

DEOMI NEWS LINKS, 4 SEPTEMBER 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

[GAO agrees to review Army's sexual harassment program](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 28 August 2020]

The Government Accountability Office on Wednesday accepted a request from Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., to review the Army's sexual harassment response program in the wake of the disappearance and death of Spc. Vanessa Guillen, the senator's office announced Friday. The review will look at the implementation and effectiveness of the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, known as SHARP, after Guillen's family said the soldier had experienced sexual harassment on base at Fort Hood, Texas, but was too afraid to report the instances to her chain of command. Those allegations have led to at least four internal Army reviews at Fort Hood. Demand for transparency grew as other veterans and service members shared stories similar to Guillen's using the hashtag #IamVanessaGuillen.

[Pentagon Seeks Input from Workforce on Improving Diversity](#) [Courtney Bubl , *GovExec*, 2 September 2020]

The department's Board on Diversity and Inclusion on Tuesday [reiterated its call](#) for suggestions by October 16 so the board can incorporate them into a report to Defense Secretary Mark Esper by December 15. The board is one of two Esper created in June to foster an "enterprise-wide, organizational and cultural shift." Although the Pentagon has made some inroads on diversity over the years, the Defense workforce (civilian and military) in 2018 was 82% male and 71% White, according to the department's most recent [report](#) on its Military One Source website. Esper said in June that while the department rejects discrimination, hate and bigotry, "we are not immune to the forces of bias and prejudice," which "has [a] direct and indirect impact on the experiences of our minority members."

[Troops: White nationalism a national security threat equal to ISIS, al-Qaida](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 3 September 2020]

*Troops surveyed in the latest *Military Times* Poll identified White nationalism as a national security threat on par with al-Qaida and the Islamic State Group, and more worrisome than the danger posed by North Korea, Afghanistan or Iraq. Participants, polled in late July after months of nationwide racial equality protests and violent conflicts between demonstrators and law enforcement, also reported signs of racist behavior in the ranks, despite military leaders' recent reminders of the importance of diversity and respect. The [poll](#), conducted in partnership with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University, found about one-third of all active-duty respondents said they saw signs of White supremacist or racist ideology in the ranks. That's roughly on par with results from other *Military Times* surveys in recent years.*

CULTURE

[Badges and Beards: The Air Force Wants Your Ideas for Future Uniform Updates](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 3 September 2020]

Airmen can now tell the Air Force their ideas on where they'd like to see improvements for uniforms, appearance standards, badges and patches and even jewelry, the service announced Thursday. Starting now, airmen and civilians can submit their recommendations through the Air Force's "IdeaScale" via a Common Access Card on how to update policy regarding acceptable appearance while on duty. "If we want an environment in which Airmen feel valued, we need to create transformative opportunities to foster a culture of innovation and then listen to their ideas," Lisa Truesdale, Air Force military force policy deputy director, said in a release. "Additionally, wearing the uniform and having pride in your personal appearance enhances esprit de corps."

[Nearly half of troops polled support changing names of bases honoring Confederate leaders](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 3 September 2020]

Nearly half of service members surveyed in the latest Military Times Poll favored renaming military bases that honor Confederate leaders and a large majority favored banning Confederate symbols and paraphernalia from all Defense Department locations. In recent months, military leaders have struggled with solutions to the controversy surrounding facilities such as Fort Bragg in North Carolina, Fort Hood in Texas and Fort Benning in Georgia — all named for Confederate generals and seen by some activists as tributes to America's pro-slavery past. About 69 percent of active-duty respondents to the survey said that the flags and other Confederate related symbols should be prohibited in those public military spaces. Roughly 58 percent of all troops — and 71 percent of minority service members — said they strongly support the ban. Only about 22 percent opposed the idea.

[John Boyega calls Disney out for marketing a Black character, only to ultimately push them aside](#) [Leah Asmelash, *CNN*, 2 September 2020]

When Disney first revealed John Boyega as a stormtrooper in "The Force Awakens," he immediately became the target of racist comments from "Star Wars" fans protesting the casting of a Black person in the role. Now, six years later, with the latest trilogy completed, Boyega is speaking up about his time working on the franchise. And understandably, he doesn't seem too happy. "What I would say to Disney is do not bring out a Black character, market them to be much more important in the franchise than they are and then have them pushed to the side," he said in an [interview with GQ UK](#) that was published Wednesday. Hollywood has long faced backlash for its lack of representation on screen, with advocates in the industry voicing their criticism in an open #OscarsSoWhite campaign in 2015 and 2016. That same year, Boyega was among the [683 new members](#) added to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. And while Hollywood is [more diverse](#) than before, many in the industry have pointed out there is still a long way to go.

["GI Joe" comic tackles the psychological burden of coming home from war](#) [J.D. Simkins, *Military Times*, 1 September 2020]

A reboot of the classic "GI Joe" comic series by [IDW Publishing](#) has released a stand-alone issue that, for the first time, centers on the intricate struggles encountered by those with post-traumatic

stress disorder. Published in August and developed by author Paul Allor, artist Chris Evenhuis, and colorist Brittany Peer, the 32-page issue centers on a flashback for one of the main characters, Scarlett, who is reeling from the effects of combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Traditionally, issues of GI Joe are available for purchase — digitally or in print — for \$3.99. However, IDW and Hasbro are currently offering G.I. Joe #7 — Scarlett’s backstory — for [free on digital platforms](#) in observance of National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

[Chadwick Boseman, who embodied Black icons, dies of cancer](#) [Ryan Pearson, *The Associated Press*, 29 August 2020]

First Chadwick Boseman slipped on the cleats of Jackie Robinson, then the Godfather of Soul’s dancing shoes, portraying both Black American icons with a searing intensity that commanded respect. When the former playwright suited up as Black Panther, he brought cool intellectual gravitas to the Marvel superhero whose “Wakanda forever!” salute reverberated worldwide. As his Hollywood career boomed, though, Boseman was privately undergoing “countless surgeries and chemotherapy” to battle colon cancer, his family said in a statement announcing his death at age 43 on Friday. He’d been diagnosed at stage 3 in 2016 but never spoke publicly about it.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Emotions run high over new Code Talkers beer can](#) [Natasha Brennan, *Indian Country Today*, 15 August 2020]

In honor of National Navajo Code Talkers Day, a Washington, D.C., craft brewery recently rereleased its Code Talker American Pale Ale — this time in a can — drawing some rave reviews but also backlash. The beer was formulated and brewed by LT Goodluck in honor of his late grandfather and Navajo Code Talker John V. Goodluck. The Hellbender Brewing Company announced the ale’s third annual release in August, debuting a bright red can featuring John V. Goodluck’s image. Some have commented that the product’s name makes it representative of all code talkers, not just the Navajo, and is tone-deaf because it creates another Native mascot. Others took issue with the use of a code talker to promote an alcoholic beverage. For instance, one Facebook commenter who said his grandfather was a code talker noted alcohol has destroyed many Native veterans’ lives, and called the use of a Code Talker’s image “completely sickening.” “It’s unfortunately a stereotype created by settlers and colonial ideas; however, I don’t feel our people should be defined by the stereotype. It was not my intent to hurt anyone, and I apologize to any ancestors of Navajo Code Talkers that felt that way,” Goodluck said.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

DISCRIMINATION

[Barring HIV-Positive Military Officers Has “No Rational Basis,” Judge Rules](#) [Erik Larson, *Bloomberg News*, 2 September 2020]

A U.S. military policy that blocks HIV-positive service members from being commissioned as officers has “no rational basis,” a federal judge said in declining to throw out claims brought by graduates of the Air Force and Navy academies. Five of the 10 claims in the lawsuit, including equal protection under the Constitution, survived the government’s motion to dismiss the case in a ruling Wednesday by U.S. District Judge Richard D. Bennett in Baltimore. The ruling allows the

suit to proceed toward a possible landmark trial. “There is simply no basis to hold that officers must be free from HIV even if they are physically capable of service and would otherwise be able to deploy,” Bennett wrote. “The military’s policy of withholding officer commissions from HIV-positive service members renders those service members second-class citizens. That is precisely what the equal protection clause forbids.”

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Court-Martialing Military Retirees Should Be Stopped Until Congress Acts, Lawyers Say](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 2 September 2020]

The military’s ability to court-martial some retirees and not others is a “textbook violation of equal protection,” an opening brief filed this week with a top court of appeals says. Lawyers representing Stephen Begani, a retired Navy chief petty officer who was court-martialed shortly after leaving the Navy in 2017, filed their opening brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces on Monday. Begani filed a petition earlier this year for the top military appellate court to hear his case after a lower court determined he’d been rightly court-martialed. Begani was subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice as a member of the Fleet Reserve. Sailors and Marines who leave active duty after serving more than 20 years, but less than 30, move into that status if they want to collect retiree pay. Retired reservists don’t face those same rules, however. Unlike members of the Fleet Reserve, they are not subject to the UCMJ. That, Begani’s lawyers say, is unconstitutional.

[52 Black Former Franchisees Sue McDonald’s Alleging Discrimination](#) [Alina Selyukh, *NPR*, 1 September 2020]

A group of 52 Black former McDonald’s franchisees is accusing the fast-food giant of discrimination, alleging they were “denied equal opportunity to economic success” compared to their White peers. A federal lawsuit filed in Illinois alleges that the fast-food chain steered Black franchisees toward certain neighborhoods where sales are lower while costs are higher, leaving them with less money and yet higher scrutiny from corporate headquarters. The franchisees, who ran a total of more than 200 restaurants in the past decade, are seeking up to \$1 billion in damages. In a separate lawsuit filed in January, two Black senior executives accused McDonald’s of a racial discrimination across the company, saying McDonald’s drove out both African-American leaders and franchisees. The company has denied the allegations.

[DOD Set to Roll Out New Policy Targeting Pregnancy Discrimination in the Military](#) [Hope Hodge Seck, *Military.com*, 1 September 2020]

A new Pentagon policy update aimed at tearing down practices that discriminate against pregnant service members is now complete, and will be distributed in coming days, the Defense Department’s chief diversity officer said Tuesday. The change was ordered in July by Defense Secretary Mark Esper as part of a package of changes designed to root out “discrimination, prejudice and bias in all ranks.” Cyrus Salazar, director of the Pentagon’s office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, told a meeting of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services Tuesday that work on the former policy is now complete. Salazar explained that previous policies protecting employees from pregnancy discrimination failed to include service members. The

federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 applied to civilian employees only, and a DOD directive governing discrimination extends pregnancy protections only to department civilians.

[Justice Department Employees Urge Leadership to End Pay Disparities](#) [Erich Wagner, *GovExec*, 31 August 2020]

A coalition of half a dozen Justice Department employee associations is urging department leaders to stop asking job applicants for their salary histories, saying the question contributes to pay disparities among workers. The DOJ Gender Equity Network, Department of Justice Association of Black Attorneys, Blacks in Government's Edward Woods, Jr., DOJ Chapter, DOJ Native American Association, DOJ Association of Hispanic Employees for Advancement and Development and DOJ Pride signed a letter earlier this month to the leaders of each component of the department asking them to remove the practice from the hiring process, arguing it contributes to unfair treatment of women, minorities and LGBTQ+ employees.

[Preaching Equality, Start-Up Didn't Practice It With Employees](#) [Erin Griffith, *The New York Times*, 30 August 2020]

Onstage at an industry conference last year, Henry Ward, chief executive of the financial technology start-up Carta, described his vision for transforming the way that workers get paid. "Our mission is to create more owners in the world," Mr. Ward said. Carta has turned that message into a \$3 billion valuation and become one of Silicon Valley's hottest start-ups. But even as it espoused its ownership-for-all creed, the company behaved inequitably to many of its own 838 workers, according to interviews with more than a dozen current and former employees, along with reviews of emails, internal communications and corporate documents. The current and former employees, four of whom spoke on the record, said they were often belittled, excluded from meetings and made to feel as if they were at fault for their own mistreatment. Many of those who were mistreated were women, the current and former employees said. One woman was fired after an emotional outburst in a meeting. Another was pushed out after raising regulatory concerns.

[Removing photographs may not give a bigger picture for selection and promotion boards](#) [COMMENTARY] [Ron E. Prescott, *Army Times*, 29 August 2020]

Fostering greater diversity and inclusion in the Army requires deliberate actions to ensure women and minorities are adequately represented in positions of leadership and influence. The decision to remove photographs and demographic information from promotion and selection boards is unlikely to improve diversity and inclusion. The decision, instead, appears to be an emotionally charged reaction to the important and needed conversations currently occurring in the United States relative to issues of racial and, to a lesser extent, gender equity. What is required, however, are deliberate approaches to secure diversity and inclusion that confront institutional bias, that educate soldiers about implicit bias, and that cement attitudes and behaviors, which foster diversity and inclusion into the Army's foundation.

DIVERSITY

[A 59-year-old Army and Marine vet, who served in Afghanistan, just graduated Army basic combat training](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 1 September 2020]

A 59-year-old former Marine and civil affairs soldier graduated Army basic combat training last week — a prerequisite for him to enter the Army Reserve after a 10-year break in his military service. Staff Sgt. Monte L. Gould, who served in Afghanistan in 2004, left the Army two-and-a-half years short of retirement in 2009 to move home and spend more time with his family. Before he officially graduated last week, Gould shared some of his experiences and talked about what it was like to attend training with recruits four decades younger than him. “I’m 59 years old. For some of these kids, I’m older than their grandparents,” Gould said during a telephone interview. “I went through [Marine Corps boot camp] in 1978. It’s a whole different world.” Contemplating my next challenge, contract and adventure,” Gould wrote on a post to friends and family over social media a week before graduation. “This is in the bag and complete, check that off. A great adventure for an old man.”

[Marines lay out plans for gender integrating boot camp at the platoon level](#) [Philip Athey, *Marine Corps Times*, 1 September 2020]

The Marine Corps provided hints about its plans for gender integrating boot camp at the platoon level in a report to Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services released in the September meeting notes. The Corps will first provide the required facility upgrades for gender integrated training then will shift its focus on training a sufficient cadre of female drill instructors, according to the report dated July 30 sent to DACOWITS. The Marine Corps is the only service without fully gender-integrated basic training, something that Congress [required the Marine Corps](#) to change in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. The Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina has to integrate boot camp at the platoon level within five years, according to the law passed in December of 2019.

[USAF doctor strives to advance women leaders in military medicine](#) [Elaine Sanchez, *Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs*, 1 September 2020]

Air Force Col. (Dr.) Heather Yun is the epitome of being in the right place at the right time. Less than a month after she became the newest leader on the command team, Yun found herself perfectly situated to help shape Brooke Army Medical Center’s COVID-19 pandemic response. “I had amazing mentors and sponsors, both men and women, who supported me throughout my career,” she said. “Over the years, I’ve had younger women tell me that it’s been important to have someone senior to them whose life looks like theirs.” While the military has come a long way regarding females in the higher ranks, Yun sees more progress to come. To foster mentorship, Yun led the “Women in Medicine” program at BAMC for three years and helped pilot a coed military medicine mentorship program for physicians. Most recently, she became the command liaison for the new Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

[California Bill Would Require Corporate Boards to Diversify](#) [Emma Coleman, *Route Fifty*, 31 August 2020]

The California legislature passed a bill this weekend that would mandate diversity on the boards of corporations headquartered in the state. [Assembly Bill 979](#), which would apply only to publicly-held corporations, would require boards to have at least one member of an underrepresented community by the end of 2021. Assemblymember Chris Holden, a Democrat who sponsored the bill, told lawmakers before the vote on Sunday that the lack of diversity on corporate boards is a

hindrance to racial justice. “Women and minorities are underrepresented across white-collar industries, especially at the managerial and executive levels,” he said. “Corporations have money, power, and influence. If we are going to address racial injustice and inequity in our society, it’s imperative that corporate boards reflect the diversity of our state.”

[Meet Senegal’s first female professional surfer](#) [BBC News, 31 August 2020]

Khadjou Sambe, Senegal’s first female professional surfer, trains near her home in the district of Ngor - the westernmost point of the African continent. “I would always see people surfing and I’d say to myself: ‘But where are the girls who surf?’” says the 25-year-old. “I thought: ‘Why don’t I go surfing, represent my country, represent Africa, represent Senegal, as a Black girl?’” “I always think to myself, when I wake up in the morning: ‘Khadjou, you’ve got something to do, you represent something everywhere in the world, you must go straight to the point, don’t give up.’” The surfer is now inspiring the next generation to defy cultural norms and take to the waves. Sambe trains beginners at Black Girls Surf (BGS), a training school for girls and women who want to compete in professional surfing.

[Being the first Black female military pilots wasn’t easy. Now they help others fly](#) [Tara Copp, McClatchy, 28 August 2020]

The first Black female pilots in the Army and Navy made history just months apart. But a year later, one would have her flight status taken away, and the other would be left questioning how close she came to also losing her military flying career. Until now, neither Army Lt. Col. Marcella Hayes Ng, the nation’s first Black female military pilot, nor Lt. Cmdr. Brenda Robinson, the Navy’s first Black female pilot, has shared publicly the details of the difficulties they faced as “firsts.” Both are now retired, and spoke to McClatchy about ideas on what can be done to [get more minority women to fly](#) as the Pentagon conducts a review on diversity in the military.

[NASA astronaut Jeanette Epps to become first Black woman to join an International Space Station crew](#) [Courtney Connley, CNBC, 27 August 2020]

NASA astronaut Jeanette Epps will join astronauts Sunita Williams and Josh Cassada as a crew member on the first operational flight of Boeing’s CST-100 Starliner spacecraft to the International Space Station (ISS), the agency [announced](#) Tuesday. The six-month expedition, which is planned to launch in 2021, will make Epps the first Black woman to live and work in space for an extended period of time. Her new assignment in space comes two years after she was first tapped to become an ISS crew member aboard a Russian spacecraft, which would have made her the first Black astronaut, man or woman, on an extended space mission. But, at the last minute Epps, who had already trained for her role, was removed from the assignment without any explanation by NASA. Her brother, Henry Epps, blamed racism as the reason for his sister’s removal, but Epps told [The Washington Post](#) in 2018 that she could not comment on her brother’s remarks or the reason for the last-minute crew change.

HUMAN RELATIONS

[Why toxic senior leaders survive—and sometimes thrive—in the military](#) [COMMENTARY]

[Retired Col. Jason Lamb, *Military Times*, 4 September 2020]

About a year ago in a candid one-on-one discussion, I asked a senior general officer in the Air Force why he had not yet removed a commander well known to be toxic. He told me that he would like to, but that too many other people had been removed lately and there was “no appetite” to remove yet another senior leader. Instead, that commander went on to another prestigious position on a staff. Why is there a quota on the number of senior leaders who can be fired or removed? From what I’ve been able to determine, it comes down to three major factors: individual competence of the toxic officer; lack of personal accountability up and down the chain of command; and senior leader fear of loss of confidence.

[The Air Force has begun assigning airmen with child custody arrangements to duty near their kids](#) [Stephen Losey, *Air Force Times*, 2 September 2020]

The Air Force on Aug. 17 began allowing airmen who have court-ordered child custody arrangements to ask to be stationed near their children for their next assignments, or to have their next assignments deferred if it would take them away from their kids. Previously, child custody arrangements were not considered as part of the assignment process. However, the Air Force cautioned last month that it still has to meet its needs, and might not be able to accommodate all airmen requesting assignment near their children. These assignment matches will be made when possible, the Air Force said, and it will try to accommodate airmen’s family situations, unless there is no other option.

[Cognitive Limits Mess up Decisions Based on Chance](#) [James Devitt, *Futurity*, 31 August 2020]

Our cognitive limitations lead to probability distortions and to subsequent errors in decision-making, according to [new research](#). The chances of a commercial airliner crashing are vanishingly small—and yet many people are uncomfortable flying. [Vaccinations](#) for many common childhood diseases entail almost no risk—but parents still worry. Human perception of probabilities—especially very small and very large probabilities—can be markedly distorted and these distortions can lead to potentially disastrous [decisions](#). But why we distort probability is unclear. While the question has been previously studied, there is no consensus on its causes. For the new study, researchers developed a model of human cognitive limitations and tested its predictions experimentally. The researchers initiated the analysis by examining the nature of distortions as a potential clue for explaining this phenomenon.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[New generation of Tuskegee aviators delivers med supplies](#) [Steve Euvino, *Stars and Stripes*, 29 August 2020]

One organization grounded in helping young people has assisted two groups whose public service has been heightened due to the pandemic. Cadets from the Tuskegee NEXT youth aviation program delivered supplies of personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer on Aug. 18 to Gary/Chicago International Airport. These supplies will be distributed to Methodist Hospitals and the Gary Chapter of the NAACP. Sean Littleton, a 16-year-old from Chicago who plans to enroll at Tuskegee NEXT to pursue a private pilot's license, volunteered for his Eagle Scout service project. With Tuskegee NEXT, city, hospital and airport officials gathered in the Bessie Coleman Hangar, Gary Mayor Jerome Prince said Tuskegee NEXT cadets represent future generations of heroes.

MISCELLANEOUS

[6 Black Lives Matter murals planned for streets of KC](#) [The Associated Press, 4 September 2020] Organizers of a plan to paint Black Lives Matter murals on six Kansas City, Missouri, streets say the project may be the largest of its kind. The murals are scheduled to be painted Saturday, The Kansas City Star [reported](#). Several other cities have seen street murals honoring the Black Lives Matter movement in the months since George Floyd's death in Minneapolis, but Kansas City organizers said they're unaware of any matching the scope of what they have planned. The project, KC Art on the Block, will cover 2,000 feet (610 meters) of street and involve 1,000 volunteers. Six Black artists will lead the designs, each featuring "Black Lives Matter" in block letters, but each featuring varying themes. "Cities can affect lasting change when they come together," said Damian Lair, who helped organize the project.

[Sophia Farrar Dies at 92; Belied Indifference to Kitty Genovese Attack](#) [Sam Roberts, The New York Times, 3 September 2020]

The story of Kitty Genovese, coupled with the number 38, became a parable for urban indifference after Ms. Genovese was stalked, raped and stabbed to death in her tranquil Queens neighborhood. Two weeks after the murder, The New York Times reported [in a front-page article](#) that 37 apathetic neighbors who witnessed the murder failed to call the police, and another called only after she was dead. It would take decades for a more complicated truth to unravel, including the fact that one neighbor actually raced from her apartment to rescue Ms. Genovese, knowing she was in distress but unaware whether her assailant was still on the scene. That woman, Sophia Farrar, the unsung heroine who cradled the body of Ms. Genovese and whispered "Help is on the way" as she lay bleeding, died on Friday at her home in Manchester, N.J. She was 92.

[Air Force Authorizes Time Off from PT for More Women Who Miscarry](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, Military.com, 1 September 2020]

The U.S. Air Force is giving airmen who suffer a miscarriage a more flexible time period before they take their next physical fitness assessment, according to an updated instruction. The Air Force will officially give PT exemptions for pregnancies that last fewer than 20 weeks, according to the new instruction, ["Duty Limiting Conditions."](#) [Air Force Magazine](#) was first to report the news. The Air Force in 2015 gave women who had pregnancies lasting at least 20 weeks -- including miscarriages -- the exemption from PT for a year. Women who suffered miscarriages earlier in their pregnancies were evaluated for exemptions on a case-by-case basis. Now, women who have pregnancies that last fewer than 20 weeks will also be given a grace period: Women whose pregnancy ends in a miscarriage between 12 and 20 weeks "will have a fitness assessment exemption of 180 days," the AFI said. A pregnancy duration of "up to 12 weeks will have a fitness assessment exemption of up to 60 days," it said.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Dermatology Has a Problem With Skin Color](#) [Roni Caryn Rabin, The New York Times, 1 September 2020]

In the spring, teenagers started showing up at doctors' offices in droves with angry red and purple blisters on their fingers and toes. The latest unexpected feature of the coronavirus infection

fascinated the public, and suddenly photographs of so-called Covid toes were everywhere on social media. But almost all of the images depicted glossy pink lesions on white skin. Though people of color have been affected disproportionately by the pandemic, pictures of Covid toes on dark skin were curiously hard to find. The problem isn't unique to Covid toes or to social media. Dermatology, the medical specialty devoted to treating diseases of the skin, has a problem with brown and black skin. Though progress has been made in recent years, most textbooks that serve as road maps for diagnosing skin disorders often don't include images of skin conditions as they appear on people of color.

[Police: Teacher with far-right ties harassed health officer](#) [The Associated Press, 1 September 2020]

A California community college instructor with ties to the far-right, anti-government "boogaloo" movement was in custody on suspicion of sending two dozen misogynistic and threatening letters to a county health officer involving the coronavirus pandemic, authorities said Tuesday. Alan Viarengo, 55, was arrested last week and investigators seized 138 firearms, thousands of rounds of ammunition and explosive materials from his home in Gilroy, the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office said. Viarengo was charged with felony counts of stalking and threatening a public official after authorities said the letters were sent to county Health Director Dr. Sara Cody. He has not entered a plea. His bail was revoked and he remains in jail. Investigators said the letters became "increasingly aggressive, offensive and threatening" and contained slogans and imagery from the boogaloo movement, a loosely organized, right-wing extremist group known for anti-government, anti-police and pro-gun beliefs.

[Condensed Schedule and Staff Not Showing Up to Work Have Put the Census at Risk](#) [Eric Katz, Route Fifty, 30 August 2020]

The Census Bureau's late decision to push up the deadline to complete its decennial count has heightened the risk of inaccuracies, according to a new report, which found the agency is struggling to retain employees, ensure its technology functions properly and otherwise adapt to shorter timeframes for each step of its operations. After delaying the start of its operations due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, Census said it would push back the delivery of data into April 2021. The bureau never received permission from Congress for the change, however, and now plans to meet its statutory deadline of Dec. 31, 2020. That forced Census to revise its deadline to finish collecting responses from Oct. 31 up to Sept. 30. The agency will now have just three months to process data for apportionment, instead of its normal five.

MISCONDUCT

[Seven police officers in Rochester, NY suspended over Black man's death, mayor says](#) [Gabriella Borter and Jonathan Allen, Reuters, 3 September 2020]

Seven police officers were suspended Thursday over the arrest and asphyxiation death of Black man Daniel Prude in Rochester, New York after video of the March incident was released, the city's mayor said, calling it an act of racism. Prude's family this week released body camera footage from his arrest, showing a group of officers putting a hood over his head - apparently to prevent his spit from possibly transmitting the novel coronavirus - as he knelt on the ground,

handcuffed and naked. Prude's family has called for the arrest of the officers involved in his death seven days after the incident on March 23 in the upstate New York city. Prude was 41. The Monroe County medical examiner ruled Prude's death a homicide caused by "complications of asphyxia in the setting of physical restraint," according to an autopsy report, the New York Times reported. The autopsy report said "excited delirium" and acute intoxication by phencyclidine, or the drug PCP, were also contributing factors to his death, the Times reported.

["Thirst-trap" posts on TikTok raise questions about military social media policies](#) [Sarah Sicard, *Military Times*, 2 September 2020]

A few weeks back, a TikTok post of two female soldiers dancing to Cardi B's "WAP" made the rounds on Twitter, prompting heated discussions about everything from issues on moonlighting and poor conduct to misogyny and sexism. For those who aren't aware, Urban Dictionary defines "thirst trap" as "a sexy photograph or flirty message posted on social media for the intent of causing others to publicly profess their attraction." The Army's [social media handbook](#) in particular embraces a three-pronged approach when it comes to individual soldiers posting on social media in general: Think, type and post. "The U.S. Army defines online conduct as the use of electronic communications in an official or personal capacity that is consistent with U.S. Army Values and standards of conduct. It is important that all Soldiers know that once they have logged on to a social media platform, they still represent the U.S. Army," the guide says. "Online misconduct is a term that describes unacceptable or improper behavior through the use of technology." But whether or not "thirst trap" posts in uniform mark of a violation of that policy is, as of yet, unclear.

[Fort Bragg Investigating Army Officer for Crass Holocaust Joke on TikTok](#) [Matthew Cox, *Military.com*, 31 August 2020]

*Army officials at Fort Bragg, North Carolina today announced they are opening an investigation into a video posted on social media showing an Army officer telling a joke about Jewish people and the Holocaust. The video, which began circulating on Twitter, shows Army 2nd Lt. Nathan Freihofer in civilian clothes standing in front of a mirror telling the hateful joke as he appears to render a Nazi salute. Freihofer is a popular TikTok influencer with 2.9 million followers. "*Videos do not represent the U.S. ARMY," his TikTok profile reads. Many of his videos feature him in his Army camouflage working uniform.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

RACISM

[Family of injured Kansas girl speaks out against racism](#) [The Associated Press, 4 September 2020]

The family of an 11-year-old Black girl who was injured in what they say was a racially-motivated attack in Kansas said Thursday it is important to talk to children about racism. "We've seen a problem, and we're here to give solutions and ask the community to come together to address this problem," attorney La Ronna Lassiter Saunders told reporters. Nevaeh Thomas was visiting friends in Shawnee when a 12-year-old White boy called the Black girls racial slurs, KCUR-FM reported. The boy allegedly hit Thomas on the head, leaving her unconscious. She received eight stitches and is recovering from a concussion nearly a week later. "I think kids need to get together

and talk about racism. It's okay if we're different or we have different opinions. But it's not okay to hate and judge each other on their color and their skin," Thomas said.

[West Point superintendent says he's taking action on racism highlighted by nine recent cadets](#)

[Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 3 September 2020]

West Point's superintendent said he will take action regarding a [40-page policy proposal](#) on racism at the U.S. Military Academy in New York after an investigation completes in the early fall. The policy proposal was written by nine recent graduates and sent to his office in late June. It included testimony from cadets who said they endured racial slurs and racially based harassment that wasn't properly investigated when reported to those in their chains of command. After receiving the document, West Point Superintendent Lt. Gen. Darryl A. Williams directed his inspector general's office to begin a formal investigation into the allegations raised by the former cadets. "It's very important we're looking at this, and I welcome the feedback," Williams said at an Association of the U.S. Army event Wednesday. "Oftentimes, we don't stop and take time to listen. But it's incumbent on leadership, once we've listened, that we take action. So we look forward to taking action. We're taking action now."

[Why Black Aging Matters, Too](#) [Judith Graham, *Kaiser Health News*, 3 September 2020]

People who fit this description are more likely to die from COVID-19 than any other group in the country. They are perishing quietly, out of sight, in homes and apartment buildings, senior housing complexes, nursing homes and hospitals, [disproportionately poor, frail and ill](#), after enduring a lifetime of racism and its attendant adverse health effects. Yet, older Black Americans have received little attention as protesters proclaim that Black Lives Matter and experts churn out studies about the coronavirus. A KHN [analysis of data](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention underscores the extent of their vulnerability. It found that African Americans ages 65 to 74 died of COVID-19 five times as often as Whites. In the 75-to-84 group, the death rate for Blacks was 3½ times greater. Among those 85 and older, Blacks died twice as often. In all three age groups, death rates for Hispanics were higher than for Whites but lower than for Blacks.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[A false 911 call in New Jersey could lead to more jail time if there's bias](#) [Evan Simko-Bednarski, *CNN*, 2 September 2020]

Making a false 911 call based on someone's race is now a crime in New Jersey. Gov. Phil Murphy signed legislation Monday making it a crime to place such a call with the goal of intimidating someone based on race or another protected class, such as religion or gender. The [measure creates](#) a category for false police reports and incrimination in the state's laws against bias intimidation. "Using the threat of a 911 call or police report as an intimidation tactic against people of color is an unacceptable, abhorrent form of discrimination," Murphy said in a statement. "Individuals who choose to weaponize this form of intimidation should held be accountable to the fullest extent of the law." While false police reports have long been illegal in New Jersey, the law now provides for higher penalties when doing so is for the purpose of intimidation, based on race, religion or gender, among other categories.

[The services have work to do when it comes to unconscious bias, SECDEF says](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 2 September 2020]

When Defense Secretary Mark Esper sits down to talk with troops about racial insensitivity in the military, he said, the biggest issue they call out is the unintended discrimination and insensitivity they face from other service members. Esper met with airmen and sailors for diversity and inclusion sensing sessions during a late August trip to Guam and Hawaii. “I see a continuity in terms of their feedback, and ways to address bias in the ranks,” Esper said. “They all shared that there’s a [discomfort] about discussing these issues, issues of race. Much less so when you compare other issues that we deal with in the military.” But their suggestions trend away from the military’s traditional methods for making change, which include mandatory training and written policy.

[Sgt. Maj. of the Army: If you “only see green,” you’re not seeing the whole soldier](#) [Elizabeth Howe, *Connecting Vets*, 2 September 2020]

“If you say ‘all I see is green,’ you don’t see all of your soldiers,” Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said during an Association of the U.S. Army panel on race. The panel was one of several in AUSA’s Noon Report series on race which has hosted leaders including Grinston, Under Secretary of the Army James McPherson, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Joseph Martin, and others. Monday’s panel gave Grinston the opportunity to ask NCOs from across the Army the tough questions about race that are currently at the forefront of the nation’s discussion on racial inequality. One such question specifically addressed the concept of “only seeing green.” The Army, as well as other branches of the force, has long taught soldiers to “see green” -- or only see their fellow soldiers for the color of their Army uniform rather than for the color of their skin. But now, Grinston is changing that message, explaining how this approach allows soldiers to only see a portion of each other. “When you say, ‘All I see is green,’ you don’t see all of me,” Grinston said the soldier told him.

[75 years later, Japanese man recalls bitter internment in U.S.](#) [Emily Wang, *The Associated Press*, 1 September 2020]

When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941, the first thing Hidekazu Tamura, a Japanese American living in California, thought was, “I’ll be killed at the hands of my fellow Americans.” It wouldn’t be the last time he felt that way. At 99, amid commemorations of Wednesday’s 75th anniversary of the formal Sept. 2, 1945, surrender ceremony that ended World War II, Tamura has vivid memories of his time locked up with thousands of other Japanese Americans in U.S. internment camps. Torn between two warring nationalities, the experience led him to refuse a loyalty pledge to the United States, renounce his American citizenship and return to Japan.

[SMA Grinston: Here’s how to talk about race in the Army](#) [Diana Stancy Correll, *Army Times*, 1 September 2020]

It’s not always easy discussing race and diversity issues. That’s why Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said he usually opens up these discussions by asking his soldiers how they grew up. “It kind of defines who I am today ... how I grew up,” Grinston said Monday during a virtual discussion of race sponsored by the Association of the United States Army. And that’s why it’s so important, that question.” Ten days after the death of George Floyd, a Black man prosecutors say

was murdered by a White Minneapolis police officer on May 25, Grinston, whose father is Black and mother is White, shared via Twitter some of his experiences growing up in Alabama. “Racial identity is something I struggled with my entire life,” Grinston said in the [video](#). But learning how someone grew up is just the beginning, Grinston said. The next question is whether soldiers have seen or experienced racism in the Army.

[South Carolina police officer fired after seen on video using n-word](#) [Andy Rose, CNN, 1 September 2020]

*A Columbia, South Carolina, police officer was fired Monday evening after he was seen on video using the n-word during a heated exchange with customers outside a bar. Sgt. Chad Walker was ordering customers to leave the bar in the Five Points neighborhood shortly after 11:00 p.m. Saturday, enforcing mandatory bar closing times in place because of the coronavirus, according to a statement issued by the Columbia Police Department. Bodycam video released by the department shows Walker responding to a muffled comment from a male patron, saying, “You’re a little color-blind, sir.” Walker pointing to a Black male who was in the bar, responds: “People of color? The gentleman right there that called me a N***er?” After repeating the slur, several customers can be heard getting upset. Columbia Police Chief Skip Holbrook apologized on behalf of the department in a statement Sunday night. “The repetition of the racial slur and failure to deescalate the situation were inexcusable,” Holbrook said. Walker was suspended with pay on Sunday pending a review.*

[“Antifa hunter” gets 3 years for online racist threats](#) [Michael Kunzelman, *The Associated Press*, 31 August 2020]

A Florida man who called himself “the Antifa hunter” as he waged an online campaign to terrorize and harass those who opposed his White supremacist ideology was sentenced on Monday to more than three years in prison. Daniel McMahon, 32, of Brandon, Florida, pleaded guilty in April to using social media to threaten a Black activist to deter the man from running for office in Charlottesville, Virginia. McMahon also admitted that he threatened to sexually assault the young autistic daughter of a North Carolina woman who protested against White nationalists. A federal judge in Virginia sentenced McMahon to three years and five months in prison.

[Black couple from New Jersey say they were racially profiled at a Boston hotel](#) [Monsy Alvarado, *USA Today*, 31 August 2020]

*Marilyn Mathieu and Calvin deGrasse of Maplewood have received an apology from a hotel in Boston that claimed that the couple had smoked in their non-smoking room and left “leaves” behind after they stayed there one recent summer weekend. The couple also received a refund of the \$250 smoking charge and a voucher for a future stay at the Cambria Hotel in downtown Boston. But Mathieu, 42, and deGrasse, 38, who have two young boys who also stayed at the hotel, said that although she appreciates the apology she won’t be using the voucher. Mathieu, who was born in Haiti and moved to the United States at age 5, said she believes she and deGrasse, who was born in St. Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean, were racially profiled, reports *NorthJersey.com*, which is a part of the USA Today Network.*

[The Few, the Proud, the White: The Marine Corps Balks at Promoting Generals of Color](#) [Helene Cooper, *The New York Times*, 31 August 2020]

Proud and fierce in their identity, the Marines have a singular race problem that critics say is rooted in decades of resistance to change. As the nation reels this summer from protests challenging centuries-long perceptions of race, the Marines — who have long cultivated a reputation as the United States’ strongest fighting force — remain an institution where a handful of White men rule over 185,000 White, African-American, Hispanic and Asian men and women. “It took an act of Congress last year to get them to integrate by gender at the platoon level,” said Representative Anthony G. Brown, Democrat of Maryland and a former Army helicopter pilot. “And now they continue to hold onto that 1950s vision of who Marines are.” Since the Marines first admitted African-American troops in 1942, the last military service to do so, only 25 have obtained the rank of general in any form. Not one has made it to the top four-star rank, an honor the Marines have bestowed on 72 White men.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Former NASA astronaut Leland Melvin was never afraid to go to space. But a police stop made him sweat](#) [Ashley Strickland, *CNN*, 31 August 2020]

A police stop could have cost former NASA astronaut Leland Melvin his career in space before he ever got started. Melvin, who was never afraid launching into space on two Space Shuttle Atlantis missions to help build the International Space Station, never knew what was going to happen when the cops pulled him over. “Every father in the Black community has a conversation with their son to tell them that if you get stopped by an officer, you know, you assume the position, which is 10-2 (hands on the wheel), look straight ahead,” he added. “You tell the officer, you know, you’re real respectful, you say you’re reaching for your obvious things.” Melvin spoke Monday during a panel celebrating Black lives in the space industry during the [2020 Virtual Humans to Mars Summit](#) hosted by Explore Mars, a nonprofit organization that advocates for the human exploration of Mars.

[How Minneapolis re-segregated its schools and set the stage for a national crisis](#) [Erin Einhorn and Nigel Chiwaya, *NBC News*, 31 August 2020]

The death of George Floyd this spring turned Minneapolis into a symbol of America’s racial divide — a place where, as in many American cities, people of color feel sidelined, disrespected and cut off from opportunities. But Minneapolis hasn’t always had that reputation. In the last decades of the 20th century, the Twin Cities were seen as a [model of racial and economic integration](#), celebrated as a place where state laws and local initiatives created some of the most far-reaching school and neighborhood integration programs in the nation. Those efforts didn’t stamp out racism, said Helen Bassett, 70, a Black school board member in the suburban Robbinsdale Area school district near Minneapolis. But they gave people a way to better understand one another, “to relate to them on the basis of human decency.” Today, however, the programs are mostly gone.

[Arkansas sheriff who was secretly recorded using racial slurs reluctantly resigned and insisted he’s not racist](#) [Anna Medaris Miller, *Business Insider*, 30 August 2020]

Arkansas County Sheriff Todd Wright resigned on Friday, months after he was recorded going on a racist rant about a Black grocery-store employee. In a five-minute recording captured secretly by

Desiree Middlebrooks, the mother of his child, and shared widely on social media, Wright can be heard using a racial slur nine times. Wright was apparently upset that Middlebrooks talked to the employee. He called her a “n----- lover” and later said, “Why you got to holler at f---ing n----- when I’m around?” In a Facebook post on May 28, The Pine Bluff Commercial reported, Wright acknowledged that it was his voice and said, “To all I have offended or hurt I send my sincere apologies and will pray for my enemies.” But that wasn’t enough. In a special meeting on Friday, the Arkansas County Quorum Court unanimously requested that Wright resign.

RELIGION

[Shiite Muslims mark holy day of mourning in virus’ shadow](#) [Mariam Fam and Bassem Mroue, *The Associated Press*, 29 August 2020]

Shiite Muslims are observing the solemn holy day of Ashoura that they typically mark with large, mournful gatherings, in the shadow of the coronavirus pandemic. Ashoura commemorates the seventh-century killing of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, in the Battle of Karbala in present-day Iraq with the army of then Caliph Yazid, to whom Hussein had refused to pledge allegiance. “At its heart, it’s the story of the sacrifice of an extraordinary religious figure,” said Noor Zaidi, who teaches history at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and researches Shiite Islam. “It’s (also) the story of familial love between Hussein and those who were with him in Karbala. ...It also has this real, sort of revolutionary component to it,” she said.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Demanding positive change \[COMMENTARY\]](#) [SSgt. Heather Fejerang, *Air Force Times*, 4 September 2020]

I am a U.S. Air Force staff sergeant deployed to the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. I was recently featured in an article that highlighted me and my sister, a U.S. Air Force captain, about our experience being deployed together. The article, the first of a three-part series, highlighted deployed service members who are also family. The response from the military community that followed the article once it posted online was the direct opposite of what I, or my sister, could ever have expected.

[Fort Hood gets new acting commander; Army orders “in-depth investigation” into the chain of command](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 1 September 2020]

The Army has directed a new general to take acting command of Fort Hood, a central Texas military installation thrust into the public spotlight in recent months over a series of violent deaths and disappearances among soldiers stationed there, senior service officials told reporters Tuesday afternoon. Murray’s investigation will involve “a comprehensive look at everything” involving the command’s actions following Guillen’s April 22 disappearance and the subsequent discovery of her remains months later, said Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy. An Army Forces Command inspector general team recently found that 18 out of 52 women surveyed on Fort Hood, about one-third, reported being sexually harassed. FORSCOM’s review was sparked by sexual harassment allegations that arose following Guillen’s disappearance. Her family said she was afraid to report the incidents for fear of reprisal.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[NFL assumes oversight of investigation into Washington Football Team workplace](#) [Liz Clarke, Mark Maske, Will Hobson and Beth Reinhard, *The Washington Post*, 31 August 2020]

The NFL has assumed oversight of the investigation into allegations of sexual harassment, sexism and mistreatment in the Washington Football Team workplace, according to multiple people familiar with the situation. According to these people, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and team owner Daniel Snyder discussed the issue and agreed it was best if attorney Beth Wilkinson, who is conducting the investigation, reports to the league instead of the team. Snyder has told the NFL he will release current and former team employees from nondisclosure agreements for the sole purpose of cooperating with Wilkinson and the Wilkinson Walsh law firm looking into the findings of two reports by The Washington Post that detailed years of demeaning, exploitative treatment of 40 female employees during Snyder's 21-year tenure, according to Lisa J. Banks, a partner of the D.C. firm Katz, Marshall & Banks, which represents more than 12 such former employees, based on her conference call with league officials Monday. "I think that will be extremely helpful in making employees and former employees come forward and share their experiences with the investigators," Banks said following the call.

[Langley airman convicted of sex assault at court martial](#) [*The Associated Press*, 29 August 2020]

An airman at Langley Air Force Base has been found guilty in military court of sexually assaulting a colleague. The Virginian-Pilot [reported](#) Saturday that Airman Adam M. Rodela was convicted at a court martial of touching the genitals of a female airman without her consent. He was sentenced to a year in confinement, a reprimand and a reduction in rank. Rodela is assigned to Langley's 1st Operations Support Squadron. He entered the service in 2018.

[Air Force general issues apology to veteran about new investigation into old rape case](#) [Steve Beynon, *Stars and Stripes*, 28 August 2020]

An Air Force general has issued an apology to a veteran after she raised concerns about how military investigators handled reexamining her 20-year-old rape case. Lisa Wilken, a former airman and veterans advocate, said two military investigators showed up at her Indiana home unannounced three weeks ago after she recently tweeted about her rape, which happened in 1994. She said the surprise visit was inappropriate, noting most rape survivors want to tell their stories on their terms and it felt "big-brotherish" that the military was monitoring social media. It's possible other women could be uncomfortable telling their stories knowing the Defense Department is in the audience, Wilken said. "It is never our intent to put survivors of crime through additional trauma," Brig. Gen. Terry Bullard, commander of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, wrote in a letter to Wilken. "OSI stands ready to listen to victims and survivors, provide them a voice no matter how long ago their sexual assault occurred, and to guarantee their opportunity to receive support."

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Family lawyer: Fort Hood soldier found dead was "humiliated" after reporting sexual abuse](#) [J. Edward Moreno, *The Hill*, 28 August 2020]

*Sgt. Elder Fernandes, the Fort Hood soldier whose body was found in Temple, Texas, on Tuesday, was “humiliated” after reporting sexual abuse, his family attorney said. On Tuesday, Fernandes was found hanging in a tree in Temple, which is about 28 miles from the Fort Hood base, months after he had gone missing in April. Natalie Khawam, the family’s attorney, said the U.S. Army’s base in Texas created an environment that led to Fernandes’s death. “They don’t know what happened — whether it was suicide or whether murder. But I’m gonna tell you, what they did to him, the blood on their hands, it’s a form of murder,” Khawam said Wednesday afternoon [at a press conference](#) in Tampa, Fla., *The Enterprise* reported.*

[Military sexual assault victims say the system is broken](#) [Ella Torres, *ABC News*, 28 August 2020]
*Sexual harassment and assault in the military has been at the forefront of discussions for years as the military tries to address the problem and make it easier and safer for victims to report cases. Out of the four branches, the Army and Navy had the highest reports of sexual assault, according to the [most recent data](#) from the Department of Defense. “These [sexual harassment or assault] cases are not handled properly and the follow-up care for the victim is not right,” Kayla Kight, now a first lieutenant in the 322nd Civil Affairs Brigade, told *ABC News* in a recent telephone interview. Earlier this year, *ABC News* [profiled](#) a former Army officer who said she was raped -- an event that she said began what she said was a long nightmare for her in the pursuit of justice, including having her trial moved at the last minute from civilian to military court. The suspect in her case was ultimately acquitted in a court martial. In a 2017 email between commanders about Kight’s case obtained by *ABC News*, a colonel writes, “When [Kight] left my office she stated, ‘I could have been a great Army Nurse if I had the chance...maybe I shouldn’t have reported it.’ This statement deeply saddens me.”*

SUICIDE

[Veteran died by suicide after not receiving needed care at Memphis VA, IG report says](#) [Nikki Wentling, *Stars and Stripes*, 3 September 2020]

A veteran died by suicide one day after seeking treatment at the veterans hospital in Memphis, Tenn., where the patient “did not receive the care needed,” an investigation found. The veteran, in his or her 30s, sought treatment at the Memphis VA Medical Center in summer 2019. He or she had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, was suffering from insomnia and was out of psychiatric medications. An emergency room doctor discharged the veteran with instructions to go to the facility’s outpatient mental health clinic, but there was no evidence the patient received treatment there. A family member who accompanied the veteran to the hospital told inspectors that they went to the mental health clinic, where they waited an hour before being told that the next available appointment was in one month. The veteran was able to get a 10-day refill of one antidepressant that day but did not receive refills for a medication that prevents nightmares or another that treats insomnia. The next day, the veteran died by a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

[Seeking the Military Suicide Solution Podcast, Episode 33: Dr. Matt Mishkind — Reducing Barriers to Care through Telehealth](#) [*Military Times*, 2 September 2020]

Matt Mishkind has focused his career on two focal points: military health care and organizational development. He began his military health career with the Deployment Health Clinical Center at

Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He also served as one of the original staff members tasked with developing the National Center for Telehealth and Technology, known as T2, located on Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state. While at T2, Dr. Mishkind helped lead the development of several technology-based initiatives to improve behavioral health access across the Department of Defense. His particular focus was on developing telehealth programs for remote and otherwise isolated populations.

[\[LISTEN\]](#)

[September Toolkit: Suicide Prevention Month](#) [Health.mil News Service, 1 September 2020]

The Department of Defense (DOD) is committed to preventing suicide among Service members and their families. Suicide prevention is a DOD priority throughout the year, but during September — Suicide Prevention Month — the Department brings added attention to this complex issue. This year, the DOD's Suicide Prevention Month theme, *Connectedness*, highlights the important role that connections to family, friends, the community, and resources can play in preventing suicide. As part of the conversation this month, the Military Health System will also look at ways to be proactive and mindful in tackling pain challenges, including the need for opioid safety. In support of the DOD's theme of "Connectedness," MHS will highlight how strength and resilience are possible through support networks and the use of DOD and Department of Veterans Affairs resources. Public awareness campaigns like the [Real Warriors Campaign](#) and [Make the Connection](#), encourage service members to ask for help and recognize seeking help is a sign of strength. Watch this [video](#) from the Co-Founder of Team Rubicon explaining why it is important for them to help veterans explore their options for mental health care.

VETERANS

[75th anniversary of end of WWII is mostly virtual amid virus](#) [Caleb Jones, *The Associated Press*, 2 September 2020]

When Japanese military leaders climbed aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945, the battleship was packed with U.S. sailors eager to see the end of World War II. On Wednesday, the 75th anniversary of the surrender, some of those same men who served the United States weren't able to return to the Missouri in Hawaii's Pearl Harbor because of the world's new war against the coronavirus. The commemoration initially was supposed to be a blockbuster event with parades, movie premieres, galas and thousands of people honoring the veterans in their 90s or beyond, some who may be marking the milestone for the last time. Because of the threat of the virus, the ceremony was scaled down to about 50 people, with local veterans and government officials gathering on the USS Missouri in masks. The names were read of surviving WWII veterans, including 14 who were on the ship the day the Japanese surrendered.

[Army in Germany extends MWR access to retirees, some veterans](#) [Stars and Stripes, 1 September 2020]

The German government has approved an Army request for military retirees and eligible veterans to use Morale, Welfare and Recreation services and facilities such as libraries, gyms, lodges and golf courses on Army bases in Germany, officials said Tuesday. A provision in the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act expanded veteran eligibility for shopping at military exchanges and

commissaries starting Jan. 1 of this year. “This came out of this same initiative,” said Mark Heeter, a spokesman for Installation Management Command-Europe. The authorized list of facilities includes paid services such as golf courses, bowling centers, auto skills shops, arts and crafts shops, outdoor recreation and lodging; and free services such as fitness centers, libraries and Army Community Service.

[A Navy officer’s sudden mission meant carrying a flag 9,000 miles and standing up his fiancée on date night](#) [Michael E. Ruane, *The Washington Post*, 1 September 2020]

The old wool flag was in a wooden box stowed in a courier’s bag and Lt. John K. Bremyer knew he had to keep it close by. He would take it with him when he went to the bathroom. When he went to eat. When he slept. He would stay with it every minute of the 9,000 mile journey. His mission was urgent. Bremyer, 25, was to carry the flag from Washington and travel on anything that could get him in a hurry to the legendary Fleet Adm. William F. “Bull” Halsey, then on the battleship USS Missouri, somewhere in the Pacific Ocean. Exactly where, he didn’t yet know. It was 1945, 75 years ago this summer.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[House poised to vote on bill to let VA recommend marijuana to vets, end weed prohibition](#) [Abbie Bennett, *Connecting Vets*, 31 August 2020]

The Department of Veterans Affairs has long used marijuana’s position on the federal controlled substances list as a reason not to incorporate it into veterans’ care. Now, the House is poised to vote on legislation that would remove marijuana from the Controlled Substances Act, effectively ending marijuana prohibition at the federal level -- though states would still get to rule on it for themselves. House Majority Whip James Clyburn, D-S.C., announced over the weekend that the House plans to bring the bill to the floor after nine months of silence, and “will be voting soon” on [H.R. 3884](#), the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement (MORE) Act. The exact date for the vote is still to be determined. The legislation, though unlikely to pass the current Senate, is one of the most significant steps from Congress so far in changing federal marijuana policy.

[50 years after the Chicano Moratorium, a Mexican American veteran on what it meant to fight in the war](#) [Brittney Mejia, *The Los Angeles Times*, 28 August 2020]

As helicopters and C-130s flew over a mountaintop bunker in Vietnam, an Army soldier flipped through a copy of Time magazine and asked Tomás Sandoval two questions. Are you from Los Angeles? How about Mexican? Sandoval said yes to both. “Look what your boys are doing to your city,” the soldier said, tossing Sandoval the magazine, turned to an article with the headline: “Chicano Riot.” The story detailed how thousands of demonstrators marched through East Los Angeles for the [National Chicano Moratorium Against the Vietnam War](#). What was intended to be a quiet rally, the article stated, “ended in violence and tragedy.” Latinos in the U.S. had proved their patriotism for generations by fighting in this country’s major conflicts going all the way back to the Civil War. Veterans returned to join the middle class, to fight for civil rights and a better future for their children. But with the Vietnam War, a new sentiment swept across barrios nationwide: skepticism.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)