

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 29 JANUARY 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

[Biden issues executive orders promoting racial equity](#) [Nick Niedzwiadek, *Politico*, 26 January 2021]

President Joe Biden on Tuesday rolled out an additional slate of executive actions to address racial equity, a move to fulfill a key campaign promise that he made during the height of this past summer's protests. Biden said that Tuesday's actions are a direct response to the groundswell of protests that emerged following the killing of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, by Minnesota police and the resulting calls for racial justice. In brief remarks at the White House, the president said Floyd's death "opened the eyes of millions" and paved the way for change. As part of the effort, the president directed the Department of Justice to not renew contracts with private prison operators and signed a presidential memorandum acknowledging the role the federal government has played in discriminatory housing policy. Biden also signed an executive order reaffirming the federal government's commitment to the sovereignty of tribal governments over their territory, and a memorandum related to the rise in anti-Asian sentiment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Biden overturns ban on transgender people serving in the U.S. military](#) [Idrees Ali, Phil Stewart, and Alexandra Alper, *Reuters*, 25 January 2021]

President Joe Biden on Monday signed an executive order that overturned a controversial ban by his predecessor on transgender individuals serving in the U.S. military, a move cheered by LGBTQ advocates that fulfills a campaign promise. "President Biden believes that gender identity should not be a bar to military service, and that America's strength is found in its diversity," the White House said in a statement. "Allowing all qualified Americans to serve their country in uniform is better for the military and better for the country because an inclusive force is a more effective force. Simply put, it's the right thing to do and is in our national interest," it said. [\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[In one of first actions, new defense secretary orders review of sexual misconduct programs](#) [Howard Altman, *Military Times*, 24 January 2021]

Newly sworn-in Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, carrying through on a promise he made during his confirmation hearing, isn't wasting time tackling military sexual misconduct. Saying the military cannot accomplish its missions if "we also have to battle enemies within the ranks," Austin issued a memorandum Saturday night telling Pentagon senior leaders, combatant commanders, defense agency and DOD field activity directors to speed up efforts to get a handle on the situation. Austin ordered senior leaders to report to him by Feb. 5 "a summary of the sexual assault harassment and accountability measures" taken the in past year "that show promise, as well as a frank, data-driven assessment of those which do not." A primary focus, Austin wrote, "should be on how you are conducting oversight to ensure programs and policies are being executed on the ground and with fidelity."

CULTURE

[Biden Administration Will “Speed Up” Efforts To Put Harriet Tubman On \\$20 Bill](#) [Laurel Wamsley, *NPR* 25 January 2021]

The Biden administration will resume efforts to redesign the \$20 bill to feature abolitionist Harriet Tubman, the White House said Monday. Press secretary Jen Psaki said it’s important that “our money ... reflect the history and diversity of our country, and Harriet Tubman’s image gracing the new \$20 note would certainly reflect that. So we’re exploring ways to speed up that effort.” In [April 2016](#), Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew announced that Tubman’s portrait would be on a redesigned \$20 note, to be unveiled in 2020. The image of President Andrew Jackson, a slaveholder, would be moved to the bill’s reverse side.

[“Bridgerton’s” Approach to Race and Casting Has Precedent Onstage](#) [Matt Wolf, *The New York Times*, 26 January 2021]

As is so often the case, the theater got there first. I’m referring to the approach to race and casting in “Bridgerton,” the sartorially splendid Netflix study in hyperactive Regency-era hormones that everyone’s talking about. Much has been made of the presence across the eight-part series of Black actors populating a Jane Austen-style landscape that is usually shown onscreen as all White. In fact, as London theater observers of a certain generation can attest, this has long been common practice onstage here, across a range of titles and historical periods. That’s been true whether it’s been part of Britain’s pioneering interest in colorblind casting or, as with “Bridgerton,” when productions have played with audience expectations about race to make a point. Either way, the prevailing desire has been to fashion a theatrical world that speaks to the multicultural reality of the country. The idea behind casting a Black actor as a Maine villager (in “Carousel”) or a Viennese court composer (in “Amadeus”) isn’t documentary verisimilitude; rather, it’s to make clear that such time-honored stories belong to all of us, regardless of race.

[Disney Updates Jungle Cruise After Insensitivity Criticism](#) [The Associated Press, 26 January 2021]

Jungle Cruise, one of the original Disney parks’ rides, is getting a 21st century remodel in yet the latest update to a legacy theme park ride that has been criticized in years past for being racially insensitive. The ride will updated by Disney “Imagineers” at the Disneyland park in California and the Magic Kingdom park in Florida with a new storyline and characters that “reflect and value the diversity of the world around us,” Disney said in a blog post Monday. The ride, which first opened at Disneyland in 1955, had been criticized for its depiction of animatronic indigenous people as savages or headhunters. Last summer, amid calls to change the Splash Mountain theme park ride over its ties to “Song of the South,” the 1946 movie many view as racist, Disney officials said it was recasting the ride so that it is based on “The Princess and the Frog,” a 2009 Disney film with an African American female lead.

[Goade becomes first Native American to win Caldecott Medal](#) [Hillel Italie, *The Associated Press*, 26 January 2021]

Illustrator Michaela Goade became the first Native American to win the prestigious Randolph Caldecott Medal for best children’s picture story, cited for “We Are Water Protectors,” a celebration of nature and condemnation of the “black snake” Dakota Access Pipeline. Written by Carole Lindstrom, the book was conceived in response to the planned construction of the Dakota pipeline through Standing Rock Sioux territory. Goade, a member of the Tlingit and Haida Indian tribes in Southeast Alaska, was sent a copy of the manuscript through her agent in 2018 and responded immediately to its political message and message of water as a universal force. “I am really honored and proud,” the 30-year-old Goade told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. “I think it’s really important for young people and aspiring book makers and other creative people to see this.”

[The Metropolitan Opera Hires Its First Chief Diversity Officer](#) [Joshua Barone, *The New York Times*, 25 January 2021]

Marcia Sells—a former dancer who became an assistant district attorney in Brooklyn and the dean of students at Harvard Law School—has been hired as the first chief diversity officer of the Metropolitan Opera, the largest performing arts institution in the United States. Her appointment, which the Met announced on Monday, is something of a corrective to the company’s nearly 140-year history and a response to the Black Lives Matter demonstrations that followed the killing of George Floyd in 2020. It’s also a conscious step toward inclusivity by a major player in an industry in which some Black singers, including Leontyne Price and Jessye Norman, have found stardom, but diversity has lagged in orchestras, staff and leadership. The company announced plans to open next season with Terence Blanchard’s “Fire Shut Up in My Bones,” its first opera by a Black composer, directed by James Robinson and Camille A. Brown, who will become the first Black director to lead a production on the Met’s main stage. It also named three composers of color—Valerie Coleman, Jessie Montgomery and Joel Thompson—to its commissioning program.

[Nia Dennis: U.S. gymnast’s “Black excellence” routine goes viral](#) [BBC News, 27 January 2021]

*The floor routine by Nia Dennis, an athlete at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA), incorporated songs by artists including Kendrick Lamar, Beyoncé and Missy Elliott. She said Black Lives Matter protests inspired the performance, which saw her kneel with her fist in the air. “I had to... for the culture,” the 21-year-old wrote on Instagram. The routine wowed the judges and earned her praise from celebrities, fellow athletes and fans. A [video](#) shared by UCLA Gymnastics was viewed more than nine million times. Dennis told Washington Post publication *The Lily* that she wanted the routine to “be a celebration of everything [Black people] can do, everything we can overcome”.*

[Ponytails and lipstick: Sweeping changes to Army grooming standards are coming](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 26 January 2021]

Soldiers of all genders will be allowed to have highlights that blend with uniform colors; women can wear long ponytails during training or even shave their heads if they want; men can wear clear nail polish; and terminology that some may find offensive—such as Mohawk, Fu Manchu and dreadlocks—will be removed from Army regulations. Those changes, and more, are slated to come into effect Feb. 26, Army officials said Tuesday, giving the service time to create imagery

and memorandums to help soldiers and command teams understand the new guidelines. The changes are the work of a 17-soldier panel established to promote diversity and inclusion, according to the service. Suggestions were proposed by troops and voted on by panel members, who came from commands across the force. The panel was made up of 10 Black women, four White women, one Hispanic woman, one Hispanic man and one Black man.

[Sculptor Nilda Comas Captures Mary McLeod Bethune’s Essence In Marble For U.S. National Statuary Hall](#) [Talia Blake, *WMFE News*, (Orlando, Fla.), 25 January 2021]

Mary McLeod Bethune will be the first African American Woman to have a state commissioned statue in the U.S. National Statuary Hall in Washington D.C. Nilda Comas was chosen from 1600 sculptors to create the statue. Comas talked to WMFE’s Talia Blake about capturing the essence of Bethune in a sculpture carved from Italian marble. Comas says the statue will initially be unveiled in Pietrasanta, Italy on May 7. They are looking to reserve the Capitol rotunda to inaugurate Bethune into the Hall on her birthday July 10th.

[Washington Football Team’s Jennifer King becomes first full-time Black female assistant coach in NFL history](#) [Christopher Brito, *CBS News*, 26 January 2021]

Jennifer King has become the NFL’s first full-time Black female assistant coach after the Washington Football Team promoted her, the [team announced](#) Tuesday. King is now the team’s assistant running backs coach after serving as a full-year coaching intern in 2020. As an intern, she worked with the offensive staff throughout the offseason, training camp and regular season, specifically helping running backs coach Randy Jordan, the team said. She joins Tampa Bay Buccaneers’ Lori Locust and Maral Javadifar as the only current full-time female coaches in the NFL. Last season, King and Callie Brownson, Cleveland Browns Kevin Stefanski’s chief of staff, made headlines for working as coaches in a game officiated by female referee Sarah Thomas.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Why all American music is rooted in African American expression, a new museum shows](#)

[Kristen Rogers, video by Channon Hodge, *CNN*, 28 January 2021]

As more people are starting to learn about the history of African Americans, there is one component that’s particularly integral to understanding the national culture: music. African American artists created and influenced genres from the blues, jazz and hip-hop to rock and roll. Bluesmen Muddy Waters and B.B. King electrified that genre and galvanized rock guitarists, and trumpeter and composer Louis Armstrong changed the jazz landscape—all building on traditions brought to American soil by enslaved people. Educating the world on the central role African Americans have played in “creating the American soundtrack” and preserving that legacy are the missions of the [National Museum of African American Music](#), which debuted in Nashville on Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 18. The museum opens to the public on Saturday.

DISCRIMINATION

[“The Ban Should Never Have Been Imposed”](#) [Marcus Weisgerber, *Defense One*, 25 January 2021]

Eric Fanning remembers the morning of July 26, 2017. In a series of three tweets, Donald Trump announced that transgender Americans could no longer serve in the U.S. military, reinstalling a ban that Fanning, as Army secretary, and other Obama administration officials had overturned 13 months earlier. Now, Fanning—who helped overturn the ban during the Obama administration as chief of staff to then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter and as Army secretary—said it’s time for Congress to ensure that transgender servicemembers’ cannot again be disqualified from serving in the military with the stroke of a presidential pen. “This needs to be changed legislatively...so the protections are more permanent,” Fanning said. “You’ve got these Americans who volunteered to serve who are in limbo.”

[Transgender youth bills in U.S. states reflect deep divisions](#) [Iris Samuels, *The Associated Press*, 21 January 2021]

Transgender kids would be banned from playing on school sports teams for the gender with which they identify under a GOP-backed bill that advanced Thursday in Montana, one of more than a dozen states where lawmakers are proposing restrictions on athletics or gender-confirming health care for trans minors this year. The proposals run counter to an [executive order](#) signed by Democratic President Joe Biden during his first day in office prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity in school sports and elsewhere. The order immediately sparked a backlash from conservative groups, a split that reflects the deep divisions in the U.S. around transgender youth. This year, state lawmakers also want to restrict transgender students’ sports participation in Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Dakota, and New Hampshire. Several more states are weighing separate proposed bans on certain medical treatment for transgender minors, including Alabama, Indiana, Missouri, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas.

[Virginia pays \\$115,000 to prisoner who says he was punished for not speaking English](#) [Rachel Weiner, *The Washington Post*, 22 January 2021]

Nicholas Reyes, a convicted murderer, was held in solitary confinement at one of Virginia’s most restrictive prisons for a decade because he did not fill out a journal in a language he does not speak, his attorneys said. Reyes killed his pregnant girlfriend in Alexandria in 1991, then fled to Florida, where it took police nine years to find him. He is serving a 47-year prison sentence. Last week, Virginia agreed to pay Reyes \$115,000 and set up a system for ensuring that non-English-speakers in the prison system are not isolated for lack of ability to communicate. “If it’s done right, I think this policy can really transform how people with limited English proficiency are treated in Virginia prisons,” said Vishal Agraharkar, an attorney with the Virginia American Civil Liberties Union who worked on Reyes’s case.

DIVERSITY

[Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Action Team partners with NPHC](#) [SECAF Public Affairs, *Air Force News Service*, (Arlington, Va.), 26 January 2021]

The Department of the Air Force’s Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Action Team recently began working with the District of Columbia’s National Pan-Hellenic Council to inform youth in the region of the multiple opportunities the Air Force and Space Force offer. The Diversity &

Inclusion Strategic Action Team, a continuation of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, was assembled in response to racial inequalities brought to light last year and reaffirmed the recent independent racial disparity review. One of the Line of Efforts, Recruiting and Accessions, has the primary objective of expanding external presence with minority centers of influence. “Our goal with this partnership is to expose youth and influencers to multiple aspects of the Air Force to include STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), civilian career opportunities and research opportunities,” said Enjoli M. Ramsey, Office of Diversity & Inclusion Outreach and Recruitment chief. The NPHC is a collaborative organization of historically African American fraternities and sororities.

[Maj. Gen. Charles C. Rogers: Talent through diversity, equity and inclusion](#) [Charles D. Allen, *Military Times*, 28 January 2021] [COMMENTARY]

The United States military experiences during the First and Second World Wars highlighted the need for quality leadership in the officer ranks. Accordingly, diversity and inclusion became a strategic necessity. Subsequently in 1951, Charles C. Rogers was commissioned as a lieutenant of field artillery from West Virginia College, an HBCU. In 1980, he was inducted into the inaugural cohort of its ROTC Hall of Fame as an Army general. From humble beginnings as a son of a miner, Rogers excelled as an honor roll student, an athlete as football team quarterback, and a leader elected as student council president in his all-Black high school. Rogers cited his father’s “pride in service to country” as an Army enlisted mail clerk during the First World War. His father’s service motivated Rogers to join the Army even while the Korean War raged on. Rogers couldn’t know the impact of a future conflict in Southeast Asia on his life and military career.

[Senate confirms Janet Yellen as first female Treasury secretary](#) [Daniel Uria, *United Press International*, 25 January 2021]

The Senate confirmed Janet Yellen as the first woman to head the Treasury Department on Monday. Yellen, who was the first woman to serve as chair of the Federal Reserve, also said the Biden administration must be able to provide coronavirus relief before turning to other issues such as rising debt. As Treasury secretary, Yellen will head up the administration’s efforts to support Biden’s \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 stimulus program, which she highlighted as a primary goal during her confirmation hearing.

[South Fulton Fire Captain On Her Sign Language Opportunity At Biden’s Inauguration](#) [Lisa Rayam, and Maria White Tillman, NPR, (Atlanta, Ga.), 27 January 2021]

City of South Fulton Fire Captain Andrea Hall remains on cloud nine. One week ago, she stood on the nation’s Capital steps in Washington D.C. to recite and sign the Pledge of Allegiance at President Joe Biden’s inauguration ceremony on Jan. 20. Hall, a firefighter for 28 years, says for her, it was an auspicious occasion that crossed party lines and made her proud to be an American. She recalled for WABE host of “Morning Edition” Lisa Rayam, what those few minutes on a frigid January morning were like. Hall was first exposed to sign language through her deaf father, who learned Sign Language at the Georgia School for the Deaf, according to the Georgia School for the Deaf Alumni Association Facebook page. Her cousin, according to the Georgia School for the Deaf, also attended the school. Hall has served as the first African American female captain in South Fulton’s Fire-Rescue Department since 2004.

[Survey: 58% of Feds Said Trump Diversity Training Order was “Counterproductive”](#) [Erich Wagner, *GovExec*, 27 January 2021]

A recent survey of federal workers found that 58% of respondents said that former President Trump’s executive order barring the use of so-called “divisive” diversity and inclusion training at federal agencies and contractors was “counterproductive.” Last fall, Trump directed agencies and federal contractors to halt the use of diversity training that involved the use of critical race theory or otherwise denied the existence of systemic racism in the United States. According to a survey conducted last week by the Government Business Council, the research arm of Government Executive, 72% of federal employees said that it was important or extremely important for federal agencies to be diverse and inclusive. Nearly 50% of respondents said that diversity and inclusion training created understanding at their agency, compared to 18% who said it created divisiveness.

[White House website allows users to specify pronouns for first time](#) [Dan Avery, *NBC News*, 21 January 2021]

The day President Joe Biden was sworn in, the White House website was updated to allow visitors to specify what pronouns they use. On Wednesday, the contact form at WhiteHouse.gov added a drop-down menu with pronoun options, including “she/her,” “he/him,” and “they/them.” Users can also select “other,” and write in their own selections or indicate they “prefer not to share” their pronouns. The list of prefixes has also been updated to include the gender-neutral “Mx.” along with “Mr.” “Mrs.” and “Ms.” Sarah Kate Ellis, president and CEO of LGBTQ advocacy group GLAAD, called the update “more than just a demonstration of allyship.” “Research has shown that recognition and respect of our pronouns can make all the difference for our health and well-being—especially when it comes to LGBTQ youth,” Ellis said in a statement.

HUMAN RELATIONS

[There Are Two Kinds of Happy People](#) [Arthur C. Brooks, *The Atlantic*, 28 January 2021]

These days, we are offered a dizzying variety of secrets to happiness. Some are ways of life: Give to others; practice gratitude. Others are minor hacks: Eat kale; play a board game. Some are simply an effort to make a buck. I have found that most of the serious approaches to happiness can be mapped onto two ancient traditions, promoted by the Greek philosophers Epicurus and Epictetus. In a nutshell, they focus on enjoyment and virtue, respectively. Individuals typically gravitate toward one style or the other, and many major philosophies have followed one path or the other for about two millennia. Understanding where you sit between the two can tell you a lot about yourself—including your happiness weak points—and help you create strategies for a more balanced approach to life.

MISCELLANEOUS

[Auschwitz survivors mark anniversary online amid pandemic](#) [Vanessa Gera, *The Associated Press*, 27 January 2021]

A Jewish prayer for the souls of the people murdered in the Holocaust echoed Wednesday over where the Warsaw ghetto stood during World War II as a world paused by the coronavirus pandemic observed the 76th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Most International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemorations were being held online this year due to the virus, including the annual ceremony at the site of the former Auschwitz death camp, where Nazi German forces killed 1.1 million people in occupied Poland. The memorial site is closed to visitors because of the pandemic. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, in a message to a World Jewish Congress and Auschwitz memorial museum event, said the online nature of remembrance events takes nothing away from their importance.

[Biden Signs Executive Order Killing Schedule F, Restoring Collective Bargaining Rights](#) [Erich Wagner, GovExec, 22 January 2021]

Fulfilling a campaign promise, President Biden signed an executive order Friday afternoon rescinding a series of orders issued by former President Trump aimed at gutting federal employee unions and stripping federal workers of their civil service protections. According to a summary of Biden's executive order released Friday morning, the directive will rescind the three anti-union orders, as well as the order establishing Schedule F. The text of the executive order was not immediately available. American Federation of Government Employees National President Everett Kelley said he hopes that Biden's order portends that federal labor-management relations will return to pre-2017 norms.

[CCAF finalizes education partnership with Stillman College, first HBCU in GEM Program](#) [Billy Blankenship, Air University Public Affairs, (Maxwell AFB, Ala.), 19 January 2021]

The Community College of the Air Force at Air University and Stillman College signed a partnership recently allowing the north Alabama school to offer online general education courses to Airmen pursuing their CCAF associate degree. Stillman College, located in Tuscaloosa, is the first Historically Black Colleges and Universities to sign up with CCAF's General Education Mobile Program. The [GEM Program](#) allows CCAF students to enroll in partnering civilian academic institutions to fulfil general education course requirements needed for associate in applied science degrees. "At Stillman College, we are deeply honored to be the first HBCU to partner with Air University as part of the CCAF GEM program," said Dr. Mark McCormick, Stillman provost and vice president of academic affairs. "Stillman College is constantly looking for new avenues to provide educational opportunities to traditional and non-traditional students. It seems a natural fit to partner with the CCAF GEM program to fulfill the need for general education classes."

[Corky Lee, legendary Asian American photographer, dies at 73](#) [Jessie Yeung, CNN, 28 January 2021]

Corky Lee, an award-winning photographer who captured the everyday lives and political activism of the Asian American community, has died at the age of 73 after battling Covid-19. "It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Corky (Young Kwok) Lee," said a statement from Lee's family on Wednesday evening. "Corky, as he was known to the Asian American community, was everywhere. He always had a camera around his neck, documenting a community event, capturing a social injustice for the record and even correcting the social

injustice of an historical event that took place well over a century ago. He did what he loved and we loved him for it. (Corky) had a very unique lens. His passion was to rediscover, document and champion through his images the plight of all Americans but most especially that of Asian and Pacific Islanders,” the statement added. “He has left us with what is likely to be the single largest repository of the photographic history of Asian Americans of the past half century.”

[“A Japanese Schindler”: The remarkable diplomat who saved thousands of Jews during WWII](#)

[Gillian Brockell, The Washington Post, 27 January 2021]

Nathan Lewin’s mother kept up with the news. Unlike other Jews in Poland, she had been born in the Netherlands, and even attended the University of Berlin, before marrying a Polish Jew and immigrating. Because of this experience, she was perhaps more aware than others around her of the threat of Adolf Hitler. “She made my father promise that when and if Hitler crossed the border into Poland, we would immediately try to escape and leave Poland,” Lewin, now 84, said Monday at a virtual reception via Zoom. When Hitler invaded in September 1939, they did just that. Lewin, then 3 years old, was “carried in the night through the forest” to Lithuania with his parents, maternal grandmother and an uncle. But Lewin’s mother knew they still weren’t safe. That was when they found out about Chiune “Sempo” Sugihara. He was a Japanese diplomat who spoke fluent Russian; he had been sent to the Lithuanian city of Kaunas to monitor German and Soviet troop movements under the guise of handling consular affairs. With a Japanese transit visa, the Soviets would allow the refugees to take a train across Siberia en route to Japan.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[On This Holocaust Memorial Day Be The Light In The Darkness](#) [Ewelina U. Ochab, Forbes, 26 January 2021]

January 27 marks the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. The day was designed by way of a UN General Assembly resolution adopted on November 1, 2005. The date designated for this Holocaust Remembrance Day is no coincidence. On January 27, 1945, Soviet troops liberated the biggest Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau in the then occupied Poland. At that concentration camp, over a million men, women and children were killed in the most heinous of ways. The [official theme](#) for 2021 is “Facing the Aftermath: Recovery and Reconstitution after the Holocaust.” As the UN notes, this year’s commemoration “focuses on the measures taken in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust to begin the process of recovery and reconstitution of individuals, community, and systems of justice. Integral to the process of reconstitution was the accurate recording of the historical account of what happened before and during the Holocaust.

[Pandemic spurs quest to enroll more Black Americans in vaccine trials](#) [Julie Steenhuisen and Nick Brown, Reuters, 28 January 2021]

Infectious disease doctor Angela Branche needed help. Branche and colleagues at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York were running a clinical trial for a vaccine against the coronavirus, which kills Black people at three times the rate it kills Whites—yet it was mostly Whites signing up. They needed more African Americans. The initiatives could change the way vaccine and drug trials are conducted in the United States, according to Reuters interviews with more than 40 public health and pharmaceutical-industry officials. “This mindset about

diversity—of not just being an afterthought but a central part of successful trials—is beginning to sink in,” Dr. Francis Collins, director of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), told Reuters. Enrollment of Black people in clinical trials is a particular challenge. Mistrust runs high, in part because of the nation’s history of unethical practices in medical research on African Americans.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

MISCONDUCT

[Chaplain’s Facebook post denigrating transgender troops under investigation by Army](#) [Howard Altman, *Army Times*, 27 January 2021]

Officials from the 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade at Fort Hood, Texas, are investigating a Facebook post by a unit chaplain denigrating transgender troops. The post was made Monday, on a story mentioning Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin’s support for President Joe Biden ending a service ban on transgender people. “We are aware of Maj. Calvert’s social media post on the Army Times Facebook page,” Army Maj. Jefferson T. Grimes, a 3rd SFAB spokesman, told Military Times in an email. “The matter is currently under investigation. We support the commander in chief, secretary of defense and all DOD policies and directives. A service member’s gender orientation is “none of” Calvert’s business, retired Navy SEAL Special Warfare Operator Senior Chief Kristin Beck told Military Times. “Chaplains should support all troops and their belief systems, said Beck, 54. “And if they don’t, they are constitutionally in conflict.”

[Fort Hood command sergeant major reinstated after investigation into “unprofessional language”](#) [Haley Britzky, *Task & Purpose*, 24 January 2021]

The command sergeant major of III Corps and Fort Hood is being reinstated after he was temporarily suspended in December over allegations that he used “unprofessional language” towards subordinates. An investigation into the allegations against Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur “Cliff” Burgoyne III, carried out by U.S. Forces Command, was finished on Friday, FORSCOM said in a press release. The investigation found that the language in question “was not unprofessional and he did not exhibit counterproductive leadership,” according to FORSCOM. When Burgoyne was temporarily suspended last month, an Army official told Task & Purpose that the language wasn’t related to race, gender, sexual orientation, or sexual harassment. The official said the language fell into the category of toxic leadership.

[Military and Police Investigate Members Charged in Capitol Riot](#) [Deepa Seetharaman, Zusha Elinson and Ben Kesling, *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 January 2021]

Jacob Fracker is a member of the Virginia National Guard and a police officer in the small town of Rocky Mount, Va. On Jan. 6, he joined the mob that broke into the U.S. Capitol and posted a photo of himself next to a fellow off-duty officer with his middle finger raised in front of a statue of a Revolutionary War commander, according to court documents. As total federal arrests in the Capitol riot grow past 100, Mr. Fracker is one of at least 18 current and former police officers, firefighters and military members who have been charged as of Friday, according to a Wall Street Journal tally. Some of the people charged in the riot were members of the Oath Keepers, a

private militia group that tries to recruit current and former military and law-enforcement personnel as well as first responders to persuade them to stay true to the constitution, according to founder Stewart Rhodes. The group believes that the “federal government has been co-opted by a shadowy conspiracy that is trying to strip American citizens of their rights,” according to the Justice Department.

RACISM

[Cemetery changes contract after Black deputy denied burial](#) [Janet McConnaughey, *The Associated Press*, 29 January 2021]

The board of a small Louisiana cemetery that denied burial to a Black sheriff’s deputy held an emergency meeting Thursday and removed a Whites-only provision from its sales contracts. “When that meeting was over it was like a weight lifted off of me,” H. Creig Vizena, board president for Oaklin Springs Cemetery in southwest Louisiana, said Thursday night. He said he was stunned and ashamed to learn two days earlier that the family of Allen Parish Sheriff’s Deputy Darrell Semien, who died Sunday, had been told that he could not be buried at the cemetery near Oberlin because he was African American.

[For 1st Black Pentagon chief, racism challenge is personal](#) [Lolita C. Baldor, *The Associated Press*, 23 January 2021]

Newly confirmed Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will have to contend not only with a world of security threats and a massive military bureaucracy, but also with a challenge that hits closer to home: rooting out racism and extremism in the ranks. Austin is not the first secretary to grapple with the problem. Racism has long been an undercurrent in the military. While leaders insist only a small minority hold extremist views, there have been persistent incidents of racial hatred and, more subtly, a history of implicit bias in what is a predominantly White institution. Austin, who broke racial barriers throughout his four decades in the Army, said military leaders must set the right example to discourage and eliminate extremist behavior. They must get to know their troops, and look for signs of extremism or other problems, he said. But Austin—the first Black man to serve as head of U.S. Central Command and the first to be the Army’s vice chief of staff—also knows that much of the solution must come from within the military services and lower-ranking commanders. They must ensure their troops are trained and aware of the prohibitions.

[Hope And Skepticism As Biden Promises To Address Environmental Racism](#) [Rebecca Hersher, *NPR*, 29 January 2021]

“It can get really bad,” says Hall, the co-founder of the Rural Empowerment Association for Community Help in Duplin County. There are about two million hogs in the county, outnumbering residents by 29 to 1, and they produce a lot of waste. Because farmers spray the pig waste on fields as fertilizer, microscopic pieces of feces pollute the air and water. For decades, residents have complained that just breathing can make your eyes water and your throat itch, cause nausea and dizziness. Hall worked with researchers in the early 2000s to study the health effects of farm pollution. Studies found that families living near hog farms have higher rates of infant mortality, kidney disease and respiratory illness. And in Duplin County, it is

people of color who are disproportionately harmed. “If you look at the maps,” Hall says, “and you begin to look at where these facilities are located, it’s pretty much in communities of color.”

[The Pentagon tried to bury an alarming survey about widespread racism in the ranks](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 27 January 2021]

For years, the Pentagon sat on a 2017 survey showing that nearly a third of Black service members who responded had experienced racism and few troops had faith in the process of officially reporting racism. Only after Reuters reporter Phil Stewart first revealed in December that the Defense Department had buried the survey results in the bowels of the Pentagon did the military finally release it. Upon reading the recently released, and lengthy [300-page report](#), it immediately becomes clear why the Pentagon kept the document buried for so long. Some of the reasons why the survey was not released until recently include the following: It was not completed until 2018; it included a new metric on racial and ethnic experiences that took longer to appropriately analyze; and the release was delayed to allow the Defense Department to conduct an internal review that looked at the survey’s preliminary results, Army Maj. César Santiago said.

[Segregation Policies in Federal Government in Early 20th Century Harmed Black Americans for Decades](#) [Guo Xu and Abhay Aneja, *The Conversation*, 25 January 2021]

Economic disparities in earnings, health and wealth between Black and White Americans are staggeringly large. Historical government practices and institutions—such as segregated schools, redlined neighborhoods and discrimination in medical care—have contributed to these wide disparities. While these causes may not always be overt, they can have lasting negative effects on the prosperity of minority communities. Abhay Aneja and I are researchers at University of California, Berkeley, who specialize in examining the causes of social inequality. Our [new research](#) examines the U.S. federal government’s role in creating conditions of racial inequality more than a century ago. Specifically, we researched the harmful impact of government discrimination against Black civil service employees. We also examined how such discrimination continues to affect their families decades later, rippling across future generations.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[UNC building defaced by anti-Semitic, racist vandalism](#) [*The Associated Press*, 26 January 2021]

A building at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill was vandalized with anti-Semitic symbols after someone unlawfully entered and defaced several offices, university officials said. A racial epithet was also written on a whiteboard during the weekend break-in at Campus Y, the school’s hub for social justice and innovation, the university said Monday in a statement. Officials did not provide details on what was written, but a post on Campus Y’s Facebook page said some of the vandalism had “hateful symbols and messages” pertaining to women and people of color. The break-in and vandalism was reported to campus police, who have issued two warrants for a suspect’s arrest. Officials have not released the person’s identity.

[UN chief urges global alliance to counter rise of neo-Nazis](#) [Edith M. Lederer, *The Associated Press*, 26 January 2021]

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged coordinated global action on Monday to build an alliance against the growth and spread of neo-Nazism and White supremacy and the resurgence of xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and hate speech sparked partly by the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.N. chief also urged international action “to fight propaganda and disinformation.” And he called for stepped up education on Nazi actions during World War II, stressing that almost two-thirds of young Americans do not know that 6 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust. Guterres spoke at the annual Park East Synagogue and United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Service marking Wednesday’s 76th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, held virtually this year because of COVID-19.

[VMI commandant to retire as racial reckoning continues](#) [Ian Shapira, *The Washington Post*, 23 January 2021]

*The commandant of the Virginia Military Institute, William “Bill” Wanovich, who came under scrutiny for posing in a photo mocking Hispanics at a campus Halloween party three years ago, is retiring at the end of the academic year, the college announced Friday. Wanovich’s pending departure marks the latest major disruption at VMI since *The Washington Post* published a series of stories exposing racism at the nation’s oldest state-supported military college. The revelations prompted Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam (D), a VMI graduate, to order an independent investigation into what he called the school’s “clear and appalling culture of ongoing structural racism.” The investigation will be completed later this year. In October, the college’s longtime superintendent, retired Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III, resigned. He was replaced by retired Army Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins, the college’s first Black leader in its 181-year history. Wins is serving as interim superintendent until the college selects a permanent successor to Peay later this year.*

RELIGION

[Group of U.S. Catholic bishops urges support for LGBT youth](#) [David Crary, *The Associated Press*, 26 January 2021]

Declaring “God is on your side,” a Roman Catholic cardinal, an archbishop and six other U.S. bishops issued a statement Monday expressing support for LGBT youth and denouncing the bullying often directed at them. “All people of goodwill should help, support and defend LGBT youth,” said the statement released by the Tyler Clementi Foundation, named for the Rutgers University student who took his own life in 2010 after being recorded on a webcam kissing another man. According to Catholic teaching, gays and lesbians should be respected, loved and not discriminated against, but homosexual activity is considered “intrinsically disordered.” The church leadership in the U.S. vigorously opposes same-sex marriage and has not supported efforts to boost acceptance of transgender people. The bishops’ statement said LGBT youth attempt suicide at much higher rates, are often homeless because of families who reject them and “are the target of violent acts at alarming rates.”

[Maryland Episcopal church commits \\$500,000 to reparations](#) [Adelle M. Banks, *The Associated Press*, 28 January 2021]

A historic Episcopal church in Baltimore has committed to setting aside \$100,000 to reparations, an initiative that will contribute to local racial justice causes. Memorial Episcopal Church also

pledged to contribute an additional \$400,000 for reparations and justice over five years. “Our church has a long history of, unfortunately, supporting racial segregation up until 1969, being active participants in it,” said the Rev. Grey Maggiano, rector of the church that was founded in 1860, on Tuesday (Jan. 26). “And so we’ve identified a few key areas where we need to make particular amends and atone.”

SEXISM

[Britain withdraws COVID ad criticised for “1950s sexism”](#) [Alistair Smout and Sarah Young, Reuters, 29 January 2021]

The British government withdrew a coronavirus public awareness advert that depicted women doing domestic chores while a man relaxed on a sofa and which prompted a wave of criticism that it exemplified “1950s sexism”. The advert showed four households—one in which a woman holds a baby next to what seems to be an ironing board, another with a woman home-schooling two children, and a third with two women who are cleaning. The online ad was taken down by the government on Thursday, saying it did not reflect its views on women. Guidance from Britain’s Advertising Standards Authority says that depicting gender stereotypes is likely to cause “harm or serious or widespread offence”. “An ad that depicts a man with his feet up and family members creating mess around a home while a woman is solely responsible for cleaning up the mess” is “likely to be unacceptable,” the guidance states.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Ex-VA doctor sentenced to 25 years over molesting patients](#) [The Associated Press, 25 January 2021]

A former doctor at a Veterans Affairs hospital in West Virginia was sentenced to 25 years in prison on Monday after pleading guilty to federal charges that he molested three male patients and violated their civil rights. U.S. District Judge Frank Volk sentenced Jonathan Yates, 52, to the prison term and three years of supervised release, prosecutors announced. Last September, he had pleaded guilty in court filings to three counts of depriving veterans of their civil rights under color of law, which means the crimes were committed while on duty.

[Gag order denied in case of Virginia Beach Marine who says she was sexually assaulted](#) [Katherine Hafner, *The Virginian-Pilot*, (Norfolk, Va.), 26 January 2021]

A military judge this week denied a gag order in the criminal case of a Virginia Beach corporal whose supporters say her actions stem from the trauma of a sexual assault at the hands of a fellow Marine. The Corps had requested the order in November, aiming to bar Cpl. Thae Ohu’s attorneys or any other witnesses from speaking with the press. In a hearing at Quantico Monday, Judge Lt. Col. Michael Zimmerman quickly dismissed the request, according to Eric Montalvo, Ohu’s attorney with the Federal Practice Group. “He acknowledged that this would impact constitutional rights to free speech and there was nothing the defense had done to warrant any restriction,” Montalvo said.

[Lloyd Austin's focus on sexual misconduct in the military offers hope for real change](#) [The Editorial Board, *The Washington Post*, 25 January 2021] [OPINION]

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is certainly not the first Pentagon official who has promised to solve problems of sexual assault and harassment that have long plagued the military. But it is a reassuring sign of how seriously he views these issues that his first directive after being sworn into office was ordering a top-down review of ongoing efforts to tackle sexual crimes and misconduct. President Joe Biden has ordered a 90-day commission to pursue solutions to sexual misconduct in the military, but Austin said he didn't want to wait to take action. In a Jan. 23 memorandum to his senior leaders, Austin said he wanted reports two weeks from now on sexual assault prevention programs in the military, and an assessment of what has worked and what hasn't. "I know this has been a focus for you and for the Department's leadership. I know you have worked this problem for many years," he wrote, "I tried to tackle it myself when I, too, commanded. We simply must admit the hard truth: we must do more. All of us."

SUICIDE

[For veterans after suicide attempts, gender affects recovery needs](#) [Connie Hughes, *Wolters Kluwer Health*, 25 January 2021]

*What care do veterans need when recovering after suicide attempts? The answer may be different for women compared to men veterans, reports a [qualitative study](#) in *Medical Care*, part of a special issue devoted to new research on suicide risk and prevention in women. "The paths to recovery after a suicide attempt may vary by gender, especially among veterans," according to the new research by Lauren M. Denneson, PhD, of the HSR&D Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care (CIVIC) at VA Portland (Ore.) Health Care System. "Our data suggest that women emphasize relatedness whereas men emphasize competence." Their study appears in a supplement dedicated to "Advancing Knowledge of Suicide Risk and Prevention Among Women."*

[Navy directs commanders to follow up after suicide prevention referrals](#) [Christen McCurdy, *United Press International*, 28 January 2021]

Navy commanders will be required to follow up on the cases of sailors who've been referred to the service's suicide prevention program, per a policy shift announced Thursday. Sailors who attempt suicide or express suicidal thoughts are referred to the Navy's Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life Program, also known as [SAIL](#)—a prevention program designed to help sailors during the 90 days after a suicide-related behavior. In a memo released earlier this week, Vice Adm. John B. Nowell, the Navy's personnel chief, described SAIL as a critical resource in bringing the service's suicide rate down—but case managers are having a hard time contacting sailors referred to the program. That gap in contact means just 50% of sailors referred to the program are actually getting the care they need.

[This study will pay you to help prevent military suicides](#) [Harm Vanhuizen, *Military Times*, 24 January 2021]

In its work with the National Guard Bureau, One More Day wants to help to create "a better everything" when it comes to suicide prevention. That includes improving the Guard's already robust programs for training service members in recognizing the signs of suicide and reaching

out, making assistance available when it's needed, and learning how technology can play a role in suicide prevention. That last point is where active-duty service members can step in to help. One More Day is currently raising awareness for a DOD-funded study by Florida State University's Dr. Thomas Joiner, a leading expert on suicide. The study will take a total of four hours spread out across six sessions in 11 weeks. For their participation in the research, service members will receive \$20 for each completed session. Interested active-duty service members should contact Joiner at militarystudy@psy.fsu.edu to learn more about participating.

VETERANS

[Former Army captain arrested after live-streaming Capitol riot](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 23 January 2021]

A former Army captain and Iraq War veteran was arrested Tuesday in South Florida for his alleged role in the Capitol riot after he was identified by the FBI using Facebook Live videos he made inside the building during the breach. Gabriel A. Garcia, who left the Army in 2017, broadcast himself and others pushing against police lines to gain entrance to the Capitol building Jan. 6. Garcia, who was also a 2020 candidate for the Florida State House, was charged with violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds, as well as aiding and abetting certain acts during civil disorder. "We just went ahead and stormed the Capitol. It's about to get ugly," Garcia says in one of the videos, according to the complaint. Around him, the crowd chants, "Our house!" More veterans, and potentially service members, could be identified and charged in the coming days and weeks. Department of Justice officials have said they're still sifting through video footage and witness accounts that have not been made public.

[New VA Program Investigates Outdoor Therapy For Veterans](#) [Dustin Jones, *NPR*, 27 January 2021]

Getting into shape traditionally tops many people's lists when it comes to New Year's resolutions. But after a tumultuous past year, focusing on mental health needs is also important. Recently passed legislation aims to help America's military veterans with both. Last month, President Trump signed the [Accelerating Veterans Recovery Outdoors Act](#) after it easily passed in Congress in a rare instance of bipartisan support, as part of a package called the Veterans COMPACT Act of 2020. Among other things, the new legislation calls on the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement programs and policies related to transition assistance, suicide care, mental health education and treatment. More specifically, it requires the VA to establish a task force to investigate the benefits of outdoor recreation therapy for veterans. In the not-too-distant future, struggling veterans could be prescribed outdoor activities as treatments; a welcome alternative to pharmaceuticals or a more traditional approach to therapy.

[Senators ask that POW/MIA flag fly again atop White House](#) [Shawne K. Wickham, *The New Hampshire Union Leader*, (Manchester, N.H.), 23 January 2021]

Sen. Maggie Hassan, D-NH, and two Senate colleagues are calling on President Joe Biden to return the POW/MIA flag to "its rightful place" atop the White House. A 2019 law requires the flag, which honors American service members held prisoner or missing in action, be flown in designated locations, including the U.S. Capitol, the White House and national cemeteries.

During a Memorial Day event last year, the black flag was moved from atop the White House and placed in a new memorial garden on the White House grounds. The move prompted outrage from some veterans groups, including the Northeast POW/MIA Network, which has held a weekly vigil in Meredith's Hesky Park for 34 years to honor and remember those held captive or missing in foreign wars. The senators said they support the creation of the permanent memorial on the White House grounds but said that location is not prominently visible from outside those grounds.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Tuskegee Airman and Winter Park Native Richard Hall Jr. Has Died](#) [Danielle Prieur, WMFE News, 27 January 2021]

Chief Master Sgt. Richard Hall served the United States Air Force for 31 years, first as a member of the Tuskegee Airmen-the first African American pilots in the Air Force-during WWII. He later served as a Chief Master Sergeant during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. President George W. Bush awarded Hall the Congressional Gold Medal in 2007 for his role in desegregating the armed forces and his bravery in battle. The Winter Park native's statue, which was vandalized in 2019, stands outside the Hannibal Square Heritage Center. His oral history is housed in the Winter Park Public Library.