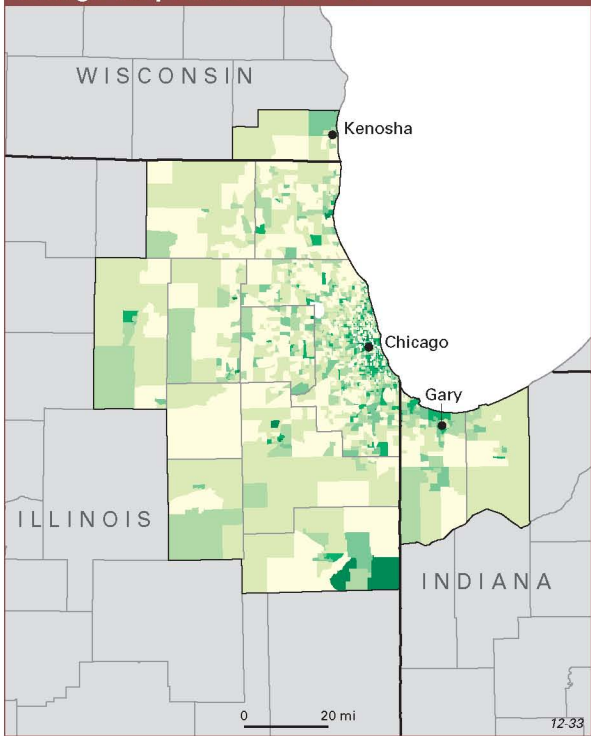


Percent of Veterans in Poverty, 2000

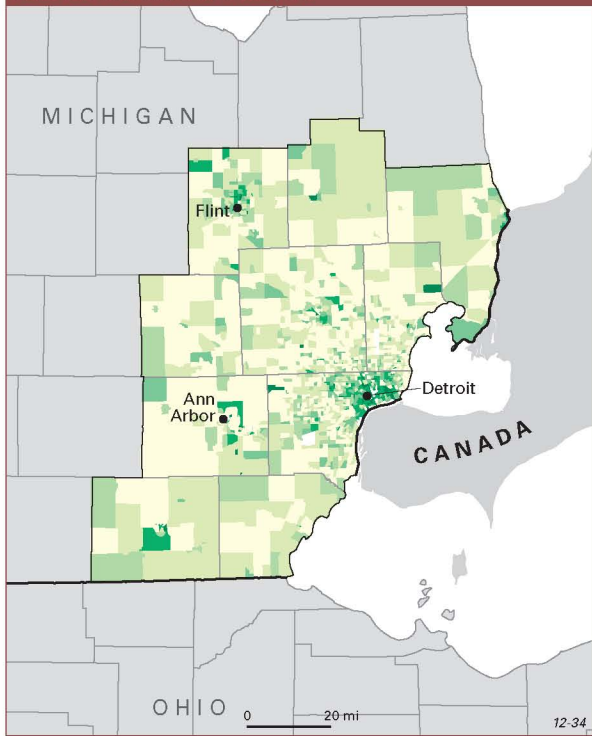
Largest Metropolitan Areas



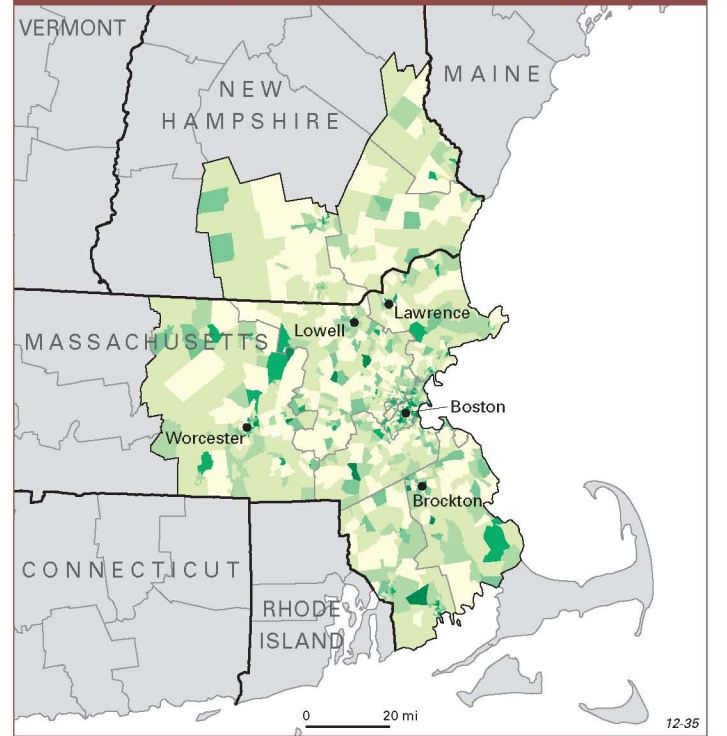
Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI



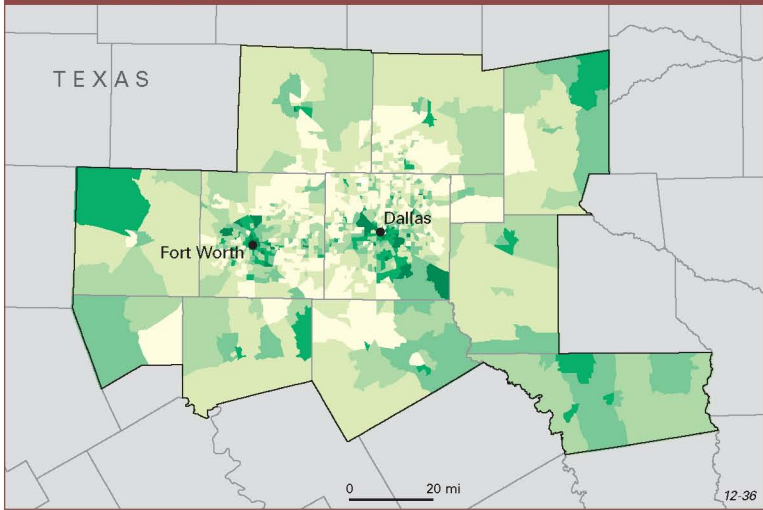
Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI



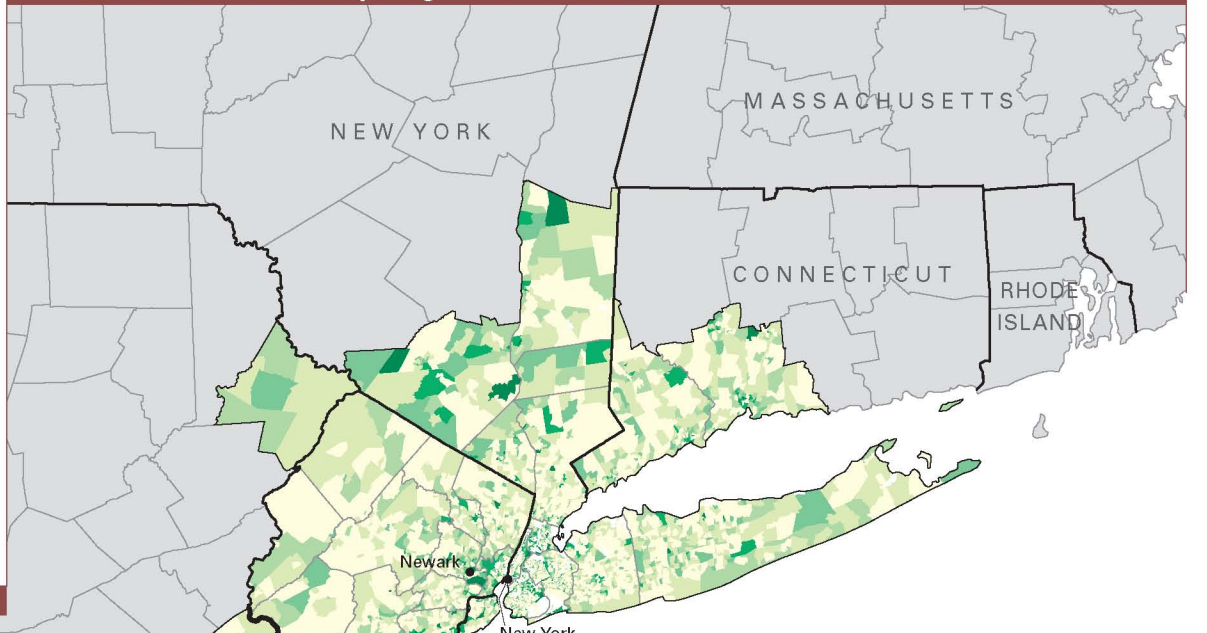
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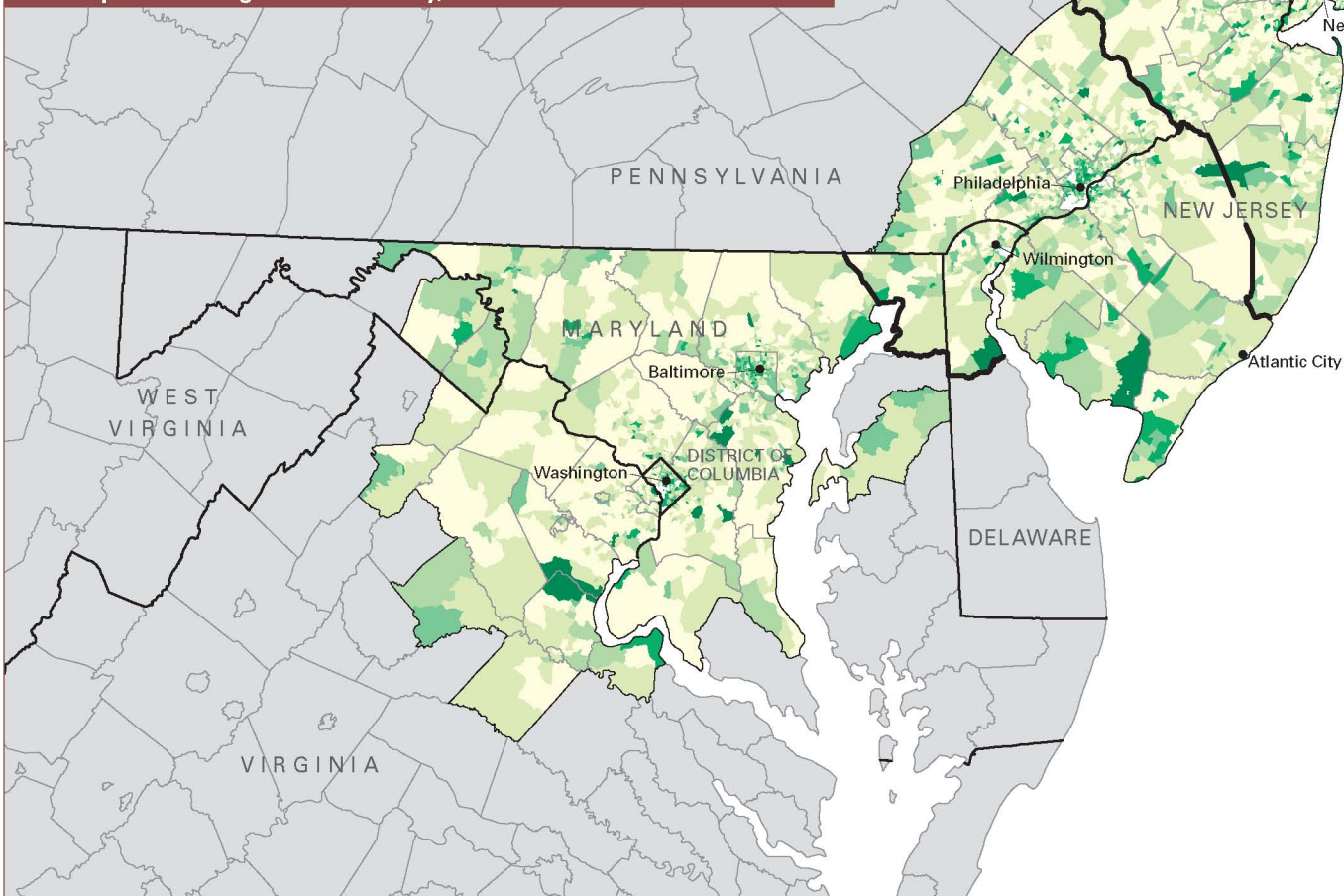
Dallas-Fort Worth, TX



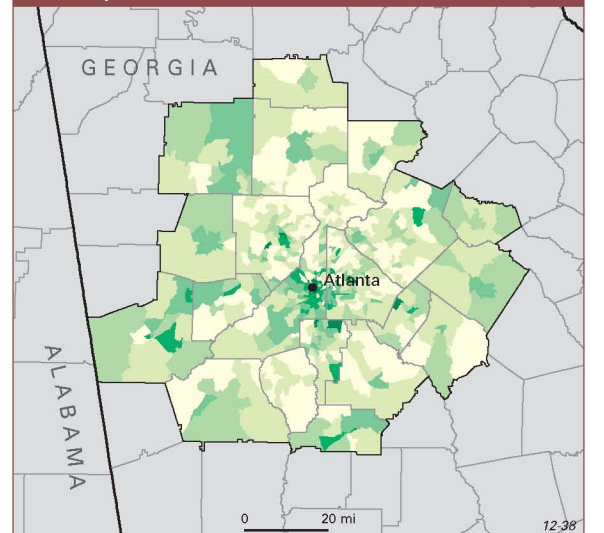
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA



Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, PA-NJ-DE-MD



Atlanta, GA



Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV



