

DEOMI NEWS LINKS, 23 OCTOBER 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

[From the bottom up, Army focusing on trust, relationships](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 23 October 2020]

The training begins with a bar scene. Two male soldiers act out a night of celebrating a promotion, but one soldier is feeding shots to the other while just sipping a beer. The sober soldier begins getting closer to his drunken friend, occasionally putting a hand on him, leaning across, touching more than normal. Sgt. 1st Class Crystal Basham, the lead sexual assault response coordinator for the 1st Cavalry Division, pauses the scene to ask whether anyone would step up and stop this. What if the drunken soldier were a woman? The scenario is one of five presented to small groups of soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas, at the 1st Cavalry Division's SHARP 360 facility—an interactive training center opened in April 2018 as an alternative to the standard training mandated by the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, known as SHARP. “The trust-building initiative among soldiers and leaders takes a holistic approach to improving soldiers' well-being. It aims to remove three ‘corrosives’ that destroy trust—sexual assault and harassment; extremism and racism; and suicide”, said Maj. Gen. Broadwater, 1st Cav commander.

[Progress marches on for more diverse Army](#) [Thomas Brading, *U.S. Army News Service*, 20 October 2020]

The roadmap to a modernized Army relies on building a more diverse force, said the head of Army Training and Doctrine Command last week. A panel of leaders, including Gen. Paul E. Funk, highlighted the Army's diversity goals and how the service can best reflect the nation it defends during a discussion Oct. 13 at the Association of the U.S. Army Annual Meeting and Exposition. The Army is “a culture built on trust that harnesses experiences, cultures, characteristics, and backgrounds [all] Soldiers and civilians bring into our great Army,” Funk said. “Whether you wear a uniform or a suit, you're part of an Army profession,” Funk added. “It's our responsibility to uphold that culture and the sacred trust of the American people.”

[Trump Administration Requests Info on Contractor Diversity Training as Officials Seek to Clarify What's Allowed](#) [Erich Wagner, *GovExec*, 21 October 2020]

Procurement officials are moving forward with efforts to ensure that federal contractors comply with a recent executive order banning diversity training that the Trump administration accuses of being “anti-American,” requesting information about the types of training that companies doing business with the government currently conduct. The Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs has submitted a Request for Information set to be published on Thursday in the [Federal Register](#) asking contractors to submit their diversity training materials to ensure that they do not “involve race or sex stereotyping or scapegoating.” “Through this request for information, the department invites the public to provide information or materials concerning any workplace trainings of federal contractors that involve such stereotyping or scapegoating,” the document states.

CULTURE

[Conflict raging over “The Eyes of Texas” school song](#) [Jim Vertuno, *The Associated Press*, 23 October 2020]

A controversy over “The Eyes of Texas” has lingered for weeks now at Texas, with some players refusing to sing it after games or even stand for it given its links to the racist minstrel shows of yesteryear. Just this week, the highly respected Longhorn Band reportedly has refused to play the song whose history at Texas dates to the early 1900s. The administration insists the song, one of the school’s most treasured traditions, will stay even though it is unlikely that players or student musicians can be ordered to support it. Written in 1903 and sung to the tune the tune of “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad,” the song is an old standard in Longhorns country. For decades, it has been sung after games and graduation ceremonies and is a popular sing-along at weddings and even funerals. The song has been a sore subject for minority students for decades. The title is taken from a favored saying of a former school president who had mimicked remarks by Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. The song was routinely performed by musicians in blackface at minstrel shows.

[Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer and YouTube all found recently hosting racist music](#) [Daniel Kramer and Steve Holden, *BBC News*, 22 October 2020]

Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube Music have now removed racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic content from their services, following a BBC investigation. Deezer was also made aware of similar songs, mostly linked to White supremacy, on its platforms. It comes three years after Spotify tried to crackdown on a [similar issue](#) and [updated its hate content policy](#). In a statement, Spotify said it “prohibits content which expressly and principally advocates or incites hatred or violence against a group or individual based on characteristics (race, religion, gender identity, sex, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability).”

[Support for same-sex marriage reaches all-time high, survey finds](#) [N’dea Yancey-Bragg, *USA TODAY*, 22 October 2020]

The percentage of Americans who support same-sex marriage reached an all-time high, according to a national poll released Monday. The [survey](#), conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute in partnership with the Brookings Institution, found 70% of Americans favor allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry legally. The majority of most political and religious groups surveyed also expressed support for same-sex marriage. Eighty percent of Democrats, 76% of independents and half of Republicans support marriage equality according to the survey from the nonprofit, nonpartisan research organizations. Most major religious groups followed the same trend, including 90% of religiously unaffiliated Americans, 79% of White mainline Protestants, 78% of Hispanic Catholics, 72% of members of non-Christian religious groups, 68% of Hispanic Protestants, 67% of White Catholics, 57% of Black Protestants, and 56% of members of other Christian religious groups. White evangelical Protestants were the only major religious group in which a majority (63%) opposes allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry.

[Hidden Common Ground: We found that Americans are more united than it appears](#) [Wil Friedman, *USA TODAY*, 21 October 2020] [OPINION]

It is one thing to say that Americans often disagree. We are a large, diverse, opinionated people in a rapidly changing world. Of course we will have our share of differences and arguments. It is another thing to say we are profoundly, even hopelessly, divided on virtually all the important questions of our times. But that is the story we are relentlessly told via news pundits, national politicians, and malicious foreign actors. By this account, America's "tribes," whether defined by partisan affiliation, race, the urban-rural divide, ideology or otherwise, can neither stand nor understand one another. Like a massive and virulent game of telephone, these tales wend their way into our social media channels, get recycled on the 24-hour news cycle, and make it increasingly hard to imagine that Americans can find common ground or work together for the common good.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[TikTok explicitly calls out White nationalism, White genocide theory, and male supremacy as hate speech](#) [Chris Stokel-Walker, *Business Insider*, 21 October 2020]

TikTok has strengthened its community guidelines to better tackle coded language and symbols that help spread hate speech. The company announced in a blog post on Wednesday morning that it "will stem the spread of coded language and symbols that can normalize hateful speech and behavior." The announcement comes shortly after TikTok [joined the European Commission's Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online](#). The company says it will address the spread of White nationalism, White genocide theory, Identitarianism (an anti-immigration movement spreading in parts of Europe and elsewhere), and male supremacy.

[The Air Force's new top enlisted leader won't stand for any Facebook trolling](#) [David Roza, *Task & Purpose*, 20 October 2020]

The Air Force's top enlisted leader had the final word in a whirlwind four-day social media drama that generated thousands of angry comments and dozens of bad memes, and all because of a four-letter word: Bass. The [drama began](#) Saturday when an airman, SSgt Banks, asked Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne Bass on Facebook whether her last name was pronounced like the species of fish or the musical instrument. Airmen on Facebook and Reddit erupted with memes and comments about the exchange. Some cackled at what they perceived to be the impending demise of SSgt Banks' Air Force career; some attacked Bass for overreacting to a social media jest; others defended her for rightly cracking down on a troll; still others wondered how this came to be such a big deal in the first place. Bass herself seemed to bring order to the unruly court with an update on her Facebook page on Monday. An Air Force that values diversity and inclusion must be built on a foundation of respect, Bass wrote. That can't happen if people are brutalizing each other on social media.

[Terminal Lance's Max Uriarte, stories of female Marines added to radically changed Commandant's Reading List](#) [Philip Athey, *Marine Corps Times*, 20 October 2020]

The Marine Corps released a radically different [Commandant's Reading List](#) on Tuesday, cutting the list in half, adding 30-some new titles and for the first time including a graphic novel, books focused on the experience of female Marines, and companion podcasts and periodicals. For the first time the list will include not only one, but two books that detail the experience of women in the military, with "Women at War: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Conflicts," by James E. Wise Jr. and Scott Baron, and "Hesitation Kills: A Female Marine Officer's Combat Experience in Iraq," by

Jane. Blair. The 2020 list also hopes to modernize in a way that reflects the modern day Marine Corps while adjusting to how Marines consume content in the 21st century. The list urges Marines to listen to podcasts and add periodicals to their reading regimens.

[How the Most Socially Progressive Pro League Got That Way](#) [Jonathan Abrams and Natalie Weiner, *The New York Times*, 18 October 2020]

From the beginning of their more than two decades on the court, the players in the WNBA have defied society's expectations. Today, challenging the status quo is a hallmark of the league's players. They pushed the envelope long before it came into vogue among modern-day professional athletes, and led the way in protesting social injustice and racism. The breadth of action among WNBA players is unparalleled among professional sports leagues. They include singular efforts like Seimone Augustus's opposition to a ballot measure in Minnesota aimed at amending the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage, Maya Moore's basketball sabbatical to focus on criminal justice reform and Natasha Cloud's fight against gun violence. Often they include unified undertakings, such as the league's dedicating the 2020 season to Breonna Taylor, a Black woman who was killed by the police, and the players' collective stand against the co-owner of the Atlanta Dream, Senator Kelly Loeffler, Republican of Georgia, who had criticized their support for the Black Lives Matter movement.

[West Point creates advisory group, an honor stand-down, cadet-led talks to tackle race issues](#) [Todd South, *Army Times*, 17 October 2020]

Following alumni accusations this summer of racist treatment at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, cadets, staff and the head of a new advisory group highlighted efforts to foster "character growth" among cadets there. Those initiatives have included a focus on racially based incidents, in which cadets shared their experiences, at the fourth annual "[Honorable Living Week](#)" in September. That event also included anti-bias training. West Point has also created a Character Integration Advisory Group, aimed at integrating honor, respect and trust programs within the cadet corps. Cadets are also conducting a pilot program of cadet-led "tree talks" on social issues such as online conduct, sexual harassment and racial issues.

["White Supremacy" Once Meant David Duke and the Klan. Now It Refers to Much More.](#) [Michael Powell, *The New York Times*, 17 October 2020]

The director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, one of New York City's most prestigious museums, acknowledged this summer that his institution was grounded in White supremacy, while four blocks uptown, the curatorial staff of the Guggenheim decried a work culture suffused in it. The Los Angeles Times editorial board issued an apology two weeks ago describing itself as "deeply rooted in White supremacy" for at least its first 80 years. In England, the British National Library's Decolonising Working Group cautioned employees that a belief in "colorblindness" or the view that "mankind is one human family" are examples of "covert White supremacy." The meaning of the words has expanded, too. Ten years ago, White supremacy frequently described the likes of the Ku Klux Klan and David Duke, the neo-Nazi politician from Louisiana. Now it cuts a swath through the culture, describing an array of subjects: the mortgage lending policies of banks, a university's reliance on SAT scores as a factor for admissions decisions, programs that teach poor people better nutrition, and a police department's enforcement policies.

[Why “Karen” memes and “OK, Boomer” insults stereotype people we don’t really know](#) [Chloe Johnston, *USA TODAY*, 17 October 2020] [OPINION]

That divide has been reinforced through online encounters, off-putting interviews and “OK, Boomer” memes. Memes like the overused “Karen” putdowns, aimed at middle-age White women, have become a socially accepted way of promoting stereotypes and bigotry. Let’s gather more than one perspective by having conversations with people you disagree with. Let’s learn to listen and not to respond, to approach people with open hearts and minds, and to converse without trying to change the other person. Let’s start with empathy and understanding, because with these two things it is possible to move beyond what we assume to be true and truly listen to people different than ourselves.

DISCRIMINATION

[Bill aims to prohibit discrimination in financial services for 1st time](#) [Catherine Thorbecke, *ABC News*, 22 October 2020]

A new bill proposed by a handful of Senate Democrats aims to make discrimination in the banking industry explicitly illegal for the first time, bridging a gap that left the financial services industry out of 1964 Civil Rights Act discrimination laws. The bill would prohibit banks from discriminating based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation. The landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination in many public places and businesses including hotels, restaurants, movie theaters and more—but it notably left out banking institutions. The new bill, if passed into law, would allow a way for courts to hold banks accountable for discriminatory practices.

[LGBT students attacked in university Zoom meeting](#) [Sean Coughlan, *BBC News*, 22 October 2020]

Students have been left feeling “threatened” and unsafe after a LGBT university association Zoom meeting was “hijacked” by more than 15 people shouting “homophobic slurs”. The online meeting at Durham University was disrupted with loud music, shouted abuse and “sexually explicit videos”, say LGBT groups at the university. The event was for new students who are already facing Covid restrictions. Durham University said such behaviour “will not be tolerated”. “To hijack an event like this in such an aggressive and targeted way is nothing less than a hate crime,” said a statement from LGBT groups at the university, including St Mary’s College, where the incident took place earlier this month.

[She said she had to breastfeed during virtual class. Her professor’s reply shocked her.](#) [Soo Youn, *The Lily*, 21 October 2020]

One month into the semester, Marcella Mares got an email from her professor at Fresno City College. It said that going forward, cameras and microphones would have to be turned on for her virtual statistics class. “I emailed him back privately and I had told him that I didn’t have a problem with turning on my camera and microphone, but I would need to turn it off if I needed to feed my baby,” Mares said of the Sept. 23 incident. His email reply, she says, shocked her: It said she shouldn’t breastfeed during class and should instead wait until after the four-hour instruction is over. Fresno City College did not respond to an email asking for comment. California law

requires that schools accommodate conditions related to pregnancy, including breastfeeding, without academic penalty. Hua says he did not know that Title IX protections extended to breastfeeding women. He said he required the cameras because students weren't participating fully in classes online.

[Worked to death: Latino farmworkers have long been denied basic rights. COVID-19 showed how deadly racism could be.](#) [Rick Jervis, Rebecca Plevin, Trevor Hughes and Omar Ornelas, USA TODAY, 21 October 2020]

José Alfredo Reyes, a longtime farmworker in this agricultural county of 181,000, is one of thousands in Imperial County to be sickened or killed by COVID-19, the disease spawned by the coronavirus. Imperial County, which is 85% Hispanic, has consistently had one of the highest death rates in the United States, at a time when Latinos are one of the hardest-hit ethnic groups in the pandemic, according to data compiled by USA TODAY. It is one of the poorest and unhealthiest places in California, with high rates of unemployment and child poverty. Nearly a quarter of families depend on federal assistance for food. Imperial County's suffering mirrors the struggles of many Latinos across the nation, who are more likely than non-Hispanic White Americans to face poverty and poor nutrition after centuries of being pushed into low-paying jobs and segregated communities. Now, they are also more likely to die from COVID-19.

["Still killing us": The federal government underfunded health care for Indigenous people for centuries. Now they're dying of COVID-19](#) [Dennis Wagner and Wyatte Grantham-Philips, USA TODAY, 20 October 2020]

Few places in the world have been as scarred by the coronavirus pandemic as McKinley County, New Mexico. By September, the county ranked first in the state and sixth nationally for COVID-19 deaths per capita. Roughly 74% of McKinley County's 71,367 residents are non-Hispanic Native American, mostly Navajo and Zuni. The majority of land within the county's borders is part of the Navajo Nation reservation. The Navajos, who call themselves Diné, are descendants of people who outlived colonization, smallpox, massacres and resettlement. They take pride in a history of resilience. Then came the Big Cough, or Dikos Ntsaaígíí-19, as coronavirus is known among Diné tribal members.

[The military is having a hard time providing evidence that supports the transgender ban, advocate says](#) [Elizabeth Howe, ConnectingVets.com, 19 October 2020]

Long-standing arguments against allowing transgender service members to continue to serve or serve in the future revolve around the concept that gender dysphoria, experienced by transgender individuals before gender reassignment, is a mental health disorder that should bar one from service. "The way the military deals with any and all medical conditions is to evaluate whether the condition is treatable. If a condition is treatable, such that once a person has undergone the treatment they're perfectly fit and fine, then that is not a bar to military service," Minter explained. This same general approach is not being applied to gender dysphoria. "There's no other medical condition, no other policy that singles out this one condition that says—if you have this, no matter what, we're going to categorically exclude you," Minter said. "And it's clear why—it's because it's really about transgender people."

[Not enough or double the prejudice: On being Black and Asian American in 2020](#) [Sakshi Venkatraman and P.R. Lockhart, *NBC News*, 18 October 2020]

Conversations surrounding these groups, their subgroups and how they relate to one another have been messy and complicated. NBC BLK and NBC Asian America talked to 12 people who identify as both Black and Asian American Pacific Islander about their identities, their communities and what 2020 has meant for them. “The experiences of so-called Blasians aren’t “anomalies,” said Myra Washington, assistant vice president for faculty equity and diversity at the University of Utah. “All they are is a very specific example of a thing that we all do, which is navigate and negotiate our particular identities at a given moment in time.”

[New Texas rule lets social workers turn away clients who are LGBTQ or have a disability](#) [Edgar Walters, *The Texas Tribune*, (Austin, Tex.), 14 October 2020]

Texas social workers are criticizing a state regulatory board’s decision this week to remove protections for LGBTQ clients and clients with disabilities who seek social work services. The Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners voted unanimously Monday to change a section of its code of conduct that establishes when a social worker may refuse to serve someone. The code will no longer prohibit social workers from turning away clients on the basis of disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Gov. Greg Abbott’s office recommended the change, board members said, because the code’s nondiscrimination protections went beyond protections laid out in the state law that governs how and when the state may discipline social workers.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

DIVERSITY

[Analysis: Racial inequity in who takes career, tech courses](#) [Sarah Butrymowicz, Jeff Amy and Larry Fenn, *The Associated Press*, 22 October 2020]

A [Hechinger Report/Associated Press analysis](#) of career and technical education (CTE) enrollment data from 40 states reveals deep racial disparities in who takes these career-oriented courses. Black and Latino students were often less likely than their White peers to enroll in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and information technology classes, according to the analysis, which was based primarily on 2017-18 data. Meanwhile, they were more likely to enroll in courses in hospitality and, in the case of Black students in particular, human services. The analysis offers a comprehensive look at data that states will be required to report to the federal government at the end of this year under the Carl D. Perkins Act. The \$1.2 billion law that oversees career and technical education at the federal level was reauthorized in 2018 with an increased focus on equity. Previously, such data was only required to be reported by gender, where large disparities are also seen.

[Advisory Agency Recommends Phaseout and Replacement of Disability Employment Program](#) [Courtney Publé, *GovExec*, 21 October 2020]

The National Council on Disability, a bipartisan and independent agency, published a report on October 14 about the AbilityOne Program—one of the nation’s largest employment programs for the blind and others with significant disabilities—under which the federal government procures goods and services at fair market prices through a network of about 500 nonprofits. A commission

of 15 members appointed by the president and Congress oversees the program that traces its roots to the 1930s. The report builds on issues the Government Accountability Office and program inspector general have identified over the years. “We concluded that the AbilityOne Program is a policy out of sync with modern national disability policy,” said NCD Chairman Neil Romano during a press briefing on Wednesday. “It generates sales to an 82-year-old work program that perpetuates segregation and has a long history of paying subminimum wage to people. A lot has changed since the program was created.”

[86% of Air Force pilots are White men. Here’s why this needs to change.](#) [Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, Yahoo News, 20 October 2020] [OPINION]

Pursuing equality means we must be sure that we are attracting the most capable members of our society, from all races and walks of life, as we prepare for the next fight. This fighting force should be highly capable while reflecting the diversity of the country we serve. Before I even took command of my service’s recruiting efforts this spring, Air Force leadership made it clear to me that improving diversity would be on the top of my to-do list. And recent national events only serve as an accelerant as we take aim and tackle this vexing issue. Pentagon leaders didn’t need to explain the why, although Gen. David Goldfein, our former chief of staff, did that in calling diversity “a war-fighting imperative.” It’s been clear for some time that our progress in better reflecting the society we serve has been too slow.

[The best plan for Marine Corps gender-integration? It just paid \\$2M to find out](#) [Philip Athey, Marine Corps Times, 20 October 2020]

The Marine Corps has awarded a \$2 million contract to the University of Pittsburgh to conduct a study on how to best gender-integrate Marine Corps boot camp at the platoon level, according to a Marine Corps press release. The Marine Corps is the final U.S. service branch to not conduct fully gender-integrated entry level training—a practice Congress mandated the Corps to end in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. As part of the transition, the Marine Corps planned to commission a study on the best way to integrate training at the platoon level, while maintaining Marine Corps standards and tradition. The funding will go to the University’s Neuromuscular Research Laboratory and Warrior Human Performance Research Center and is meant to “analyze combinations of gender-integrated training and make recommendations for models that integrate genders to the greatest extent possible while continuing to train Marines to established standards,” the press release said.

[Companies Need to Think Bigger Than Diversity Training](#) [Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev, The Harvard Business Review, 20 October 2020] [OPINION]

In late September, Donald Trump ordered federal agencies and companies and universities with federal contracts to stop offering diversity training that addresses systemic racism and sexism. The Wall Street Journal [reports](#) that businesses are protesting President Trump’s order, arguing that it attacks free speech and undermines workplace equity. Whether it tramples on free speech rights is a question for lawyers and voters. But whether it undermines workplace equity is a question we can answer. As social scientists we know one thing: Diversity training has borne too much of the burden of addressing inequality at work. It has become the go-to solution for all inequities. Starbucks gets hit with negative publicity, and they order firm-wide diversity training. BMW loses

a race-discrimination suit and institutes more training. Trump's directive has led corporations and universities to worry about the legality of their diversity training and seek counsel. It has also led the Department of Justice to suspend diversity training. But is diversity training even worth fighting for? [[SEE ALSO](#)]

[9 sailors watch the bridge of the USS Gerald R. Ford. They are all women.](#) [Dave Ress, *The Daily Press*, (Newport News, Va.), 19 Oct 2020]

Women have been serving on Navy ships for a quarter-century, although the deck department—especially the bridge watch sections responsible for steering the ship and keeping a lookout for hazard—have remained a mainly male preserve. That changed with USS Gerald R. Ford's underway last month—all the deck department sailors assigned to the boatswain's mates bridge watch teams were women. They call themselves the Iron 9. "They did great. If there's a grade higher than 'A', that's what I'd give them," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Faeline Matthews, the boatswain's mate who leads the team and whose job is to make sure the relatively young sailors in a bridge watch section are qualified to do the work. "I think it shows what we can do."

[[REPRINT](#)]

[Viewpoint: When an Executive Order Is Racist](#) [Stan Soloway, *GovExec*, 19 October 2020]

[[OPINION](#)]

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed legislation requiring that federal contractors offer equal employment opportunities and prohibit discriminatory practices. Following on the heels of the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act, the new statute sought to make clear that the federal government, and by extension its contractors, was committed to leading the movement toward equality and equity in America. This week, 55 years later, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy will be accepting public comments on the implementation of President Trump's Sept. 22 executive order on diversity and inclusion training. Under normal circumstances for a routine rulemaking, this would be just another step in the usual regulatory process. But circumstances are anything but usual and this is no routine executive order. Trump's directive represents a stark threat to the commitments made by this nation in 1965.

[[COUNTERPOINT](#)]

HUMAN RELATIONS

[GovExec Daily: How to Foster a Culture of Civility and Empathy](#) [Adam Butler and Ross Gianfortune, *GovExec*, 22 October 2020] [[PODCAST](#)]

America's public discourse has gotten rougher over the past decade, with incivility on the rise. Social media, more coarse politics and more disconnection have made civility more and more rare. As our society and political system try to deal with complex problems, civility goes by the wayside. Appreciating everyone's common humanity is a key component of civility and a key component of fostering a civil society. Shelby Scarbrough is a former U.S. Department of State protocol officer and has worked with leaders like Nelson Mandela, Margaret Thatcher and five U.S. Presidents. Her upcoming book, [Civility Rules!: Creating A Purposeful Practice Of Civility](#), looks at how everyone can use civility to build a better society. She joined GovExec Daily to discuss how to cultivate civility in our lives and in our society.

[Why some people are cruel to others](#) [Simon McCarthy-Jones, for *The Conversation*, BBC News, 21 October 2020] [COMMENTARY]

We understand if someone lashes out in retaliation or self-defence. But when someone harms the harmless, we ask: “How could you?” Humans typically do things to get pleasure or avoid pain. For most of us, hurting others causes us to feel their pain. And we don’t like this feeling. This suggests two reasons people may harm the harmless – either they don’t feel the others’ pain or they enjoy feeling the others’ pain. And the idea that we must suffer to grow is questionable. Positive life events, such as falling in love, having children and achieving cherished goals can lead to growth. Teaching through cruelty invites abuses of power and selfish sadism. It isn’t the only way—Buddhism, for example, offers an alternative: wrathful compassion. Here, we act from love to confront others to protect them from their greed, hatred and fear. Life can be cruel, truth can be cruel, but we can choose not to be.

[Can empathy and emotions make soldiers better learners? The Army’s trying to find out](#) [Todd South, *Army Times*, 20 October 2020]

The Army wants to know if emotion and empathy can help make soldiers better learners. To do that, they’re looking for ways to “locate, track and trace” different learning traits through a technology development program known as the [xTechSearch Brain Operant Learning Technology \(BOLT\)](#) competition. Geared to Army medical professionals, the tech development program looks at how to “unlock the brain and maximize performance,” said Dr. Darrin Frye, medical simulation portfolio manager at the Army Medical Research Development Command. Researchers expect that fundamentals, which can be applied to complex medical training to reduce learning time and increase retention, will also be applicable for other job skills and training. “Emotion, attention and empathy have significant input to store memories and retrieve them,” Frye said.

MISCELLANEOUS

[Tulsa Unearths Human Remains in Search for Race Massacre Victims](#) [Emma Coleman, *Route Fifty*, 21 October 2020]

A search for victims of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre uncovered human remains on Tuesday, marking a potential breakthrough in the long quest to find the missing bodies of Black people killed by a violent White mob. Although archeologists are not yet sure if the remains belong to victims of the massacre, state archaeologist Kary Stackelbeck said during a press conference that the location gives them “reason for optimism.” This is the second time this year that Tulsa has dug for victims and the first time the city has uncovered a body. The process for identifying the remains, which will not be moved from the city-owned Oaklawn Cemetery, will involve forensic analysis followed by comparisons with funeral home records and death certificates.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Approval expected soon for DOD civilians to shop in military exchanges](#) [Karen Jowers, *Military Times*, 20 October 2020]

Defense Department civilian employees would be able to shop at military exchanges, under a policy change working its way through the final stages of the approval process, officials said. Officials expect it would bring about 575,000 new eligible customers into exchanges, said Berry

Patrick, who works in the DOD Office of Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Nonappropriated Fund Policy, during a virtual conference of the American Logistics Association Tuesday. DOD civilians are on the base every day, he noted. Based on projections of buying patterns, he said, they estimate exchange sales could increase by about \$287 million a year, with a potential increase of \$48 million in profits going back to support the services' MWR programs. DOD has been deliberating the policy change for about three years.

[Jewish group condemns auction of Hitler speeches in Germany](#) [David Rising, *The Associated Press*, 20 October 2020]

A prominent European Jewish organization slammed a Munich auction house's decision to sell several of Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler's handwritten speech notes, saying Tuesday it "defies logic, decency and humanity" to put them on the market. Rabbi Menachem Margolin, the head of the Brussels-based European Jewish Association, said the upcoming sale of the manuscripts is particularly worrisome amid recent figures showing rising anti-Semitism in Germany, and could encourage neo-Nazis. "I cannot get my head around the sheer irresponsibility and insensitivity, in such a febrile climate, of selling items such as the ramblings of the world's biggest killer of Jews to the highest bidder," he said in a statement. "What auctions like this do help legitimize Hitler enthusiasts who thrive on this sort of stuff."

[Yom Kippur Zoom reunites Holocaust survivors 71 years later](#) [Luis Andres Henao and Jessie Wardarski, *The Associated Press*, 20 October 2020]

Holocaust survivors Ruth Brandspiegel and Israel "Sasha" Eisenberg call their reunion a miracle that began on the holiest day in Judaism, and it only happened thanks to a prayer service that was held virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic. Decades ago their families, who came from the same city in Poland, escaped the Nazis, crossed into the Soviet Union and were sent to different labor camps in Siberia, where Eisenberg was born. They later met at a displaced persons camp in Austria, where they became close friends. They last saw each other there, in 1949, before losing track of each other's whereabouts. More than 70 years later, Brandspiegel, now a Philadelphia resident, heard a familiar name being called out in a Yom Kippur service held in late September via Zoom by her son's synagogue in East Brunswick, New Jersey.

[Naval Academy Officially Opens New Cyber Building Named After Rear Adm. Grace Hopper](#) [Heather Mongilio, *The Capital Gazette*, (Annapolis, Md.), 16 October 2020]

Hopper Hall is the academy's new center for cybersecurity studies. Although the academy celebrated its ribbon cutting Thursday, the building has been open with students attending in-person classes since mid-September, according to an academy press release. While the ribbon ceremony focused on the advancements in cybersecurity, the new building will now provide, speakers also took time to remember Hopper. She was infamous for handing out the nanowire. She used it to show, in an understandable way, how quickly information flowed, said Vice Adm. Sean Buck, Naval Academy superintendent. "Adm. Hopper was a brilliant computer scientist whose contributions to the field are responsible for many of the modern computing advancements we take for granted today," Buck said. "She was an innovative thinker who bucked against archaic systems that stifled our nation's advancements in technology."

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[With Census Count Over, Concerns Linger About Accuracy](#) [Andrea Noble, *Route Fifty*, 16 October 2020]

The abrupt halt of the 2020 Census count this week ended with a flurry of last-minute phone calls and text messages from outreach workers in California, desperate to connect with residents who hadn't yet completed the questionnaire. This year's census count has been fraught with complications that advocates fear could result in an incomplete enumeration of the U.S. population. The Trump administration fought unsuccessfully to include a citizenship question, which immigrants' rights groups said led to fear and mistrust among immigrant communities and the coronavirus pandemic delayed in-person efforts to encourage people to participate. "One of the biggest concerns with the census shutting down operations earlier is that millions of people may be left uncounted," said Keshia Morris-Desir, the census project manager for Common Cause.

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

MISCONDUCT

[Army battalion commander under investigation for political social media posts](#) [Davis Winkie, *Army Times*, 23 October 2020]

*U.S. Army Central is investigating social media posts made by Lt. Col. Joseph Cannon, commander of the Michigan National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment, for potential violations of Defense Department political speech rules. "U.S. Army Central is investigating social media behavior within its formation not consistent with the Army values and allegations that violate [DOD's policy](#) on political activity by members of the Armed Forces," said Col. Armando Hernandez, the ARCENT spokesman, in a statement to *Military Times*. Last week *Military Times* learned two soldiers in Cannon's battalion were punished for violating DOD regulations on political speech in uniform. The soldiers, whose names were not released by U.S. Army Central or the Michigan National Guard, were disciplined after posting a viral video laden with obscenities that targeted "liberals and Democrats." The soldiers made the video while on duty in Bahrain, according to a defense official.*

[The Marine Corps is investigating a deployed machine-gunner who seems to be a Nazi fanboy](#) [Paul Szoldra, *Task & Purpose*, 21 October 2020]

The Marine Corps is investigating a deployed machine-gunner with possible neo-Nazi sympathies who told a Jewish journalist earlier this week on Instagram that her religion is "that of satan." Talia Lavin, who [published a book](#) last week on how White supremacists organize online, said that Marine Lance Cpl. Joseph Mercurio "[randomly commented](#)" on her Instagram profile with the anti-Semitic remark. Then she clicked over to his account and found in his bio below "USMC 0331" a quote from a prominent White nationalist leader and lyrics from a Neo-Nazi punk rock band. Additionally, Mercurio's username included "88," which is commonly used in neo-Nazi circles as shorthand for "HH," or "Heil Hitler." Mercurio, 20, an infantryman with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, removed the numbers from his username and the quotes soon after Lavin posted the screenshots. "I can confirm that the command is investigating," said Capt. Joe Butterfield, a Marine spokesman. "Further information is limited because the investigation is ongoing."

[Deployed soldiers face punishment for their “message to liberals” video](#) [Davis Winkie, *Army Times*, 17 October 2020]

Two deployed Michigan Army National Guard soldiers who in September posted an obscenity-laced TikTok video of themselves, armed and in uniform, chiding “liberals and Democrats” for being “crybabies and snowflakes” now face disciplinary action following an investigation. “This case is egregious and clear-cut,” said Jim Golby, a civil-military relations expert and senior fellow at the University of Texas at Austin’s Clements Center for National Security, Army officials say the soldiers also may have violated security rules by using a personal device. Videos such as this can also have a negative impact on perceptions of partisanship in the military, explained Golby, who has been studying the partisan activities of troops with Peter Feaver, who served as a White House advisor to former President George W. Bush and is now a political science professor at Duke University. “My research with Peter Feaver shows that partisan activity by servicemembers undermines trust and helps polarize the public’s confidence in the military,” Golby said.

RACISM

[Indiana H.S. student listed as “Black guy” in yearbook caption](#) [Janelle Griffith, *NBC News*, 22 October 2020]

An investigation is underway at an Indiana high school after a photo caption in the school’s 2020 yearbook listed a student on the boys’ basketball team as “BLACK GUY” instead of by his name. After images of the photo in the Brown County High School yearbook were posted to social media Monday, the superintendent apologized that evening in a [Facebook Live video](#). “It has been brought to our attention that that yearbook has a truly incomprehensible statement included in it,” the superintendent, Laura Hammack, said, adding that officials were “trying to better understand what that situation is all about.” Brown County High School is a public school in Nashville, roughly 50 miles south of Indianapolis. There were 577 students enrolled in the 2019-20 school year, the majority of whom—92.2 percent—are White, according to state data.

[Cities Declared Racism a Public Health Crisis. What Now?](#) [Emma Coleman, *Route Fifty*, 19 October 2020]

While the idea of a government agreeing with the phrase “racism is a public health crisis” has gained steam at the state and local level lately, the concept isn’t new. Public health researchers have been talking about the social determinants of health since at least the 1990s, connecting racist practices in housing, health care, employment, and other areas to worse health outcomes for Black Americans. These crises are often talked about individually: the Black maternal mortality crisis, the high rates of asthma among Black people living in neighborhoods suffering from significant air pollution, the twin crises of mass incarceration and over-policing in Black communities. Put simply, declaring racism a public health crisis means the government is officially connecting the dots and talking about racism as the common root of these problems. But the data supporting these assertions has been around for years—so why is the idea gaining steam now?

[Journalist Valentin Gendrot went undercover with French police. He found racism and a toxic culture.](#) [Matt Bradley, *NBC News*, 19 October 2020]

An explosive new book by an investigative journalist has drawn fresh attention to police brutality and racism in France, after protests against the deaths of Black people at the hands of American law enforcement swept across the world. Valentin Gendrot's book "Flic," meaning cop, chronicles the author's training and the six months he spent as a police officer in one of Paris' poorest districts. Gendrot says he watched police demean, brutalize and racially profile young men of mostly Arab and African descent. The shocking details in Gendrot's book will come as no surprise to the mostly immigrant residents of the French capital's poor, urban neighborhoods.

[Racist Postings by New York Court Officers Are Detailed in Bias Report](#) [Jan Ransom, *The New York Times*, 19 October 2020]

One White court officer in Brooklyn posted an illustration of President Barack Obama with a noose around his neck on social media. Another White officer referred to a Black court officer as "one of the good monkeys." A third White court officer commented to a White colleague that he would have done better on a firearms test if he had been given a "Sean Bell target," a reference to an unarmed Black man killed by the police in 2006. The incidents of overt racism were among several mentioned in a [new report about racial bias](#) in the New York State Court system commissioned by Chief Judge Janet DiFiore after national protests this summer against institutional racism in the criminal justice system.

[Former Black Iowa players demand \\$20 million, Kirk Ferentz's job after alleged racial issues](#)

[Ryan Young, *Yahoo Sports*, 18 October 2020]

The eight former players, per the report, sent the 21-page letter to the school on Oct. 5. They are being represented by a civil rights attorney in Tulsa, and have threatened a lawsuit against the school if their demands aren't met by Monday. Dozens of former Iowa players have spoken out in recent months about their experiences playing for Ferentz in Iowa City, many of whom said they felt they were treated unfairly and were unable to be themselves on Ferentz's teams because they were Black. Many complaints were directed toward strength coach Chris Doyle, too, who was put on administrative leave and later reached a separation agreement with the school. Ferentz admitted he had a "blind spot" in his program, and that an advisory committee would be formed to help improve the culture within the program. Reports, however, alleged that Ferentz was briefed on racial issues within his program more than a year before the complaints surfaced.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[At VMI, Black cadets endure lynching threats, Klan memories and Confederacy veneration](#) [Ian Shapira, *The Washington Post*, 17 October 2020]

More than a half century after the Virginia Military Institute integrated its ranks, Black cadets still endure relentless racism at the nation's oldest state-supported military college. The atmosphere of hostility and cultural insensitivity makes VMI—whose cadets fought and died for the slaveholding South during the Civil War and whose leaders still celebrate that history—especially difficult for non-White students to attend, according to more than a dozen current and former students of color. "I wake up every day wondering, 'Why am I still here?'" said William Bunton, 20, a Black senior from Portsmouth, Va. Keniya Lee, a 2019 VMI graduate, [lodged a complaint](#) last year against a White professor who reminisced in class about her father's Ku Klux Klan membership. The woman

still teaches at the Lexington, Va., campus, which received \$19 million in state funds this past fiscal year.

[Black immigrants find camaraderie, divide amid protests](#) [Haleluya Hadero, *The Associated Press*, 17 October 2020]

Inspired by the global protests against systemic racism and police brutality, Nigerian American blogger Nifesimi Akingbe donned a black shirt that read “I am Black history,” and began recording a video. Akingbe then went on to list her frustrations about racism in America and directed her message to Black immigrant communities like her own: This is your battle, too.

“When these cops see us or when some of these racist people see us, they see a Black person,” Akingbe said during the 34-minute video posted on YouTube. They “don’t care if you were born in Alabama, if you were born in Nigeria, in Ghana, in Sierra Leone. They see one color.”

RELIGION

[Francis becomes 1st pope to endorse same-sex civil unions](#) [Nicole Winfield, *The Associated Press*, 21 October 2020]

Pope Francis endorsed same-sex civil unions for the first time as pontiff while being interviewed for the feature-length documentary “Francesco,” which premiered Wednesday at the Rome Film Festival. The papal thumbs-up came midway through the film that delves into issues Francis cares about most, including the environment, poverty, migration, racial and income inequality, and the people most affected by discrimination. “Homosexual people have the right to be in a family. They are children of God,” Francis said in one of his sit-down interviews for the film. “You can’t kick someone out of a family, nor make their life miserable for this. What we have to have is a civil union law; that way they are legally covered.”

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[France shuts Paris mosque in crackdown after teacher’s beheading](#) [Reuters, 20 October 2020]

France ordered the temporary closure of a mosque outside Paris on Tuesday, part of a [crackdown](#) on Muslims who incite hatred after the decapitation of a teacher who showed his class caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad. Police plastered notices of the closure order outside the mosque as the authorities promised a tough response against the disseminators of hate messages, preachers of radicalised sermons and foreigners believed to pose a security threat to France. The six-month order was “for the sole purpose of preventing acts of terrorism”, the notice issued by the head of the Seine-Saint-Denis department read. The beheading of a public servant by a suspected Islamist for his use of religious satire to explore with students the debate surrounding freedom of expression, a deeply cherished tenet of democracy in secular France, has convulsed the country and shocked the world.

SEXISM

[The changes that could help women stay employed](#) [Corinne Purtill, *BBC Worklife*, 18 October 2020]

In early April, soon after the U.S. economy began its pandemic-induced nosedive, a group of researchers from Northwestern University [published a paper](#) that noted some unusual patterns emerging. “Regular” recessions – that is, routine economic contractions not spurred by a once-in-a-century pandemic—typically hurt men’s employment more than women’s, the authors wrote, as male-dominated industries like construction and manufacturing are often the first to slow down. The Covid-19 recession, on the other hand, seemed practically designed to torpedo women’s employment. Stay-at-home orders and social distancing guidelines took a heavy toll on service and hospitality jobs, where women make up a large share of employees. They also shut down the support systems—schools and day-cares—that enable many women with young children to work. Grandparents, friends and neighbours who might otherwise have helped were off-limits for fear of contagion. These factors had the potential to push women out of the workforce en masse, the authors wrote. And without a concerted effort from employers to retain female talent, the damage to women’s careers could linger long after the virus is controlled.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Judge permits sex assault case against Joint Chiefs member](#) [The Associated Press, 23 October 2020]

A federal judge on Thursday refused to dismiss a lawsuit alleging the vice chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff sexually assaulted a former top aide during a Southern California trip. Air Force Gen. John Hyten has denied the allegations brought by former Army Col. Kathryn Spletstoser that he attacked her during a December 2017 trip to attend the Reagan National Defense Forum at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, northwest of Los Angeles. The lawsuit was amended from an original complaint that alleged Hyten sexually assaulted her at least nine times in 2017, including during trips to California, London, South Korea and elsewhere and that he retaliated against for refusing his advances by harming her career and eventually forcing her retirement.

[Misawa airman’s Instagram post about sexual harassment gets senior enlisted leader’s attention](#) [Seth Robson, Stars and Stripes, 22 October 2020]

The chief master sergeant of the Air Force has reached out to a female airman in Japan who said on Instagram that she experienced sexual harassment and retaliation. Airman 1st Class Sarah Figueroa [posted her claims](#) Oct. 14 along with a photograph of herself in uniform that tagged President Donald Trump, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and numerous media outlets. “My name is Sarah Figueroa and i am a victim of sexual harassment in the air force,” she wrote. The post claims she was sexually harassed by a coworker at Misawa Air Base, an installation in northeast Japan that’s home to the 35th Fighter Wing and about 5,700 U.S. personnel. “Since i reported this, i’ve faced retaliation in ways you wouldn’t believe. The retaliation has even reached a point of ‘mistakes’ being made for my career development,” she wrote without providing details.

[Ex-Washington cheerleaders shaken by lewd videos: “I don’t think they viewed us as people”](#)

[Beth Reinhard, Liz Clarke, Alice Crites and Will Hobson, *The Washington Post*, 16 October 2020]

The contracts for the Washington Football Team’s cheerleaders held them to a strict moral code. “Inappropriate” conduct or online content, including nude or seminude appearances in

“tasteless” films, videos or photographs, could trigger immediate dismissal. Such provisions are not unusual in the NFL, according to lawyers familiar with such contracts, and ex-Washington cheerleaders say that, while they took the policy seriously, it didn’t bother them—until recently. In August, The Post reported that the team had produced lewd videos out of outtakes from the cheerleaders’ 2008 and 2010 swimsuit calendar shoots that include partial nudity. Now in their 30s and 40s, with careers and children, the dozens of ex-cheerleaders who appear in the videos are terrified the footage will appear online and are coping with a painful reckoning about their seasons with the NFL franchise.

SUICIDE

[Plans for vets suicide prevention training, new three-digit emergency mental health crisis line signed into law](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 18 October 2020]

The new suicide crisis hotline measure will designate 988 as a universal telephone number for national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline services. Although the call center will not be exclusive to veterans, advocates have championed the idea in recent years as a way to make emergency mental health care more available to veterans. Under the provisions of the bill, the new 988 crisis number will be active by fall 2021. The other measure—the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act—includes a new grant program to encourage collaboration with community organizations on suicide prevention, new hiring rules to quickly fill mental health staffing gaps at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and a host of new data requirements to better track potential causes of suicide.

VETERANS

[Moran helps introduce U.S.-Israel PTSD Collaborative Research Act](#) [Sarah Motter, *WIBW.com* (Topeka, Kan.), 21 October 2020]

Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) said he and Senators Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) and Ben Cardin (D-Md.) introduced the bipartisan [United States - Israel PTSD Collaborative Research Act](#) to establish a grant program for research efforts between the U.S. and Israel to advance PTSD treatments. “Through research and science, the global medical community is starting to better understand and treat PTSD which often affects everyday people who we consider our friends and neighbors, such as veterans, law enforcement officers and victims of violence,” said Sen. Moran. “This legislation creates a grant program to support collaborations between American and Israeli research institutions to grow our understanding of this mental health condition and to provide treatment and hope for those who suffer from this disorder.” According to Moran, the bill would allow the Department of Defense to create partnerships through the Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Program with American and Israeli institutions looking to advance PTSD research while establishing a grant program to fund the collaborative research conducted through the partnerships.

[VA Plans to Outsource All Compensation and Pension Exams](#) [Nikki Wentling, *Stars and Stripes*, 21 October 2020]

The Department of Veterans Affairs is eliminating its in-house compensation and pension exam program and will outsource all of the exams, which are crucial to determining whether veterans are eligible for VA benefits. In a letter to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie on Tuesday, Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., said the plan was developed with no notice to Congress. She's concerned the move could slow work to reduce a backlog of compensation and pension exams, commonly referred to as C&P exams, and she's worried about the VA's ability to oversee the contractors. Luria also criticized the department for cutting federal jobs during a pandemic. Luria also wants to know whether the VA has considered maintaining in-house exams for veterans suffering from Gulf War Illness, military sexual trauma and traumatic brain injury—all conditions unique to veterans and that often call for specialists. She asked for responses by Nov. 16.

[Women's Health Transition Training offered virtually](#) [TSgt. Areca T. Wilson, SECAF Public Affairs, 19 October 2020]

“There's a lot of different challenges that women veterans face when they depart service, and I think different issues compared to their male peers, (it's not that) one gender experiences it worse—it's just one gender experiences it differently,” said Maj. Alea Nadeem, Women's Initiative Team chair. “Women have different outcomes when they depart service, and so, this is why this was created—to acknowledge that there's some differences, and we need to get some parity between men and women when they depart service.” The course is available to all active duty, guard and reserve servicewomen. For Nadeem, the reasons women should attend the Women's Health Transition Training is two-fold. “Take advantage of someone educating you on very specific things to females—not a lot of times do we get that in the military so I think it's kind of a neat opportunity,” Nadeem said. “I think women should take advantage of the program because it sends a demand signal to the VA, (the service is) going to need more of these specialty care items in the future as women go back into the growing population. It's really for the future generations to make sure that they have the healthcare that they need.”