

# DEOMI NEWS LINKS, 18 SEPTEMBER 2020

## HIGHLIGHTS

[Air Force Will Set New Diversity Recruiting Targets in 2021](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 15 September 2020]

*The Air Force is setting new targets to ensure it is recruiting a force that represents the country's diversity, shaking up how it finds prospective members, the service's top recruiting chief said this week. Air Force recruiters must look beyond the southern and western states that have historically turned out the most recruits, Maj. Gen. Edward Thomas Jr., Air Force Recruiting Service's commander, said Monday during the 2020 virtual Air, Space and Cyber conference. "This isn't a quota; it's a target," he said. "But we've got to be able to measure this, look at it and be able to adjust and tweak to ensure we can move the needle." The primary challenge is in the officer corps and, as Brown described, particularly among pilots. About 86% of Air Force aviators are currently White men. Less than 3% of pilots are women. But there's work to do on the enlisted side, too, Thomas said, where Asian Americans tend to be underrepresented.*

[The Corps can't complete its missions without women, minorities, top Marine says](#) [Philip Athey, *Marine Corps Times*, 11 September 2020]

*The Marine Corps cannot complete its missions without women, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger said Thursday. Some people "think that diversity women, minorities, add," Berger said during the closing remarks of Thursday's online session of the Women in Defense Virtual Leadership Symposium. "We can actually not do our mission in the Department of Defense in the Marine Corps, without the dedication of women." During his prepared remarks, Berger spoke about the success the Marine Corps has had integrating women into combat units and starting the process to bring gender integration to Marine Corps boot camp. Berger pointed out the Corps has women in every combat military occupational specialty — roles once denied to them.*

[SEE ALSO: [1](#), [2](#) ]

[I Am Vanessa Guillén Act unveiled to reform how military addresses sexual misconduct](#) [Diana Stancy Correll, *Military Times*, 16 September 2020]

*New legislation named after Fort Hood soldier Spc. Vanessa Guillén would revamp how the military addresses sexual assault and harassment in its ranks. "I Am Vanessa Guillén has become a rallying cry across the country for survivors speaking out against the toxic rot in the military around harassment and sexual assault," Speier, a Democrat from California, said during a press conference Wednesday on Capitol Hill. "Sexual assault and harassment that they have endured at the hands of their brothers and sisters in arms." The measure would make sexual harassment a punishable crime under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and would also permit those who were sexually harassed or assaulted to file claims within the DOD for compensation. Furthermore, the legislation would also demand independent investigations outside of the chain of command by "trained and experienced professionals," said Speier.*

[SEE ALSO [1](#), [2](#)]

## SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

[As Suicides Near 100 in 2020, Air Force Creates “Playbook” for Commanders](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 17 September 2020]

*The U.S. Air Force’s top leader said that nearly 100 airmen have taken their lives this year. In light of that number, the service has distributed new instructions to leaders on how to talk through what could be troubling airmen during challenging times. During a roundtable Wednesday with reporters during the Air Force Association’s virtual Air, Space & Cyber conference, Chief of Staff Gen. Charles “CQ” Brown said 98 airmen have committed suicide thus far in 2020. As a result, “we have a playbook that we pushed out to our leadership out in the field to help them work through some of this,” he said. Brown did not offer additional details on the instructions.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Lessons from Suicide Attempts among U.S. Army Soldiers During Deployment](#) [James A. Naifeh, Ph.D. and Holly B. Herberman Mash, Ph.D., *Clinician’s Corner Blog (Psychological Health Center of Excellence)*, September 17, 2020][OPINION]

*Since 2009, a team of investigators at universities across the U.S. have carried out the Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers (Army STARRS) to improve understanding of suicidal thoughts and behaviors among Army soldiers. Combining more than a billion Army and Defense Department records with detailed questionnaires that were completed by more than 100,000 soldiers, Army STARRS is the [largest study of suicide risk and resilience](#) ever conducted in the U.S. military. Additional information about Army STARRS, now called STARRS-LS (for “longitudinal study”), is available at [starrs-ls.org](#).*

[Major veterans suicide prevention legislation advances, but without discussion of guns](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 17 September 2020]

*Congressional lawmakers reached a deal this week to send sweeping veterans suicide prevention legislation to the White House later this month, but the plan for now will abandon any serious discussion about gun safety for at-risk veterans. The connection between veterans suicide and firearms safety was promoted by House lawmakers throughout the summer and included in the White House’s own new suicide prevention roadmap unveiled in June. About 20 veterans and current service members die by suicide each day, a figure that has remained stubbornly consistent for the last decade despite federal efforts to address the problem. Firearms are involved in nearly 70 percent of veterans suicide deaths, according to VA statistics.*

[Veteran Suicide Prevention Bills Will Move Forward After Committees Reach Compromise](#)

[Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 15 September 2020]

*Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., House Veterans Affairs Committee chairman, and Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, hammered out a plan late Monday that includes nine provisions to support veterans, in addition to a measure that passed the Senate last month. The new legislation, dubbed the Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care and Treatment, or COMPACT, bill, includes a Takano-sponsored bill mandating that the Department of Veterans Affairs cover acute care for emergency mental health crises, either at the*

VA or at a private facility. The compromise legislation also would require the VA to furnish annual reports on its program to support veterans in the first year after they leave service; contact veterans who have not reached out to the department in two or more years; and provide annual training to all its security officers and police on de-escalation and crisis intervention, among other requirements.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Seeking the Military Suicide Solution Podcast, Episode 34: Joe Bartozzi from the National Shooting Sports Foundation](#) [*Military Times*, 14 September 2020]

*This podcast from Military Times examines the alarming rate of military and veterans suicide, offering new insights based on research and effective clinical and peer support practices in suicide prevention. This week's guest, Joseph Bartozzi, is the president and CEO of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the trade association for the firearm and ammunition industry, as well as the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers Institute, the standard-setting organization for the firearm and ammunition industry*

[\[LISTEN\]](#)

[\[SEE ALSO 1, 2, 3\]](#)

[Suicide impacts us all—but there is help!](#) [*DOD Warrior Care*, 14 September 2020]

*The DOD Warrior Care Recovery Coordination Program focuses on the recovery and reintegration of wounded, ill, and/or injured service members, military caregivers, and their families. Many across our nation are feeling the stress, disconnectedness, and financial insecurity that COVID-19 has brought, and for some this increases the risk of suicide. Warrior Care and the Department of Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) want to provide everyone with the knowledge and resources to help prevent suicide. When loved ones begin experiencing signs of excessive moodiness or sadness, change in personality or appearance, and dangerous harmful behavior, it is a sign that help is needed. Social connectedness and a sense of belonging improve mental, physical, and emotional well-being. To some, it may seem hard to stay connected when we are being told to practice social distancing, and being isolated when recovering from COVID-19, but it is possible.*

[Thousands of messages show what it really means to help someone who's suicidal](#) [Alia E. Dastagir, *USA Today*, 14 September 2020]

*WARNING: This story explores suicide and details of self-harm. If you are at risk, please stop here and contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for support at 800-273-8255 or the Crisis Text Line by texting 741741. Deena has been trying not to kill herself for more than half her life. Her pain can be measured in years—the two decades since her first suicide attempt—or by the number of suicidal thoughts she has in a week, when she's struggling, sometimes thousands. It can be measured by the 60 electroconvulsive therapy treatments, the 11 hospital stays or seven therapists. It can be measured in messages to her friend Susan, thousands over a decade, almost all about wanting to live when her brain was telling her to die. A little over a decade ago, Deena Nyer Mendlowitz and Susan Messing began a conversation on Facebook Messenger that would grow to more than 5,000 chats and reveal the complexity of suicidal suffering. Their conversations—the kind that typically happen in hushed tones, if they happen at all—are full of*

*violent fantasies and fragments of undelivered goodbyes, reflections on the limits of psychic pain and the capacity to heal. There is frustration and discomfort and desperation, but also encouragement, acceptance, optimism.*

[U.S. Navy Suicide Deep Dive: Missed Opportunities and Recommendations](#) [Navy Lt. Cmdr. Stephanie M. Long, *Psychological Health Center of Excellence*, 14 September 2020]

*The Navy conducts an annual Multidisciplinary Suicide Case Review, commonly referred to as the Deep Dive, during which a board of experts reviews all suicides from a calendar year. It is organized by the Navy's Suicide Prevention Program, which is housed in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations' 21st Century Sailor Office. The purpose of the Deep Dive is threefold: to understand the unique experiences of sailors who died by suicide, to identify missed intervention opportunities, and to make recommendations for improvements in Navy suicide prevention efforts. Identifying missed intervention opportunities has led to valuable recommendations to improve policies, programs, processes, and practices. For example, gatekeeper training was developed for certain communities (Ombudsmen, schoolhouse instructors, etc.) who were likely to come into contact with those at risk. This [one small ACT](#) of taking the time to ask this question may make a critical difference in the life of that sailor.*

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## CULTURE

[New Recruiting Ad Tells Gen Z to Ditch the Digital World and Join the Marines](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 17 September 2020]

*Young people feeling suffocated by the constant barrage of social media and other digital alerts can leave the shallow online world for a place where they can form real bonds. That's the message in the Marine Corps' new minute-long "Battle to Belong" advertisement, which hits ESPN, NFL Network, NBA Network and other TV stations this weekend. Military.com was given an [exclusive first look](#) at the new commercial, which shows a man in a near-future dystopian society surrounded by ads, social-media notifications, and other digital noise. The concept for the new ad was based on research on Generation Z, the group born in the late 1990s and beyond from which the military is currently recruiting.*

[Lewis Hamilton "won't let up" after FIA rule out investigation into T-shirt](#) [Andrew Benson, *BBC Sport*, 15 September 2020]

*Formula 1's governing body had been considering whether Hamilton broke its rules in wearing a T-shirt highlighting police brutality at Sunday's race. An FIA spokesman told BBC Sport an investigation had been ruled out. Hamilton said: "Want you to know I won't stop using this platform to shed light on what I believe is right." The Mercedes driver, writing on Instagram, thanked "those of you who continue to support me and show love, I am so grateful". He added: "This is a journey for all of us to come together and challenge the world on every level of injustice, not only racial." Hamilton's T-shirt, which he wore for the pre-race anti-racism demonstration and on the podium afterwards, said: "Arrest the cops who killed Breonna Taylor" and "Say her name".*

[Grammy-winning Ranky Tanky is a band with a mission to honor Gullah culture \[VIDEO\]](#) [Jeffrey Brown and Anne Azzi, *PBS News*, 14 September 2020]

*South Carolina band Ranky Tanky is on a mission to revive and celebrate Gullah music and culture, which originated among descendants of West African slaves in Georgia, Florida and South Carolina. The group earned a Grammy Award this winter, and Jeffrey Brown went to the Lowcountry for a listen as part of our American Creators series and ongoing coverage of arts and culture, Canvas.*

[Not so White Emmys: a blip, or real progress on diversity?](#) [Jill Serjeant, *Reuters*, 14 September 2020]

*From “Insecure’s” 20-something women to the Muslim-American star of “Ramy,” Sunday’s Emmy line-up is an unprecedented showcase for people of color. But the television industry needs to take concrete action on pledges to nurture non-White writers and directors to ensure that the 2020 awards ceremony is not just a blip triggered by a summer of protests over systemic racism in the United States, observers say. “I’m sure the last thing the Television Academy wanted was to have an ‘Emmys so White’ controversy in the middle of all that,” said Eric Deggans, TV critic for National Public Radio. “So I’m not surprised they paid special attention to the work of Black performers,” said Deggans, author of the 2012 book “Race Baiter.” Nominations open doors for other Blacks, Asians and Latinos and shape perceptions beyond the world of entertainment, said Rashad Robinson, president of social justice organization Color of Change.*

[Perfume brand says cutting Black actor from ad was misstep](#) [*The Associated Press*, 13 September 2020]

*British perfume brand Jo Malone has apologized to Black actor John Boyega of “Star Wars” fame after cutting him out of the Chinese version of a cologne commercial he helped create. Jo Malone London said in a statement to *The Hollywood Reporter* that the ad designed for Chinese audiences was a misstep and has been removed. The recreated ad replaced Boyega with Chinese star Liu Haoran. “The concept for the film was based on John’s personal experiences and should not have been replicated,” it said. Boyega has spoken out about Hollywood racism, recently telling *GQ* that Black characters have been “pushed to the side” in Disney’s “Star Wars” franchise.*

[Racial injustice themes fill empty NFL stadiums](#) [Jimmy Golen, *The Associated Press*, 13 September 2020]

*Teams opening the year in empty stadiums knelt, locked arms, raised fists in protest or stayed off the field entirely for the “Star-Spangled Banner” and the Black anthem “Lift Every Voice and Sing” on Sunday as the once-reluctant league brought racial injustice to the forefront on the NFL’s first full slate of games. In Atlanta, the teams wore armbands honoring civil rights leader John Lewis and staged the most striking of the day’s gestures: They barely flinched as the opening kickoff landed beyond the end line, took a knee, and remained there for about 10 seconds before trotting off the field to resume the game. “A couple years back, kneeling was the worst thing you could do. And now if you stand, people have something to say about that,” Minnesota linebacker Anthony Barr said. “There’s always going to be people trying to divide from inside. But, however you feel about it, you should express it your way.”*

[19 families buy nearly 97 acres of land in Georgia to create a city safe for Black people](#) [Pamela Kirkland, CNN, 12 September 2020]

*“Welcome to Freedom!” exclaims real estate agent Ashley Scott as she surveys the nearly 97 acres of land that she and a group of 19 Black families purchased in August. “I’m hoping that it will be a thriving safe haven for people of color, for Black families in particular,” Scott says. The land sits just East of Macon in rural Wilkinson County, Georgia. Scott and her friend, investor and entrepreneur Renee Walters, didn’t initially plan on buying a large plot of land, but they had a vision that was clear—to create a safe space for their Black families. “Being able to create a community that is thriving, that is safe, that has agriculture and commercial businesses that are supporting one another and that dollars circulating in our community, that is our vision.” Scott and Walters reached out to family and friends to see who might be interested in joining their effort. Together, they created the [Freedom Georgia Initiative](#) to spearhead the purchase. They hope to incorporate the land they bought into a new Black city, called Freedom, Georgia.*

[U.S. Open women’s final features Naomi Osaka’s masks, Black hair and a bold cultural statement](#) [OPINION] [Robyn Autry, NBC News, 12 September 2020]

*Naomi Osaka’s hair doesn’t matter. At least not when it comes to her 120 mph serve, her daunting forehand or her powerful baseline play. But it does matter in terms of how she shows up in the tennis world and how she’s emerged as one of the most prominent athletes supporting the Black Lives Matter protests. On Saturday, Osaka defeated Victoria Azarenka to claim her second U.S. Open singles title and third Grand Slam title. Alongside her outstanding athleticism, though, Osaka has grabbed headlines this tournament by wearing masks emblazoned with the names of victims of racial violence: Philando Castile, Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Elijah McClain. Black masks, white lettering. Her one-person protest feels even more powerful as she enters and exits the nearly empty stadium every match. With her thick hair often pulled into a high ponytail and up through a visor, Osaka is accustomed to making a statement. It’s the sort of statement that Black bodies always make, whether intended or not, in predominately White spaces. Whether it’s colorful beads that clack or hair pieces attached at the back, Black women’s hair gets noticed especially by White onlookers.*

[Preakness will not play Maryland’s state song, a Civil War-era ballad that celebrates the Confederacy](#) [Ovetta Wiggins, *The Washington Post*, 11 September 2020]

*Maryland’s state song, “Maryland, My Maryland,” a ballad with lyrics that celebrate the Confederacy and that many consider to be racist, will not be played in Baltimore next month for the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico Race Course. David Joseph, a spokesman for the owners of the Maryland Jockey Club and Pimlico, said Friday that they “look forward to starting a new tradition” at the Preakness. The decision comes as calls are being made across the country to do away with monuments to and statues of historical figures who represent a legacy of slavery and racism and as professional athletes protest police brutality and racial injustice. Joseph said he did not know how long “Maryland, My Maryland”—which urges Maryland to secede and join the Confederacy against the “Northern scum”—has been played at the Preakness.*

## DISCRIMINATION

[Germany apologizes for past military anti-gay discrimination](#) [Geir Moulson, *The Associated Press*, 17 September 2020]

*Germany's defense minister is apologizing for decades of discrimination against gay servicepeople in the military until a change of policy in 2000. A study commissioned by the defense ministry and being presented Thursday documented "systematic discrimination" in the Bundeswehr—the military of West Germany and since 1990 of reunited Germany—from 1955 until the beginning of the new millennium. "I very much regret the practice of discrimination against homosexuals in the Bundeswehr, which stood for the policy of that time," Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer said in a statement. "I apologize to those who suffered because of it." Kramp-Karrenbauer said she wants to advance legislation to rehabilitate those affected. The study said that "same-sex orientation was viewed as a security risk in the Bundeswehr until the turn of the millennium and made a career as an officer or noncommissioned officer impossible." The study on discrimination in the military is the latest move in Germany to address past anti-gay discrimination. In 2017, parliament voted to annul the convictions of thousands of gay men under a law criminalizing male homosexuality that was enforced enthusiastically in post-World War II West Germany.*

[Pivotal Harvard race discrimination case to be weighed by U.S. appeals court](#) [Nate Raymond, *Reuters*, 16 September 2020]

*A federal appeals court on Wednesday will consider whether Harvard University discriminates against Asian-American applicants in a closely-watched case that could impact whether U.S. colleges can use race as a factor in admissions. The 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston will hear arguments in a lawsuit brought by Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA), a non-profit founded by anti-affirmative action activist Edward Blum, and backed by the Trump administration. The group sued Harvard in 2014, claiming it illegally engages in "racial balancing" that artificially limits the number of Asian-American students at the Ivy League school. Harvard denies the allegation and says it is legally promoting student body diversity in keeping with Supreme Court precedent.*

[Appeals Court Overturns Dismissal of EEOC Attorney's Retaliation Claims](#) [Erich Wagner, *GovExec*, 15 September 2020]

*A three-judge panel on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit on Tuesday gave the green light to an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission attorney to proceed with a lawsuit alleging that the agency retaliated against her and denied requests for reasonable accommodations due to chronic medical conditions. Circuit Court Judges Neomi Rao, Patricia Millett and Robert Wilkins overturned a decision by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia dismissing Cassandra Menoken's lawsuit, which alleged that, because she pursued discrimination complaints against several federal agencies, the EEOC created a hostile work environment, including meddling with her pay and benefits and improperly denying reasonable accommodation requests. [Writing for the court](#), Rao said the district court was wrong to dismiss the retaliation complaints on the grounds that they occurred while Menoken was on paid leave, noting that existing court precedent*

*“explicitly rejected” the idea that a hostile work environment cannot be implemented while an employee is out of the office.*

[Kroger sued by U.S. after 2 firings linked to gay emblem](#) [Joseph Flaherty, *The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, (Little Rock, Ark.), 15 September 2020]

*The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in a lawsuit filed Monday accused Kroger Co. of unlawful employment practices for allegedly refusing to accommodate two former employees in Conway who expressed religious objections to wearing an apron embroidered with a rainbow based on their belief that the symbol represented advocacy for the LGBTQ community. The two former employees of the grocery chain, Brenda C. Lawson and Trudy K. Rickerd, were disciplined and ultimately terminated because of their objections to the dress code that stemmed from their religious beliefs, according to an EEOC complaint.*

[Court argument seeks reversal of military HIV policies](#) [Matthew Barakat, *The Associated Press*, 14 September 2020]

*Lawyers for military service members whose careers were halted after testing positive for the AIDS virus asked a federal judge Monday to overturn policies restricting their service as irrational and discriminatory. Lawsuits filed on behalf of two airmen and an Army National Guard sergeant say the military has no rational basis for holding the service members’ HIV status against them. The Air Force wants to discharge the two airmen from the service. The Army is refusing to grant an officer commission to the Army sergeant. Rules regarding service of HIV-positive members are not consistent across the military. Generally, people HIV-positive cannot join the military. But those who test positive after enlisting face varying treatment. Scott Schoettes, a lawyer for the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, which is representing the plaintiffs, said the risk of deploying HIV-positive service members is essentially nonexistent, so using HIV status to deny opportunities to serve makes no sense.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Lawsuit claims United favors young, blond attendants to staff NFL, MLB team flights](#) [Shannon McMahon, *The Washington Post*, 14 September 2020]

*Two veteran flight attendants are suing United Airlines for discrimination, saying that the airline favors young, blond, blue-eyed crew members when assigning for flights that serve the NFL, NCAA and MLB, according to a complaint filed in the Superior Court of California. The flight attendants, Kim Guillory and Sharon Tesler, have worked for United Airlines for 28 and 34 years, respectively. “United has created a despicable situation,” the women said in the complaint, by unlawfully enacting “procedures that are designed to ensure that young, White, blond/blue-eyed, female employees receive positions with the charter program.” The lawsuit says more senior, Black and Jewish employees are not assigned to the flights, and that the plaintiffs were told by supervisors that they were not on the “preferred” crew list for the charters.*

[States face pressure to ban race-based hairstyle prejudice](#) [Russell Contreras, *The Associated Press*, 14 September 2020]

*A growing number of states are facing pressure to ban race-based discrimination against hair texture and hairstyles in schools and the workplace. Advocates this week presented a draft*



*proposal to New Mexico state lawmakers that would outlaw employers and schools from discriminating against Black and Native American women's hairstyles. It's the latest state targeted by a national campaign. Devont'e Kurt Watson, a member of Black Lives Matter in Albuquerque, told New Mexico lawmakers on Monday that the state should amend its Human Rights law to protect people with Afros, cornrows, dreadlocks and headwraps. The state should also provide protections for Native Americans who face hair discrimination, he said. "Passing the (the proposal) in New Mexico will have far-reaching implications to protect our diverse community from egregious acts of hatred," Watson said. "Hair discrimination is racial discrimination."*

### [Many Black WW II Veterans Were Denied Their GI Bill Benefits. Time To Fix That.](#)

[\[COMMENTARY\]](#) [Robert Levinson, *War on the Rocks*, 11 September 2020]

*During World War II 1,154,486 Black Americans served in uniform. Not only did they face continued brutal racism and discrimination when they returned home from the war, but the benefits of the GI Bill, which Congress passed as a gesture of gratitude for veterans, were denied to a great many of them. The U.S. Congress should adjust the current GI Bill to benefit their descendants. This would compensate veterans and their families for the withheld benefits to which their relatives were legally entitled and were unjustly denied. It could also help to reduce the historic race-based inequality that the United States still struggles with.*

## **DIVERSITY**

### [EU unveils plan to combat racism, increase diversity](#) [Samuel Petrequin, *The Associated Press*, 18 September 2020]

*The European Commission presented a series of measures Friday aimed at tackling structural racism and discrimination, acknowledging a blatant lack of diversity among the European Union's institutions.*

*The bloc's executive arm set out its action plan for the next five years, which includes strengthening the current legal framework, recruiting an anti-racism coordinator and increasing the diversity of EU staff.*

*The European Commission's vice president for values and transparency, Věra Jourová, said that recent anti-racism protests in the U.S. and Europe highlighted the need for action.*

### [Transgender activist wins Delaware state senate primary](#) [Randall Chase, *The Associated Press*, 16 September 2020]

*Transgender activist Sarah McBride won a Democratic state Senate primary in Delaware on Tuesday and is poised to make history as the first transgender person elected to the state's General Assembly. If elected, McBride would join a handful of other transgender legislators around the country but would be the first transgender state senator. "I'm bringing my whole self to this race," McBride told *The Associated Press* in an interview before Tuesday's primary. "My identity is one part of who I am, but it's just one part." "I would be legislating based not on my identity," McBride added. "I would be legislating based on my values and on the needs of my constituents."*

### [How corporate diversity initiatives trap workers of colour](#) [Sheryl Nance-Nash, *BBC Worklife*, 13 September 2020]

*As companies around the world rush to implement diversity and inclusion programmes, the burden to launch these initiatives are unduly falling on employees of colour. In the wake of Black Lives Matter, companies across the globe have put new emphasis on diversity—adding people of colour to their ranks, implementing bias training and attempting to lift marginalised voices. It’s welcome news, but also a double-edged sword for people of colour (POC) and Black, indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC), as employers disproportionately lean on them to come up with initiatives, join committees and help formulate diversity game plans. People of colour are often tasked with this heavy lift while juggling their usual duties amid the coronavirus crisis—and not being offered additional compensation for the work. The burden also carries a high emotional price tag. “It’s not that [companies] don’t know where else to turn—they are doing what’s easiest and most convenient,” says Shereen Daniels, managing director of HR Rewired, a London-based organisation that facilitates anti-racist and equality workshops. She adds that many companies have not taken the time to acknowledge their own failings in this area, and instead have come up with knee-jerk solutions.*

[She Once Was Barred from Fighter Jets. Now She’s the Pentagon’s Only Female Four-Star](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 13 September 2020]

*It was the morning of June 18, 1983. Jacqueline Van Ovost, just 17 at the time, got up early to witness history in the making. She flew her father’s Cessna 172 Skyhawk up the coast from Fort Pierce to Melbourne, Florida, roughly 25 miles from Cape Canaveral, where Sally Ride was about to embark on NASA’s seventh shuttle mission and become the first American woman in space. “She made that much of an impression on me,” Van Ovost said in an interview Thursday, adding that she never had the chance to meet Ride in person. “At the time, I was in Civil Air Patrol, and I couldn’t stop talking about what the possibilities for any woman were at that point.” Today, Van Ovost is the Pentagon’s only female four-star general, and the fifth in the Air Force’s 73-year history.*

[This 59-Year-Old Army BCT Grad Is About to Be the New Guy in His Son’s Unit](#) [Hope Hodge Seck and Bing Xiao, *Military.com*, 12 September 2020]

*At 59, Staff Sgt. Monte Gould is the oldest-ever graduate of the Army’s current Basic Combat Training Course, finishing Aug. 27 in the top 10% of his class. Now, a decade or two older than retirement age for most career soldiers, he’s starting a new journey—with plans to join his son, Spc. Jarrod Gould, in the 405th Civil Affairs Battalion’s Las Vegas detachment.*

*In an Army news release, Staff Sgt. Gould spoke about the challenge of making it through the rigorous BCT, the Army’s entry-level training course. A veteran of the Marine Corps and Army National Guard, Gould went through boot camp in 1978—more than four decades earlier.*

*For the record, according to the release, Gould is not the oldest-ever graduate of BCT. A 68-year-old completed an earlier version of the course in 1999.*

[Marine Commandant Wants Answers on Why Women, Minorities Decline to Seek Command](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 11 September 2020]

*Women and people of color take themselves out of the running for Marine command screening boards “at a much higher rate” than White men, the service’s top officer said this week, leaving the Corps with less diversity in its leaders. The Marine Corps has work to do when it comes to*

*building diversity in its top ranks, Commandant Gen. David Berger said Thursday. That means not only looking at what happens during promotion selection boards, but also how the service can build its pool of eligible officers who can lead battalions or squadrons, so commanders are more representative of their units. “Women and minorities tend to remove, by request, from command boards,” Berger said during a virtual Women in Defense Leadership Symposium. “... You’re allowed the opportunity to write a letter and say, ‘Please don’t consider me,’ because of family reasons or whatever. Women and minorities asked not to be considered at a much higher rate than their White male counterparts.”*

[Top Marine Says He Won’t Stop Fighting for 1-Year Maternity Leave](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 11 September 2020]

*The Marine Corps is struggling to retain women, the service’s top general said this week, because many feel they must choose between a military career and their family. Commandant Gen. David Berger said the 12 weeks of maternity leave Marines get after having a baby are not enough. It’s a topic he’s been pushing since last year, when he said he’d consider extending the Marine Corps’ maternity leave policy to a full year. Berger said he’s “not there yet,” but vowed to keep fighting for it. “Many of our very capable women Marines are leaving because they think it’s either the Marine Corps, or a family, and they can’t see how they can have it both ways,” Berger said on Thursday during a Women in Defense Leadership Symposium. “We have got to solve that dilemma.”*

[Meet the first featured female soloist in the Marine Band \[VIDEO\]](#) [CNN, 3 September 2020]

*Gunnery Sergeant Sara Sheffield is the first female vocalist and concert moderator for “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band. She reflects on what it meant to join the band and how she serves her country through music.*

## **HUMAN RELATIONS**

[The surprising benefits of talking to strangers](#) [Emily Kasriel, *BBC Future*, 14 September 2020]

*For some it’s a habit, while others avoid it at all costs—but talking to strangers has unexpected benefits for our wellbeing. There is a [growing body of research](#) suggesting that engaging with and trusting people we don’t know is important for our wellbeing and the wellbeing of those we encounter as well as the health of society. For example, [friendly behaviour to strangers](#) has been linked to higher self-esteem in teenagers in the United States. [In China](#), greater trust in strangers has been linked to better overall health. And in Canada, trust in strangers has also been correlated to individual wellbeing. A [pre-Covid study](#) published in 2020 showed that social isolation significantly increases a person’s risk of premature death from all causes, a danger that may rival those of smoking, obesity and physical inactivity. The lockdowns imposed to protect us from Covid-19 has increased isolation particularly among the most vulnerable. New [societal divisions](#) have emerged. In daily life pre-Covid, many of us naturally encountered a wide group of people, often accidentally. We would pass a stranger in the hallway at work and say hi, or meet a friend in a bar, and then start talking to someone they were with. But now?*

[The great experiment. The pandemic is tragic. It's also an incredible chance to study human behavior.](#) [Emily Anthes, *The Washington Post*, 10 September 2020]

*Over the past six months, the coronavirus pandemic has remade daily life, prompting widespread school closures, layoffs and home confinement. These changes have created social and economic chaos—but also unique research opportunities for social scientists, producing a “natural experiment” that could help answer questions about issues from family dynamics to how economic insecurity affects views of government policy. Scientists are seizing the moment. By early September, the crowdsourced “[COVID 19 Social Science Research Tracker](#)” listed more than 300 projects—and that figure represents “just the tip of the iceberg,” says the tracker’s co-creator, J. Nathan Matias, an assistant professor of communication at Cornell University.*

## MISCELLANEOUS

[U.S. Embassy in Kabul warns of extremist attacks against women](#) [Kathy Gannon, *The Associated Press*, 18 September 2020]

*The U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan warned that extremists groups are planning attacks against a “variety of targets” but are taking particular aim at women... The advances for women made since 2001 have been important. Women are now members of parliament, girls have the right to education, women are in the workforce and their rights are enshrined in the constitution. Women are also seen on television, playing sports and winning science fairs. But the gains are fragile, and their implementation has been erratic, largely unseen in rural areas where most Afghans still live.*

[Lawmakers take key step towards getting Alwyn Cashe the Medal of Honor](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 16 September 2020]

*New legislation introduced in the House on Wednesday would allow Iraq War hero Alwyn Cashe to receive the Medal of Honor, a move that already has the backing of top Pentagon officials. Cashe, an Army sergeant first class who died in November 2005 while trying to save his men from a burning Bradley Fighting Vehicle, was previously honored with a Silver Star for his actions. Advocates have long criticized that decision, noting paperwork mistakes and bureaucratic regulations that prevented him from receiving the highest military honor... Over the years, military advocates have questioned whether Cashe’s race played a factor in the Pentagon’s reluctance to upgrade the honor, but also demanded broader reviews of how the Medal of Honor process is handled amid a perception that troops from the current wars face a higher level of scrutiny for their heroism than past conflicts.*

[Rosa Parks: U.S. civil rights legend’s house displayed in Naples](#) [BBC News, 16 September 2020]

*The one-time home of U.S. civil rights legend Rosa Parks has gone on display inside the Royal Palace of Naples, Italy. In 1955 Parks refused to give up her seat on a racially segregated bus in Alabama - a key moment in the U.S. civil rights moment. Detroit city authorities planned to demolish the two-story building after the financial crisis in 2008. But Parks’s niece Rhea McCauley bought it from Detroit officials for \$500 and donated it to U.S. artist Ryan Mendoza. Mr. Mendoza tried to have the city save the building but in 2016 took it apart and moved it to Berlin for display at his studio. In 2018, Brown University in Rhode Island said it would display the house as part of a civil rights exhibition. But it then dropped out because of a legal dispute with*

her family. The display is part of an exhibition called *Almost Home - The Rosa Parks House Project*.

[Senators seek highest civilian honor for Till and his mother](#) [The Associated Press, 16 September 2020]

*Congress should give the nation's highest civilian honor posthumously to Emmett Till and his mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, a Republican and a Democratic senator said Wednesday. Sens. Richard Burr, R-N.C., and Cory Booker, D-N.J., said the Congressional Gold Medal is long overdue for the Till family. Till was a Black teenager lynched in Mississippi in 1955 by White men who were later acquitted despite eyewitness testimony tying them to the killing. He had been accused of whistling at a White woman. Mamie Till-Mobley demanded an open-casket funeral for her son in Chicago. A photograph of Till's brutalized body galvanized the Civil Rights movement. She remained a Civil Rights activist in honor of her slain son for the rest of her life.*

[Survey finds "shocking" lack of Holocaust knowledge among millennials and Gen Z](#) [Kit Ramgopal, NBC News, 16 September 2020]

*A nationwide survey released Wednesday shows a "worrying lack of basic Holocaust knowledge" among adults under 40, including over 1 in 10 respondents who did not recall ever having heard the word "Holocaust" before. The survey, touted as the [first 50-state survey of Holocaust knowledge among millennials and Generation Z](#), showed that many respondents were unclear about the basic facts of the genocide. Sixty-three percent of those surveyed did not know that 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, and over half of those thought the death toll was fewer than 2 million. Over 40,000 concentration camps and ghettos were established during World War II, but nearly half of U.S. respondents could not name a single one. "The most important lesson is that we can't lose any more time," said Greg Schneider, executive vice president of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, which commissioned the study. "If we let these trends continue for another generation, the crucial lessons from this terrible part of history could be lost."*

[Graphic novel series highlights first and only woman to ever receive the Medal of Honor](#) [J.D. Simkins, *Military Times*, 14 September 2020]

*The newest issue of "Medal of Honor," a graphic series produced by the Association of the U.S. Army, spotlights the Civil War heroics of Mary Walker, the first woman in the U.S. to earn a medical degree and the only woman to ever receive the Medal of Honor. To this day, Walker remains the only woman to receive the medal, an honor made even more unique in that she earned the recognition while working as a civilian. That distinction spurred controversy, however, and in 1917, as part of a grand review of all issued Medals of Honor, the War Department determined that her civilian status made her an invalid recipient. It wouldn't be until 1977 that petitions by her family to have the honor reinstated were finally granted when President Jimmy Carter restored Walker's place among Medal of Honor recipients. Walker's heroics and trailblazing efforts made her a clear-cut selection for the AUSA team's third graphic novel installment of 2020. [Read the full issue of Medal of Honor: Mary Walker here.](#)*

[Nigeria's slave descendants prevented from marrying who they want](#) [Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, *BBC News*, 13 September 2020]

*In a tragedy reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet, a couple in Nigeria killed themselves earlier this month after their parents had forbidden them from marrying because one of them was a descendant of slaves. "They're saying we can't get married... all because of an ancient belief," the note they left behind said. Marriage is not the only barrier slave descendants face. They are also banned from traditional leadership positions and elite groups, and often prevented from running for political office and representing their communities in parliament. In 2017, 44-year-old Oge Maduagwu founded the [Initiative for the Eradication of Traditional and Cultural Stigmatisation in our Society \(Ifetacsios\)](#). For the past three years, she has been travelling across the five states of south-eastern Nigeria, advocating equal rights for descendants of slaves. "The kind of suffering that the Black people are going through in America, the slave descendants here are also going through the same," she said.*

## MISCONDUCT

[Navy Kicks Sailor Off Esports Team After Racist Usernames Appear in Game Stream](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 16 September 2020]

*The Navy esports team is once again on pause, just weeks after resuming operations following a separate controversy. A sailor has been kicked off Goats and Glory, the Navy's official esports team that streams on the video platform Twitch. Personnel Specialist Second Class Brandon Chandler on Saturday streamed himself playing the space-themed video game "Among Us" with three other people. All three, whom Chandler reportedly referred to as his good friends and officials said had no Navy affiliation, were using racist usernames. Two of them—"Japan 1945" and "Nagasaki"—referenced the 1945 U.S. atomic bombings that killed tens of thousands. The third, "Gamer Word," is a known reference to the N-word in the gamer community. The military's recent experimentation with esports and Twitch has been met with some resistance. While the team falls under Recruiting Command, Rear Adm. Dennis Velez told *Military.com* this summer that the goal is not to recruit people there. Instead, he said, it's a place for sailors wearing an official Navy esports jersey to connect with young people who might not know much about military service.*

[Trial for Marine lieutenant accused of White supremacist activity postponed as new allegations surface](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 14 September 2020]

*The Marine Corps has temporarily dismissed charges against a junior officer who has accused of having ties to White supremacists so that investigators can look into new allegations of misconduct, a Corps spokesman said on Monday. Marine 2nd Lt. Felipe Maher had been slated to appear before a general court-martial later this month before the case was withdrawn on Sept. 9. The prosecution decided to start the case over in light of recent alleged misconduct that was discovered two weeks prior to Maher's original trial date, said Stephenson, who declined to comment about what the latest allegations against Maher entail because the matter is currently under investigation. Maher had been charged with violating a lawful general order for allegedly advocating supremacist and extremist doctrine; making a false official statement for allegedly saying he never belonged to a White supremacist group; wrongfully getting a tattoo that is*

*affiliated with extremists; conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and wrongfully trying to possess steroids, Stephenson told Task & Purpose in March.*

[Philippines deports U.S. Marine in transgender woman's killing](#) [Jim Gomez, *The Associated Press*, 13 September 2020]

*A U.S. Marine convicted of killing a Filipino transgender woman was deported Sunday after a presidential pardon cut short his detention in a case that renewed outrage over a pact governing American military presence in the Philippines. Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton said in a farewell message that he was “extremely grateful” to President Rodrigo Duterte for pardoning him and expressed his “most sincere sympathy” to the family of Jennifer Laude, who he was convicted of killing in 2014 in a motel northwest of Manila after finding out that she was transgender. Virginia Suarez, the Laude family’s lawyer, said in a statement that she wishes Pemberton “peace of mind,” and hopes that he has learned “the value of life and dignity regardless of gender and nationality.” Duterte’s pardon was condemned by left-wing and LGBTQ groups.*

## **RACISM**

[“Fifth girl” injured in 1963 Klan church bombing asks Alabama governor for restitution](#) [Sydney Trent, *The Washington Post*, 16 September 2020]

*Fifty-seven years after the Klan bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., murdering four Black girls and stunning the nation, a victim of the notorious hate crime sought a public apology and compensation from the state of Alabama on Tuesday. Sarah Collins Rudolph, now 69, was 12 and permanently blinded in one eye by shards of glass when dynamite blasted through the ladies lounge in the church basement on the morning of Sept. 15, 1963. The explosion killed Rudolph’s 14-year-old sister, Addie Mae Collins, and their friends, Denise McNair, 11, Carole Robertson, 14, and Cynthia Wesley, 14. The Birmingham church bombing became a galvanizing event in the civil rights movement.*

[Germany suspends dozens of police officers for neo-Nazi chat messages.](#) [Loveday Morris and Luisa Beck, *The Washington Post*, 16 September 2020]

*Twenty-nine German police officers were suspended Wednesday for participating in extremist chat groups that shared images such as swastikas and a depiction of a refugee in a gas chamber, officials said, in the latest neo-Nazi scandal to engulf the country’s military and law enforcement. The discovery is a “disgrace” for the police in the western region of North Rhine-Westphalia and has shaken the force “to its core,” the state’s interior minister, Herbert Reul, said at a news conference. Pictures of Hitler, Reich flags and an image portraying a Black person being shot were also shared. “We are talking about the nastiest and most disgusting neo-Nazi, racist and refugee-hostile hatred,” Reul said. The 126 images with content punishable by law were shared in five WhatsApp chat groups that were exclusively or predominantly used by police officers. The officers—25 of whom worked for the police force in the city of Essen—were asked to hand in their badges and weapons Wednesday.*

[Miami Herald editor blames “internal failures” after publishing an anti-Semitic, racist insert](#)

[Jaclyn Peiser, *The Washington Post*, 16 September 2020]

*Subscribers to el Nuevo Herald, the Spanish-language sister publication of the Miami Herald, opened their papers on Friday to find a paid insert called “LIBRE.” In a column headlined, “American Jews and Israeli Jews” in the insert, an author claimed American Jews support “thieves and arsonists” and equated Black Lives Matter protesters with Nazis. “What kind of people are these Jews? They’re always talking about the Holocaust, but have they already forgotten Kristallnacht, when Nazi thugs rampaged through Jewish shops all over Germany? So do the BLM and antifa, only the Nazis didn’t steal; they only destroyed,” author Roberto Luque Escalona wrote. After an onslaught of backlash, the Herald apologized this week and promised to never again run the insert, which the paper’s editors now say had actually included anti-Semitic and racist articles for months. Aminda Marqués González, executive editor and publisher of the Miami Herald and el Nuevo Herald, and Nancy San Martín, el Nuevo Herald’s managing editor, said neither had read the insert before publishing it, a fact they called “distressing” in an [open letter](#) to readers on Monday.*

[Fake “hunting licenses” left on cars encourage killing Black people, Wisconsin cops say](#) [Mike Stunson, *The Charlotte Observer*, (Charlotte, N.C.), 15 September 2020]

*A woman who left racist notes on multiple cars outside a Walmart has been arrested, according to Wisconsin police. Fake notes allegedly left by Cathleen Yauch resembled hunting licenses and allowed the recipient to kill Black people, WLUK reported. The notes included a racial slur and permitted the holder of the card to “hunt day or night. With or without dogs,” the TV station reported. Notes were left last week on at least two cars, according to the Herald Times Reporter. Surveillance footage identified Yauch as a woman involved in previous theft cases, the newspaper said. Yauch confessed to putting the fake licenses on the windshield, police said, according to WLUK.*

[Special Report: U.S. troops battling racism report high barrier to justice](#) [Phil Stewart, M.B. Pell and Joshua Schneyer, *Reuters*, 15 September 2020]

*By the time he saw a swastika scrawled in the bathroom at Barksdale Air Force base in October 2018, Deven Sherk was already disillusioned with how the Air Force handled racism complaints. The Black airman had filed a complaint alleging discrimination that June when a fellow airman, a White man, hung a noose near him on the base. “I felt that was a direct threat to my life,” said Sherk, who was a staff sergeant specializing in B-52 bomber maintenance at the time. Along with the noose, he reported seeing a whip on display at the hangar where he worked, with slogans including “Fuckin Attitude Adjuster” written in marker. Sherk says he never felt the Air Force’s Equal Opportunity office took seriously his complaints of racism. So, he decided against filing a formal complaint about the swastika... Equal Opportunity offices are located on U.S. military bases around the world, established to give troops access to some of the protections against discrimination that American civilians can tap through a separate system, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity. Troops, who are not considered employees, have the right to seek investigations through EO offices.*



[In White Adirondacks, racism may be toughest hill to climb](#) [Michael Hill, *The Associated Press*, 14 September 2020]

*Nicole Hylton-Patterson moved to the Adirondack Mountains to help make this vast, and overwhelmingly White, region more welcoming to people who, like her, are Black. The job has not been easy. While the death of George Floyd gave her mission a jolt of urgency, the “Go Back to Africa” graffiti on a bridge near her home spoke to her challenges. With relatively few Black people here, White people fill out Black Lives Matter rallies and host online antiracism forums. Without diverse city streets filled with demonstrators, how do you encourage racial reckonings in rural areas like the Adirondacks, where most everyone looks similar?*

[Black scientists call out racism in the field and counter it](#) [Christina Larson, *The Associated Press*, 13 September 2020]

*Tanisha Williams, a botanist at Bucknell University, knows exactly which plants she’s looking for. But after being questioned by strangers in public parks, Williams, who is Black, has started carrying her field guides with her. “I’ve been quizzed by random strangers,” she said. “Now I bring my wildflower books and botanical field guides, trying to look like a scientist. It’s for other people. I wouldn’t otherwise lug these books.” Overt harassment and subtle intimidation during fieldwork compound the discrimination that Black scientists and those from other underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds already feel in academic settings. [A National Science Foundation survey](#) found that in 2016, scholars who identified as Black or African American were awarded just 6% of all doctorates in life sciences, and less than 3% of doctorates in physical and Earth sciences. Students who identified as Hispanic or Latino were awarded less than 8% of doctorates in life sciences and about 5% of doctorates in physical and Earth sciences. According to the most recent census, Black people make up 13.4% of the population, and Latinos 18.5%.*

## RELIGION

[Rosh Hashanah has begun: What to know about the two-day Jewish holiday that leads into Yom Kippur](#) [Dwight Adams (Indianapolis Star), *USA TODAY*, 17 September 2020]

*Rosh Hashanah. Yom Kippur.*

*They’re two of the most familiar—and important—days on the Jewish religious calendar, but did you know that the two events are strongly connected? And what these special days actually represent?*

[“At the Intersection of Two Criminalized Identities”: Black and Non-Black Muslims Confront a Complicated Relationship With Policing and Anti-Blackness](#) [Sanya Monsoor, *Time*, 13 September 2020]

*Before Jacob Blake’s father spoke to media last month about how police gunned down his son in Kenosha, Wis., he took a moment to say a Muslim prayer. Blake Sr.’s recitation of the prayer moved Iesa Lewis, a Black Muslim graduate student at the University of Chicago and part-time community organizer, evoking for him “just how deeply embedded Islam is within the Black community.” But the moment also encapsulated the complicated relationship that the Black Muslim community has with non-Black Muslims. Lewis says that while many non-Black Muslims*

would likely embrace Blake Sr.'s decision to recite the Qur'an, many would also continue to perpetuate anti-Blackness in their own lives and communities—everything from non-Black Muslims not returning greetings, to assuming ignorance about Islam, to not considering Black Muslims worthy of marrying their non-Black children. Black Muslims account for at least one-fifth of all Muslims in the U.S. even as they face discrimination from within their religious community. Some mosques are segregated by race, reflecting the neighborhoods they are located in. The refusal to fully integrate Muslim communities runs deep, Lewis says.

## SEXISM

[Why female bosses get different reactions than men when they criticize employees](#) [Martin Abel, *The Conversation*, 10 September 2020]

*Imagine that your boss Ethan calls you into his office. He expresses disappointment in your recent performance and lack of commitment. How would you react? Would you accept the feedback and put in more effort? Or would you pout in your office and start looking for a new job? Now, would your reaction be different if your boss was not named Ethan but Emily? I'm a professor of economics, and [my research](#) investigates this very question. This has important implications for the success of women in leadership, such as Jane Fraser, who will take over Citigroup in February, becoming the first woman to lead a major Wall Street bank. If giving feedback is more likely to backfire for women in positions of power, they may adopt [less effective management strategies or become altogether less interested](#) in holding leadership positions.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

## SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Former VA doctor pleads guilty to molesting patients](#) [Cuneyt Dil, *The Associated Press*, 17 September 2020]

*A former doctor at a Veterans Affairs hospital in West Virginia pleaded guilty Thursday to federal charges that he molested three male patients and violated their civil rights. Jonathan Yates pleaded guilty in court filings to three counts of depriving veterans of their civil rights under color of law, which means the crimes were committed while on duty. He faces up to 30 years in prison.*

[Former Missile Defense Agency Chief Harassed Female Employee for 7 Years, IG Finds](#) [Hope Hodge Seck, *Military.com*, 16 September 2020]

*The civilian head of the Defense Department's office overseeing strategic missile defense sexually harassed three female colleagues, one over the course of seven years—subjecting them to unwanted attention and touching, and even on one occasion taking an inappropriate photograph without permission, according to a new report from the Defense Department Inspector General. Former Missile Defense Agency Executive Director John H. James retired Feb. 29 after a 37-year career in the Defense Department. He'd been reassigned Nov. 24, 2019 to the job of assistant director for Cybersecurity amid an investigation into his conduct. The 25-page report, with testimony from 11 witnesses, lays out a detailed timeline of James' substantiated inappropriate activities over the course of his tenure at MDA.*

[Navy “gray-zone behavior” study part of military sexual assault prevention and response effort](#)  
[Jared Morgan, *Military Times*, 16 September 2020]

*In an effort to get ahead of potential sexual misconduct, the Navy has been using research and training models to learn more about “gray-zone behavior,” or acts that don’t meet the Navy’s definition of sexual harassment or sexual assault. The research is meant to give first-line supervisors training on how to handle inappropriate behavior in the workplace and should be ready to roll out to the fleet within the next year. “When people think about SAPR, they immediately think about response,” said Dr. Jessica Gallus, senior advisor for the Navy’s SAPR office, in a teleconference last week with Military Times. “We’re absolutely committed to providing victims with world-class care when they do experience sexual assault, but for us it’s just as critical that we focus on prevention.”*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[ICE Deported a Woman Who Accused Guards of Sexual Assault While the Feds Were Still Investigating the Incident](#) [Lomi Kriel, *ProPublica*, 15 September 2020]

*The U.S. government late Monday deported a crucial witness in an ongoing investigation into allegations of sexual assault and harassment at an El Paso, Texas, immigrant detention center, the witness’s lawyers said. The 35-year-old woman has been held in the facility, which is overseen by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, for about a year and told lawyers about a “pattern and practice” of abuse there, including that guards systematically assaulted her and other detainees in areas that were not visible to security cameras. Several guards “forcibly” kissed her, and at least one touched her intimate parts, often as she was walking back from the medical unit to her barrack, according to her complaint filed with law enforcement agencies. “If she behaved,” she said one guard told her, “he would help her be released.”*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[DODEA schools fail to report serious incidents involving students, including sexual assault, IG report says](#) [Jennifer H. Svan, *Stars and Stripes*, 10 September 2020]

*Hundreds of serious incidents involving students at Defense Department schools, including alleged sexual assaults and threats of physical violence, have gone unreported because of policies that allow principals to decide whether to report them, a report by the DOD Inspector General has said. School administrators failed to report 522 of 600 serious juvenile-on-juvenile incidents to headquarters and failed to notify law enforcement or base commanders in 524 and 593 cases, respectively, the report found. As a result, installation commanders were prevented from holding the offenders accountable, law enforcement was unable to investigate the serious allegations and DODEA’s ability to “accurately identify trends, provide guidance, or target problems” was hindered, said the report released Wednesday. Some DODEA personnel said they did not report incidents because they didn’t want a student to “carry a negative label into the next school or school year,” the report said.*

## **VETERANS**

[Landmark Bill Would Designate 12 Illnesses as Connected to Burn Pits](#) [Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 15 September 2020]

*Lawmakers introduced legislation Tuesday that would streamline the process for veterans to receive disability benefits for diseases that may be related to exposure to burn pits and other battlefield pollutants. Bolstered by the support of advocate and comedian Jon Stewart, who successfully led the effort to continue financial support for victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and Rep. Raul Ruiz, D-Calif., announced a bill to remove a Department of Veterans Affairs requirement that veterans prove a link between a dozen diseases and exposure to burn pits and other toxins. Instead, former service members would only have to provide documentation to the VA that they served at least 15 days in one of 33 countries listed in the proposed legislation. “We always have money for the war. We never have money for the warfighter,” Stewart said. “Today, we plant the flag, and we are going to exhibit the relentlessness of the warfighter.”*