

DEOMI News Highlights

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Appeals court sides with Trump in transgender military case [Jessica Gresko, *The Associated Press*, 4 January 2019]

- A federal appeals court sided with the Trump administration Friday in a case about the Pentagon's effort to restrict military service by transgender people, but the ruling won't change who can serve or enlist at this point.
- A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled Friday that a lower court judge was wrong to block the Pentagon from implementing plans to restrict the service of transgender individuals. The unsigned ruling will not allow the Pentagon to implement its policy, however, because other judges have entered orders blocking the administration in similar cases.
- The administration has already asked the Supreme Court to weigh in. The high court could announce as early as this month if it will do so.

[Appeals court sides with Trump in transgender military case](#)

First Female Air Force F-35 Test Pilot Marks Mission Milestone [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 8 January 2019]

- Another woman has completed a major milestone in the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.
- Maj. Rachael Winiecki, of the 461st Flight Test Squadron, recently became the first female test pilot to lead an F-35 mission at Edwards Air Force Base, California, according to the service.
- Winiecki follows other women who have accomplished similar feats in the fifth-generation jet. Last year, Col. Gina "Torch" Sabric became the first female F-35 pilot in the Air Force Reserve. In 2015, Lt. Col. Christine Mau became the first woman ever to fly the plane.

[First Female Air Force F-35 Test Pilot Marks Mission Milestone](#)

Marine Corps Closely Watching Integrated Training Company at Parris Island [Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 10 January 2019]

- A platoon of 50 female Marine recruits [began training](#) Jan. 5 in 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, marking the first time women have trained outside the all-female 4th Recruit Training Battalion.
- Sgt. Major of the Marine Corps Ronald Green said the service is assessing the integration of an all-female platoon within one of the battalion's companies to determine whether it is a model the Corps should continue, rather than training female recruits in a single battalion, as is current protocol.
- Women now make up 8.9 percent of Marine recruits, Green said. Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Robert Neller has said he'd like to grow the Marine Corps to 10 percent female.

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Culture

Joyful Headlines About Race and Equality

A few stories about race, from the many we published, that are worth celebrating.

By Adeel Hassan

The New York Times, December 31, 2018

Another year of grim headlines about detained and deported immigrants, hate crimes, and the police being called on black people for doing [everyday things like gardening](#) or [going swimming](#). But 2018 also held glimmers of hope — if you search hard enough — with stories about racial equality and justice. Here are a few of that we published and that are worth celebrating.

Election Night Firsts

The candidates in the midterm elections were among [the most diverse in the history of the United States](#), and their candidacies will likely have an enduring impact on political representation in the country. Two states elected [the first Native American women, Sharice Davids and Debra Haaland](#), to Congress. Another elected its first Native American lieutenant governor, Peggy Flanagan. A Navajo candidate, Willie Grayeyes, won a pivotal county race in an area long dominated by a white minority.

Ilhan Omar in Minnesota and Rashida Tlaib in Michigan became [the first Muslim women elected to Congress](#). Ayanna Pressley in Massachusetts and Jahana Hayes in Connecticut will become their states' first African-American woman in Congress. And [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, 29, a Latina](#), became the youngest woman ever elected to Congress.

Justice for All

[Seventeen black women in Texas were elected as judges in Harris County](#), the nation's third-largest county. Each of the lawyers, all Democrats ranging in age from 31 to the early 60s, won their races by double digits. The county, which was known as the “buckle of the American death belt,” has executed more people than every state in the country since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976.



Seventeen black women were elected as judges in Harris County, Tex., bringing the total to 19. (Credit: Christin Mcqueen/Harris County Democratic Party, via Associated Press)

“We talked about coming in and being more compassionate,” Latosha Lewis Payne, 44, a longtime lawyer in Houston, said of her 16 newly elected colleagues. “Being more understanding of the poor and disadvantaged that come into the judicial system. I hope that our election will usher in courts that ensure an equal opportunity for justice for all.”

In Living Color

[“Black Panther” smashed box-office records](#) upon its February release. The Disney-Marvel movie featuring the superhero T’Challa of Wakanda hauled in \$218 million in North America over the Presidents’ Day weekend. Many viewers [came to theaters in outfits inspired by characters](#) in the film. That same month, [“Coco,” a Pixar film set in Mexico](#) with a voice cast that’s almost entirely Latino, won two Academy Awards. In August, an all-Asian cast found success with “Crazy Rich Asians.” It was the first time since the “The Joy Luck Club,” in 1993, that a major Hollywood film set in the present [showcased a predominantly Asian cast](#).

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/31/us/joyful-headlines-about-race-and-equality.html>

Sports Breakthroughs

South Korea hosted the Winter Olympics, and with that came more Asian athletes and fans. There were also 13 athletes from eight African nations, the largest representation of athletes from African nations in any Winter Games. At the same time, the United States Olympic Committee fielded its most diverse team at a Winter Games. Of the 243 athletes, at least 10 were African-American and 10 were Asian-American. [The Americans included Nathan Chen](#), Vincent Zhou, Mirai Nagasu, [Chloe Kim](#), Erin Jackson and Jordan Greenway.



Naomi Osaka, who has a Haitian father and a Japanese mother, won the U.S. Open in September. She grew up in the United States, but became the first Japanese-born player to win a Grand Slam championship. (Credit: Julian Finney/Getty Images)

Other landmark moments: Naomi Osaka captured the U.S. Open title, becoming the first Japanese-born tennis player to win a Grand Slam championship. Ms. Osaka, 20, who grew up in the United States, has a Haitian father and a Japanese mother, and she is helping to [challenge Japan’s longstanding sense of racial purity and cultural identity](#).

[Alex Cora, a native of Puerto Rico](#), coached the Boston Red Sox to the most wins in its 118-year history and a World Series championship. [Dave Roberts, who has an African-American father and a Japanese mother](#), led the Dodgers to their second consecutive National League pennant. It was the first time that the World Series featured two teams managed by people of color.

Striking a New Note

In the musical world, there is [an effort to promote diversity in orchestras](#). The initiative — spearheaded by the Sphinx Organization, the New World Symphony and the League of American Orchestras — will help black and Hispanic musicians prepare for auditions, pair them with mentors and showcase their work in concerts. Orchestras are among the least racially diverse institutions in the country, with African-Americans accounting for 1.8 percent of players.

Also this year, [Kendrick Lamar became the first rapper to win the Pulitzer Prize for music](#) and the first winner in the category who is not a classical or jazz musician. [Our critic called Mr. Lamar’s album “DAMN.”](#) a work of “reactions and perceptions, a response to the sensations that come when the world is creeping in and you can’t keep it at bay any longer without lashing back.”

Economic Sense

In June, [Raphael Bostic became the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta](#). He is the first African-American to lead any of the Fed’s 12 regional reserve banks in the central bank’s 105-year history. This year we learned that while the unemployment rate for black Americans hit its lowest point on record, [joblessness for African-Americans was still about twice the rate for whites](#). Mr. Bostic is an expert on housing policy, and he has said that he wants to focus the Atlanta Fed on housing-related issues. Increased diversity in economics and economic policymaking has the potential to help the government overcome its blind spots and make better decisions affecting the lives of all Americans.

More Than a Diploma

About 53 percent of the [undergraduates at the University of California, Merced](#) — the newest addition to the 10-campus University of California system — are Latino. No other campus more closely mirrors the demographics of the nation’s most diverse state. Nearly three-quarters of students are the first in their

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/31/us/joyful-headlines-about-race-and-equality.html>

families to attend college. Merced is in the middle of Central Valley, largely farmland that has been one of the poorest and overlooked parts of the state. State leaders sought a campus there to serve a region that lagged far behind in educational attainment.

Unity



Rabbi Jeffrey Myers, of the Tree of Life congregation in Pittsburgh, with the Rev. Eric S.C. Manning, who leads Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C. (Credit: Hilary Swift for The New York Times)

One of the darkest days of the year — the massacre of 11 Jewish worshipers at a synagogue in Pittsburgh on Oct. 27 — rallied Americans of all faiths and backgrounds. [Two Muslim groups raised about \\$240,000 to help victims and their families.](#) The Rev. Eric S.C. Manning, who leads Emanuel African Methodist

Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C., where [nine parishioners were massacred](#) during a Bible study in 2015, met with the Rabbi Jeffrey Myers. During the meeting, the two spiritual leaders “spread their arms wide and embraced at length, the rabbi patting the pastor rhythmically on the back as the pastor drew him close. Words were not necessary.”

For more stories on race, please [sign up here](#) to have the Race/Related newsletter delivered weekly to your inbox.

Lincoln moved to end slavery on New Year's Day 1863. It went on for three more years.

By Ronald G. Shafer

The Washington Post, January 1, 2019



The first reading of the Emancipation Proclamation before President Abraham Lincoln's Cabinet, painted by F.B. Carpenter. (Library of Congress)

On New Year's morning of 1863, President Abraham Lincoln hosted a three-hour reception in the White House. That afternoon, Lincoln slipped into his office and — without fanfare — signed a document that changed America forever.

It was the Emancipation Proclamation, decreeing “that all persons held as slaves” within the rebellious Southern states “are, and henceforward shall be, free.”

However, the proclamation did not immediately free any of the nation's nearly 4 million slaves. The biggest impact was that for the first time, ending slavery became a goal of the Union in the bloody civil war with the Confederacy.

The news sent shock waves throughout the divided country. Southern newspapers responded with outrage. Lincoln's action was “the most startling political crime, the most stupid political blunder yet known in American history,” the Richmond Enquirer thundered. “The Southern people have now only to choose between victory and death.”

In the North, the Cleveland Morning Leader exulted “The day of Jubilee has arrived, and the all important words ‘Be Free’ have been spoken.” The New York Times declared “President Lincoln's proclamation marks an era in history, not only of this war, but of the world.” But some Northern whites opposed fighting for the freedom of black slaves. The Cincinnati Enquirer said Lincoln's proclamation represented the “complete overthrow of the Constitution he swore to protect and defend.”

Free African Americans in the North celebrated the news. “We are all liberated by this proclamation,” said the noted orator and former slave Frederick Douglass. “Everybody is liberated. The white man is liberated, the black man is liberated, the brave men now fighting the battles of their country against rebels and traitors are now liberated.” But Douglass cautioned that the proclamation was only a first step; slaves who celebrated the proclamation risked being beaten or hung.

The proclamation was not a surprise. Lincoln had presented his draft of a preliminary order at a Cabinet meeting on July 22, 1862. Secretary of State William Seward suggested the president wait until after the North had scored a fresh win over Southern troops before releasing the document. On Sept. 22, a few days after Union forces claimed victory in the Battle of Antietam, Lincoln issued the preliminary proclamation. It stated that if Southern states did not surrender by Jan. 1, 1863, the president would issue a final order to make their slaves “forever free.”

The fighting continued. Some doubted Lincoln would back up his threat. But on the afternoon of Jan. 1, he paused only to steady his hand before signing the final Emancipation Proclamation. “I never, in my life, felt more certain that I was doing right than I do in signing this paper,” Lincoln said. “If my name goes into history, it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/01/01/lincoln-declared-an-end-slavery-new-years-day-it-went-two-more-years/>

Many abolitionists criticized Lincoln's action as too limited. The proclamation purported to free millions of slaves in the Southern states that had seceded from the Union. It exempted 850,000 slaves in border states and parts of three Southern states that were not in rebellion. The New York Herald said of Lincoln's order: "While the proclamation leaves slavery untouched where his decree can be enforced, he emancipates slaves where his decree cannot be enforced."

While Lincoln believed freeing the slaves was the right thing to do, his proclamation was a strategic "war measure" in the battle to defeat the Confederacy. The proclamation allowed black men to join the Union military forces. Eventually, nearly 200,000 African Americans fought for the North. By making the abolition of slavery a Union goal, the proclamation also discouraged intervention by anti-slavery foreign nations, such as England, on the Confederate side.

Lincoln, who won reelection in 1864, knew his war order was temporary and pressed Congress to amend the Constitution to end slavery forever. By Jan. 31, 1865, both houses of Congress passed the 13th Amendment that "neither slavery or involuntary servitude ... shall exist in the United States."

Slavery officially ended on Dec. 18, 1865 after 27, or two-thirds, of the 36 states ratified the amendment. Lincoln did not live to see the culmination of his proclamation. On April 14, 1865 — five days after the South surrendered — the president was shot and killed by Southern sympathizer John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington.

The end of slavery was just the beginning of a long struggle by African Americans for full rights as U.S. citizens. Racial segregation in the South continued into the 1960s in everything from public accommodations to schools. At the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., in 1922, the crowd of 50,000 people was segregated by race.

An integrated crowd of more than 250,000 swarmed around the Lincoln Memorial in August 1963 for the March on Washington. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. began his "I Have A Dream" speech by praising the Emancipation Proclamation as a "great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. ... But 100 years later, the Negro still is not free."

Though the outcome was far from certain when Lincoln signed the proclamation, one group of black Americans had faith when they met in mid-January 1863 at the Oak Grove school in Leesburg, Ohio. The group agreed on a resolution expressing hope that the proclamation would lead to freedom for all black people in America.

"Should all this be accomplished," the resolution said, "the name of Abraham Lincoln will ever be gratefully remembered by the colored race of America; and the 1st of January should be celebrated to our latest posterity as the most important event in all our history."

Ronald G. Shafer is a freelance writer in Williamsburg, Va., and a former Washington political features editor at the Wall Street Journal.

SEE ALSO:

[New Year's Day Is Also Emancipation Day](#) [*The New York Times*, 2018-12-30][OPINION]

Old favorites, outdated attitudes: Can entertainment expire?

By Ted Anthony

The Associated Press, December 28, 2018



In this March 15, 2015, file photo, an Apu cutout is displayed at a Simpsons Kwik-E-Mart Truck in Austin, Texas. Comedian Hari Kondabolu released a film, “The Problem With Apu,” documenting stereotypes he saw with the character and its effect on South Asian entertainers. (Deborah Cannon/Austin American-Statesman via AP)

NEW YORK (AP) — They are fighting, yes, but the fight crackles with the enticing electricity that only Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn could deliver. He is storming out the door. She is throwing

his golf clubs after him. The music is jaunty. He is charmingly irritated.

Then: He strides up to her, throws a fake punch in the air at her, opens his fist and shoves his palm into her face, slamming her onto the ground. She looks up at him with what appears to be mild exasperation. She rubs her injured neck. The rom-com musical score plays on.

So begins 1940’s “The Philadelphia Story”: with a case of domestic assault played for laughs. Eight decades later, the movie is clearly two things: uneasy fare for a post-#metoo culture — and an enduring American classic.

They exist throughout society’s pop-culture canon, from movies to TV to music and beyond: pieces of work that have withstood time’s passage but that contain actions, words and depictions about race, gender and sexual orientation that we now find questionable at best.

Whether it’s blackface minstrel routines from Bing Crosby’s “Holiday Inn,” Apu’s accent in “The Simpsons,” bullying scenes in “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer,” the arguably rapey coercion of “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” and “Sixteen Candles” or the simplistically clunky gender interactions of “Mr. Mom,” Americans have amassed a catalog of entertainment across the decades that now raises a series of contentious but never-more-relevant questions:

What, exactly, do we do with this stuff today? Do we simply discard it? Do we give it a free pass as the product of a less-enlightened age? Or is there some way to both acknowledge its value yet still view it with a more critical eye?

Does American entertainment ever have an expiration date?

—

“Jake, she’s a child!”

“So?”

— Two male high-school seniors discussing an attractive female sophomore in John Hughes’ “Sixteen Candles” (1984)

—

“How are we meant to feel about art that we both love and oppose?” Molly Ringwald, who played the “child” referenced above, wrote this past April in *The New Yorker*, 34 years later. As the decades passed, she grew more uncomfortable with some of the material that made her one of the 1980s’ biggest young stars.

<https://www.apnews.com/4ebd33ab2629490183763f90862e2977>

This can be a fraught debate, and understandably so. Some Americans, often those who wield society's power, cast popular culture as froth that's unworthy of serious scrutiny: Hey, it's just entertainment. Don't overthink things.

But entertainment is a byproduct of its era — of how we view ourselves, of who gets to call who what and who wields the paintbrushes of representation in society. And if you're never the one holding the paintbrush, how entertaining can it be?

This delicate question pervades some of our culture's most beloved work, from Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" on down. It is the wonderful and the problematic, often presented side by side.

So if we're watching "I Love Lucy," do we consider how belittling Ricky (and most everyone else) is to her? Or do we take away the fact that no matter what, she never stops trying and is never contained? In "The Honeymooners," do we key in on the obvious love between Ralph and Alice or on his fist-shaking threats to send her "to the moon"?

If we're listening to the Beatles, and we adore John Lennon for his vision of a more peaceable world, what do we make today of his 1965 song that began with the lyrics, "I'd rather see you dead, little girl, than to be with another man"?

If we're showing our kids Hollywood classics, and we put "Gone with the Wind" in front of them, what do we say when Mammy (Hattie McDaniel) acts like a happy slave who adores her masters? What about the frequent racial and ethnic stereotypes — from Mexican to African-American to Irish to Italian — in Warner Bros.' beloved collection of cartoon shorts from the 1940s and 1950s?

For the Gen-Xers among us: Through what prism should we view such hormone-drenched 1980s fare as "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," "Porky's" and — heaven help us — "Zapped," an entire movie about a teenage boy who can pop open girls' blouses with his mind?

And what of Hughes, who captured teenage life's authenticity as never before but also handed us material that sent some fundamentally confusing and problematic sexual messages to adolescents?

"If you could erase all the scenes that are offensive to us today, even if you could, would that be a good idea? I don't really think so," says M. Alison Kibler, who teaches American studies at Franklin & Marshall College and researches how groups struggle for fair representation in entertainment.

She adds: "I would step back from any kind of one-dimensional read of movies and performances from the past."

—

"Woman not made for heavy thinking but should always decorate scene like blossom of plum." — Charlie Chan (a decidedly un-Asian Roland Winters), "Charlie Chan in the Chinese Ring" (1947)

—

The "Charlie Chan" movies of the 1930s and 1940s, shown repeatedly on TV in the 1970s and 1980s, seem today to brim with racial problems: non-Asians portraying Asians, fortune-cookie sayings spouted in precious accents and, for good measure, some broadly played African-American representations too.

Yet according to Yunte Huang, who traced the character's history, many Asians welcomed the films at the time because, in an era of Fu Manchu stereotypes, they represented something coveted: a respected Asian protagonist who outwitted every white person on the screen.

<https://www.apnews.com/4ebd33ab2629490183763f90862e2977>

“There’s a history to everything. And we need to know history — including those ugly representations and everything,” says Huang, author of “Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and His Rendezvous with American History.”

“On the one hand, we need to be critical and continue to protest,” he says. “On the other hand, it is important for us to get people to talk about this. . Let them come out, but talk about them and analyze them so we know how far we have traveled.”

Until the last couple decades, older fare resurfaced only sporadically, when studios or networks put it back out there on air or VHS tape.

But the dawn of the digital era and the rapid rise of streaming culture means that now, anything can be accessed by pretty much anyone on any screen. That in turn means that a dizzying library of our cultural past, warts and all, is available at the press of a button.

This is also a different question than what’s being grappled with around entertainers like Bill Cosby, Louis C.K. and Woody Allen, whose work many now reject because of the artists’ behavior rather than the content itself (though many have identified problems in Allen’s and C.K.’s work).

Consider Apu, the South Asian convenience-store owner long voiced by Hank Azaria in “The Simpsons” — an unusual case because the show has spanned more than two generations of evolving attitudes.

Last year, comedian Hari Kondabolu released a film, “The Problem With Apu,” documenting stereotypes he saw with the character and its effect on entertainers of South Asian descent. The response included hints that Apu might fade from the cast of thousands that populate the Simpsons’ hometown of Springfield.

That doesn’t sit right with Shilpa Davé, author of “Indian Accents: Brown Voice and Racial Performance in American Television and Film.” Apu, after all, is also a beloved character and community member. Isn’t there another solution?

“The easy thing is to point a finger and say, ‘Oh, that’s terrible.’ But I think we have to say, what are the alternatives? How do we want to progress now that we have more information and a higher consciousness?” Davé says. “Does entertainment mean that we leave our brains behind?”

When Tim Cogshell was a child, he loved John Wayne. He’d watch Westerns and root for the cowboys — the “good guys.”

“Then my uncle told me, ‘Stop rooting for the cowboys,’” Cogshell says, allowing that his uncle also used a word between “the” and “cowboys” that began with an “f.”

Today Cogshell, a film critic for FilmWeek on KPCC-FM, an NPR affiliate in Pasadena, California, thinks a lot about how yesterday’s attitudes should be considered in today’s environment. Part of his answer comes down to intent.

“I gotta know the details. What’s going on here? What’s the intention here?” Cogshell says. “Sometimes you have to peel the onion. And then one decides how to think about it, how to feel about it, where to put it in the canon.”

So while “Birth of a Nation,” the groundbreaking 1915 film widely regarded as one of the most corrosively racist ever made, is viewed ever more harshly as the years pass, a misogynist bigot like Archie Bunker from “All in the Family” presents a different story: Whether a successful portrayal or not, Cogshell says, it was intended to highlight a problem and get it discussed.

<https://www.apnews.com/4ebd33ab2629490183763f90862e2977>

Some of this discussion is perhaps moot. YouTube-savvy teenagers are probably not watching “Birth of a Nation,” “The Mask of Fu Manchu” or even “Porky’s” on their mobile devices.

The solutions, though, suggest a general direction: Don’t simply ban or eliminate or delete. Talk about stuff — whether formally, when it’s presented to the public, or informally at home. And don’t assume we’re smarter today; as you read this, entertainment is being made that’ll be just as problematic to our great-grandchildren.

And involving more voices in the production of today’s popular culture — and the selection, curation and characterization of yesterday’s — can make sense of this more than dismissing the issue as overreaction or scrubbing the leavings of less-enlightened eras.

That doesn’t mean that newly offensive classics can’t be entertaining. Many of these things are American favorites for a reason: They resonated with us over many years, and have things to say that remain relevant — and, at times, fun and escapist.

But wherever you come down, to suggest that entertainment — music, movies, TV, a multibillion-dollar industry designed to sell our culture’s stories back to us in infinite configurations — is not something to examine sometimes under a more close-up lens seems a bit self-defeating. This, after all, is us — maybe not an inclusive enough “us,” maybe not the “us” that many want us to be, but something that demands to be understood.

Let Molly Ringwald have the last word: “Erasing history is a dangerous road when it comes to art — change is essential, but so, too, is remembering the past, in all of its transgression and barbarism, so that we may properly gauge how far we have come, and also how far we still need to go.”

Ted Anthony, director of digital innovation for The Associated Press, writes frequently about American culture. Follow him on Twitter at @anthonyted.

Veterans welcome? Less than 2 percent of Capitol Hill staffers have military experience

By Leo Shane III

Military Times, January 10, 2019



The Capitol Dome is shown on Dec. 14, 2018. A new report from the advocacy group HillVets shows that less than 2 percent of Capitol Hill staffers have military experience. (J. Scott Applewhite/AP)

WASHINGTON — Fewer than 2 percent of congressional staffers have served in the military, despite [years of warning from advocates](#) about the need to include veterans' perspective in policy work and pledges from lawmakers to help separating service members find work.

According to figures released this week by [HillVets](#) — a bipartisan networking group of Capitol Hill staffers with military experience — only about 200 of the 13,000-plus congressional staff have military backgrounds. That equates to about 1.6 percent of [the Capitol Hill workforce](#), not including elected officials.

“There’s a fundamental lack of knowledge in Congress in regards to what these benefits mean and what it’s like to serve in the military,” said Justin Brown, founder of the group. “We don’t have that braintrust available.”

[Veterans in the 116th Congress, by the numbers](#)

The number of veterans elected to Congress this session dropped to under 100, the lowest level since before World War II. But that still equates to about 18 percent of legislators being veterans, far above the staffer levels.

In the executive branch, about 31 percent of federal employees are veterans. The Defense Department (48 percent) and Department of Veterans Affairs (33 percent) have among the highest veteran employment rates of any agency, while Health and Human Services (8 percent) and the Environmental Protection Agency (9 percent) are among the lowest.

Even those rates far outpace the congressional representation. House and Senate Republicans did slightly better than their Democratic counterparts in hiring staffers with military experience, but still did not break the 2 percent employment mark.

The latest HillVets figure is actually lower than past estimates of veterans employed on Capitol Hill, but Brown said the total number of veterans staffers has basically stayed flat for the last five years.

“As it is now, we have staff writing policy for veterans who have never set foot in a VA hospital,” said Brown, a Navy veteran who previously worked on the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee. “We’re not suggesting that Capitol Hill should have upwards of 50 percent like the Defense Department. But the numbers should be higher than this.”

While many Hill offices don’t employ even one veteran, Brown said his group has seen success stories with individual offices.

[Vets working without pay: Government shutdown leaves hundreds of thousands in the lurch](#)

For example, Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., has five working on his staff. He said their perspective is invaluable.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/01/10/veterans-welcome-less-than-2-percent-of-capitol-hill-staffers-have-military-experience/>

“As a member of both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, being able to consult with them about their experiences and seek their advice helps me to make well-informed decisions,” he said in a statement.

“The veterans in my office have served the country in our armed forces, and working in a Senate office is an extension of that service.”

HillVets has been pushing for more veterans hiring for the past five years, especially in congressional policy posts. The group has been sharing a list of more than 40 prospective staffers from its network of veterans along with the latest research findings, in an effort to help fix the problem.

“There are veterans out there and they want to serve,” Brown said. “But we’ve never seen a collective effort to really take on the issue. It’s going to take work to fix it.”

[Leo Shane III](#) covers Congress, Veterans Affairs and the White House for Military Times. He has covered Washington, D.C. since 2004, focusing on military personnel and veterans policies.

Diversity

Appeals court sides with Trump in transgender military case

By Jessica Gresko

The Associated Press, January 4, 2019

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal appeals court sided with the Trump administration Friday in a case about the Pentagon’s effort to restrict military service by transgender people, but the ruling won’t change who can serve or enlist at this point.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled Friday that a lower court judge was wrong to block the Pentagon from implementing plans to restrict the service of transgender individuals. The unsigned ruling will not allow the Pentagon to implement its policy, however, because other judges have entered orders blocking the administration in similar cases.

The administration has already asked the Supreme Court to weigh in. The high court could announce as early as this month if it will do so.

The appeals court ruling said the military’s plan appears to rely on the “considered professional judgment” of “appropriate military officials.” It noted that the plan “appears to permit some transgender individuals to serve in the military.”

Military policy until a few years ago had barred service by transgender individuals. That changed under President Barack Obama’s administration. The military announced in 2016 that transgender individuals already serving in the military would be allowed to serve openly. And the military set July 1, 2017, as the date when transgender individuals would be allowed to enlist.

But President Donald Trump’s administration delayed the enlistment date, saying the issue needed further study. While that study was ongoing, the president tweeted in late July 2017 that the government would not allow “Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military.” He later directed the military to return to its policy before the Obama administration changes.

Groups representing transgender individuals responded by suing the administration in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Washington state and California. The Trump administration lost early rounds in those cases, with courts issuing nationwide injunctions barring the administration from altering course. As a result, transgender individuals continue to serve openly and transgender individuals have been allowed to enlist in the military since Jan. 1, 2018.

In March 2018, the Trump administration announced that after studying the issue it was revising its policy. The new policy generally bars transgender individuals from serving or enlisting unless they serve “in their biological sex” and “do not seek to undergo gender transition.” An exception allows the service of transgender service members who previously relied on the Obama-era rule. Groups representing transgender individuals have responded by arguing that the policy is essentially a ban on the service by transgender individuals.

The lawsuit in the District of Columbia was filed by the National Center for Lesbian Rights and GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders. NCLR Legal Director Shannon Minter called Friday’s decision “a devastating slap in the face to transgender service members.”

Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said the administration was “pleased with the decision.”

Two of the three judges who ruled in the case were nominated by Republican presidents. Judge Thomas Griffith was nominated by George W. Bush and Judge Stephen Williams was nominated by Ronald Reagan. The third judge, Robert Wilkins, was nominated by President Barack Obama.

<https://www.apnews.com/2f2fe27025b5401688486f3b7d5080e2>

SEE ALSO:

[US appeals court rules in favor of Trump transgender ban, but policy still can't be enforced](#) [*Stars and Stripes*, 2019-01-04]

[Federal appeals court sides with Trump on military transgender ban, but injunctions remain in place](#) [*USA TODAY*, 2019-01-04]

[Circuit Court backs DoD's transgender service policy](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-01-04]

[U.S. court rules for Trump on transgender military limits](#) [*Reuters*, 2019-01-04]

[Appeals court sides with Trump on transgender military ban](#) [*The Hill*, 2019-01-04]

[Court Backs Curbs on Transgender Military Service](#) [*VOA News*, 2019-01-04]

Exclusive: Retired U.S. military chiefs fight Trump trans ban

By Hugo Greenhalgh

Reuters, January 8, 2019



FILE - Gender Justice League executive director Danni Askini speaks during a press conference following oral arguments in a case to block a transgender military ban at the U.S. Western District Federal Courthouse, March 27, 2018, in Seattle.

LONDON (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - Four senior retired U.S. military officers on Tuesday blasted a legal ruling backing President Donald Trump's ban on transgender individuals serving in the armed forces as "wrong" ahead of a key decision from the country's top court on Friday.

The officers said a ruling last week by a Washington appeals court in favor of a ban on transgender recruits was misguided and backed an earlier decision that such a policy would violate their constitutional rights.

"The D.C. Court of Appeals made an error when it lifted one of the injunctions that protect transgender members of our military," said retired officers Lieutenant General Claudia Kennedy, Rear Admiral John Hutson, Major General Gale Pollock and Brigadier General Clara Adams-Ender.

"The need for an injunction protecting transgender people who serve their country remains precisely the same," they said in a joint statement obtained exclusively by the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

In July 2017, Trump tweeted that transgender people would be banned from serving in the U.S. military, citing the "tremendous medical costs and disruption".

Former defense secretary Jim Mattis last year proposed allowing trans individuals currently serving to remain.

However, new transgender recruits and trans servicemen and women who sought to transition after the ban took effect would be barred.

In its ruling, the Washington appeals court said the Mattis proposal did not represent a "blanket ban" on trans individuals.

But the retired chiefs said the rationale for the Mattis policy and the Trump tweets was "the same — politics, not military expertise — and courts should not be deferring to it".

A 2016 RAND Corporation survey estimated that there were between 1,300 and 6,600 trans men and women on active duty in the 1.3 million-strong U.S. military.

"The Trump tweets and the Mattis policy take aim at the same people: troops diagnosed with gender dysphoria," said Aaron Belkin, director of the Palm Center, an independent research institute that focuses on LGBT+ people and the military.

"They ban the same thing: gender transition. They have the same effect: forcing transgender troops to live a lie and denying them medically necessary care."

Other LGBT+ rights organizations echoed Belkin's concerns.

The administration is "trying to package this as an entirely new policy, but all it does is what President Trump ordered: ban openly transgender people from bravely serving their country", said Tara Borelli, counsel at Lambda Legal.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-lgbt-military/exclusive-retired-u-s-military-chiefs-fight-trump-trans-ban-idUSKCN1P221S>

Ryan Thoreson, an LGBT+ researcher at Human Rights Watch, said: “Wording the Mattis policy slightly differently doesn’t change the plain fact that this is and always has been a ban on transgender service.”

Under rules introduced by former U.S. President Barack Obama, the country’s military did not distinguish between trans men and women and other service personnel.

Trump has requested the matter be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court, which will convene on Friday to decide whether to review the three injunctions still in place.

Reporting by Hugo Greenhalgh @hugo_greenhalgh; Editing by Claire Cozens. Please credit the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters that covers humanitarian news, women's and LGBT+ rights, human trafficking, property rights and climate change. Visit [news.trust.org](https://www.news.trust.org)

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First Female Air Force F-35 Test Pilot Marks Mission Milestone

By Oriana Pawlyk

Military.com, January 8, 2019



Maj. Rachael Winiiecki, 461st Flight Test Squadron F-35 test pilot, and Airman 1st Class Heather Rice, 412th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, pose for a photo after Winiiecki's first test mission flight in the fifth-generation fighter Dec. 14, 2018. (U.S. Air Force/Kenji Thuloweit)

Another woman has completed a major milestone in the [F-35 Joint Strike Fighter](#).

Maj. Rachael Winiiecki, of the 461st Flight Test Squadron, recently became the first female test pilot to lead an F-35 mission at [Edwards Air Force Base](#), California, according to the service.

Winiiecki, who's flown the [A-10C Thunderbolt II](#) and [F-16 Fighting Falcon](#) on various missions, is part of a team overseeing developmental testing of all F-35 variants, [which began last month at the base](#).

"I may be the first female developmental test pilot [in the F-35], but [test pilots] are just one small part of the test enterprise," she said in the release.

Winiiecki's background in the A-10 is one of the reasons she was selected for the job, according to Lt. Col. Tucker Hamilton, 461st FLTS commander. Winiiecki has previously flown A-10 missions in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and the Pacific, according to the release.

"Major Winiiecki was selected to become an F-35 test pilot based on her exceptional flying ability and the important voice she brings to the F-35 development as a prior A-10 pilot," Hamilton said.

Winiiecki's close-air support experience allows her to apply lessons to the F-35, as well as critique them.

"I really do appreciate the perspective that I can bring coming from the A-10 and the F-16 to hopefully bring some influence from that perspective. As testers, the contacts we have back in the combat [Air Force](#) are valuable," she said.

Last July, close-air support tests between the F-35 and A-10 Warthog finished up at Edwards as part of a congressionally mandated requirement that the two aircraft [go up against each other](#).

The stipulation was included as a [provision in the fiscal 2017 National Defense Authorization Act](#) amid congressional concerns over plans to retire the A-10 and replace it with the F-35.

A [Project on Government Oversight report](#) slammed the "skewed" testing, saying at the time the flights overwhelmingly favored the F-35. But aviation enthusiasts and pilots have also said putting the two aircraft side-by-side remains an apples-to-oranges comparison.

It's why the Air Force consistently avoided calling the [highly anticipated test a "fly-off."](#)

After Winiiecki's flight, the Air Force stressed that the stealth jet has air-to-ground capabilities, even if they don't exactly mirror the A-10.

Winiiecki said keeping officials in the loop when comparing testing techniques is important.

"We can reach out to our networks to solicit feedback, solicit information on how we could and should accomplish our mission sets in the future," she said. "That's really where we can open doors. I can reach back to my friends and contacts in my previous community just like other test pilots here."

<https://www.military.com/dodbuzz/2019/01/08/first-female-air-force-f-35-test-pilot-marks-mission-milestone.html>

The service did not specify what type of flights Winiiecki carried out at Edwards. She worked side-by-side with her crew chief, Airman 1st Class Heather Rice of the 412th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, for the flight.

More women are coming to the test field, Winiiecki said.

"I am grateful for the women who have broken barriers previously; they built the path," she said. "I look forward to the day when sorties like this are a regular occurrence."

Winiiecki follows other women who have accomplished similar feats in the fifth-generation jet.

Last year, Col. Gina "Torch" Sabric [became the first female F-35 pilot in the Air Force Reserve](#).

In 2015, Lt. Col. Christine Mau became [the first woman ever](#) to fly the plane.

-- Oriana Pawlyk can be reached at oriana.pawlyk@military.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@Oriana0214](https://twitter.com/Oriana0214).

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- [DoD Says A-10 vs. F-35 'Fly-Off' Is Over. But Will Results Satisfy?](#)
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First female Marine graduates from Winter Mountain Leaders Course

By Shawn Snow

Marine Corps Times, January 8, 2019



Sgt. Tara-Lyn Baker is the first female Marine to graduate from Winter Mountain Leaders Course. (Marine Corps)

The first female Marine graduated Tuesday from the Corps' arduous and physically demanding Winter Mountain Leaders Course.

Sgt. Tara-Lyn Baker, a heavy equipment mechanic, graduated from the nearly six-week school based out of the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in [Bridgeport, California](#).

The course hones Marines' skills in [cold weather survival](#), skiing, snow mobility and mountain warfare.

“You learn how to survive, you learn how to deal with the cold,” Baker said in a video posted by the Marine Corps.

Today, the first female Marine graduated from Winter Mountain Leaders Course. Oorah, Marine. pic.twitter.com/qeFU4ADUfR

— U.S. Marines (@USMC) [January 8, 2019](#)

Baker went on to say she suffered from frostbite and hypothermia.

“We learn how to overcome it,” she said about dealing with the austere cold-weather environment of the mountains.

The Corps has been pushing to train the force in extreme cold-weather environments.

The Marines recently doubled the size of their rotations to Norway to nearly 700 Marines in an effort to train more Marines in the harsh cold Arctic environment.

[Shawn Snow](#) is the senior reporter for Marine Corps Times and a Marine Corps veteran.

Marine Corps Closely Watching Integrated Training Company at Parris Island

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, January 10, 2019



U.S. Marines with Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, and Oscar Company, 4th Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment, take part in Tug-of-War during the Field Meet at 4th Recruit Training Battalion physical training field on Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., April 21, 2018. (U.S. Marine Corps/Cpl. Sarah Stegall)

The all-female platoon [currently undergoing recruit training](#) in a previously all-male battalion at [Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island](#), S.C., may not be the last, according to the Marine Corps' most senior enlisted leader.

Speaking Thursday at a forum on maritime priorities in Washington, D.C., Sgt. Major of the Marine Corps Ronald Green said the service doesn't "do things as a one-time deal" and is assessing the integration of an all-female platoon within one of the battalion's companies to determine whether it is a model the Corps should continue, rather than training female recruits in a single battalion, as is current protocol.

"The assessment is to see how we can more closely align integration," Green said.

But completely integrating platoons, with men training side-by-side with women, is not likely to occur anytime soon, he added.

"What we ask individuals to do at recruit training is a lot more physical and challenging than any other service. We all know that. Who we recruit, we must take them and transform them into [Marines](#). We want to give every individual the greatest opportunity for success," Green said at a forum hosted by the U.S. Naval Institute at the Center for International and Strategic Studies.

A platoon of 50 female Marine recruits began training Jan. 5 in 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, marking the first time women have trained outside the all-female 4th Recruit Training Battalion.

The service decided to integrate the women as a single platoon in a traditionally male company rather than make them wait until later in the year, when there would be enough women to activate 4th Recruit Training Battalion.

Women now make up 8.9 percent of Marine recruits, Green said. Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Robert Neller has said he'd like to grow the Marine Corps to 10 percent female.

Marine officials say they are increasing outreach to potential female recruits. But Green said Thursday that a challenge to recruiting both men and women has been high schools nationwide that block military recruiters from approaching students.

The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act required public high schools to give military recruiters as much access to campuses as is given to any other recruiter. But some school districts have blocked access to military personnel, Green said.

"It's difficult to get into some schools. I'd like to see a more open-door process but, in some schools, there's no entry point. We are protecting the people in these high schools, and there are people in these high schools who want to serve. The door shouldn't be slammed shut and closed," he said.

-- Patricia Kime can be reached at Patricia.Kime@military.com. Follow her on Twitter @patriciakime.

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Male and female Marine platoons to integrate at recruit training for the first time

By Shawn Snow

Marine Corps Times, January 4, 2019



Recruit Anna J. Hereth, Platoon 4026, November Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, practices a falling during a martial arts training session in May 2015 at Parris Island, South Carolina. (Sgt. Jennifer Schubert/Marine Corps)

The Corps is the only branch of service that has not fully integrated male and females together at recruit training. Could that be about to change?

[ABC News](#) first reported Friday that a female platoon will integrate with male platoons aboard the recruit depot at Parris Island, South Carolina.

“On January 5, 2019, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island will start their training cycle with one female platoon and five male platoons,” the Marine Corps said in a statement.

A Marine official said that the change was not permanent, but that the Corps “will certainly look at how the company performs in this model as we continually evaluate how we make Marines.”

[Where are the female Marines?](#)

The Corps decided to “incorporate the 50 female recruits into the historically all-male battalion because the recruiting classes are typically much smaller in the winter months,” according to the Marine Corps statement.

Female drill instructors will still lead the female recruits. Female recruits will live in the barracks with their male counterparts, but in different squad bays.

“This training cycle of about 300 recruits will provide Recruit Depot staff a unique opportunity to assess outcomes, achievements and challenges in training, logistics and resource impacts of this company training model,” the Marine Corps said.

The Corps has two recruit depots, and only Parris Island has partially integrated female Marines with males during boot camp. The recruit depot at San Diego is still all male, though there are some female drill instructors aboard the installation.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Robert B. Neller was [previously reluctant](#) to further gender integration at boot camp.

“Our drill instructors stay with their recruits 24 hours a day, seven days a week the entire time they are there,” Neller told reporters at a televised Pentagon briefing in May. “So I am not considering having men and women live together in an open squad bay.”

Before the Corps’ announcement Friday, female Marines had only trained side-by-side with their male counterparts at boot camp during various training events like swim qualifications, the rifle range and classroom instructions during the final phase of recruit training.

[Top Marine: No more gender integration changes at boot camp on horizon](#)

Vocal women’s advocacy groups have long contended that separating males and females in recruit training builds resentment and a false perception that female Marines have it easier in training.

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/01/04/male-and-female-marine-platoons-to-integrate-at-recruit-training-for-the-first-time/>

That issue, they argue, can result in male Marines disrespecting female superiors and leaders.

“What truly disadvantages women is training that separates them from their fellow Marines from the outset,” retired Navy Capt. Lory Manning, director of government operations at the Service Women’s Action Network, previously told Marine Corps Times. “The Marines should fully integrate enlisted boot camp from the first day so all new Marines soak up the Marine Corps ethos together and learn, together, that the unit bond includes both men and women.”

The top Marine attempted to address some of those concerns by including female drill instructors at the all-male recruit depot in San Diego.

[Shawn Snow](#) is the senior reporter for Marine Corps Times and a Marine Corps veteran.

Miscellaneous

4-star: The Army may be pushing to recruit from some blue-voting cities, but it's not political

By Meghann Myers

Army Times, January 8, 2019



An Army Ranger talks to a group of boys at Arizona State University's Salute to Service college football game Nov. 10. Phoenix is one of the Army's key target cities in an urban recruiting push. (Alun Thomas/Army)

Weeks after announcing in September that the Army had missed its [recruiting goal](#) for the first time in a decade, the service unveiled a new initiative to [shore up recruiting numbers](#) with a revitalization of its [big-city recruiting strategy](#).

For decades, the head of Training and Doctrine Command said in October, the Army had been focusing on smaller cities and towns in the South, Southeast and Midwest, in what he called an “industrial era, brute force” campaign. Now, the service has shifted focus to major cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston and Miami.

Cities that, as the [New York Times](#) has pointed out, tend not to send their children into military service, and also vote overwhelmingly Democratic.

“No, that’s not the way I see it,” Gen. Stephen Townsend told Army Times on Monday. “I read with interest and humor the same stories. In fact, some of these cities, you can’t characterize them that way.”

Rather than ideology, he added, the Army is looking for major population centers as a matter of efficiency. Also on the target list are Phoenix, Dallas and Seattle, some of America’s fastest growing cities, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).

“These cities have the majority of that population, 18 to 24 [year-olds],” Townsend said, the Army’s target recruiting market.

And though Northeast and West Coast cities are on the list of 22, many of the cities are surrounded by traditionally more fertile ground, like Houston and Orlando. There are also solidly conservative areas like Shreveport, Louisiana, and Oklahoma City.

“I’ll give you an example: Georgia is a recruiting powerhouse. You would have probably guessed that,” Townsend said. “Except Atlanta is not. We don’t do so well in Atlanta even though we do great in Georgia.”

In the past, recruiting could rely on areas with a high number of veterans, lower college attendance and limited economic opportunities to make numbers, factors that could all make service attractive to a high school graduate.

In major urban areas, the strategy will have to be different. With that in mind, the Army is reinstating market research for recruiting stations, so NCOs who are dropped into a possibly unfamiliar location will have some data points to refer to.

“We were sending recruiters out into the field with no intelligence,” Townsend said.

[The Army’s greatest recruiting tool is in its opportunity](#)

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/01/08/4-star-the-army-may-be-pushing-to-recruit-from-some-blue-voting-cities-but-its-not-political/>

The new approach will be more akin to the way a political campaign runs, in that candidates running for election use research and polling to figure out the political leanings and pet issues of their target audience.

“If you are a politician, before you go into any neighborhood, you will know who’s for your party, who’s for the other party,” down to the street, Townsend said, as well as the themes and messages that speak to the residents.

“As I mentioned before, our recruiters didn’t know,” he added. “No one’s given them that information. They don’t have the materials they need to succeed.”

There will also be targeted ads by area, he said. Chicago is part of a pilot that is placing billboards around town with different subjects and themes, based on the neighborhood.

There are early indications that the Army is getting results. Los Angeles and Chicago, Townsend said, exceeded their first quarter recruiting goals.

[Meghann Myers](#) is the senior reporter at Army Times. She covers personnel, fitness, the sergeant major of the Army and various other lifestyle issues affecting soldiers.

The Army, in Need of Recruits, Turns Focus to Liberal-Leaning Cities

By Dave Philipps

The New York Times, January 2, 2019



Army recruiters Sgt. Dira An, left, and Sgt. Julio Diaz, manned a table at a job fair in Seattle. Enlistment rates in liberal-leaning cities have tended to be low, especially when jobs are plentiful. (Credit: Ian C. Bates for The New York Times)

SEATTLE — Army recruiters in Seattle can earn a Friday off for each new soldier they enlist. But in a city with a thriving tech industry and a long history of antiwar protests, the recruiters haven't gotten many long weekends.

“It's no secret we're a little behind,” Sgt. First Class Jeremiah Vargas, who heads the city's recruiting station, told four recruiters at a morning pep talk in early December. With a week left to go in the 30-day reporting period, he wrote the station's goal — eight recruits — on a white board, and then the current tally: two.

“What do we need to make mission?” he asked.

One recruiter responded with a shrug, “A miracle.”

The Army is not quite counting on miracles, but after falling [6,500 soldiers short](#) of its goal nationwide for the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, it is trying a new strategy that might seem almost as unlikely.

Rather than focus on more conservative regions of the country that traditionally fill the ranks, the Army plans a big push in [22 left-leaning cities](#), like Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle, where relatively few recruits have signed up.

“We want to go into Boston, Pittsburgh, Kansas City,” Maj. Gen. Frank Muth, the head of Army Recruiting Command, said. “These are places with a large number of youth who just don't know what the military is about.”

The approach may seem like hunting for snow in Miami. But Army leaders say that all they need to attract enlistees in those cities are a surge of recruiters and the right sales pitch.

The pitch they have used for years, playing down combat and emphasizing job training and education benefits, can work well when civilian opportunities are scarce. But it is a tough sell these days in a place like Seattle, where jobs are plentiful and the local minimum wage of \$15 an hour beats the base pay for privates, corporals or specialists.

Instead, General Muth said, the Army wants to frame enlistment as a patriotic detour for motivated young adults who might otherwise be bound for a corporate cubicle — a detour that promises a chance for public service, travel and adventure.

“You want to do a gap year?” the general said. “Come do your gap year in the Army.” (Figuratively speaking, of course: Enlistees commit to serve for two to six years.)

For decades, Army recruiting has relied disproportionately on a crescent-shaped swath of the country stretching from Virginia through the South to Texas, where many military bases are found and many families have traditions of service. Young people there enlist at two to three times the rate of other regions.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/02/us/army-recruiting-tech-industry-seattle.html>

By contrast, in the big metropolitan areas of the Northeast, Midwest and West Coast, young people are less likely to have a parent, teacher or coach who served in the military, which can be a major factor in deciding to enlist. And in those regions, many high schools openly discourage recruiters from interacting with students.

When the Seattle recruiters visit schools, they are sometimes met by antiwar “[counter-recruiting action teams](#)” who call attention to civilian deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan and the high rate of sexual assault in the military.

“Legally, the high schools have to let us in, but a lot of times, they’ll just ignore our calls,” Sergeant Vargas said. “A lot of schools don’t want us to talk to their kids. They want them to go to college, and see the military as a last resort.”

Parents can be just as leery. “They say ‘Thank you for your service, but stay away from my kid,’” said Capt. Carlos Semidey, the Seattle recruiters’ company commander.

Those cold shoulders were easy to ignore when the jobless rate was above 6 percent and the Army’s most dependable recruiter, [Sgt. Hard Times](#), was driving high school graduates to enlist. But now, unemployment has fallen to 50-year lows.

“Whenever that happens, the Army faces recruiting challenges,” said David R. Segal, a sociologist who advises the military on recruiting. “But they have always doubled down on areas where they know they can get results. This is a 180-degree turn.”

The Army has begun redirecting its marketing toward digital-native urbanites and suburbanites who are eager for excitement. Out went the Army’s sponsorship of a drag-racing team; in are teams of soldiers who compete in mixed martial arts, CrossFit, and competitive video gaming, or e-sports.

Ads on network sports broadcasts are being scaled back in favor of targeted ads on Facebook and Twitch, Amazon’s live-streaming gaming platform. Recruiters will soon be required, not just encouraged, to post on Instagram.

“Kids aren’t watching network TV any more,” General Muth said. “They are not at the mall. And they don’t answer calls from numbers they don’t know. But we know they want to serve their community, so we have to start that conversation with them.”

Unlike the Army, the Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy were able to meet 2018 recruiting goals — in part because each requires less than half the Army’s numbers.

But squeezed by the same forces, all military branches must sweeten their enlistment deals, adding sign-up and retention bonuses and loosening medical standards on childhood conditions like asthma and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. The Navy is even offering a “[golden ticket](#)” that allows some enlisted personnel to take a year off and return with the same job and rank.

The Army has had to change tactics before to fill its ranks, and it has sometimes stumbled. Toward the end of the draft in the early 1970s, the Army updated its slogan to say “[The Army wants to join you.](#)” and dispatched recruiters on motorcycles to hold “rap sessions” with prospects, talking about how the Army was loosening up on haircuts and early-morning formations, putting beer machines in barracks and teaching sergeants to not to be so square. The Marine Corps quickly [made fun of the attempt at cool](#), and the campaign came to be [reviled](#) in the Army as well.

This time, the Army plans to focus on blue cities with traveling interactive exhibits that showcase Army careers in health care, engineering and computing. Its sky-diving team and its touring rock band will work

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/02/us/army-recruiting-tech-industry-seattle.html>

to draw crowds, and top brass will speak at events promoting leadership and patriotism. The Army is also putting hundreds of additional recruiters in the field and increasing enlistment bonuses.

But some experts question whether the plans will make much of an impression on the target audience.

“They need to see that the Army is made up of people like them,” said Emma Moore, who studies Army recruiting at the Center for a New American Security, a research institute in Washington. She added, “Coders, engineers, women — there are a lot of people out there that the Army could use that don’t see themselves as having a place.”

The Seattle recruiters often feel as if they are getting nowhere. Two of them stood for hours at a recent job fair in the shadow of the Space Needle without getting a single prospect. An ultimate Frisbee coach with an engineering degree stopped to talk, but he said later that he did it mostly because they “looked a little lonely.”

At a high school event later in the day, students were happy to sign up to for a skateboard raffle, but none made an appointment to meet with a recruiter.

Even those who walk in to the recruiting station are not a sure bet. Myles Pankey, 19, fit the profile of a blue-city adventure seeker, showing up in jeans and a plaid flannel shirt. A year after graduating from one of the city’s top high schools, he was working construction, which paid well but bored him. Following in his accountant father’s footsteps held no appeal, he said; he wanted a challenge.

“If I were you, I’d go infantry,” Sergeant Vargas told him. “There’s an \$11,000 bonus right now if you can ship in a few weeks.”

They talked for more than an hour about opportunities in the Army, but Mr. Pankey said he felt pulled in many directions. His mother and father weren’t crazy about him enlisting, he said. His boss, a former Special Forces soldier, had talked up the experience, but another friend who had served in Vietnam called it a terrible idea. None of his high school friends had joined, so he’d be going on his own. He finally told the sergeant he would wait a week before making up his mind.

“I can get a good job here, but I want to serve my country,” Mr. Pankey said on his way out. “I guess I have some thinking to do.”

A week later, there was a slot open in the airborne infantry, with a \$10,000 bonus. Mr. Pankey signed up.

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/01/02/new-in-2019-the-armys-basic-infantry-training-is-about-to-get-longer-and-it-could-be-a-sign-of-broader-changes-to-come/>

New in 2019: The Army's basic infantry training is about to get longer, and it could be a sign of broader changes to come

By Meghann Myers

Army Times, January 2, 2019



The Army is moving toward extending basic training for all soldiers. (Sgt. 1st Class Brian Hamilton/Army)

Army basic training got a major face lift in 2018.

Early in the year, [Fort Jackson](#), South Carolina's basic training program of instruction was updated to encourage more fitness and discipline in new soldiers, while [infantry one-station unit training](#) at Fort Benning, Georgia, was extended from 14 to 22 weeks.

Senior leaders have said that extension will be made permanent in 2019, along with extensions for OSUT for the other combat arms, such as armor and engineer. Also under consideration: changes to the length of [basic combat training](#).

“We have packed a lot into basic training — we have — and we need to extend it,” Sergeant Major of the Army Dan Dailey told reporters in June. “We know we can make a better product.”

Longer training will require more drill sergeants, so before a decision is even made, the Army has started a push to hire more cadre and decrease the ratio of instructors to trainees.

“We want to essentially cut those ratios in half,” Army Chief of Staff Mark Milley told Army Times in October, while adding a platoon sergeant and officer platoon leader to each training unit.

A 2017 survey of operational unit leadership by the Center for Initial Military Training found that new soldiers were lacking the fitness and discipline expected to integrate into their first units.

“What leaders have observed is that, in general, they believe that there's too much of a sense of entitlement, questioning of lawful orders, not listening to instruction. Too much of a buddy mentality with NCOs and officers,” CIMT commander Maj. Gen. Malcolm Frost said in February.

Fort Jackson responded by adding more drill and ceremony to its program, increasing fitness standards and creating a new, three-part field exercise to test everything the soldiers learned over the previous weeks.



Fort Benning's infantry one-station unit training will permanent extend from 14 weeks to 22 weeks in 2019. (Patrick A. Albright/Army)

At OSUT, more weapons training, longer field exercises, more land navigation and more combat lifesaving filled out the extra eight weeks.

“What we want, ultimately, is we want any soldier who graduates from OSUT, that they can immediately go and join any formation that they need to go to, no matter what phase of the sustained readiness model they're in,” Brig. Gen. Christopher Donahue, the infantry school commandant, told Army Times in March.

<https://www.armytimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2018/12/29/army-unit-lifts-sex-ban-cancels-hilarious-order-prohibiting-rubbing-humping-grinding/>

Army unit lifts sex ban, cancels order prohibiting ‘rubbing, humping, grinding’

By J.D. Simkins

Army Times, December 29, 2018

For nine harrowing days, one Grafenwöhr, Germany-based Army unit was barred from engaging in a laundry list of sexual acts and forms of physical contact, all in the name vehicle and equipment upkeep.

That was the bizarre gist of the Dec. 17 battalion-issued memo that circulated throughout the barracks of the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, one that was shared online for all to enjoy courtesy of the popular account, U.S. Army WTF Moments!

“Effective immediately, personnel are prohibited from engaging in sexual intercourse, acts that are sexual in nature, or acts that are done with the intent to sexually gratify any person in the Grafenwoehr Training Area,” according to the memo, which specified “agricultural cleaning and preparing our vehicles, equipment, and personnel to return to Fort Hood, Texas” as the reason for the coitus crackdown.

No sex for you! [#usawtfm pic.twitter.com/v7xl70BJH7](https://pic.twitter.com/v7xl70BJH7)

— U.S Army WTF! Moments (@TheWTFNation) [December 26, 2018](#)

It remains unclear whether this was a problem before. Could this battalion — the identity of which was redacted in the memo — have so severely neglected basic duties in favor of sexual escapades that a 17th century Quaker abstinence policy was warranted?

And why are other sex-having service members around the world perfectly capable of performing these bare essentials?

Furthermore, because no soldiers have had sex, ever, the memo went on to detail — in excess — a middle school sex education-type anatomical road map of sexual debauchery to ensure the avoidance of any confusion.

“Sexual intercourse includes, but is not limited to genital to genital sexual intercourse, oral to genital sexual intercourse, anal to genital sexual intercourse, and oral to anal sexual intercourse.”

But the list of don’t-dos didn’t stop there.

“Kissing, rubbing, humping, grinding, cuddling, and lap dancing” were also listed as off limits.

“The intent of the policy letter was to ensure Soldiers remained professional and respectful of one another while they work and live in close, public quarters, like the barracks that house multiple Soldiers in an open bay,” Army spokeswoman Maj. Bonnie Conard told [Stars and Stripes](#) about the abstinence policy, one that would have killed Ludacris’s smash hit “What’s your fantasy?” before the first lyric even dropped.

The battalion decided nine days after the order was issued, however, that a strict ban on all intimacy *somehow* didn’t translate to getting a group of hormonally-charged individuals to focus on cleanliness and readiness.

“The command decided that the policy is unnecessary, as good order and discipline may be enforced through existing administrative and UCMJ provisions,” Conard told Stripes. “As a result, the policy letter was rescinded 26 Dec. and soldiers were briefed on the importance of respecting others and maintaining good order and discipline.”

Good order and discipline. Permission to cuddle granted, soldier.

J.D. Simkins is a writer and editor for Military Times who was a Marine scout observer from 2004-2008. He ugly cried when the Washington Capitals won the 2018 Stanley Cup.

As Teens Born After 9/11 Reach Military Age, Recruiters Face New Challenges

By Hope Hodge Seck

Military.com, January 2, 2019



Navy Recruiters visit Felix Varela Senior High School to speak to students during the Navy Recruiting Commands Miami "Swarm" Event, December 19, 2018. (U.S. Navy photo/Zachary S. Eshleman)

Command Sgt. Maj. Todd Crofoot still remembers the calls he received as an Army recruiter in the days following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

"You got a lot of people who wanted to join to help kill Osama bin Laden or whatever," he said.

"... a guy that's going to come in with his gun, prepared to go to war."

Crofoot, the command sergeant major for Raleigh Recruiting Battalion in North Carolina, told Military.com that a lot of those fired-up queries came from people who didn't meet existing Army physical or aptitude standards and didn't result in signed contracts. But the surge in interest in military service, by a larger swath of the population, persisted.

While actual enlistment in the armed services saw only a modest and temporary bump, the years following 9/11 saw an increase in average scores on the Armed Forces Qualification Test and the number of high school graduates recruited for the Army, according to a 2006 Congressional Budget Office study.

A 2005 Heritage Foundation report found an increase in military recruits from higher-income neighborhoods following the attacks and an increase in overall education levels.

Crofoot said he noticed another trend in his own recruitment work.

"One thing that was remarkable to me ... some of the females that started calling in, knowing that they would be able to go and serve their nation," he said. "Some of the females I met were either in a college plan already or at school and were giving up that to go a different route because it was the right thing to do. I had not seen that in the past."

Now, Crofoot and other recruiters are facing a different challenge. The teens walking into their offices have no memory of the 9/11 attacks. On Sept. 12, the first Americans born after Sept. 11, 2001, officially became eligible to enlist. These prospective recruits have never known their nation in peacetime, and have no direct recollection of the surge in patriotic feeling that took hold of the country as footage of the World Trade Center attacks was broadcast over and over.

On top of that, the prospective pool of recruits is cannier and better informed than any previous generation, with unlimited information a finger swipe away at all times. Nearly every recruiter who spoke with Military.com spoke of the challenges that ubiquitous technology poses and the way prospects rely less on their recruiters and more on the internet to compare their options and check facts.

These youth also are in high demand: A booming economy and near-record-low unemployment mean the military branches are struggling to make recruitment quotas and attract prospective recruits away from other opportunities in the private sector. Last year, for the first time since 2005, [the Army missed its annual recruiting goal](#), coming up 6,500 accessions short. The shortfall has prompted organizational soul-

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/01/02/teens-born-after-9-11-reach-military-age-recruiters-face-new-challenges.html>

searching, with service leaders announcing a slate of new initiatives designed to better align recruiting efforts with the needs and interests of the rising generation.

Among those initiatives: outreach to metropolitan centers [historically overlooked in military recruiting efforts](#) and [ramped-up use of social media and technology](#) to connect with the recruitable population.

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Carpio, 33, commander of the Army recruiting station in Evans, Georgia, said he has learned to tailor his message based on what he observes when a prospect walks in the door. A kid wearing a Dale Earnhardt Jr. T-shirt, he said, might be easier to sell on the Army than a hipster teen wearing a beanie.

The military uses the term "propensed" to describe how likely someone is to join up and how favorably they view service; one of the strongest indicators of propensity is whether a family member has served. The tendency of military service to be handed down like a legacy through generations may be why the recruiting outlook has not changed more dramatically across nearly two decades of war.

A study [completed in 2012 and 2013](#) by the Pentagon's Joint Advertising Market Research & Studies program found that the vast majority of military recruits had a family member who served. The Air Force had the highest proportion of recruits with military family members, 86 percent, while the Marine Corps had the lowest, 77 percent. Across the services, about one-third of all recruits had a parent who served.

Of the teens he meets who were born after Sept. 11, 2001, Carpio said the ones with military parents are most likely to identify obligation and service to country as top reasons to sign up.

"Not too many kids who were born after 9/11 [and don't have a military background] come in feeling that deep obligation," he said.

Carpio, a tank crewman by training who has deployed three times to Iraq and Afghanistan, said he tries to bring the conversation to what he sees as the main point, regardless of the prospective recruit's background or motivations.

"We're in the business of fighting the nation's wars," he said. "At the end of the day, war is going to be fought somewhere. I'd rather [be] fighting it in [the enemy's] part of the world than in our part of the world. We help defend the Constitution and the right of the people to do what they want."

Army 1st Sgt. Richard Conner was four days into basic training when the twin towers fell. He recalls listening to news coverage of the attacks on his drill sergeant's radio, half thinking in the days that followed that he'd be dispatched to fight in Afghanistan before he had even learned how to march.

In the 17 years since Conner graduated basic, military service members have become more firmly established in the American consciousness as heroes, and reports of troops killed in action or returning from deployments with life-altering war wounds have become a fixture of news coverage.

For some prospective recruits, the fear of what might happen downrange and the strong likelihood of having to deploy pose their own barriers to enlistment.

"What they see on TV about war and soldiers not coming home, it is always a question we get," said Conner, now the first sergeant at Army Recruiting Company Fayetteville, N.C. "They're worried about joining the military, and they know we fight war and there's an inherent risk to that."

Petty Officer 3rd Class Darnell Beller, 33, a recruiter at Navy Recruiting District Los Angeles, said the recruiting experience in his area is much different than in many heavily recruited areas, such as the post he

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/01/02/teens-born-after-9-11-reach-military-age-recruiters-face-new-challenges.html>

previously held in Houston, Texas. In Inglewood, the urban area he canvasses, young people are not likely to be "propensed" by prior family service, and one of the greatest challenges is qualification. Of 20 or 30 youths he talks to each week, Beller said, only three or four meet the education and physical requirements to serve.

"They don't really understand the history of the military as some other people might understand it," he said. But, Beller added, they still resonate with authenticity.

"I'm first-generation military, and I've always wanted to do something different in life," he said. "It was a challenge for me to go out and do that."

On the island of Puerto Rico, some young people are finding the military through connections that have little to do with war.

Petty Officer 1st Class Miguel Rivera Perez, 39, a Puerto Rico native who now works as a recruiter, said Hurricane Maria, which devastated the island in 2018 and left 97 percent of homes without power, also called attention to the mission of the U.S. Navy. The hospital ship Comfort [spent two months near Puerto Rico](#) treating patients, while sailors on land interacted with locals and offered aid.

"I had this kid that came out and saw me out there [in my uniform] and got really interested," Rivera Perez said. "Every time [people] saw the uniform, it brought hope to the people of Puerto Rico."

Crofoot, the command sergeant major who served as a recruiter in 2001 and continues to recruit today, said he marvels at the fact that young people who have never known peacetime still step forward to swear the oath of enlistment.

"These young men and women are remarkable; they've been at war as a generation longer than any other generation has," he said. "[...] They know a lot more about 9/11 than people would ever believe because we have a media-centric world. They might have been young. It is part of their life, it defines the beginning of their young childhood. ... They get it."

-- Hope Hodge Seck can be reached at hope.seck@military.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@HopeSeck](https://twitter.com/HopeSeck).

New in 2019: The Corps' fitness tests are getting harder for everyone — time to get in shape

By Shawn Snow

Marine Corps Times, January 2, 2019

Here is a comparison of the maximum and minimum number of pullups for female Marines:

Current pullup scoring system			New pullup scoring system		
Age	Minimum	Maximum	Age	Minimum	Maximum
17-20	1	7	17-20	1	7
21-25	1	9	21-25	3	11
26-30	1	10	26-30	4	12
31-35	1	9	31-35	3	11
36-40	1	8	36-40	3	10
41-45	1	6	41-45	2	8
46-50	1	4	46-50	2	6
50+	1	3	50+	2	4

The Corps recently pushed out changes to its two fitness tests, the physical fitness test and combat fitness test, or [PFT and CFT](#), and those changes go into effect in 2019.

The changes make the tests a little harder for everyone.

The rest time between CFT events is being reduced from five minutes to three, female Marines will have to do an increased number of pullups on the PFT, and now there's a minimum score of 150 to pass both tests.

The new minimum means a Marine can no longer sandbag his entire fitness test hoping

to pass with just a bare minimum amount of points on each event.

Old scoring system

	Score	Rating
3rd Class PFT/CFT	184-199	3.9
	168-183	3.8
	152-167	3.7
	136-151	3.6
	120-135	3.5
	0-119	Unqualified

The Corps decided to make the pullup portion of the PFT tougher for female Marines following recent data that showed they were crushing the event.

The Corps also updated its composite score system for those Marine scoring at the lower rung of fitness, or those with the lowest class of PFT.

Marines with a [third class PFT](#) will need to push a little harder next year if they want to boost their composite score and gain more points for promotion.

New scoring system

	Score	Rating
3rd Class PFT/CFT	190-199	3.9
	180-189	3.8
	170-179	3.7
	160-169	3.6
	150-159	3.5
Unqualified	0-149	0.0

The PFT changes go into effect this January, and the new CFT changes will kickoff sometime around the start of the CFT season this summer.

This is an excerpt from "19 Things You Need to Know in 2019," in the 12-31 print edition of Marine Corps Times.

In Screening for Suicide Risk, Facebook Takes On Tricky Public Health Role

By Natasha Singer

The New York Times, December 31, 2018



Facebook called Courtney Davis, left, a telecommunications operator at the Police Department in Rock Hill, S.C., about a man who was live-streaming a suicide attempt, helping Sgt. Bruce Haire find him. Credit: Logan R. Cyrus for The New York Times

[Leer en español](#)

A police officer on the late shift in an Ohio town recently received an unusual call from Facebook.

Earlier that day, a local woman wrote a Facebook post saying she was walking home and intended to kill herself when she got there, according to a police report on the case. Facebook called to warn the Police Department about the suicide threat.

The officer who took the call quickly located the woman, but she denied having suicidal thoughts, the police report said. Even so, the officer believed she might harm herself and told the woman that she must go to a hospital — either voluntarily or in police custody. He ultimately drove her to a hospital for a mental health work-up, an evaluation prompted by Facebook’s intervention. (The New York Times withheld some details of the case for privacy reasons.)

Police stations from Massachusetts to [Mumbai](#) have received similar alerts from Facebook over the last 18 months as part of what is most likely the world’s largest suicide threat screening and alert program. The social network ramped up the effort after several people live-streamed their suicides on Facebook Live in early 2017. It now utilizes both algorithms and user reports to flag possible suicide threats.

Facebook’s rise as a global arbiter of mental distress puts the social network in a tricky position at a time when it is under investigation for privacy lapses by regulators in the United States, Canada and the European Union — as well as facing heightened scrutiny for failing to respond quickly to [election interference](#) and [ethnic hatred campaigns](#) on its site. Even as Facebook’s chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, has apologized for [improper harvesting of user data](#), the company grappled last month with fresh revelations about [special data-sharing deals](#) with tech companies.

The anti-suicide campaign gives Facebook an opportunity to frame its work as a good news story. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among people ages 15 to 29 worldwide, according to the [World Health Organization](#). Some mental health experts and police officials said Facebook had aided officers in locating and stopping people who were clearly about to harm themselves.

Facebook has computer algorithms that scan the posts, comments and videos of users in the United States and other countries for indications of immediate suicide risk. When a post is flagged, by the technology or a concerned user, it moves to human reviewers at the company, who are empowered to call local law enforcement.

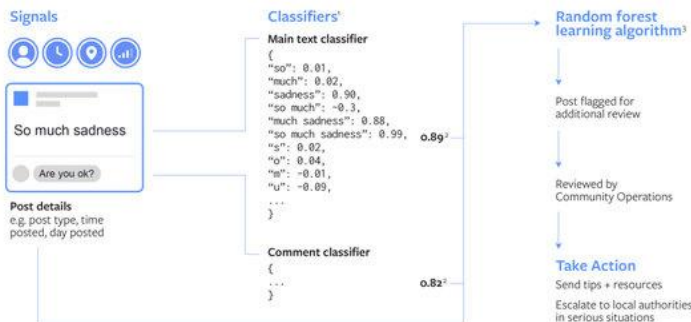
“In the last year, we’ve helped first responders quickly reach around 3,500 people globally who needed help,” Mr. Zuckerberg wrote in a November [post](#) about the efforts.

But other mental health experts said Facebook’s calls to the police could also cause harm — such as unintentionally precipitating suicide, compelling nonsuicidal people to undergo psychiatric evaluations, or prompting arrests or shootings.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/31/technology/facebook-suicide-screening-algorithm.html>

And, they said, it is unclear whether the company's approach is accurate, effective or safe. Facebook said that, for privacy reasons, it did not track the outcomes of its calls to the police. And it has not disclosed exactly how its reviewers decide whether to call emergency responders. Facebook, critics said, has assumed the authority of a public health agency while protecting its process as if it were a corporate secret.

How text and comment classifiers work



Facebook posted a description in September of how its computer algorithms scan and score certain user posts, comments and videos for indications of immediate suicide risk. Credit: Facebook

“It’s hard to know what Facebook is actually picking up on, what they are actually acting on, and are they giving the appropriate response to the appropriate risk,” said [Dr. John Torous](#), director of the digital psychiatry division at Beth Israel

Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. “It’s black box medicine.”

Facebook said it worked with suicide prevention experts to develop a comprehensive program to quickly connect users in distress with friends and send them contact information for help lines. It said experts also helped train dedicated Facebook teams, who have experience in law enforcement and crisis response, to review the most urgent cases. Those reviewers contact emergency services only in a minority of cases, when users appear at imminent risk of serious self-harm, the company said.

“While our efforts are not perfect, we have decided to err on the side of providing people who need help with resources as soon as possible,” Emily Cain, a Facebook spokeswoman, said in a statement.

[Share an experience about Facebook’s suicide prevention program [with The New York Times](#).]

In [a September post](#), Facebook described how it had developed a pattern recognition system to automatically score certain user posts and comments for likelihood of suicidal thoughts. The system automatically escalates high-scoring posts, as well as posts submitted by concerned users, to specially trained reviewers.

“Facebook has always been way ahead of the pack,” said John Draper, director of the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#), “not only in suicide prevention, but in taking an extra step toward innovation and engaging us with really intelligent and forward-thinking approaches.” (Vibrant Emotional Health, the nonprofit group administering the Lifeline, has advised and received funding from Facebook.)

Facebook said its suicide risk scoring system worked worldwide in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic — except for in the European Union, where data protection laws restrict the collection of personal details like health information. There is no way of opting out, short of not posting on, or deleting, your Facebook account.

A review of four police reports, obtained by The Times under Freedom of Information Act requests, suggests that Facebook’s approach has had mixed results. Except for the Ohio case, police departments redacted the names of the people flagged by Facebook.

In one case in May, a Facebook representative helped police officers in Rock Hill, S.C., locate a man who was streaming a suicide attempt on Facebook Live. On a recording of the call to the police station, the Facebook representative described the background in the video — trees, a street sign — to a police operator and provided the latitude and longitude of the man’s phone.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/31/technology/facebook-suicide-screening-algorithm.html>

The Police Department credited Facebook with helping officers track down the man, who tried to flee and was taken to a hospital.

“Two people called the police that night, but they couldn’t tell us where he was,” said Courtney Davis, a Rock Hill police telecommunications operator, who fielded the call from Facebook. “Facebook could.”



Mason Marks, a health law scholar, argues that Facebook’s suicide risk scoring software, along with its calls to the police that may lead to mandatory psychiatric evaluations, constitutes the practice of medicine. Credit: Jerome Pollos for The New York Times

The Police Department in Mashpee, Mass., had a different experience. Just before 5:16 a.m. on Aug. 23, 2017, a Mashpee police dispatcher received a call from a neighboring Police Department about a man who was streaming his suicide on Facebook Live. Officers arrived at the man’s home a few minutes later, but by the time they got to him, he no longer had a pulse, according to police records.

At 6:09 a.m., the report said, a Facebook representative called to alert the police to the suicide threat.

Scott W. Carline, chief of the Mashpee Police Department, declined to comment. But he said of Facebook, “I’d like to see them improve upon the suicide prevention tools they have in place to identify warning signs that could potentially become fatal.”

Facebook’s Ms. Cain said that, in some cases, help unfortunately did not arrive in time. “We really feel for those people and their loved ones when that occurs,” she said.

The fourth case, in May 2017, involved a teenager in Macon, Ga., who was streaming a suicide attempt. Facebook called the police after officers had already found the teenager at her home, a spokeswoman for the Bibb County sheriff’s office said. The teen survived the attempt.

Some health researchers are also trying to predict suicide risk, but they are using more transparent methodology and collecting evidence on the results.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has developed [a suicide risk prediction program](#) that uses A.I. to scan veterans’ medical records for certain medicines and illnesses. If the system identifies a veteran as high risk, the V.A. offers mental health appointments and other services. Preliminary findings from a V.A. study reported fewer deaths over all among veterans in the program compared with nonparticipating veterans.

In a forthcoming article in a Yale law journal, [Mason Marks, a health law scholar](#), argues that Facebook’s suicide risk scoring software, along with its calls to the police that may lead to mandatory psychiatric evaluations, constitutes the practice of medicine. He says government agencies should regulate the program, requiring Facebook to produce safety and effectiveness evidence.

“In this climate in which trust in Facebook is really eroding, it concerns me that Facebook is just saying, ‘Trust us here,’” said Mr. Marks, a fellow at Yale Law School and New York University School of Law.

Facebook’s Ms. Cain disagreed that the program amounted to health screening. “These are complex issues,” she said, “which is why we have been working closely with experts.”

Follow Natasha Singer on Twitter: [@natashanyt](#).

Doris Burke contributed research.

A version of this article appears in print on Jan. 1, 2019, on Page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Suicide Flags Put Facebook In Tricky Spot.

Massachusetts judge sides with ‘bad paper’ veterans denied bonuses

By Nikki Wentling

Stars And Stripes, December 31, 2018

WASHINGTON — A Massachusetts judge sided with three Afghanistan war veterans who filed a lawsuit against the state after being denied “Welcome Home” bonuses because of their other-than-honorable military discharges.

In a decision handed down Wednesday, Associate Justice Michael Ricciuti ordered the Massachusetts Veterans’ Bonus Appeal Board to reconsider rejecting the veterans. Lawyers in the case estimate that beyond their three clients, the decision means about 4,000 Massachusetts veterans will be eligible now for the bonuses.

“Veterans with bad paper discharges are among the most at-risk veterans and yet are often told that they are ineligible for traditional veteran services and programs,” said Laurel Fresquez, an attorney who represented the three veterans. “Thanks to this decision and these three veterans, thousands of Massachusetts veterans will finally have a right to some recognition for their honorable service to our country.”

The Massachusetts legislature created the Welcome Home Bonus in 2005 for post-9/11 servicemembers. Under the program, people who deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan — and lived in Massachusetts for a period of at least six months before enlisting — are eligible to apply for a one-time, tax-free \$1,000 bonus. The program is run by the state treasury.

Jeffrey Machado, Washington Santos and Herik Espinosa — three Army veterans named in the lawsuit — each completed enlistments and re-joined multiple times. They applied for the Welcome Home Bonus and were denied by the treasury and then the Veterans’ Bonus Appeal Board, which argued their other-than-honorable discharges from their final enlistments made them ineligible.

Machado, Santos and Espinosa, represented by student attorneys at Harvard Law School’s Veterans Legal Clinic, filed a lawsuit in 2017 in Massachusetts Superior Court. In the complaint, they argued the board should take into consideration their prior enlistments, which they completed honorably.

The judge agreed, calling the state’s denial “erroneous as a matter of law, arbitrary and capricious.” He said the board’s decision to deny the benefit disincentivized servicemembers from enlisting multiple times.

“The Bonus Law was designed to reward service to the country,” Ricciuti’s order reads. “The board’s reading would penalize such service for military members who voluntarily remain in combat, a result at odds with the legislature’s intent.”

In a statement Sunday, Machado, the lead plaintiff, said the decision meant more than the \$1,000 — it was a symbolic win for veterans with other-than-honorable discharges.

Those discharges, known as “bad paper,” can prevent veterans from receiving federal assistance, such as Department of Veterans Affairs health care, disability payments, education and housing. Some lawmakers and veteran advocates have long argued servicemembers with bad paper were, in many cases, unjustly released from the military because of mental health issues.

The Government Accountability Office released findings in 2017 that the Defense Department separated approximately 92,000 servicemembers for misconduct from 2011 through 2015, and 57,000 of them were

<https://www.stripes.com/news/massachusetts-judge-sides-with-bad-paper-veterans-denied-bonuses-1.562703>

diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury or other conditions that can change servicemembers' moods and behaviors and lead to disciplinary problems.

Machado deployed to Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom in 2012-13 and immediately re-enlisted. According to the complaint, Machado's service ended in 2014 with an other-than-honorable discharge that was "given out after the wounds of war and the stress of service became too great."

Machado was later diagnosed with PTSD and applied for the Welcome Home Bonus during a particularly tough time, when facing the possibility of homelessness, his lawyers said.

"What really matters to me is that other Massachusetts veterans will be recognized for their honorable service to our country," Machado said in a statement. "It's less about the bonus itself – it's about what it represents."

Veterans who believe they're now eligible for the bonus can [apply for it through the state government website](#). Dana Montalto, a clinical instructor at the Veterans Legal Clinic, said she hoped the state would reach out to veterans who might be eligible.

"For now, the burden is on these veterans to find out about this decision and apply," Montalto said in a statement.

The Massachusetts decision follows other recent wins for veterans with other-than-honorable discharges.

Congress approved a measure in March that requires the VA to provide veterans with mental health screenings and care, even if they received bad paper. Veterans who served in combat zones or areas of hostilities, worked as drone operators in combat zones or experienced sexual abuse or assault are eligible.

In addition, Connecticut opened its state VA resources in October to veterans who can show their other-than-honorable discharges are linked to PTSD, traumatic brain injury or sexual trauma. It's estimated 800 veterans could benefit from the change.

wentling.nikki@stripes.com Twitter: [@nikkiwentling](#)

Need to Know: These New UCMJ Laws Start Jan. 1

By Amy Bushatz

Military.com, December 31, 2018

A series of sweeping reforms and updates to the [Uniform Code of Military Justice](#) (UCMJ) kick in on Jan. 1, 2019, including the addition of some crimes, an expansion of victims' rights and standardizing the legal blood alcohol limit for drivers on some military bases.

Many of the changes, which stemmed in part from Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendations made in 2013, were ordered in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Put into policy early this year through an executive order from President Donald Trump, they bring what Sen. John McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee during the 2017 NDAA process, called the "most significant reforms to the Uniform Code of Military Justice since it was enacted six decades ago."

How will the new laws affect troops? Here's a rundown:

Expansion of crimes

The law adds new acts to the list of crimes under the UCMJ and moves some crimes that had previously been considered under UCMJ's Article 134, known as the General Article, to their own article.

For example, a new criminal offense bars sexual relations between troops in recruiting or training roles and their recruits or trainees, regardless of consent.

An article barring "adultery" has been changed to "extramarital sexual conduct," while court-ordered legal separation has been added as an allowed defense against that charge.

Theft carried out by credit or debit card is moving from falling under "larceny" to its own article.

Both stalking and cyberstalking were newly added as crimes under their own articles.

Also newly considered a crime is any retaliation against those who witness or report a crime or gross waste, mismanagement or abuse of authority.

Standardizes DUI rules

The new rules lower the highest acceptable blood alcohol level for those driving on a military base to .08 from .10.

Most bases enforce a blood alcohol limit that is equal to the legal limit of the state in which the base is located. But in the past on bases which straddle two states, the base commander can select the enforceable limit, so long as it's no more than .10. The new .08 rule will directly affect those bases, bring these installations in line with a near nationwide limit of .08.

New investigative authorities

Under the changes, military judges have the newly added ability to issue warrants ordering service providers like Facebook to disclose the contents of electronic communications, such as online messages.

Military judges also will be able to act on cases before referring them to court martial, allowing them to order wiretaps or issue subpoenas earlier in the investigative process.

New victim protections

Any victim, regardless of the crime, can have an advocate or government counsel present during interviews, according to the new rules.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/12/31/need-know-these-new-ucmj-laws-start-jan-1.html>

The rights of victims also are being expanded to include a legal guardian or judge appointment representative. This means that if a victim is underage or unable to represent his or herself, victim rights, including those for an advocate, extend to those who are representing on their behalf.

Changes to judges, panels

A new rule removes the option for the accused to pick either a panel, the military version of a jury, or a judge-only trial during a special court martial for certain crimes where the punishment is six months or less. Instead, the government will be allowed to choose which version is used in those cases. Crimes affected by this new rule could include being drunk on duty or disrespecting a noncommissioned officer, according to the Army.

Convicted troops also will now receive what's known as segmented sentencing, similar to sentencing rules used in civilian federal courts. Under this change, the accused can request a panel to decide sentencing or allow the military judge to make a ruling. If the judge issues sentencing, each offense will now be considered separately. The judge will also rule as to whether punishment will be served concurrently.

Another new law expands both the required panel size for special and general courts martial and the number of votes required to convict. Panel sizes will grow from three to four for special courts martial and five to eight for general courts martial, while a three-fourths vote will be required to convict. The ratio previously had been two-thirds.

-- Amy Bushatz can be reached at amy.bushatz@military.com.

New in 2019: The roll-out of the Air Force's new combat uniform gains steam

By Stephen Losey

Air Force Times, January 2, 2019



Master Sgt Nicholas Kollett, first sergeant for the 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, folds an Operational Camouflage Pattern uniform at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, in July 2012. The Air Force is adopting the Army's combat uniform. (Capt. Raymond Geoffroy/Air Force)

The Air Force will ramp up its effort to adopt the [new Operational Camouflage Pattern](#) uniform across the entire service in 2019.

By April 2021, all airmen will be required to have ditched the old [Airman Battle Uniform](#) in favor of the OCPs. In October 2018, the Air Force began allowing airmen the option of wearing OCPs, and AAFES stores at a few bases began selling the new pattern.

More AAFES stores will get the OCP this April, and AAFES is expected to start selling the uniform online in October.

Also beginning in October, airmen coming through basic training, officer training school, and the Reserve Officer Training Corps will be issued OCPs.

The Air Force in May announced it would adopt [the Army's OCP](#) as its official utility uniform. It chose the new uniform because of its improved fit and comfort, because it would help airmen fit in alongside soldiers in the field, and because airmen consistently said they wanted to adopt a version of the Army's uniform.

The Air Force is also contemplating possible changes to its service jacket and physical training uniform in the coming year.

In an August interview, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Kaleth Wright said the Air Force was designing an updated version of its [service dress blues uniform](#). As they are designing the new service jacket, Air Force officials are drawing inspiration from older, heritage jackets, which had four functional outer pockets, Wright said. The current service jacket has two decorative outer pockets.

The top enlisted airman said he believes the modern service jacket has drifted too close to a business suit design, and that he wants more of a traditional, military style.

Wright also said the Air Force was considering [making PT uniform changes](#). Those changes could include making some uniforms available in a moisture-wicking fabric, he said, which would increase comfort for airmen in warmer climates as they start sweating.

The unofficial Facebook page Air Force amn/nc0/snc0 last month also [posted slides depicting mockups](#) of the possible new PT uniform.

Wright said in August that the dress blues and PT uniform changes could come out later in 2019. After the PT slides leaked, the Air Force stressed that no decisions on possible changes to that uniform have been made.

Senators Want Answers on Unspent VA Suicide Prevention Funds

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, January 4, 2019



September is Suicide Prevention Month. During the month, organizations provide information about identifying warning signs of suicide, increase the understanding of what leads to suicide and promote helpful resources. (U.S. Air Force/Airman 1st Class Kathryn R.C. Reaves)

A group of 21 Senate Democrats has asked the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) to explain why it spent just \$57,000 of \$6.2 million budgeted for paid media advertising campaigns directed at suicide prevention in fiscal 2018, a deficiency they called "appalling" for its lack of oversight.

The lawmakers, led by Senate Veterans Affairs Committee ranking member Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, [demanded a full accounting of the \\$17.7 million budgeted by VA for suicide prevention](#) outreach, which includes both paid advertising such as radio spots, billboards and digital ads, as well as unpaid outreach such as public service announcements, social media and the VA's own Crisis Line website.

According to the Government Accountability Office, the VA developed 47 pieces of social media content in 2018, down from 339 in 2016; failed to air any public service announcements on radio or TV for more than a year; and did not develop any new paid advertising for 2018 despite having a budget of \$6.2 million.

A GAO report published in November blamed the decline in outreach on leadership turnover and reorganization within the VA.

During the time frame examined by the GAO, the VA's suicide prevention efforts shifted from suicide prevention to mental health outreach, primarily due to reorganization of the suicide prevention offices in 2017. For three months, the job of national director for suicide prevention was vacant. In October 2017, Keita Franklin, then the head of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office, was detailed to the VA as acting national director. She was named permanent director in April 2018.

VA staffers told the GAO that, for an extended period, leadership simply wasn't available for meetings to discuss outreach activities.

In response, the senators wrote a letter to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie on Dec. 20, calling the lapse in outreach due to staffing issues a "dereliction of VA's responsibility to veterans."

"Dysfunction at VA cannot be the excuse for the lack of a plan to execute suicide prevention outreach," the senators wrote. "Efforts to prevent suicide must remain at the forefront of the Department's care of veterans."

In congressional testimony and response to the GAO report, VA officials said they used \$1.5 million -- not \$57,000 -- of the \$6.2 million and have conducted outreach events and created a PSA that wasn't included in the GAO report, a partnership with Johnson & Johnson featuring Tom Hanks, part of the "Be There" campaign.

According to the VA, its suicide prevention coordinators reached nearly 2 million people at 18,836 events; touched 18 million people by social media during one week in October alone; and help nearly 2,000 callers a day to the Veterans Crisis Line, the department's suicide prevention hotline.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/01/04/senators-want-answers-misspent-va-suicide-prevention-funds.html>

"This year, I'm making sure that we are spending the funding 100 percent," Dr. Steven Lieberman, the executive in charge of the Veterans Health Administration, said at a joint Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees hearing Dec. 19. "We certainly have obligated all the dollars, and we have plans to reach out, including social media, this year. We have to get it right."

According to VA data, veterans account for 14 percent of all suicides in the U.S., and the suicide rate among veterans is 1.5 times greater than for non-veterans, when adjusted for age and gender.

Between 2015 and 2016 -- the most recent years for which data are available, and before the substantial slide in outreach, according to the GAO -- the suicide rate among young veterans ages 18 to 34 climbed substantially, from 40.4 deaths per 100,000 population to 45 suicides per 100,000.

Many of the senators who signed the letter were present at the Dec. 19 hearing when Wilkie and Lieberman discussed the GAO report and its recommendations. Most were not satisfied with the VA officials' responses.

"Forgive me, but we've seen this movie before," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn. "We've seen a slew of secretaries who have made commitments and promises, and we are expressing the frustration and impatience that is well-founded in fact."

In addition to requesting a full accounting of the \$17.7 million, the senators asked the VA to consult with experts to develop metrics to track public health campaigns and measure their success.

-- *Patricia Kime can be reached at patricia.kime@military.com. Follow her on Twitter @patriciakime.*

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WH vet leads in fight against PTSD, veteran suicides

By Kevin Bouffard

The Ledger (Lakeland, Fla.), December 28, 2018



Dan Jarvis of Winter Haven started a charity, 22Zero Follow Me Inc., to help military veterans and first responders overcome post-traumatic stress disorder. (Scott Wheeler/The Ledger)

WINTER HAVEN — Local veterans charity 22Zero Follow Me Inc. struck as a revelation to its founder, Dan Jarvis, according to his friend and mentor, Scott Mann.

Jarvis, a Winter Haven resident, was completing a leadership seminar last spring through one of Mann’s organizations, Rooftop Leadership Training, when he blurted out, “I know what I’m going to do,” Mann told The Ledger.

That revelation was founding 22Zero to help military veterans and first responders (police, firefighters and emergency medical technicians) overcome post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. It registered as a Florida corporation on April 18, according to state records.

“I was trying to figure out what’s next in my life,” Jarvis said. “When I found out there were successful therapies for PTSD, I had to share it.”

One of the charitable organization’s central purposes is to raise money to sponsor professional counselors, such as psychologists and social workers, for licensed training in two new therapies that have shown remarkable success in treating PTSD, he said. That will inevitably lead to a reduction in veteran suicides.

Another is to put vets and first responders in touch with those therapists who can offer the help, Jarvis said.

“Dan is all about closing the gap between veterans and people who can help them,” said Mann, a former Green Beret who had his own issues with PTSD and also runs a vets support charity called “The Heroes Journey.”

There are tens of thousands of veteran support organizations, Jarvis and Mann said. So many that veterans have a name for it, the “Sea of Good Will.”

But navigating the sea can pose a problem especially for veterans emotionally immobilized by PTSD, they said.

“It’s not surprising that people go dark,” said Mann, who worked with Jarvis following that flash of inspiration. “It didn’t seem to me there were many catalyst organizations connecting people who need help with those who can help them.”

22Zero is one of the few private organizations filling that gap, he added.

“He (Jarvis) has one of the few nonprofits fulfilling the need to connect people,” said Diego Hernandez, a clinical psychologist at the University of South Florida’s College of Public Health who’s worked with Jarvis and other veterans with PTSD. “There’s no central clearing house for this information. In a short amount of time, he’s taken it to the ground and really done something.”

Hernandez offers a PTSD treatment called Accelerated Resolution Therapy, or ART, one of two new therapies 22Zero supports, Jarvis said. The other is the Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories Protocol, or RTM, developed after 9-11 by New York clinical psychologist Frank Bourke.

<https://www.theledger.com/news/20181227/wh-vet-leads-in-fight-against-ptsd-veteran-suicides>

ART is a new traumatic therapy that deals with how people form, store and process memories, Hernandez said. Although he deals mostly with vets, the therapy can be used for anyone dealing with “exceptional experiences” from traumas of war to loss of a pet.

The therapy uses progressive relaxation techniques and rapid eye movements that help the patient visualize the painful memory in order to process it better, he said.

Hernandez treated Jarvis in 2017, which is one of the reasons 22Zero supports ART, Jarvis said.

Jarvis also has experienced RTM with Bourke, its developer, who praised veterans organizations like 22Zero for getting the needed therapy out to the people who need it.

“Without veterans organizations helping us to get veterans to come in, they won’t come in. They’re so disillusioned with the VA,” Bourke told The Ledger. “The veterans groups and counselors are now acting as catalysts for this therapy.”

Since his own RTM experience, 22Zero sponsored four professional counselors to get licensed training, at a cost of \$2,500 each, earlier this year, Jarvis said. It will sponsor a training session run by Bourke for 20 other counseling professionals from Feb. 27 to March 2 in Winter Haven.

Without such efforts, it could take up to five years to establish the RTM in the veterans community, said Bourke, who credited Jarvis specifically for his passion in advancing the therapy.

Bourke compared traumatic memories to a horror movie that evokes panic in the viewer. Like ART, the aim of RTM is to use relaxation and behavior techniques that enable the client to recall the memory without the panic reaction, he said.

“That’s the secret sauce,” Bourke said. “If you ask a client to relive a traumatic memory (before RTM), they panic.”

Scientific research studies have found RTM has a 90 percent success rate in relieving PTSD and other traumatic events, including phobias, he said. The therapy can take as little as two to five hours.

22Zero sprang from Jarvis’ own life story.

He joined the U.S. Army infantry just months after graduating from Winter Haven High School in 1988.

Jarvis served for two years but remained in the reserves. He was recalled to active duty in 2004 and subsequently served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

His own PTSD issues stemmed from a July 11, 2011, incident in which a roadside bomb killed a member of his squad and caused brain and shoulder injuries to Jarvis, he said. As a sergeant first class, Jarvis served as squad leader.

The incident affected his ability to sleep for years afterward, Jarvis said.

“Every time I went to sleep, I would hear the explosion, and my heart would go 130 beats a minute,” he said.

On top of that incident, four other soldiers in his squad experienced severe injuries during his one-year service in Afghanistan, Jarvis said.

His retirement on Sept. 11, 2014, brought no respite, he said.

His mother died three weeks later, and Jarvis struggled with the guilt of their separation while she was ill. Jarvis said he blamed himself for the stress that contributed to his mother’s health problems.

Jarvis dealt with the pain through alcohol and sleeping pills, he added.

<https://www.theledger.com/news/20181227/wh-vet-leads-in-fight-against-ptsd-veteran-suicides>

“I did what many soldiers do, I got a 12-pack of beer,” Jarvis said.

Jarvis didn’t feel he had conquered his PTSD until experiencing the ART and RTM therapies in 2017, which led to 22Zero Follow Me Inc., he said.

Although running the charity is his full-time job, Jarvis takes no salary from it, he added.

“Follow me” is the infantry’s motto. 22Zero refers to an oft-cited statistic that 22 veterans a day commit suicide, although that figure has been disputed.

Few dispute, however, veterans have a much higher incidence of suicide than the civilian population.

Jarvis’ goal for 22Zero is to raise \$25 million to sponsor 10,000 counselors in ART or RTM, he said. To learn more about the charity or to donate, go to its website at <http://22zero.org>.

Misconduct

Alcohol Trouble More Likely For Some Never-Deployed Soldiers

By David Hill, Futurity

Government Executive, December 29, 2018

Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers who feel more guilt or other negative emotions about never having been deployed are more likely to misuse alcohol, a new study shows.

“A greater degree of non-deployment emotions—such as guilt, less value, less camaraderie, and less connectedness—was associated with greater frequency and amount of alcohol drinking among never-deployed Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers,” says lead author Rachel Hoopsick, a community health and health behavior PhD candidate in the School of Public Health and Health Professions at the University at Buffalo.

“Male, but not female soldiers, experienced a greater likelihood of alcohol problems when they had highly negative non-deployment emotions,” Hoopsick says.

Reserve service members, who number just over 1 million in the US, have been shown to be at high risk for problems with substance use and mental health. But less is known about the drinking patterns of soldiers who have never been deployed, Hoopsick says.

While previous research hasn’t uncovered any significant differences between recently deployed and never-deployed soldiers in terms of alcohol use, never-deployed service members may be less likely to be considered for targeted screening and intervention efforts as those who have been deployed.

“U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers are at high risk for alcohol misuse, and our prior work demonstrated that negative emotions...are prevalent among those who have never been deployed,” Hoopsick says.

“Non-deployment emotions are associated with alcohol problems among men and are thus important to consider in the overall health and well-being of never-deployed service members,” she says, adding that they should be included in alcohol screening and prevention efforts.

Researchers say non-deployment may affect men more so than women because of what has previously been called the “reserve soldier identity,” of which deployment is a key component.

In the current study, which appears in [Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research](#), 77 percent of male soldiers and 70 percent of female soldiers experienced some type of negative emotions over their non-deployment. Among never-deployed soldiers, 23 percent of men and 21 percent of women reported getting drunk at least once per month, while 12 percent of men and 8 percent of women had clinically significant alcohol problems.

“The importance of considering all soldiers and not just those who have deployed is essential for the prevention and intervention of problematic substance use and other issues,” says coauthor Gregory G. Homish, associate professor and associate chair of the community health and health behavior department.

Data for the paper came from [Operation: SAFETY](#) (Soldiers and Families Excelling Through the Years), an ongoing study of the health and well-being of U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers and their partners. The National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences of the National Institutes of Health funded the work.

Source: [University at Buffalo Original Study](#) DOI: 10.1111/acer.13901

Commander of MARSOC team falsely accused of war crimes finally cleared for promotion

By Shawn Snow

Marine Corps Times, January 7, 2019



Retired Marine Maj. Fred Galvin at his home in Overland Park, Kansas, on January 7, 2015. Galvin was the commander of Fox Company, 2nd MSOB, the first MARSOC unit to deploy to Afghanistan. (Mike Morones/Staff)

A Navy records board has exonerated the commander of [Marine special operations team](#) and paved his way for a promotion more than decade after the unit was falsely accused of killing civilians during a March 2007 ambush in Bati Kot district of Afghanistan's

Nangarhar province.

The board cited a 2008 Court of Inquiry decision that found the team had operated within the confines of the Law of Armed Conflict when it engaged militants in a violent ambush. And it's the latest in a series of letters and Pentagon records, including a recent letter from the commandant's office, that have cleared the elite team of accusations of wrongdoing.

The records board approved a request to remove adverse paperwork from the team's former commanding officer, now-Ret. Maj. Fred Galvin, and called for the convening of a special selections board to consider his promotion to lieutenant colonel.

Galvin had been relieved of his command and his unit booted from Afghanistan following false accusations of war crimes in 2007 — while some members of the commando outfit faced potential negligent homicide charges.

[Task Force Violent: The unforgiven | Part 1](#)

Specifically, the board approved the removal of a fitness report dated June 1, 2006 to April 3, 2007 — which covered Galvin's command of the Marine special operations team in Afghanistan — and the removal of a no misconduct report regarding the calamitous events of March 2007.

The board also agreed to remove an adverse fitness report stemming from an unrelated incident while Galvin served as an operations officer in 2011 for 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Galvin sparred with his battalion commander over the need to use a lower yield munition during a fire fight that was dangerously close to Marines on the ground, which resulted in his relief and adverse paperwork.

Fitness reports in the Marine Corps are a career performance evaluation tool and negative paperwork can stymie future career progression and promotions.

"This report from the thorough review held by senior civilian leaders at the Pentagon unanimously determined that not only did our Marines do exactly what they were supposed to do during the deployment of the first Marine Special Operations Task Force into combat in Afghanistan in 2007 but that false reports not only from locals but up to the Prime Minister of Afghanistan that were publicly reinforced by senior military officers led to our removal from Afghanistan, a criminal investigation and following trial that left many of the facts unclear as they were never publicly address by the Pentagon until today," Galvin told Marine Corps Times.

The board said the March ambush "corrupted the judgement of the RS [reporting senior]," which also led to Galvin's removal from command of the special operations team and his removal from Afghanistan.

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/newsletters/daily-news-roundup/2019/01/07/commander-of-marsoc-team-falsely-accused-of-war-crimes-finally-cleared-for-promotion-to-lieutenant-colonel/>

Galvin was the commanding officer of elite Marine special operators dubbed Task Force Violent, which was part of Marine Forces Special Operations Command's first deployment to Afghanistan.

On March 4th 2007, 30 members of the team embarked on a six vehicle convoy near the village of Bati Kot when a bomb laden car approached the convoy and detonated. The Marines then fought back a complex ambush.

[Task Force Violent: The unforgiven | Part 2](#)

Following the attack, media reports spilled onto the internet detailing scores of innocent civilians killed.

An investigation into the incident was launched and the Marine commandos were restricted from operating in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Members of the team involved in the ambush were ordered not to participate in future missions unless deemed necessary.

Another event on March 9, 2007, involving the Marine commandos further aggravated the situation and hastened their departure from the country.

The Marine commandos submitted a concept of operations for a several reconnaissance missions, but a platoon commander with the unit "masked" a route showing the convoy moving through the restricted operation zone of Jalalabad to an operating point south of the area.

But a later mission confirmation brief clearly indicated the reconnaissance objective was in Jalalabad, not the southern point submitted with the concept of operations.

[Task Force Violent: The unforgiven | Part 3](#)

The issue raised questions as to the location and intent of the team, and the unit was recalled before it ever made it to its final destination.

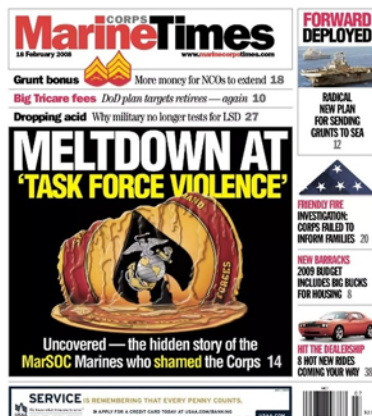
The incident was magnified by the investigation that was already underway for the March 4 ambush that appeared to paint a picture of a renegade group of cowboys.

"The Board determined the enemy information operation and responses of senior leaders were the proximate cause of the MSOC-F [Marine Special Operations Company-F] redeployment and actions taken against Petitioner were "collateral damage," the Navy board said in its determination.

"The Board determined the events of March 4, 2007 set in motion events that contributed to the unsuccessful operations of March 9, 2007 and the perception Petitioner lost operational control," the Navy board said.

Galvin was relieved of his command for the incidents that occurred in March 2007, and the Marine special operators were kicked out of the country.

The team was ostracized by public statements made by senior officials and Afghan leaders, which has taken a heavy toll on their lives.



And because much of the testimony during the Court of Inquiry was classified, a one-sided narrative of the incident developed in the media.

That led to a February 2008 Marine Corps Times cover story that misrepresented the team and the events that unfolded in Afghanistan.

Galvin has spent more than a decade trying to clear his team's name.

In February 2018, a letter from the commandant's office to North Carolina Republican Congressman Walter Jones affirmed the ruling of the court and exonerated the team.

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/newsletters/daily-news-roundup/2019/01/07/commander-of-marsoc-team-falsely-accused-of-war-crimes-finally-cleared-for-promotion-to-lieutenant-colonel/>

“The Marine Corps has consistently said, in agreement with MARCENT [Marine Corps Forces Central Command] commanding general’s decision announced publicly May 23, 2008, that the Marines of Fox Co. acted appropriately in response to the Mar. 4, 2007 complex attack in Afghanistan,” Lt. Col. Eric Dent, the commandant’s spokesman told Marine Corps Times about the letter sent to Jones.

“Both Gen. Dunford and Gen. Neller, as the 36th and 37th Commandants respectively, openly supported this position and remain steadfast in their support of the MARCENT commander’s characterization of the Fox Co. Marines’ tactical actions on Mar. 4, 2007,” Dent said.

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., called for the Marine commandos’ story to be fully told in a statement posted to the Congressional Record in December 2018.

“These reports of war crimes were unsubstantiated, and these Marines deserve to be recognized for their courage as they encountered the enemy,” the former California representative said.

The Navy records board further stated that Galvin “rightfully took a moral stand” when he challenged his battalion commander during a separate 2011 deployment to Afghanistan to use a smaller munition that would better protect Marines and Afghan civilians on the ground.

[Shawn Snow](#) is the senior reporter for Marine Corps Times and a Marine Corps veteran.

Jury acquits senior NCO accused of pointing weapon at soldier and calling another fat

By Nancy Montgomery

Stars And Stripes, January 9, 2019



Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barboza stands outside a Vicenza courtroom after being acquitted on charges of dereliction of duty, maltreatment and disrespecting a noncommissioned officer on Jan. 9, 2019. The case went to special court-martial after Barboza refused nonjudicial punishment.

NANCY MONTGOMERY/STARS AND STRIPES

VICENZA, Italy — A senior noncommissioned officer accused of pointing a pistol at one soldier, calling another fat and improperly touching a third's hair was acquitted of all related charges at her court-martial Wednesday.

- [Sergeant on trial on charges related to calling soldier fat, pointing unloaded weapon at another](#)

Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Barboza was found not guilty of dereliction of duty, maltreatment and disrespecting an NCO by a panel of nine male officers and senior NCOs. At least six of them had to agree to acquit.

"I'm relieved," said Barboza, 35, of the 2nd NATO Signal Battalion in Naples, "I'm just grateful to the jury members."

Criminal charges were brought against Barboza after she declined to accept nonjudicial punishment, following a command investigation into complaints about her more than a year ago.

"You won't see these crimes on 'Law and Order,'" prosecutor Capt. Mike Gerrity conceded in his closing argument. "But this is the military. Sergeant 1st Class Barboza failed to put her soldiers' needs above her own."

Testimony against her included that of two soldiers who said she'd pointed a 9 mm pistol at one of them during weapons training, which Barboza said wasn't true. Another soldier said Barboza humiliated her by repeatedly calling her fat, while an African-American staff sergeant said Barboza had touched her hair without permission and then called it "nasty" when rebuked.

Prosecutors also said that Barboza had referred to female African-American soldiers as "negritas," suggesting that Barboza's comments and actions were racially motivated. Barboza testified that she did use the word negrita but that it was a neutral or even affectionate word meaning "little black girl" in her native Mexican-American, southern California culture.

She did touch the staff sergeant's hair, she testified, but only because "I honestly thought there was a piece of paper in her hair."

And she did call the soldier, a specialist who had difficulties with her weight, fat, she said. "My intention was to motivate her and also let her know I was concerned," she said.

The most serious charge was dereliction of duty for failing to maintain weapon safety by pointing her pistol at a staff sergeant during weapons training.

Barboza testified that she had pointed the weapon at a poster on the wall.

Asked by her lawyer why the staff sergeant had testified she aimed at his face, she replied that it was "mostly out of spite."

<https://www.stripes.com/news/jury-acquits-senior-nco-accused-of-pointing-weapon-at-soldier-and-calling-another-fat-1.563675>

She said he was angry that she'd let other soldiers go on temporary duty assignments instead of him and that she'd told him to stop spending so much time with the soldier who complained about Barboza calling her fat.

Her lawyer suggested that the other soldier who said she'd pointed her pistol at the staff sergeant may have misperceived it.

“Do you have any misgivings? Do you have any concerns?” Davis Younts, one of Barboza's lawyers said to the jury in his closing argument. “She's a soldier who has dedicated her life to the Army. I submit to you gentleman, you have enough information to conclude she has outstanding military character, and that alone is enough to find her not guilty.”

Barboza said after the verdict that she'd refused the nonjudicial punishment and took a chance on a worse outcome at court-martial because it would have ruined her career.

“This was a learning experience,” she said. “My gung-ho-ness — I've always been like that. But this has taught me to be more sensitive.”

montgomery.nancy@stripes.com

Twitter: [@montgomerynance](https://twitter.com/montgomerynance)

Marine Under Investigation After Blaming Underage Girls For Having Sex With Older Men

By Jeff Schogol

Task & Purpose, January 8, 2019

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service is looking into a Marine for allegedly making comments on Facebook blaming sexual violence on young girls, a 2nd Marine Logistics Group spokesman told Task & Purpose.

Master Sgt. Mark McBride made the comments on Sunday as part of a discussion about rap artist R. Kelly, who has been accused of statutory rape in a recent documentary.

Starting around noon on Sunday, McBride began posting comments on Facebook that claimed pedophilia is partially the fault of young girls who flirt with men.

"There would be no such thing as statutory rape if there weren't young girls WILLING to have sex with older Men there would only be Rape!" McBride wrote in one post, a screenshot of which was obtained by Task & Purpose.

McBride also wrote that he believes parents should teach young girls not to have sexual relationships with older men.

"Just so I can clear the air I believe every pedophile and predator should stay in jail for life," McBride wrote. "However all these young girls are NOT innocent victims."

After McBride's unit was made aware of his comments, the matter was referred to NCIS for a review, said 1st Lt. Samir J. Glenn-Roundtree, a spokesman for 2nd Marine Logistics Group.

Consistent with all other forms of communication, Marines are responsible for all content they publish on social networking sites, blogs, or other websites," Roundtree told Task & Purpose. "The Marine Corps does not tolerate any form of discrimination, to include sexual discrimination or any other conduct that demeans the dignity of another person."

McBride could not be reached for comment on Tuesday. In a live video that he posted Sunday on Facebook, McBride said he has two daughters, whom he teaches to "be accountable for their actions," and he did not intend to blame rape victims.

"You're never going to get rid of the pedophiles – ever," McBride said. "So you have to teach your children not to be on Instagram and trying to have 1 million followers and entertaining these pedophiles that are out here trying to take advantage of them. That's what I'm saying."

"Stop just pointing the finger at the constant that you're not going to change and start pointing the finger at these individuals who are choosing – I am not talking about who were manipulated and the individuals who were victims like they didn't know what the hell was going on – no, I'm talking about these individuals who are purposely going after older men and trying to have relationships with them for some type of monetary gain. And I'll represent that to the death."

Following the [Marines United scandal](#), in which active-duty Marines and veterans shared nude photos of female service members and other women and harrassed them, all Marines were required to complete social media conduct training and acknowledge in a Page 11 entry that they had read and understood the Corps' new social media policy.

SEE ALSO:

[The Pentagon Isn't Stopping Revenge Porn Sites. So One Marine Veteran Is Doing It On Her Own.](#)

Navy SEAL arraigned on war crime charges

By Carl Prine

Navy Times, January 5, 2019



Special Warfare Operator Chief Edward “Eddie” Gallagher, a highly decorated Navy SEAL, is fighting murder charges tied to the death of an Islamic State operative in Iraq. (photos provided)

UPDATE: [SEAL charged with war crimes to remain in the brig](#) [2019-01-11]

Special Warfare Operator Chief Edward “Eddie” Gallagher was arraigned Friday morning at Naval Base San Diego on a long list of criminal charges, including the premeditated murder of a wounded

Islamic State prisoner of war.

At the same time, his case drew the attention from an unlikely lawmaker, Rep. Duncan Hunter — a Marine combat veteran who himself is facing a long list of federal criminal charges — who urged President Donald Trump to personally intervene to end the SEAL’s prosecution.

Military prosecutors contend that Gallagher, 39, is a callous murderer who stabbed to death the defenseless teenage detainee on May 3, 2017, near the Iraqi city of Mosul and also gunned down unwitting civilians with his sniper rifle, bragged about racking up kills and threatened to intimidate and publicly out SEAL buddies who complained to superiors and investigators about him.

Investigative files [leaked to Navy Times](#) revealed authorities probing allegations that Gallagher mutilated the teenage prisoner’s dead body, posed with the corpse during a re-enlistment ceremony and attempted to cover up the alleged crimes when he returned to California.

But the same dossier uncovered a Naval Criminal Investigative Service interview of a pair of high-ranking Iraqi officers present during the unnamed teenager’s death.

They insisted “Chief Ed” committed no crimes and that the boy died from battlefield wounds inflicted by Iraqi government forces.

According to the files, NCIS also failed to locate and exhume the alleged victim’s body for an autopsy.

On Friday, prosecutors handed over 1,700 pages of documents, including text messages they say show Gallagher trying to intimidate witnesses, The Associated Press reported.

One of the SEAL’s attorneys, Phil Stackhouse, dismissed them as “hearsay and double hearsay statements” ginned up by disgruntled platoon members who wanted to depose a demanding enlisted leader.

Attorneys representing Gallagher, a married father and 19-year Navy veteran who was prepping for retirement before his indictment, have said he’s the victim of a smear campaign by platoon malcontents and have vowed [to clear his name](#).

[NCIS documents cast doubt on Navy SEAL’s guilt in slaying of Islamic State fighter](#)

Navy Region Southwest commander [Rear Adm. Yancy B. “Lurch” Lindsey](#) greenlighted Gallagher’s charges following a legal review of the SEAL’s [two-day Article 32 hearing in November](#).

A military judge said that his court-martial trial will commence between Feb. 19 and March 1, with at least a third of his panel composed of enlisted personnel.

A former member of the House Armed Services Committee who represents a large chunk of San Diego County, Republican Hunter doesn’t want it to get that far.

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/01/05/seal-arraigned-on-war-crime-charges/>

In a statement emailed to Navy Times on Friday, Hunter said that he'd personally reviewed Gallagher's case and concluded that the military's prosecution suffered from "inconsistent testimony" by other SEALs and a lack of physical evidence tying him to the detainee's death.

Hunter accused military prosecutors of "bias against our warfighters" and called the Navy's criminal justice system "political."

He urged Trump "to personally review and dismiss this case, taking an American hero out of a prison cell and back on the front lines where he belongs."

Hunter was an early and avid supporter of Trump and had been rumored for a high post in his administration that never materialized.

SEAL to stand trial for murder, other alleged war crimes

Gallagher has been confined at the Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar in San Diego since his arrest on Sept. 11 at Camp Pendleton, where he was receiving treatment for a traumatic brain injury incurred in combat overseas.

Authorities said Friday that a decision will be made next week on whether Gallagher will be released from the brig pending trial.

Hunter said that he received reports that the 19-year veteran lacks access to quality medical care, mental health services and legal representation but will continue to probe those allegations.

"If true, it is completely unacceptable and, without hesitation, I will introduce legislation to ensure this situation is not repeated," Hunter said in his prepared statement. "South American criminal illegal aliens are provided with better access to legal representation than our nation's elite warriors because bureaucratic lawyers in the Navy justice system see this situation as an opportunity to make their name and advance their career."

Navy officials did not return messages seeking comment.

Charges against Duncan Hunter detail family vacations, football tickets, other luxury items with illegal funds

On Aug. 23, both Hunter and his wife, Margaret, pleaded not guilty to a raft of federal public corruption charges, including wire fraud, conspiracy to commit offenses against the United States, falsification of records and misusing campaign funds.

Prosecutors say that the Hunters converted more than \$250,000 of the campaign treasure chest into a slush fund to patch up their precarious personal finances and [fuel a lavish lifestyle](#) that included European vacations, pricey restaurant feasts, Pittsburgh Steelers tickets, Apple merchandise and golf attire later marked as "balls for the wounded warriors" to fool federal election watchdogs.

The Hunters have fought back, claiming the indictments are politically motivated.

Despite his legal woes, on Nov. 6 Hunter vanquished Democrat Ammar Campa-Najjar for California's 50th congressional district seat.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

[Carl Prine](#) came to Navy Times after stints at the San Diego Union-Tribune and Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. He served in the Marine Corps and the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. His awards include the Joseph Galloway Award for Distinguished Reporting on the military, a first prize from Investigative Reporters & Editors and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

Relationship with subordinate, adultery led to firing of Air Force Global Strike Command's top NCO

By Rose L. Thayer

Stars and Stripes, January 4, 2019



Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Mazzone, at his desk on Barksdale Air Force Base, La., in 2014. U.S. AIR FORCE

The top noncommissioned officer of the Air Force Global Strike Command and Air Forces Strategic-Air has been removed for adultery and a sexual relationship with a subordinate at his previous post, the command said Friday. An investigation confirmed these findings and Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Mazzone has been reassigned pending retirement.

Gen. Timothy Ray, the command's commander, sent an email to personnel letting them know of his decision to relieve Mazzone, based on a command-directed investigation into his behavior at his previous assignment as chief of the Air Force District of Washington. The commander of that district, Maj. Gen. James A. Jacobson, ordered the investigation.

The investigation was ordered in September and the report reveals that Mazzone had a sexual relationship with a woman in his chain of command, sent her explicit text messages and bought her a silver, heart-shaped ring. Some interviews in the report indicate the relationship began as early as 2016, though the investigation focused on allegations from June 2017 through November 2017. Mazzone joined the Washington District and the 320th Air Expeditionary Wing at Joint Base Andrews, Md., in April 2016 and left to join Strike Command in Louisiana in December 2017.

Findings from interviews with witnesses show that the two would go to lunch together, meet at the shoppette and exchange gifts by leaving them in each other's vehicles. The woman wrote a song for Mazzone and sent him a video of her singing it. The lyrics included, "it being so wrong but being so right, nights in his truck, his kiss on her lips," the report stated.

"CMSgt. Mazzone created the appearance of favoritism and the abandonment of organizational goals for his personal interests when he committed all above mentioned actions," the report stated. Neither Mazzone nor the woman answered questions for the investigation.

Chief Master Sgt. Melvina Smith, the Eighth Air Command chief, has moved temporarily into Mazzone's job.

"It is imperative that we create the right culture and climate in our command to become the long range precision strike force that our nation needs," Ray wrote in the email to command personnel.

Mazzone joined the Air Force in 1990 and had been at the Global Strike Command since December 2017.

Global Strike Command is headquartered at Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, La. As the command's senior enlisted leader, Mazzone was responsible to the commander on matters concerning the readiness, effective utilization, professional growth and welfare of the command's airmen.

The command's mission is to develop, equip and provide combat-ready forces for nuclear deterrence and global strike operations supporting the initiatives of U.S. Strategic Command and other geographic combatant commands. It has more than 33,700 personnel. Weapon systems assigned to the command include intercontinental ballistic missiles and bomber aircraft, UH-1N helicopters, E-4B National Airborne Operations Center aircraft and the Nuclear Command, Control and Communications Center.

thayer.rose@stripes.com

Twitter: @Rose_Lori

Religion

<http://time.com/5494964/muslim-omar-rule-change-head/>

Congressional Rule Change Allows Head Scarves, Religious Headwear on House Floor

By Tara Law

TIME, January 6, 2019



TIME Video: Ilhan Omar: First Somali-American Muslim person to become a legislator and, as of November 2018, the first Somali American elected to the U.S. Congress

The same day that the first two female Muslim congressional representatives in history took office, the House voted to permit religious headwear on the floor for the first time in 181 years.

The change, which was passed as part of a rules package, amended an 1837 rule that was originally intended to ban representatives from wearing hats on the House Floor. After a vote of 234 to 197 on Thursday, Congress members will now be allowed to wear head coverings, such as kippahs, hijabs and turbans.

Minnesota Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, a Somali-American Muslim and refugee, became the first member of Congress to wear a religious headscarf on the floor. She celebrated the vote in a tweet.

“I thank my colleagues for welcoming me, and I look forward to the day we lift the Muslim ban separating families all over the U.S. from their loved ones,” Omar wrote.

Yesterday, Congress voted to lift a 181 year ban on headwear to make the [#116thCongress](#) more inclusive for all.

I thank my colleagues for welcoming me, and I look forward to the day we lift the Muslim ban separating families all over the U.S. from their loved ones.

— Ilhan Omar (@IlhanMN) [January 4, 2019](#)

The rule change was [proposed](#) in November by Omar, Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California and Rep. Jim McGovern of Massachusetts. With the change, [the rule](#) now “clarifies and maintains the existing prohibition on wearing hats in the Hall of the House, while making express that this prohibition does not include religious headwear.”

Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib, a Muslim of Palestinian descent, was also sworn into Congress last week.

The 116th congress is considered to be the most diverse in American history. However, Christians still continue to be [overrepresented](#), relative to the American population.

The religious makeup of the new, 116th Congress is very different from that of the United States population. <https://t.co/R7kKIJu5SB> pic.twitter.com/VmvGUdhXLE

— Pew Research Center (@pewresearch) [January 3, 2019](#)

Write to Tara Law at tara.law@time.com.

Heathens hold religious services rooted in Norse paganism aboard aircraft carrier

By J.D. Simkins

Navy Times, January 7, 2019



Beliefs in ancient Norse myths have taken hold of a surging number of military personnel. (Getty Images)

Heathenry is experiencing a resurgence.

The polytheistic religion, one that traces its origin to Norse myths that tell of the universe's creation and prophesy its destructive end, was at one time stifled following the end of the Viking Age and the subsequent spread of Christianity.

One such collection of myths, "The Prose Edda" — authored by Icelandic historian, poet and politician Snorri Sturluson sometime around the year 1220 — provides much of what the modern world knows about Norse mythology: Yggdrasil, Asgard and the Aesir, a tribe of gods and goddesses with familiar names like Odin, Thor, Loki, Frigg and Idun.

Now, nearly 800 years after Sturluson's "Edda," a small group of sailors aboard the aircraft carrier John C. Stennis has adopted these deities as the pillars of their religion, according to a Navy release.

The chapel onboard Stennis is where Aviation Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Joshua Wood, a once-Roman Catholic sailor from Eagle River, Alaska, fills the duties of Heathenry lay leader, a position of religious leadership that must be appointed by a unit's commanding officer.

As the most senior practitioner of Heathenry — he has been observant for five years now — Wood is tasked with leading a small group of sailors devoted to the Norse gods and goddesses in weekly services that are even advertised on the ship's one-main circuit.

'OPENED MY EYES'

Wood was just in high school when he enrolled in a mythology class that he says "opened my eyes to the Nordic Gods."

From there, he examined the famous Eddas, like Sturluson's, to learn more, eventually coming to the realization that he identified with the polytheistic faith in a way he never had with Catholicism.

[A soldier just got authorization to wear a beard because of his Norse pagan faith](#)

It didn't take long before the sailor discovered a group of like-minded Heathens in his hometown of San Diego, one that helped cement his perception of his newfound faith and his place in its community.

"They are my surrogate family," Wood said in the release. "They helped me understand the religion, and with their help, I transitioned from someone who was merely interested in the religion to someone who is well-versed enough to lead others in prayer. I went through them to get certified to lead services on the ship."

With his acquired knowledge, Wood has encouraged other sailors with inquisitiveness of Heathenry to attend a *sumbel*, a ceremony traditionally consisting of toasting and reciting poems or songs.

Aviation Electronics Technician Airman Joshua Shaikoski attended one of these ceremonies led by Wood.

"Just like Wood, I was not born a Heathen," said Shaikoski, who was born in Norway and raised in Minnesota. "I went to Lutheran services with my parents when I was growing up, but it always felt forced.

<https://www.navytimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2019/01/07/heathens-hold-religious-services-rooted-in-norse-paganism-aboard-aircraft-carrier/>

I never felt like I connected with anything spiritual until I visited Norway and discovered a group of Heathens who opened my eyes to their religion.”

Despite their newfound religious clarity, much of what Heathens like Wood and Shaikoski observe remains a mystery to those on the periphery of the faith’s beliefs and practices.

Rumors surround the religion and its followers — like Shaikoski, who said he’s fielded inquiries about everything from whether they perform ritualistic animal sacrifices to whether they’re racial supremacists.

“Not only is it the farthest from the truth, but it is hurtful,” he said.

No matter the chasmic disconnect between Heathenry followers and those oblivious to its tenets, there is no denying that the religion has gained a foothold — however small — in the U.S. military.

Just last April, a soldier from the [795th Military Police Battalion](#) was granted an accommodation to grow facial hair as part of his pagan faith.

“In observance of your Heathen, Norse Pagan faith, you may wear a beard, in accordance with Army uniform and grooming standards for soldiers with approved religious accommodations,” the soldier’s commander, Col. Curtis Shroeder, wrote in the memo approving the soldier’s request.



The Hammer of Thor is available to be placed on government headstones and markers in the United States.

And in 2013, the image of Mjölner, commonly known as the Hammer of Thor, was added to the list of symbols that can be used on veteran headstones, such as those at Arlington National Cemetery.

Such strides of religious freedoms should help dispel outlandish myths like those disputed by Shaikoski.

“Heathenry is a religion of peace and community,” he said. “[It] helped me connect with people on the ship that I would have just passed by.”

J.D. Simkins is a writer and editor for Military Times who was a Marine scout observer from 2004-2008. He ugly cried when the Washington Capitals won the 2018 Stanley Cup.

Sexual Assault / Harassment

Bernie Sanders apologizes to women who allege sexist treatment during his 2016 presidential campaign

By Kristin Lam

USA TODAY, January 2, 2019



(Photo: MANDEL NGAN, AFP/Getty Images)

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders [told CNN](#) on Wednesday night that he did not know about sexual harassment and pay disparity allegations during his 2016 presidential campaign.

Allegations from multiple women who worked on Sanders' campaign surfaced Wednesday in [the New York Times](#). Former supporters told the Times that his campaign did not adequately address incidents of sexual harassment, sexist mistreatment and pay disparities between men and women.

On CNN, Sanders apologized to "any woman who feels like she was not treated appropriately." When asked if he had been aware of the complaints, Sanders said, "I was little bit busy running around the country trying to make the case (to be elected as president)."

The allegations and his perceived failure to rectify the issues, female campaign workers told the Times, bring into question whether he can fight for women's interests if he again seeks the presidency.

"I am not going to sit here and tell you that we did everything right in terms of human resources, in terms of addressing the needs that I'm hearing from now, that women felt they were disrespected, that there was sexual harassment which was not dealt with as effectively as possible," Sanders said on CNN.

He told CNN his campaign would do better if he pursues a 2020 presidential nomination. His 2018 Senate re-election campaign, he added, established new protocols for handling sexual harassment allegations.

"We put forward the strongest set of principles in terms of mandatory training, in terms of women, if they felt harassed, having an independent firm that they can go to," Sanders said. "And I think that that's kind of the gold standard of what we should be doing."

SEE ALSO:

[Bernie Sanders alumni want meeting to discuss 'sexual violence' on 2016 campaign](#) [*The Hill*, 2018-12-30]

Charges dismissed against Okinawa-based Marine accused of sexual assault

By Matthew M. Burke

Stars and Stripes, January 9, 2019



Charges have been dismissed against Okinawa-based Marine Sgt. Morgan Bergdahl, who was accused of sexually assaulting a female Marine April 21, 2018.

COURTESY OF FACEBOOK

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Marine prosecutors Monday dropped sexual-assault charges against a sergeant accused in April of having sex with a female Marine reportedly too intoxicated to consent.

Sgt. Morgan Bergdahl, of Combat Logistics Battalion 31, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, was scheduled to appear Monday for the start of court-martial proceedings on four counts of sexual assault and four of abusive sexual contact.

“The charges against Sgt. Bergdahl have been dismissed without prejudice,” III Marine Expeditionary Force spokesman 1st Lt. David Mancilla wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes.

Mancilla did not explain specifically why the charges were dropped. He referred to the Manual for Courts-Martial, including a section that requires authorities to take the victim’s views into consideration before dismissing charges.

A dismissal without prejudice means the charges against Bergdahl could be refiled later.

Bergdahl had been held in pretrial confinement on Okinawa since April 25.

According to a copy of the charge sheet, Bergdahl assaulted the unnamed female Marine on or about April 21. Prosecutors also alleged Bergdahl caused the woman bodily harm during the incident.

Bergdahl knew, or should have known, that the woman was too intoxicated at the time to consent to sex, according to the charge sheet.

Bergdahl signed on for his current enlistment in August 2014, the charge sheet said. He was nearing the end of his four-year term when the alleged incident took place.

burke.matt@stripes.com

Kids who assault on US bases can still escape accountability

By Justin Pritchard and Reese Dunklin

The Associated Press, December 30, 2018



This March 27, 2008, file photo, shows the Pentagon in Washington. New rules addressing sexual assault among the children of U.S. service members fail to fix a flaw that on many military bases has let alleged juvenile abusers escape accountability. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

Despite new rules addressing sexual assault among the children of U.S. service members, the federal government failed to fix a flaw that on many military bases has let alleged juvenile abusers escape accountability or treatment.

New records obtained by The Associated Press underscore how few child-on-child sex assault reports pursued by military investigators are prosecuted. That problem is most serious on U.S. installations overseas, where at least 47,000 children are enrolled in Pentagon-run schools.

Children and teens suspected of sex crimes on U.S. bases overseas often faced no legal consequences, such as court-ordered rehabilitation, records obtained through the Freedom of Information Act show. Those held to account were generally either kicked off base into the civilian world or received modest punishments, the records show.

One, for example, was told to write a 1,000-word essay about “the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching.” Another avoided punishment by enlisting in the Army. A third, who was put on curfew after two girls accused him of sexual assault, was investigated a year later in an alleged rape, a case that also went unprosecuted.

Congress ordered internal investigations and mandated Pentagon reforms this summer after an Associated Press [investigation](#) revealed the problems of juvenile sexual assault on U.S. military bases, including the failure of the Defense and Justice Departments to help either victims or offenders.

One proposed reform would have required federal prosecutors with jurisdiction over civilians on base to [transfer](#) child-on-child sex assault cases to counterparts in state juvenile justice systems, which have resources dedicated to rehabilitation. But that requirement did not survive final negotiations over the legislation.

Federal prosecutors, under pressure to win big convictions, don’t take juvenile sex assault cases because they can be hard to prove and require extra paperwork, former prosecutors say. Military officials privately bemoan what they see as the Justice Department’s indifference while publicly noting their own limitations.

“We could bar that kid from being on post, or we could move the family from the post, but beyond that, the authorities really reside outside the military,” Army Secretary Mark Esper told senators at a May hearing.

Representatives of the Defense and Justice Departments have been meeting for several months to resolve problems that AP’s investigation highlighted.

Officials are “considering a range of options to ensure that these types of cases are effectively addressed,” Justice Department spokesman Wyn Hornbuckle told the AP. The idea is to use state courts when possible, he added.

That would not apply to U.S. installations in Europe and Asia, where U.S. officials can be reluctant to involve prosecutors from host nations.

<https://www.apnews.com/cc021545bf2142cbb9b31a44dfa19be8>

AP's review of investigative reports in which military officials documented prosecution decisions found that about one in 10 on overseas Army, Navy or Marines bases were accepted from 2007 into 2017.

Weak cases don't explain the lack of prosecutions. Army criminal investigators concluded that nearly 90 percent of juvenile sex crime allegations on bases were credible, records show. Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents do not routinely record whether they believe allegations, but on the Navy and Marines bases where NCIS works, AP identified two dozen unprosecuted cases in which an alleged attacker confessed.

The Justice Department refused to share data on the prosecution of juveniles for sex crimes committed overseas. The department added that its lawyers decline to prosecute cases for many reasons, including strength of evidence, age of the suspect and severity of the alleged crime.

Congress [acted](#) in response to AP stories that identified nearly 700 cases of child-on-child sexual assault or rape on American military installations worldwide over a decade. Military investigators buried some cases, AP found, while many of those they investigated fell into the legal and bureaucratic netherworld.

Military lawyers cannot prosecute the civilian children of service members and contractors. Given the infrequency of federal prosecution, kids suspected of sexually assaulting other kids rarely get the kind of court-supported rehabilitation that research shows will prevent most young offenders from committing another sex crime.

Lawmakers directed the Pentagon's inspector general and the Government Accountability Office to investigate. They also ordered the Department of Defense Education Activity, which oversees the Pentagon's network of schools in seven U.S. states and 11 other countries, to create new policies to track and respond to reports of child-on-child sexual assault. Legal protections that students in U.S. public schools enjoy were extended to the military-run schools as well.

The AP's investigation also found that the military's Family Advocacy Program has [denied](#) services to sex-assault victims because their alleged attacker was not an adult. Spokeswoman Lt. Col. Carla Gleason said Pentagon experts are now "working on identifying gaps in our family advocacy processes and programs concerning problematic juvenile sexual behavior." Congress appropriated \$10 million for family advocacy services over the next year.

In contrast, efforts to pressure the Justice Department to change the way it handles juvenile sex assault prosecutions have floundered.

When Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., asked the Justice Department's inspector general to review why federal prosecutors rarely take such cases, Inspector General Michael Horowitz responded that any action would be premature, pending the outcome of the ongoing discussions between the Justice and Defense Departments.

Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, the chamber's No. 2 Republican, had proposed requiring federal authorities to share legal jurisdiction over juvenile crimes with states. That proposal was watered down in negotiations with the House of Representatives, and the final bill that President Donald Trump signed in August contained language merely urging that such authority be shared.

Cornyn said in a statement he would "keep fighting to allow local prosecutors to pursue these cases so our most vulnerable and their families can get the justice they deserve." Spokeswoman Ryann DuRant said the senator will introduce similar legislation in 2019.

One of the rare cases in which federal prosecutors filed sexual assault charges against military kids involved a 10-year-old who was accused of abusing five younger boys at Fort Huachuca in Arizona.

<https://www.apnews.com/cc021545bf2142cbb9b31a44dfa19be8>

The abuser was first reported in August 2010. Records show investigators didn't pursue a criminal case until a second report four months later. The boy was sentenced to probation and ordered to get treatment.

"He needed to go somewhere to be rehabilitated," Assistant U.S. Attorney Ann DeMarais said during a court hearing this summer, after the boy landed in custody for a probation violation. "We know he can succeed and do really well in a controlled environment."

Pritchard reported from Los Angeles, Dunklin from Dallas.

Poll asks troops and veterans their thoughts on sex discrimination, women in combat, mixed-gender training and more

By Dianna Cahn

Stars and Stripes, January 2, 2019

WASHINGTON -- Female servicemembers and veterans were 10 times more likely than their male counterparts to answer that they faced or witnessed gender discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual assault in the military, according to an online poll of 1,708 Stars and Stripes digital subscribers around the world.

Of those who answered the question, 68.5 percent of women who serve or served in the military said they had experienced discrimination based on gender, compared to 6.4 percent of the men. Poll results showed that 65.8 percent of the women who responded said they had experienced sexual assault or harassment, while only 6.1 percent of the men answered yes.

Those who said they had been harassed or assaulted were most supportive of integrating women into ground combat positions, the survey found.

The [anonymous online poll](#), conducted by Smithsonian magazine in partnership with Stars and Stripes and the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University, was based on an email invitation to 21,364 subscribers, so the findings are not a random sampling. Among those who answered were 109 active-duty servicemembers and 922 veterans from all branches. An additional 676 civilians, including 203 military spouses, participated in the survey but were not included in questions relating to direct military service. One person did not identify personal gender details. Women — and one fluid-gender respondent — comprised a smaller subsample of the respondents, raising the margin of error in those results from plus or minus 3 percent for the overall poll to nearly 11 percent, according to the report, compiled by a team at George Mason led by political scientist Delton Daigle.

The report states that the exploration of gender-based perceptions raised some important issues about how the military moves forward in its groundbreaking effort to fully integrate women and transgender people into the force.

For example, men were far more likely than women to agree with the statement that mixed gender training reduced standards, with 69 percent of men and 44.2 percent of women agreeing.

“Reforms conducted by the United States Department of Defense to include women and transgender military personnel are historic in nature,” the report states. “Yet these efforts run counter to publicly held conceptions of what the military should be. Understanding how male soldiers feel about these reforms will be important to understanding the trajectory of the reforms themselves.”

Ellen Haring, the CEO of the Service Women’s Action Network, said her organization’s research has demonstrated a clear link between integration of women into combat positions and an end to sexual harassment and assault in the military.

“I don’t know a woman in the military who hasn’t been sexually harassed,” Haring said. “It’s just become so ingrained in our culture that some people don’t recognize it as harassment or just have a higher tolerance.”

<https://www.stripes.com/news/poll-asks-troops-and-veterans-their-thoughts-on-sex-discrimination-women-in-combat-mixed-gender-training-and-more-1.562898>

SWAN has been conducting interviews with the first female officers to integrate into armor positions, and Haring said they face a kind of Catch-22.

On the one hand, women at the forefront of full integration faced sexual assault or harassment as a form of resistance, she said. On the flip side, the women see integration as the solution.

“People who have been harassed or assaulted see full integration as a way of breaking down these barriers that result in harassment or assault,” she said.

Haring said she wasn’t surprised by the survey’s finding that men were less likely than women to say that they had witnessed sexual assault or harassment with 42 percent of women and 17.1 percent of men who responded saying they had witnessed it.

The survey did not address whether the men were less likely to see it, to recognize it or to say anything. But Haring said she believes that men are “kind of blind to it” unless it impacts them.

Across the board, there was majority support for women in ground combat, with nearly 81 percent of women and just over 69 percent of men who responded saying they supported it. The poll found that support grew with each younger generation. Whereas 62.8 percent of the Greatest Generation was in support, that figure grew to 71.8 percent of baby boomer respondents, 79 percent of Gen X and 81.4 percent of millennials.

The survey also posed this question to those who had been sexually assaulted or harassed. It found that 82.7 percent of those saying they had been assaulted or harassed supported women in ground combat, as opposed to 68 percent of those who had not.

“One of the common arguments against allowing women in the military is that they could be victims of sexual violence,” the report notes. “However very few people pause to ask the victims themselves.”

Millennial respondents were also the tipping point regarding the assertion that mixed gender training reduces standards. While older respondents were in strong agreement with that statement, just 55 percent of Gen X respondents agreed. Among millennials, support for that statement dropped to a minority 44.4 percent.

Find more results from the online survey at <https://bit.ly/2Vq2E48>.

Cahn.dianna@stripes.com Twitter: @[DiannaCahn](https://twitter.com/DiannaCahn)

<https://apnews.com/ae6f79d2223947e789b34224c30f3ec2>

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/01/08/senator-seeks-wisconsin-air-national-guard-sexual-misconduct-probe/>

Senator seeks Air National Guard sexual misconduct probe

By Todd Richmond

The Associated Press, January 8, 2019



Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin speaks to the media before a campaign stop at the Racine County Democratic office on Nov. 4, 2018 in Racine, Wis. (Darren Hauck/Getty Images)

UPDATE: [Air Force confirms Wisconsin National Guard investigation](#) [2019-01-09]

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Sen. Tammy Baldwin has asked Air Force investigators to look into allegations of sexual assault and harassment within a Wisconsin Air National Guard unit that were brushed aside by senior officers, according to a member of the unit.

The Wisconsin Democrat sent a letter to the Air Force office that handles congressional inquiries in mid-November asking it to investigate the claims involving members of the 115th Fighter Wing's Security Forces Squadron, a group of about 100 airmen that polices the Truax Field Air National Guard Base in Madison.

Baldwin made the request after receiving a letter from Jay Ellis, a master sergeant in the security squadron. Ellis wrote that he learned of six incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault against female members of the squadron that happened between 2002 and 2016, and that high-ranking officers have done little to address them.

“There’s a culture in our unit ... (that) sexual misconduct, depending on who does it, it’s no big deal,” Ellis told The Associated Press during a recent interview.

Sexual assaults have plagued the U.S. military for years. In fiscal year 2017 alone the four branches [received 5,864 reports](#) from military members who said they had been sexually assaulted sometime during their service, up 10 percent from 2016, according to Department of Defense data.

The Air Force Office of Special Investigations, or AFOSI, told Baldwin that her request had been referred to personnel responsible for the Madison area. Baldwin wrote back asking the office to confirm an investigation had begun.

“If there is a culture of sexual harassment at Truax field it is imperative that steps be fully taken to expose improper action and take remedial action to ensure a safe and appropriate work environment,” Baldwin wrote.

AFOSI officials didn’t respond to an email from the AP asking whether an investigation was underway. Ellis told the AP that investigators from Scott Air Force Base in Illinois contacted him on Nov. 16 and asked him for details of the incidents and the names of those involved.

Maj. Penny Ripperger, a spokeswoman for the 115th Fighter Wing, said Thursday that as far as she knew, AFOSI investigators had not reached out to anyone on the division’s leadership team regarding Ellis’ allegations.

Asked if a culture of sexual harassment or assault exists within the wing, she said such behavior isn’t tolerated and that allegations are taken seriously. Airmen receive frequent training on sexual assault and harassment that includes how to report incidents confidentially, she said.

“Our organization actively encourages a culture of reporting and seeks to foster an environment where victims feel comfortable coming forward,” Ripperger said.

<https://apnews.com/ae6f79d2223947e789b34224c30f3ec2>

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/01/08/senator-seeks-wisconsin-air-national-guard-sexual-misconduct-probe/>

Ellis said there's no documentation of the incidents he brought to Baldwin's attention because the women didn't file formal complaints.

One of the women described her ordeal during a recent interview with the AP. She spoke on condition of anonymity. The AP typically doesn't identify alleged sexual assault victims without their permission.

The woman said she and a friend were sexually assaulted by superior officers in the security unit during a 2002 party at Silver Flag Alpha Range, a training base outside Las Vegas, as the unit was preparing to deploy to Iraq. She said she didn't file a formal complaint because she feared retaliation, but that she did report the assault to her fire team commander, Pat Konz.

Konz, who was then a technical sergeant but who has since retired from the Air National Guard, told the AP that he documented the woman's claims in his personal notes, which the woman supplied the AP. Konz said he passed on the allegations to a senior master sergeant in the security unit, but it only resulted in the woman being harassed during the deployment.

Ellis also alleges that in 2008 at the Madison base, a technical sergeant made inappropriate remarks to female airmen, and that he tried to kiss one and choked two others. Among those who said he made "crass" remarks to was the woman who told the AP she was assaulted at the Nevada base in 2002.

Ellis said he met with the security unit's commander, Maj. Kristin Boustany, twice in 2015 to discuss the toxic culture of bullying and hostility within the unit. He said he didn't raise the sexual misconduct allegations with her because he didn't have the victims' permission.

He told the AP that he approached military equal opportunity officials last October with the allegations, but the office wanted to talk to the only victim still with the National Guard and she refused to come forward.

In his letter to Baldwin, Ellis also alleges that in 2016, a female officer was discussing her sex life with a male officer during a break in training. A more senior male officer chimed in from across the room so that everyone could hear, Ellis wrote, noting that it was "inappropriate" for him to have done so.

Ellis said he reported the incident in an anonymous morale survey that went to Boustany, who in response warned the entire unit to "know your audience" during two assemblies in 2017.

Ripperger, the 115th spokeswoman, said Boustany wasn't available for an interview. She also disputed that Boustany was in command of the squadron in 2015, saying she didn't take over until 2017. Ripperger didn't immediately respond to a follow-up query to clarify Boustany's assignment in 2015.

The AP tried to get comment from the men accused in the six incidents that Ellis cited in his letter. It was unable to find a phone number, address or email address for one of the men and the others either declined to discuss the allegations or didn't reply to voicemails or emails.

Ellis said he decided to come forward now because he doesn't fear retaliation with just two years to go until he retires.

"This culture has created, and continues to promote an incredibly hostile and toxic work environment," Ellis wrote to Baldwin. "I am asking for someone, anyone, to further investigate what has been happening at the 115th SFS."

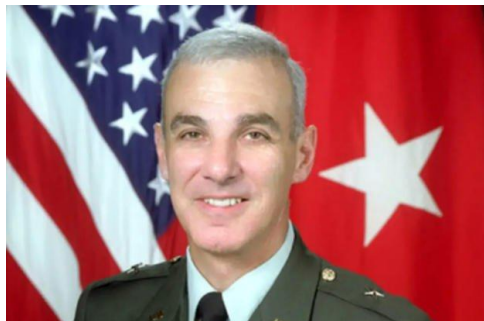
This story has been corrected to reflect that Ellis says he did not raise the sexual assault allegations with the squadron commander in 2015 and that he reported the 2016 incident in which a male officer commented on a female subordinate's sex life in an anonymous morale survey, not directly to the commander.

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Trial Set for Retired Army General Indicted on Rape and Incest Charges

By Matthew Cox

Military.com, December 31, 2018



James J. Grazioplene, a retired two-star Army general, was indicted by a grand jury earlier this month on three counts of rape and three counts of incest. (US Army photo)

Retired Army Maj. Gen James Grazioplene is scheduled to stand trial in late April in civilian court for [allegedly raping his daughter in the late 1980s](#).

Grazioplene's court date has been set for April 29 in Prince William County General District Court, according to the Associated Press.

The 69-year-old two-star general, who retired from the Army in 2005, remains in custody at the Prince William - Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center, jail officials told Military.com on Monday.

A Prince William County judge denied Grazioplene's bail request at a Dec. 20 hearing two weeks after he was arrested on Dec. 7.

A Virginia grand jury indicted Grazioplene on three counts of rape and three counts of incest against his daughter between Aug. 1, 1987 and May 31, 1988, according to the Dec. 3 indictment documents.

Military.com tried to contact Grazioplene's lawyers, Thomas Pavlinic and John Irving, for comment on the upcoming trial but did not receive a reply by press time.

In 2017, the Army charged Grazioplene with violating Article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice with six specifications of rape of a minor on multiple occasions between 1983 and 1989, [according to the Washington Post](#).

The Army dismissed the case in March after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces ruled there should be a five-year statute of limitations on rape charges, [Army Times reported](#).

-- Matthew Cox can be reached at matthew.cox@military.com.

SEE ALSO:

[Trial date set for retired Army general charged in Virginia rape case](#) [*The Washington Post*, 2018-12-29]

[A retired Army 2-star is heading to trial on charges that he raped his daughter](#) [*Army Times*, 2018-12-28]