

DEOMI NEWS LINKS, March 20, 2020

CULTURE

[U.S. Navy Relaxes Rules on Hair Length Amid Coronavirus Outbreak](#) [Neil Vigdor, *The New York Times*, 19 Mar 2020]

A few of the rigid standards of the U.S. military are being eased with each passing day of the coronavirus outbreak, and for some sailors, one change could have a visible effect: They may be able to have longer hair. On Wednesday night, the Navy announced that it was giving commanding officers discretion to temporarily [relax grooming guidelines](#) for men's and women's hair length to help maintain social distancing to prevent the spread of the virus. [\[See also\]](#)

[Full “stream” ahead: Navy is taking applications for eSports team in bid to better reach Gen Z](#) [*Stars and Stripes*, 17 Mar 2020]

A new Navy [recruiting effort](#) is getting underway just in time to reach prospective recruits at an appropriate social distance—through online streaming video games and competitions. The Navy is following the Army's lead in launching a video gaming team. As of Sunday, any petty officer looking to add a Navy eSports jersey to their sea bag can [apply](#).

DISCRIMINATION

[Trump admin unlawfully axing LGBTQ discrimination protections, suit claims](#) [Julie Moreau, *NBC News*, 19 Mar 2020]

The Department of Health and Human Services plans to unlawfully stop enforcing nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ Americans, a lawsuit filed Thursday claims. The suit centers on a “[notice of nonenforcement](#)” and a proposed rule issued by the Trump administration in November that would reverse a 2016 Obama-era rule prohibiting discrimination in HHS-funded grant programs and permit federally funded organizations to turn people away claiming conflicts with religious beliefs.

[U.S. naval officer sues over military transgender ban](#) [Alanna Durkin Richer, *The Associated Press*, 19 Mar 2020]

A U.S. naval officer who is facing involuntary discharge because of a policy restricting transgender people from military service has filed a lawsuit that aims to force defense officials to allow her to continue serving. The federal lawsuit, filed Tuesday, is the first legal challenge to the policy since rules went into effect in April 2019 stripping transgender troops of rights they secured under the Obama administration to serve openly and to have their medical transitions covered in their health benefits, lawyers said. [\[Reprint\]](#)

[Widespread discrimination alleged at Kansas City VA hospital](#) [Margaret Stafford, *The Associated Press*, 18 Mar 2020]

A U.S. senator from Kansas and the NAACP are demanding action after up to 50 Black employees of the Kansas City Veterans Affairs Medical Center have complained about widespread discrimination at the hospital. Their complaints include hearing jokes about lynchings and being compared to monkeys, having White co-workers secretly monitor them for supervisors, a lack of promotions and

bonuses, and being fired without cause. Some female employees say they have also faced sexual harassment.

DIVERSITY

[Airman Advances in Quest to Become First Female Special Tactics Officer](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 18 Mar 2020]

A female Air Force officer has completed a rigorous special warfare course and will move on to the next program within the Special Tactics Officer training pipeline, making her the first woman to advance this far within battlefield officer specialty training. The Special Tactics Officer (STO) candidate, who is unidentified for privacy reasons, was recently selected to start the next iteration of the training pipeline following her successful completion of the “STO Phase 2 Assessment” conducted by Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), according to 1st Lt. Jeremy Huggins, a spokesman for the Special Warfare Training Wing.

MISCELLANEOUS

[Airman runs own marathon to honor Bataan Memorial Death March](#) [Jacqueline Devine, *Las Cruces Sun-News (Las Cruces, N.M.)*, 18 Mar 2020]

A photo of a lone soldier carrying a Prisoners of War flag running through the streets of Las Cruces on Sunday is gaining lots of attention on social media after the 31st annual Bataan Memorial Death March was cancelled due to coronavirus concerns. David Saenz, 21, is a U.S. Air Force air traffic controller stationed at Holloman Air Force Base. A Las Cruces native, Saenz said his intent was not to be recognized or praised but to honor all the military members who defended the Philippines during World War II. [\[Reprint\]](#)

[Bye bye, Vandenberg Air Force Base. Hello, Vandenberg Space Force Base?](#) [Kaytlyn Leslie, *The Tribune (San Luis Obispo, Calif.)*, 10 Mar 2020]

As Vandenberg Air Force Base continues its push to be at the forefront of America’s space-related activities, it could soon be getting a name change. Vandenberg officials on Thursday confirmed that the base near Lompoc is in talks to be renamed to better reflect its involvement in the fledgling Space Force branch of the military, though they did not specify exactly what the new name might be. [\[Reprint\]](#)

MISCONDUCT

[Kirtland Airman Found with Arsenal](#) [Mike Gallagher, *Albuquerque Journal (Albuquerque, N.M.)*, 19 Mar 2020]

A U.S. airman assigned to Kirtland Air Force Base is in federal custody after military investigators searching his KAFB residence found a cache of 17 firearms, two silencers, large amounts of ammunition, bomb-making instructions and photos of rifle magazines with the names of mass shooters written on them. Investigators said in a criminal complaint that Senior Airman Charles Brent Justice, 27, could be a “threat to the general public.” [\[Reprint\]](#)

[Corrections Officer Files \\$7M Hazing Suit Against State](#) [*The Associated Press*, 19 Mar 2020]

An Oregon Department of Corrections officer is suing the state, a former coworker, and corrections officials for \$7 million after he was attacked with a stun gun. The civil rights lawsuit filed last week on behalf of Michael Kilgus accuses Coffee Creek Correctional Facility of maintaining a culture of “silence enforced through violence, threats, and hazing,” The Statesman Journal [reported](#).

[Marine Battalion Leaders Fired 3 Months After Rifles Went Missing at Lejeune](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 16 Mar 2020]

The top leaders of a Marine infantry battalion that lost a pair of rifles during a North Carolina training exercise have been removed from their jobs, Military.com has confirmed. Lt. Col. Clinton Kappel and Sgt. Maj. Elson Aviles were relieved of their duties last week by Maj. Gen. David Furness, head of 2nd Marine Division. Kappel was the commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines, and Aviles the unit’s top enlisted leader.

RACISM

[Germany bans anti-Semitic group, raids homes](#) [*The Associated Press*, 19 Mar 2020]

Authorities conducted raids in 10 German states Thursday at premises linked to a group accused of pursuing a mix of anti-government and racist ideology. Germany’s top security official, Horst Seehofer, issued a ban on United German Peoples and Tribes, the first time a group associated with the so-called Reichsbuerger movement has been proscribed.

[Native American Energy Department Employee Wins Significant Civil Rights Settlement](#) [Courtney Buble, *GovExec*, 17 Mar 2020]

Jody TallBear was awarded \$200,000, the restoration of 100 hours of sick leave, and executive training. TallBear’s colleagues were “openly dismissive of Native American sensitivities to Indian mascots and have not taken steps to include Native Americans in not only the diversity training, but also in the proactive goals to increase equal opportunity at DOE in its annual [diversity] report,” said the lawsuit.

[Camp Pendleton Marine investigated on suspicion of sharing White supremacist material online](#)

[Andrew Dyer, *The San Diego Union-Tribune* (San Diego, Calif.), 15 Mar 2020]

The Marines are investigating an infantryman based at Camp Pendleton for potential violations of the Pentagon’s policy against extremism, according to a Marine Corps spokesman. Lance Cpl. Thomas Cade Martin, 23, posted what some experts called “White supremacist” material across at least two social media accounts during the past two years. [\[Reprint\]](#)

RELIGION

[Bill would allow companies to use military logos on religious jewelry](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 13 Mar 2020]

A Florida congressman introduced legislation to change a Defense Department policy that prohibits licensees of its trademarked logos from using them alongside religious symbols. The move comes after the Military Religious Freedom Foundation pointed out that a Christian jewelry company was doing just that and spurred the Marine Corps to ask the business to stop.

SEXISM

[Megan Rapinoe wasn't surprised by U.S. Soccer's "unbelievable" sentiments in legal filing](#) [Cindy Boren, *The Washington Post*, 19 Mar 2020]

Unequal pay may have been the breaking point for members of the U.S. women's national soccer team in its lawsuit against the U.S. Soccer Federation, but there were underlying feelings long before the "unbelievable" language was used in a filing in the lawsuit, Megan Rapinoe said.

[\[Listen\]](#)

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARRASSMENT

[More Coast Guard Academy Cadets Than Ever Trained in Sexual Assault Prevention](#) [Julia Bergman, *The Day (New London, Conn.)*, 13 Mar 20]

A record number of Coast Guard Academy cadets have joined the Cadets Against Sexual Assault club, which advocates for victims of sexual assault and harassment and trains cadets to take reports from their peers. Currently, about half the student body — 530 of 1,063 cadets — are members of CASA. That's compared to the handful of cadets who were involved in 2013, when Shannon Norenberg started as the academy's sexual assault and prevention coordinator. [\[Reprint\]](#)

VETERANS

[Airlines' Proposed Emotional Support Animal Rules Divide Veteran Advocacy Groups](#) [Dorothy Mills-Gregg, *Military.com*, 19 Mar 20]

Some veterans and disability advocates are divided over a [rule proposed](#) by the Department of Transportation (DoT) that would let airlines treat emotional support animals as pets.

[First woman to command N.H. Air National Guard dies](#) [Josie Albertson-Grove, *The New Hampshire Union Leader (Manchester, N.H.)*, 18 Mar 2020]

The first woman to command the New Hampshire Air National Guard has died. Retired Brig. Gen. Carolyn J. Protzmann, who died Friday, was 64. [\[Reprint\]](#)