

DEOMI NEWS LINKS, 25 SEPTEMBER 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

[Diversity training doesn't run afoul of president's executive order, Army officials say](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 24 September 2020]

The Army's emerging diversity initiatives don't conflict with an executive order signed Tuesday prohibiting the armed forces from instituting training programs that suggest the United States is "irredeemably racist and sexist," service officials said Thursday during a telephone call with reporters. The goal is to create diverse teams of talented soldiers that data shows don't always exist, especially in the officer corps, at the moment. It falls under a larger effort by the service called "Project Inclusion." Other initiatives involve updating the Army's diversity and inclusion education for soldiers at all ranks. The current educational format is designed around reciting policy and regulation. Service leaders want it to be more discussion-based to create dialogue among peers.

[Pentagon unveils new religious liberty policies after pressure from conservative lawmakers](#) [Diana Stancy Correll, *Military Times*, 18 September 2020]

The Pentagon has issued new guidance on religious liberty within the military — following pressure from Republican lawmakers to "prioritize protecting the rights and freedoms of service members" in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The revised regulation, [DOD Instruction 1300.17, Religious Liberty in the Military Services](#), was unveiled earlier this month. It establishes Department of Defense policy "in furtherance of the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment" and states that DOD components will "accommodate individual expressions of sincerely held beliefs" — provided there are no adverse impacts on military readiness and unit cohesion. Such beliefs can include religious beliefs or moral principles, the guidance says.

[Trump Expands Ban On Racial Sensitivity Training To Federal Contractors](#) [NPR, 22 September 2020]

President Trump on Tuesday said he had expanded a ban on racial sensitivity training to federal contractors. His administration had instructed federal agencies to end such training earlier this month. Trump said on Twitter on Tuesday that he had expanded the ban on "efforts to indoctrinate government employees with divisive and harmful sex and race-based ideologies" to contractors doing business with the federal government and those receiving grant funds. Earlier this month, Trump announced efforts to promote "patriotic education" and railed against students learning about systemic racism. He signed an [executive order](#) that requires contracts to now include a provision that says contractors with the federal government will not have "workplace training that inculcates in its employees any form of race or sex stereotyping or any form of race or sex scapegoating" or face the cancellation of contracts. "Instructors and materials teaching that men and members of certain races, as well as our most venerable institutions, are inherently sexist and racist are appearing in workplace diversity trainings across the country, even in components of the Federal Government and among Federal contractors," the order says.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

CULTURE

[Air Force chief makes Time's 100 most influential people list](#) [Stephen Losey, *Air Force Times*, 23 September 2020]

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles "CQ" Brown was named one of [Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2020](#) Tuesday. Former Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson wrote for Time about Brown's historical significance as the first Black chief of staff to command a military service in American history, as well as his skill and experience as a leader in the Air Force. Wilson noted that, as he was sworn in as the Air Force's 22nd chief of staff Aug. 6, Brown paid tribute to his predecessors in uniform who did not receive the chance to reach their full career potential due to the color of their skin. Those trailblazers, Brown said, broke the barriers that made it possible for him to become the first Black chief of staff. "The smiles on the faces of the surviving members of the Tuskegee Airmen, an all-Black unit of fighter pilots in World War II, were matched only by those of the 19-year-olds who now know the sky's not the limit in today's Air Force," Wilson wrote.

[The Air Force now has its own tattoo shop](#) [Sarah Sicard and J.D. Simkins, *Military Times*, 23 September 2020]

Getting a tattoo is as much of a rite of passage for military personnel as the ritualized — and oftentimes scalp-gouging — buzz cut at boot camp. And while barber shops have been a mainstay on bases around the globe, soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines have never had the convenience of on-base ink — until now. Nellis Air Force Base, located near Las Vegas, officially opened its own tattoo shop on Sept 4. "We are always leading from the front and finding new ways to improve the quality of life for our Airmen," reads a Facebook post. "Team Nellis is now home to the first tattoo studio on an Air Force or Army installation." "The decision to open a tattoo parlor on base was the brainchild of the 99 Force Support Squadron. By providing tattoo services on base we can ensure our artists follow the AFI tattoo guidance when providing service for active, guard and reserve Airmen."

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[A controversial photo editing app slammed for AI-enabled "blackface" feature](#) [Rishi Iyengar, *CNN Business*, 23 September 2020]

Photo editing app Gradient is under fire for a new feature that lets people alter their ethnicity in images, with many slamming it for promoting digital "blackface." The feature, called AI Face, supposedly allows users to "find out how you would look if you were born on a different continent," according to Gradient's website. Several users expressed outrage in response to the tweets, slamming them as "racist" and denouncing their promotion of "blackface." Gradient describes itself as "the next big thing in the world of mobile photo editing," and names as its founders Vladyslav Urazov and Bogdan Matveev, whom the website describes as "artificial intelligence and machine learning enthusiasts."

[Swastika, New York, Is Keeping Its Name](#) [Julie Ritchey, *NPR*, 23 September 2020]

Michael Alcamo lives in New York City but loves cycling through the Adirondack Mountains in northern New York, with their tiny towns and hamlets and historical cemeteries. He was on a trip like this, winding through a remote stretch this summer, when he noticed something else, a small brown street sign with the name “Swastika.” “So the effect was just jarring and profoundly, I thought, disrespectful,” he said, especially to the veterans of World War II with graves nearby. So Alcamo reached out to county officials in August to see if they would consider renaming it. The town agreed to add it to their agenda for their meeting this month. And after five minutes of discussion at their Sept. 14 meeting, the town’s four councilors unanimously voted against it.

[Why do women still change their names?](#) [Maddy Savage, *BBC News*, 23 September 2020]

In the U.S., most women adopt their husband’s family name when they get hitched – around 70%, according to one of the largest data analyses in recent years. For British women, the figure is almost 90%, [according to a 2016 survey](#), with around 85% of those aged between 18 and 30 still following the practice. Although these figures are lower than they were a generation ago, it’s clear it remains a strong cultural norm in large parts of the western world, despite today’s more individualistic and gender-aware era. “It is quite surprising... [so many women adopt the man’s name] since it comes from patriarchal history, from the idea that a woman, on marriage, became one of the man’s possessions,” says Simon Duncan, a professor in family life at the University of Bradford, UK. In the U.S., growing numbers of women are also opting for [unhyphenated double surnames](#) due to the need to remain searchable online for professional reasons. Meanwhile, some couples blend their names or come up with new ones to share, and [men who adopt their wives’ names](#), although both phenomena remain unusual.

[Estate’s Racially Divisive Name Threatens Future of Premier Equestrian Event](#) [Gillian R. Brassil, *The New York Times*, 22 September 2020]

For two decades, the Olympic equestrian sport of eventing has held prestigious competitions on a Pennsylvania estate with a landscape perfect for horses and riders to demonstrate strength, endurance and grace while jumping over a variety of solid and natural obstacles. This year might be its last. There is no problem with the facility itself. There is a problem with its name: Plantation Field. Rather than change its name, as some in the sport have called for in a time of heightened awareness over systemic racism, the owner of the property has decided to cancel the lease for events going forward, casting doubt over the future of eventing competitions at the site, including the renowned Plantation Field International Horse Trials. Plantation Field Equestrian Events, the nonprofit that puts on the eventing trials and other competitions on the land, said the name had no connection to slavery.

[Hispanic, Latino and Latinx: What’s the difference, and why it matters](#) [Elizabeth Elkind, *CBS News*, 22 September 2020]

The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are often used synonymously in the U.S., with the term “Latinx” used as a gender-neutral alternative to the latter. While views on what the terms mean exactly can vary, filmmaker and journalist Andrew Padilla says the significance is not with semantics, but the actions that are supposed to come after. “I think that we know what we’re comfortable with,” Padilla said on CBSN Tuesday. “The issue is when folks try to communicate to our communities by using one of these terms as opposed to a real dedicated and developed

relationship with us.” A December Pew Research poll found 61% of bilingual Spanish and English speaking adults surveyed identified with the term “Hispanic,” while 29% preferred to be called “Latino.” Just 4% of people identified as “Latinx.” Padilla said the preference against the gender-neutral term does not reflect a negative sentiment, but rather a lack of familiarity.

[Air Force to honor Tuskegee Airmen with 2020 Air Power Legacy Series uniform](#) [Air Force Academy News, 21 September 2020]

The Air Force football team will honor the Tuskegee Airmen with the 2020 edition of the Air Power Legacy Series uniform. The Falcons will debut the special uniform for the Navy game, Oct. 3, in Falcon Stadium. The uniform is gray with black lettering. The chrome base gray helmet features the P-51 aircraft flown by the Tuskegee Airmen with signature red tails and nose that helped identify the squadron. This year marks the fifth season of the Air Power Legacy Series, started in 2016 to honor the Air Force’s rich history.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Alabama Archives faces its legacy as Confederate “attic”](#) [Jay Reeves, *The Associated Press*, 21 September 2020]

Hundreds of memorials glorifying the Confederacy had been erected by the time Marie Bankhead Owen built what may have been the grandest: [The Alabama Department of Archives and History](#), which cataloged a version of the past that was favored by many Southern Whites and all but excluded Black people. Owen used taxpayer money to turn the department into an overstuffed Confederate attic promoting the idea that the South’s role in the Civil War was noble rather than a fight to maintain slavery. Now, amid a national reckoning over racial injustice, the agency is confronting that legacy in the state where the civil rights movement was born. In June, leaders formally acknowledged the department’s past role in perpetuating racism and so-called lost cause ideals.

[Reckoning in a small town: Civil War meets civil rights in the “Last Capital of the Confederacy”](#) [Gregory S. Schneider, *The Washington Post*, 19 September 2020]

Long billed as the Last Capital of the Confederacy, this industrial city near the North Carolina line was struggling to create a new identity even before the Black Lives Matter movement rose up over the summer. As cities across the South confronted their past, leaders in Danville weren’t sure what to expect. What they got was far different from the sometimes violent clashes between protesters and police that gripped that more famous Confederate capital in Richmond, 150 miles to the northeast. Here, marchers demonstrated peacefully and the police supported them. A group that had planted a giant Confederate flag at the foot of Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Bridge took it down for two weeks during the protests.

DISCRIMINATION

[House passes bill banning race-based hairstyle discrimination](#) [Alexandra Kelley, *The Hill*, 23 September 2020]

On Monday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed [H.R.5309](#), a landmark bill aimed at banning discrimination based on a person’s hair texture or style that is associated with a specific race or

ethnicity. Dubbed the [CROWN Act](#), or *Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act of 2019*, the legislation would prevent employers from denying economic opportunities to individuals with diverse hair textures or race-specific hairstyles, including Afros, locs, twists, bantu knots, cornrows and braids. It also specifically bans discrimination based on hair texture or style against individuals participating in federal assistance programs, housing programs or other public accommodations and institutions.

[Last in, first out: Female pilots bear brunt of airline job cuts](#) [Tracy Rucinski, Jamie Freed and Allison Lampert, *Reuters*, 21 September 2020]

When Megyn Thompson landed her dream job as a commercial pilot last year, she was one of thousands being recruited globally to boost the number of women in the cockpit and meet record pilot demand. Now an industry-wide campaign to recruit more female aviators is under threat, dealing a blow to efforts to overhaul the male-dominated airline sector as the coronavirus crisis transforms a shortage into a pilot surplus. In the United States alone, the top two airlines are set to furlough more than 3,000 pilots when government stimulus expires this month, and a disproportionate number of those are women. Under layoff agreements between airlines and unions, junior pilots lose their jobs before senior ones, regardless of gender, race or age. These “Last In, First Out” labor deals at many Western airlines mean the most recent hires are the first to go. And those new hires include a higher percentage of women than in the past, the International Society of Women Airline Pilots (ISWAP) said.

DIVERSITY

[Army leaders say new diversity efforts will work because service culture is so different from a decade ago](#) [Haley Britzky, *Task & Purpose*, 24 September 2020]

Army leaders spearheading the service’s diversity and inclusion programs said on Thursday that their new efforts would be successful because the Army has a totally different culture today than it did a decade ago. There are “fundamental differences” in how the Army operates now compared to 12 years ago, said Dr. E. Casey Wardynski, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, including the ability to “leverage technology to do talent management.” He also said the culture itself is completely different because it focuses on the needs of the individual more than the needs of the Army. “The old culture of the Army was, our units and our folks trusted that the Army would know where they’re needed and when they’re needed. We flipped that,” Wardynski said. “Now, we trust that our individuals and our units know what they’d like to do and what they need, and we will create a system that allows them to come together around those things.”

[General becomes 1st Black head of U.S. Air Force Academy](#) [The Associated Press, 24 September 2020]

The U.S. Air Force Academy installed a new superintendent who will be the first Black officer to lead the military institution. Lt. Gen. Richard Clark also became the first former commandant of cadets to return to the top position at the academy near Colorado Springs, The Gazette reports. Clark becomes the first Black superintendent in the school’s 66-year history following a position at the Pentagon, where he oversaw the Air Force’s nuclear weapons program. “I am honored and

privileged for the opportunity to give something back,” said Clark, who called the superintendent post his “dream job.” Clark replaced Lt. Gen. Jay Silveria, who retired after 35 years in the military.

[Services to consider removing all identifying information from promotion board packets](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 24 September 2020]

Soon, there will be no photos on packets sent to promotion boards, but that may just be the first step. The feeling now, according to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is that all identifying information should be stripped from documents when boards consider troops for promotion. Such “sterilization” of promotion packets removes unconscious and conscious bias, Army Gen. Mark Milley said Thursday during a live-streamed senior leader town hall. “All the service secretaries think this is the way to go,” he said. “They made recommendations to the secretary of defense. And those actions are being implemented as well speak. And I fully support them. I think it’s the way to go.”

[Diversity is about saving Marines’ lives, not political correctness, commandant says](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 23 September 2020]

The Marine Corps needs to become more diverse in order to save Marines’ lives, Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger said on Wednesday. “I am absolutely convinced: Too much similarity – too much that we look all the same, think the same, got the same background – we’re going to get killed because we’re going to end up with solutions that we’re all familiar with but they’re easy to counter,” Berger said during the Marine Corps Association’s annual Modern Day Marine expo. Berger stressed that the Marine Corps will become a more capable force as it diversifies on many levels, including diversity of thought, culture, and ethnic backgrounds.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[The future of space is female. NASA is sending a woman to the moon and putting women among its highest ranks, part of a concerted push toward inclusivity in an industry long dominated by men.](#) [Chabeli Carranza, *The 19th News*, 23 September 2020]

Kathy Lueders had just sent two men into space on a private spacecraft — an extraordinary accomplishment nearly a decade in the making — when she received a call from the head of NASA this summer. There was a sudden opening in the agency’s human spaceflight division, and she was being offered the top job. Now she was being offered the opportunity to lead the entire division — NASA’s most critical — at a time when public interest in space was again growing, when a mission to return to the moon was on the horizon. But she didn’t say yes right away. The term “manned spaceflight” is already out of vogue — NASA’s official style guide calls it “piloted” or “human” spaceflight. NASA headquarters is getting a name change, too, after Mary Jackson, the first Black female engineer at NASA, who for many years was a “hidden figure” in the country’s moonshot.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Navy Learning From Past Attempts to Eliminate Bias in the Fleet](#) [Sam LaGrone, *USNI News*, 23 September 2020]

Shortly after Floyd’s death, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday established Task Force One that would address racism, sexism and other biases in the service. “It’s bigger than a Black

issue, White issue. We're looking at ageism, sexism, the religion piece. We're touching a lot of different things," Holsey said. For the Navy, the trick will be to avoid the fate of other efforts that earnestly tried to tackle the underlying social and cultural problems in the service but lost momentum over time, officials told USNI News. Many of those initiatives were rooted in scandals in and outside of the service. "You can look back at a big 'aha' moments. You can say back to Tailhook of [1991] when that occurred. The alcohol-related incidents — you put more focus on that piece there. Within the last three to five years — the [Sexual Assault Prevention and Response] program, the 'Me Too' movement — we turned cultural on a dime to get after that," Holsey said. "We put a focus on things and we kind of back off. We think we're okay."

[Air Force moves to cancel contracts for training on "White privilege"](#) [Stephen Losey, *Air Force Times*, 22 September 2020]

The Air Force is taking the first steps toward canceling any contracts for diversity and unconscious bias training that include segments on White privilege and other controversial subjects, as called for by the White House. The Air Force's move follows a Sept. 4 memo from Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought, which alleged executive branch agencies have spent millions of taxpayer dollars "'training' government workers to believe divisive, anti-American propaganda." Vought ordered agencies to identify, and then look for ways to cancel or defund, contracts or agency spending for training on critical race theory, White privilege, "or any other training or propaganda effort that teaches or suggests either ... that the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or ... that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil." Vought also called such courses "un-American propaganda training sessions."

[State Department Officials Vow Cultural Shift Toward Inclusion](#) [Erich Wagner, *GovExec*, 22 September 2020]

Officials tasked with improving diversity and inclusion at the State Department told a House panel on Tuesday that they are hard at work examining how to boost the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups in the department's workforce, although progress is slow moving. The fact that the State Department's workforce, both civil service and foreign service, does not adequately reflect the demographic makeup of the United States is a longstanding issue. According to a Government Accountability Office [report](#) from earlier this year, although the total proportion of racial and ethnic minorities in full time jobs at the department has increased from 28% in fiscal 2002 to 32% in fiscal 2018, that increase has failed to take hold among the ranks of management and minorities now make up a disproportionately large contingent of those leaving the department. "On retention, 25% of all people leaving [the State Department] in 2018 were racial minorities, compared to only 13% in 2003," said Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I.

[Ruth Bader Ginsburg and an Alabama Air Force officer opened doors for women everywhere in 1973](#) [Anna Claire Vollers, *Alabama Media Group (Birmingham, Ala.)*, 20 September 2020]

Sharron Cohen in 1973 was known as Sharron Frontiero, a young U.S. Air Force lieutenant in Montgomery, whose sex discrimination lawsuit became the first case Ruth Bader Ginsburg ever argued before the Supreme Court. That case, *Frontiero v. Richardson*, became a landmark decision, [Reckon reports](#). It's considered the first successful sex discrimination case filed against the federal government and altered the legal landscape for future gender equity cases. Her

superiors at nearby Maxwell Air Force Base, where she worked as a physical therapist, repeatedly refused to grant her the housing allowance and medical benefits automatically given to married male service members. That meant she made less in wages than men of equal rank. Instead, the Air Force insisted she had to prove that her husband depended on her for half his living expenses, a stipulation not required of men.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Inclusion starts with better management – here’s what employees say about making diversity work](#)

[Kim Brimhall, *The Conversation*, 17 September 2020]

Since the death of George Floyd in May, dozens of companies such as Apple, Estee Lauder and Facebook have vowed to increase diversity and inclusion in their workplaces. The diversity part seems straightforward enough. But what’s meant by inclusion? As a social work scholar, I study how leaders create socially just, equitable and inclusive workplaces, particularly when they have a diverse workforce. A [recent study](#) I conducted with social policy scholar Lawrence Palinkas examined how employees perceive leaders who are inclusive – and those who aren’t.

HUMAN RELATIONS

[Twitter poll calls Army work-life balance into question](#) [Sarah Sicard, *Military Times*, 23

September 2020]

A [Twitter poll shared by @mil_Leader](#) on Sept. 22 asked soldiers on the platform whether the Army promotes a healthy balance of work and life. Though the survey will run through the end of the week, as it currently stands, the answer overwhelmingly is “no.” At the time of this writing, 538 votes were cast, and more than 66 percent of respondents don’t feel that the Army has balance, while 26 percent believe the service is trying but failing to promote a healthy climate. Only around 8 percent responded positively. Some cite toxic command climate, while others blame work culture. One user suggested that the issue seems to be that leadership equates time spent on the clock to high performance. “We need to stop perpetuating the idea/culture that those who work later, come in on their days off, grind their teams harder, etc. get top blocked and that’s the key to success,” @Fal_Neil wrote.

[The pandemic proves we all should know “psychological first aid.” Here are the basics.](#) [Stacey

Colino, *The Washington Post*, 22 September 2020]

If ever there were a time for people to know the important skills that make up what mental health experts refer to as “psychological first aid,” a pandemic is it. Like regular first aid, PFA is a way of helping someone in pain — except rather than cleaning and bandaging a cut or applying ice to a sprained ankle, you tend to someone’s anxiety or distress in a way that will ease it and help restore a sense of equanimity. Many disaster responders and public health professionals have been trained in PFA, but it’s time for the rest of us to join them, so we can help our families, our friends and ourselves. We know that the unprecedented challenges from the pandemic, the economic fallout it has brought on and the racial unrest in the country are having an effect on Americans’ mental health. The prevalence of symptoms of an anxiety disorder was three times as high and symptoms of depression were four times as high in June 2020 than in the second quarter of 2019, [according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). [\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

MISCELLANEOUS

[Ruth Bader Ginsburg makes history as the first woman, Jewish person to lie in state at U.S. Capitol](#)

[Christal Hayes, Deirdre Shesgreen, and Rebecca Morin, *USA Today*, 25 September 2020]

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg made history one final time Friday as she became the first woman and Jewish person to lie in state at the U.S. Capitol. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi began the day's events with a formal arrival ceremony in National Statuary Hall, in which eight military pallbearers carried Ginsburg's flag-draped casket up the Capitol steps as lawmakers stood in somber observance.

[Exclusive: Interview with Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger. Watch Defense One's interview on building the future force, racism in the ranks, integrating women, and working with Congress](#)

[*Defense One*, 24 September 2020]

Gen. David Berger discussed his plans to remake the force for the future, keep extremism out of the ranks, what's still needed to integrate women into the Corps, and coyotes — yes, coyotes — in an exclusive interview on Thursday.

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

[Neuroscience Has A Whiteness Problem. This Research Project Aims To Fix It](#) [Jon Hamilton, *NPR*, 24 September 2020]

Mental illness can run in families. And Dr. Kafui Dzirasa grew up in one of these families. His close relatives include people with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression. As a medical student, he learned about the ones who'd been committed to psychiatric hospitals or who "went missing" and were discovered in alleyways. Dzirasa decided to dedicate his career to "figuring out how to make science relevant to ultimately help my own family." Then Dzirasa realized something: "I was studying genes that were specifically related to illness in folks of European ancestry." His family had migrated from West Africa, which meant anything he discovered might not apply to them. Dzirasa also realized that people with his ancestry were missing not only from genetics research but from the entire field of brain science. So when a group in Baltimore asked Dzirasa to help do something about the problem, he said yes.

["It's just too much to handle." In Texas, the burden of coronavirus on Latinos is diverse, with an impact that is almost certainly underestimated](#) [Arelis R. Hernández, *The Washington Post*, 22 September 2020]

The novel coronavirus is devastating Latino communities across the country, from California's Imperial Valley to suburban Boston and Puerto Rico. Workers at Midwestern meatpacking plants and on construction sites in Florida are getting sick and dying of a virus that is exacerbating historic inequalities in communities where residents, many of whom are "essential" workers, struggle to access health care. The undocumented are largely invisible. "If you look at all the negative factors, risky jobs or unemployment, unsafe housing, poor air quality and preexisting conditions, it's all people of color," said Carlos E. Rodriguez-Diaz, an associate professor at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University. "It's not because we are non-White, it's because of the social conditions that historically placed us at a disadvantage,"

Rodriguez-Diaz said. “These are not new, but Covid is giving us the unfortunate opportunity to highlight these factors.”

[Ruth Bader Ginsburg, “Jurist of Historic Stature,” Dies at 87.](#) [Linda Greenhouse, *The New York Times*, 20 September 2020]

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court and a pioneering advocate for women’s rights, who in her ninth decade became a much younger generation’s unlikely cultural icon, died on Friday at her home in Washington. She was 87. Her late-life rock stardom could not remotely have been predicted in June 1993, when President Bill Clinton nominated the soft-spoken, 60-year-old judge, who prized collegiality and whose friendship with conservative colleagues on the federal appeals court where she had served for 13 years left some feminist leaders fretting privately that the president was making a mistake. Asked often to explain the success of her 1970s litigation campaign, Justice Ginsburg usually offered some version of having been in the right place with the right arguments at the right time. “How fortunate I was to be alive and a lawyer,” she wrote in the preface to “My Own Words,” a compilation of her writing published in 2016, “when, for the first time in U.S. history, it became possible to urge, successfully, before legislatures and courts, the equal-citizenship stature of women and men as a fundamental constitutional principle.”

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

[Group of Democratic lawmakers tour Fort Hood, leave “deeply concerned” about conditions at the Texas base](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 18 September 2020]

“Behind me is the sign that says, ‘Fort Hood, the Great Place.’ I don’t think that any of us feel that we can call it a great place right now,” said Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif. “I believe there are serious cultural and safety issues at this base that we must address.” Speier, who serves as the chairwoman of the military personnel subpanel of the House Armed Services Committee, said the lawmakers visited the base because of the killing of Spc. Vanessa Guillen, the suicide of Sgt. Elder Fernandes and suspected homicide of Pvt. Gregory Wedel-Morales. However, they said they also witnessed poor living conditions of soldiers in barracks and families in base housing, as well as a culture of fear and low morale.

RACISM

[Acting DHS secretary: White supremacy is “most persistent and lethal threat” internally to U.S.](#) [Savannah Behrman, *USA Today*, 24 September 2020]

Acting Department of Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf said Wednesday during his confirmation hearing that White supremacists have become the “most persistent and lethal” “internal threat” to the U.S. “White supremacist extremists, from a lethality standpoint over the last two years, particularly when you look at 2018 and 2019, are certainly the most persistent and lethal threat when we talk about domestic violent extremists,” said Wolf, who has been heading the DHS in an acting capacity since November.

[“Administrative Action” Taken Against Naval Academy Midshipman for Racist Tweets](#) [Heather Mongilio, *The Capital Gazette*, (Annapolis, Md.), 24 September 2020]

The Naval Academy has taken “appropriate administrative action” against a midshipman responsible for a series of racist tweets over the summer. The details of the administrative action are protected by the Privacy Act, said Naval Academy spokesperson Cmdr. Alana Garas in an email. In July, a Twitter account linked to Standage tweeted out several racist statements, including ones about Breonna Taylor, a Black woman killed by police in March, and the protests following the death of George Floyd, a Black man who was also killed by police. Screenshots of the tweets were shared by members of the Navy football team and other midshipmen, with calls for the academy to separate Standage. Standage did not respond to a request for comment as of Thursday evening.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Microaggressions aren't just innocent blunders – new research links them with racial bias](#)

[Jonathan Kanter, *The Conversation*, 24 September 2020]

A White man shares publicly that a group of Black Harvard graduates “look like gang members to me” and claims he would have said the same of White people dressed similarly. A White physician mistakes a Black physician for a janitor and says it was an honest mistake. A White woman asks to touch a Black classmate’s hair, is scolded for doing so and sulks, “I was just curious.” It’s a pattern that recurs countless times, in myriad interactions and contexts, across American society. A White person says something that is experienced as racially biased, is called on it, and reacts defensively. These comments and other such subtle snubs, insults and offenses are known as microaggressions. The concept, introduced in the 1970s by Black psychiatrist Chester Pierce, is now the focus of a fierce debate.

[A Black former Tennessee Guardsman claims his fellow soldiers called him a racial epithet like it “was my name”](#) [Haley Britzky, *Task & Purpose*, 23 September 2020]

A former Tennessee National Guardsman described a disturbing culture of racism within the guard and a failure to take action against it, according to a YouTube video he posted over the weekend. In a nearly-[15 minute-long video](#), William Louis Kyle, Jr., a Black man with the YouTube username Wil Kyle, detailed frequent racist interactions he had with White members of the Tennessee National Guard, saying that they led him to attempt suicide. “I want to know why nobody cares,” he said in the video. “Do I have to be dead for someone to say, ‘Hey, let’s do something?’” The video has over 3,500 views on YouTube and has spurred hundreds of comments on the unofficial military Reddit page, [r/military](#).

[Cost Of Racism: U.S. Economy Lost \\$16 Trillion Because Of Discrimination, Bank Says](#)

[Adedayo Akala, *NPR*, 23 September 2020]

Nationwide protests have cast a spotlight on racism and inequality in the United States. Now a major bank has put a price tag on how much the economy has lost as a result of discrimination against African Americans: \$16 trillion. Since 2000, U.S. gross domestic product lost that much as a result of discriminatory practices in a range of areas, including in education and access to business loans, according to a [new study](#) by Citigroup. It’s not an insignificant number: By comparison, U.S. GDP totaled \$19.5 trillion last year. And not acting to reverse discriminatory practices will continue to exact a cost. Citigroup estimates the economy would see a \$5 trillion

boost over the next five years if the U.S. were to tackle key areas of discrimination against African Americans.

[Black Protest Leaders To White Allies: “It’s Our Turn To Lead Our Own Fight”](#) [Brian Mann and Elizabeth Baker, *NPR*, 22 September 2020]

“It’s our turn to lead our own fight, to frame our own conversations,” said Benjamin O’Keefe, a Black political organizer in Brooklyn where protests have continued since late May after George Floyd, a Black man, was killed while in police custody in Minneapolis. But it has also meant a complicated conversation with White activists who often haven’t grappled with their own attitudes about race. “We exist in a White supremacy culture in which even people who want to do good do not necessarily want to be led by a Black person,” the 26-year-old said. A [study from Harvard](#) shows that Black Americans are roughly three times more likely to be killed during an encounter with police compared with White people. Black adults are also five times more likely to say they’ve been unfairly stopped by police because of their race, according to the [Pew Research Center](#). Black activists say White demonstrators haven’t shared this experience, so they often turn up at protests with different assumptions about what reform should look like and what tactics should be used in the streets.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Racial Justice Push Creates Momentum to Protect Black-Owned Land](#) [April Simpson, *Stateline*, 21 September 2020]

In May, three sisters in Chicago got a surprise phone call: They owned 35 acres in Mississippi with a stand of mature timber worth more than \$40,000. “They’d never been to Louisville, Mississippi, so they had no idea they owned property,” recalled Frank Taylor, leader of the Winston County Self Help Cooperative in Mississippi, who called the sisters. Many of the landowners that the group contacts inherited heirs’ property, a form of ownership created when people die without a will and their heirs share a claim to the estate. Many are Black families who in the 1800s and early 1900s might have had neither the means nor, often, the freedom to secure land titles or draw up wills. This year, Mississippi and three other states passed laws that provide protections for people who inherit such property. The changes are happening against the backdrop of a broader national awakening to racial injustice, even in agricultural spaces. Black-owned land with active farm operations has decreased roughly 85% over the past century. About 95% of farmers are White.

[Air Force Academy general’s fight against racism still resonates](#) [Tom Roeder, *The Associated Press*, 19 September 2020]

Lt. Gen. Silveria had spent most of his life in the sky, putting in 3,000 hours in the cockpits of F-15s, the new F-35 stealth fighter and even mastering the HH-60 Black Hawk rescue helicopter. He spent eight years wearing captain’s bars, because that’s the rank that gets the most flying time. It must have been a letdown when the general got a call from a member of his boyhood Boy Scout troop. The friend was Gen. David Goldfein, the Air Force’s chief of staff, who was sending Silveria to do something entirely different: run the Air Force’s college in Colorado Springs. And Silveria’s tenure might have prepared the battlefield for the man who will become the new superintendent Sept. 23. Lt. Gen. Richard Clark will become the academy’s first Black leader at an institution that

over three years has worked to stamp out racial bias in the ranks. “We have to acknowledge we have racism, we have bias,” Silveria said. “We have to find it and we have to fix it.”

SEXISM

[The Army is rolling out a new fitness test: Will it hold back women?](#) [Missy Ryan, *The Washington Post*, 24 September 2020]

An Army initiative to create a stronger, fitter fighting force has yielded a dramatic gender gap, raising questions about whether the service might unintentionally compound barriers for women trying to move up the ranks. Recent Army figures show that 54 percent of female soldiers failed the new Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), which is being rolled out on a provisional basis, compared with 7 percent of men during the second quarter of 2020. That reflects a significant improvement over last year, when leaked data showed that over 80 percent of a smaller cohort of female test-takers failed the six-event exam. But some women fear they won't be able to pass even with additional training or will continue to score lower than men, potentially affecting their career prospects in an institution already struggling to shed historical gender and racial disparities.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Top Music School Finds Sexual Abuse Allegations From Violinist “Credible”](#) [Anastasia Tsioulcas, *NPR*, 23 September 2020]

*About 35 years ago, violinist Lara St. John — then just 15 years old — went with two friends to the dean of the school she attended, Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music, to say that her private teacher, the famed violin pedagogue Jascha Brodsky, had sexually abused her on multiple occasions. The then-dean, Robert Fitzpatrick, brushed her off. Over the ensuing three decades, St. John, now 49, went back again and again to Curtis officials — six times in all — between 1986 and 2019, asking that her allegations be heard and acknowledged. They never were in any substantial way — until her account was [corroborated and published by the Philadelphia Inquirer](#) last summer. St. John also told the *Inquirer* that not only had Fitzpatrick not taken her allegations seriously, but that he told her: “Oh, for God's sake, who do you think they're going to believe? Some 15-year-old kid or someone who has been here for decades?”*

[A Texas sheriff is charged with sexually abusing his colleagues. It's not his first complaint.](#) [Tim Elfrink, *The Washington Post*, 22 September 2020]

*On Monday, the Texas Rangers arrested Sheriff Ricky Scaman, 48, on sexual assault and other charges after two other government employees said he groped them and verbally harassed them while “acting under color of his office as a public servant, namely Falls County sheriff,” the *Tribune* reported. Scaman was elected sheriff in 2016 in Falls County, a rural, farming area of around 17,000 people bisected by the Brazos River about 30 miles south of Waco. He spent nearly three decades in law enforcement, the *Tribune* reported, and as sheriff, boasted of hunting down drug dealers while inviting TV reporters to tag along. Behind the scenes, though, two women in his office claimed the sheriff preyed on them. In 2018, Nanci Anderson, his former assistant chief*

deputy, filed a federal lawsuit that compared Scaman to disgraced movie producer Harvey Weinstein, noting “even a modicum of power in the wrong hands can wreak havoc.”

[Sexual harassment should not be the price of admission for women in the military](#)

[\[COMMENTARY\]](#) [Maj. Grace Miller, *Air Force Times*, 20 September 2020]

This week, Air Force Staff Sgt. Heather Fejerang bravely submitted a commentary to the Air Force Times about sexually harassing comments directed at her on People of the Deid, a “humor” page for those who are deployed or have deployed to Al Udeid. She was deployed with her sister, who is an Air Force officer, and the Air Force had written an article on their deployed experiences together. Air Force personnel and veterans on People of the Deid responded by asking when their porn would be available and with other similarly degrading remarks. This treatment of women is common on pages like these. Why are these individuals so insistent on degrading women and degrading those who stand up for them? I can only theorize. One is reminded of the troubling remarks retired Air National Guard Lt. Col. Betsy Schoeller made on Facebook in response to the outcry over the Vanessa Guillen case: “You guys are kidding, right? Sexual harassment is the price of admission for women into the good ole boy club. If you’re gonna cry like a snowflake about it, you’re gonna pay the price.” It’s an ugly rendering of our military, but I wish we could do a better job of proving her wrong.

SUICIDE

[Congress approves major bill aiming to prevent veteran suicides](#) [Nikki Wentling, *Stars and Stripes*, 23 September 2020]

The House passed sweeping bipartisan legislation Wednesday that would give up to \$174 million during the next five years to state and local organizations that provide suicide-prevention services to veterans and their families. The House approved the bill without objection. It now goes to the White House, where President Trump is expected to sign it into law. The bill, titled the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act, gained the support of the White House, the Department of Veterans Affairs, dozens of veterans service organizations and Republican and Democratic lawmakers. In part, the Hannon act creates a grant program that would allow up to \$750,000 to be awarded to community organizations. The legislation includes dozens of measures in addition to the new grant program. One requires the VA to establish a plan for boosting its mental health staff, and another creates a scholarship program to increase staff at Vet Centers.

[Seeking the Military Suicide Solution Podcast, Episode 36: Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia](#) [*Military Times*, 23 September 2020]

Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia is the former senior enlisted adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the senior non-commissioned officer in the U.S. armed forces. In this role, he served as the principal military adviser to the chairman and the secretary of defense on all matters involving joint and combined total force integration, utilization, health of the force and joint development for enlisted personnel. Battaglia was honorably retired from the United States Marines on Aug. 31, 2016, having served nearly 37 years of active duty service.

[\[LISTEN\]](#)

[Fort Campbell soldiers shine light on suicide prevention](#) [Fort Campbell Public Affairs, *Military Health System News*, 22 September 2020]

From the podium where he told his story, Bryan Flanery, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) veteran, could see the window of the barracks room where he attempted suicide in 2012. “I was raised in a household where suicide was considered a coward’s way out,” Flanery told a group of more than 100 Soldiers and supporters who turned out Sept. 10 for the second annual Light up the Night event outside Blanchfield Army Community Hospital located aboard Fort Campbell, Kentucky. “When I was a very young man, I had an uncle who took his life and we didn’t go to the funeral. My dad refused. So, growing up that is what I believed – until that moment in 2012.” Flanery spoke at a vigil and candlelight walk co-hosted by BACH, Fort Campbell Army Community Service and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation as part of the Army’s observance of National Suicide Prevention Month. For many, the subject of suicide hit very close to home. Almost all who attended raised their hands when asked if suicide had impacted their lives in some way.

[Fort Sill trainees who stopped a suicide attempt receive promotions in basic](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 21 September 2020]

Carlos Fontanez and Ari Till, of A Battery, 1st Battalion, 19th Field Artillery, were promoted outside their battalion headquarters in front of 230 of their fellow trainees Friday, the release stated. The two men had only been in basic combat training for a week when the incident occurred, according to their battery commander, Capt. Bianca Huntsman. “Within the first 72 hours after getting off the bus, trainees get a briefing about suicidal ideations, signs and symptoms,” she said in the release. “They saw something that was wrong, and they stepped up.” Fontanez and Till’s promotions were authorized by Gen. Paul Funk, who helms Army Training and Doctrine Command.

[COVID-19 and suicide prevention: Parallel public health strategies for veterans and service members \[COMMENTARY\]](#) [Keita Franklin and Kim Ruocco, *Military Times*, 20 September 2020]

COVID-19 is exacerbating the suicide crisis. Calls to suicide hotlines have increased by 800 percent, according to some estimates. Texts to crisis lines have seen a similarly alarming spike, doubling in some cities. Therefore it is inexplicable that we lack a coordinated public health approach for one of America’s leading causes of death, and one that is increasing among all age groups during the pandemic. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death in 10- to 24-year-olds.

[Pushing for purpose: Let’s mark Sept. 22 as National Veteran and Military Suicide Prevention Day \[COMMENTARY\]](#) [Matthew Allen, *Military Times*, 20 September 2020]

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. We want to establish this moment, Sept. 22, 2020, as the first annual Veteran and Military Suicide Prevention Day; and we’re asking all of you, military and veteran alike, to join us in commemorating this day both now and in the future. Do something on this day to make a meaningful and impactful difference within our community. We’re sure you’ve heard of the original “22 pushup challenge.” The challenge is simple, and meaningful: do 22 pushups every day for 22 days to raise awareness for suicide prevention. Our event consolidates those 22 days into 22 brutal two-minute rounds during one event.

[Veteran suicide is a problem. Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is a solution. \[COMMENTARY\]](#) [Rep. Greg Murphy, *Military.com*, 19 September 2020]

Many of our heroes spend difficult months, if not years, in often hostile lands missing their families and loved ones to preserve the freedom we enjoy here in America. Yet some may return from their experiences so mentally scarred that they lose all hope and take their own lives upon return. This tragedy is one of the most heartbreaking trends in our country and it simply does not receive the attention it deserves. Studies have shown that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) could play a major factor in veteran deaths by suicide. A 2015 study found that as many as 500,000 veterans who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan were diagnosed with PTSD. A lot of these veterans take to drugs and alcohol to escape the terror of their thoughts, beginning a dangerous downward spiral oftentimes with a devastating outcome. Treatments are aimed at lessening the symptoms for PTSD/TBI, but at present there is no cure. There are those who believe [hyperbaric oxygen therapy \(HBOT\)](#) may be just that for those most in need.

VETERANS

[House Approves Bill Ordering VA to Change Gender-Exclusive Motto](#) [Nikki Wentling, *Stars and Stripes*, 22 September 2020]

The House passed bipartisan legislation Tuesday to change the Department of Veterans Affairs motto to be more inclusive of women who served. The Honoring All Veterans Act would change the motto to read, “To fulfill President Lincoln’s promise to care for those ‘who shall have borne the battle’ and for their families, caregivers, and survivors.” Some female veterans and advocates, such as Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, have pushed for a gender-neutral version of the motto since 2017. The VA initially rejected the proposal. More recently, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie has sought new ways to engrain the motto within the department.

[Tuskegee Airman from Arizona who flew in 3 wars dies at 95](#) [*The Associated Press*, 22 September 2020]

A member of the famed all-Black Tuskegee Airmen who died in Arizona will be remembered this week. A native of Nogales, George Washington Biggs enlisted in 1943 at age 18 with the U.S. Army Air Corps — which later became the U.S. Air Force. He was placed in an elite group of fighter pilots trained at Alabama’s Tuskegee Institute. The program was created after the NAACP began challenging policies barring Black people from flying military aircraft. In the mid-1950s, Biggs was stationed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson. He was one of the base’s first African-American officers and helped incorporate minority soldiers, his daughter told the newspaper. He flew B-47 and B-52 bombers in the Korean and Vietnam wars while earning numerous military honors. Despite his accomplishments, he spoke often of the discrimination he faced in the military.

[The oldest living U.S. Marine celebrates her 107th birthday](#) [James Clark, *Task & Purpose*, 19 September 2020]

Today marks the 107th birthday of the oldest living U.S. Marine: Dorothy (Schmidt) Cole. Born Sept. 19, 1913 in Warren, Pennsylvania, when Cole was 29 she enlisted in the Marines at a time when few women served in the Corps. “Everyone was out doing something,” Cole said in a birthday video posted to the Marine Corps’ official Twitter account. “The women helping the Red

Cross, or even in churches, they were knitting things. So, I decided that I wanted to do something, and I would go into the Marine Corps. Originally I had chosen the Navy, but they said I was too short,” Cole told the Independent Tribune in a Sept 6 news story. “So I decided to go with the Marines. I even took flying lessons of about 200 hours, thinking it would impress the Marines. But it didn’t. They put me behind a typewriter instead of an airplane.”