

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

May 27, 2014 at 10:49am

Iraq, Afghanistan wars to cost up to \$6 trillion

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NCR Today

An unusual and insightful *Wall Street Journal* story about the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs paying pensions to the surviving spouses and children of war veterans reveals that one person, Irene Triplett, continues to receive a monthly pension benefit of \$73.13 for her father's service in the Civil War.

The story reveals that:

The last U.S. World War I veteran died in 2011. But 4,038 widows, sons and daughters get monthly VA pension or other payments. The government's annual tab for surviving family from those long-ago wars comes to \$16.5 million.

Spouses, parents and children of deceased veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan received \$6.7 billion in the 2013 fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. Payments are based on financial need, any disabilities, and whether the veteran's death was tied to military service.

The payments above don't include the cost of care of the veterans themselves, the story says.

What really jumped off the page is the reference to a Harvard study that estimates the cost of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars will run to \$4 trillion to \$6 trillion in the years ahead.

A Harvard University study last year projected the final bill for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars would hit \$4 trillion to \$6 trillion in the coming decades.

Check out the story for a helpful interactive graph on the continuing costs of U.S. conflicts and wars.

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