

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 5 FEBRUARY 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

[Air Force forms permanent office for diversity, inclusion, equity](#) [Christen McCurdy, *United Press International*, 2 February 2021]

The Department of the Air Force has formed a permanent Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which was stood up on Jan. 11 following recommendations for its creation, according to a Tuesday [announcement](#) from the Air Force. But it evolved from the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force created by former Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett in June. The office has become permanent following recommendations of both the Office of Secretary of Defense and an Air Force Inspector General independent review of racial disparity. Tawanda Rooney, a career member of the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service, will serve as acting senior adviser on diversity and inclusion.

[Defense secretary orders 60-day stand-down to confront extremism in the military](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 3 February 2021]

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has called on the services to conduct a 60-day stand-down on the issue of extremism in the military, prompted by the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol and subsequent reports of both active-duty and former service members attending a rally calling to overturn the 2020 election and the riot that ensued. Austin held a meeting Wednesday of the service secretaries and Joint Chiefs, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters, to ask them about their concerns and ideas for improving the situation. “Even though the numbers might be small, they may not be as small as we would like them to be, or we believe them to be,” Kirby said of the prevalence of troops with extremists’ views, ties or activities. “And that no matter what it is, it is not an insignificant problem.” Guidance is forthcoming on what Austin expects to see after the 60 days. “It wasn’t a blithe, ‘Hey, just go talk to your people,’” Kirby said of Austin’s direction to the service secretaries and Joint Chiefs. “He was very clear that he wants commands to take the necessary time. And I didn’t hear him be overly proscriptive about that ... to speak with troops about the scope of this problem, and certainly to get a sense from them about what they’re seeing at their level.” [SEE ALSO: [1,2,3](#)]

[Navy unveils 57 recommendations from Task Force One Navy to promote diversity, inclusion in the Fleet](#) [Diana Stancy Correll, *Navy Times*, 3 February 2021]

The report’s 57 recommendations reflect the culmination of nearly 300 listening sessions with active-duty and reserve sailors, along with almost 1,000 online surveys. “Every listening session had the same key themes: respect, empathy, training, skepticism,” Rear Adm. Alvin Holsey, the director of the task force, told reporters Feb. 1. The report’s recommendations are broken down into several “lines of effort”: recruiting’ talent management and retention; professional development; innovation and STEM; and several additional recommendations. A flag officer has been tapped to oversee progress in each area. The proposals for getting there range from the very basic, such as modifying the Navy’s core values, to the systematic, such as establishing mentoring programs and using artificial intelligence in the selection board process to reduce potential bias.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

SPECIAL: EXTREMISM[As he tackles extremism, Austin draws on military's experience with racially motivated slayings](#)

[Paul Sonne and Missy Ryan, *The Washington Post*, 31 January 2021]

When Lloyd Austin was a lieutenant colonel in the 1990s, overseeing operations for the 82nd Airborne Division, a grisly double murder plunged the elite Army unit into crisis, anger and soul-searching over race and the military's ability to detect threats in its own ranks. In December 1995, young soldiers in the division, members of an underground band of neo-Nazi skinheads, shot and murdered two Black pedestrians in nearby Fayetteville, N.C. The killings prompted a national outcry and an effort to root out extremism across the Army ranks. Austin, who became the nation's first Black defense secretary this month, has been tasked with once again examining far-right sympathies in the U.S. military, after some of the Jan. 6 insurrectionists at the Capitol were found to be veterans or have military ties, and the military removed at least a dozen National Guardsmen from inauguration duty over concerns about their ties.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

["Beijing Biden Is Not My President:" Troops' Social Media Posts in Spotlight After Capitol Riots](#)

[Patricia Kime and Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 4 February 2021]

Airman 1st Class Sean Brinson wanted his peers to know that he didn't consider President Joe Biden a legitimate commander in chief. In a post on the popular Facebook group Amn/NCO/SNCO Jan. 12, Brinson pledged to "continue to say 'Beijing Biden is not my president' for 4 years." "End of god damned story," wrote Brinson, identified as being assigned to the 691st Cyberspace Operations Squadron, part of Air Combat Command located at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Kristofer Goldsmith, an Army veteran who led an investigation for Vietnam Veterans of America over online targeting of troops and veterans by extremist groups and foreign operatives, said the Defense Department and Department of Veterans Affairs should provide instruction on "cyber-hygiene," ensuring that troops and veterans are aware of who is trying to target them and reading them online. Troops and vets are being trolled by groups posing as veteran organizations that seek to sow division and discontent, and they are actively being recruited by extremist groups for their military skills, Goldsmith explained.

[The Boogaloo Bois Have Guns, Criminal Records and Military Training. Now They Want to Overthrow the Government.](#)

[A.C. Thompson, *ProPublica*, and Lila Hassan and Karim Hajj, *FRONTLINE*, 1 February 2021]

In the weeks since Jan. 6, an array of extremist groups have been named as participants in the Capitol invasion. The Proud Boys. QAnon believers. White nationalists. The Oath Keepers. But the Boogaloo Bois are notable for the depth of their commitment to the overthrow of the U.S. government and the jaw-dropping criminal histories of many members. In its short existence, the Boogaloo movement has proven to be a magnet for current or former military service members who have used their combat skills and firearms expertise to advance the Boogaloo cause. Before becoming one of the faces of the movement, Dunn did a brief stint in the U.S. Marines, a career he says was cut short by a heart condition, and worked as a Virginia state prison guard. Through interviews, extensive study of social media and a review of court records, some previously unreported, ProPublica and FRONTLINE identified more than 20 Boogaloo Bois or sympathizers

who've served in the armed forces. Over the past 18 months, 13 of them have been arrested on charges ranging from the possession of illegal automatic weapons to the manufacture of explosives to murder.

[Canada designates the Proud Boys as a terrorist entity](#) [Rob Gillies, *The Associated Press*, 3 February 2021]

The Canadian government designated the Proud Boys group as a terrorist entity on Wednesday, noting they played a pivotal role in the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. The Proud Boys is a far-right, male chauvinist extremist group known for engaging in violent clashes at political rallies. Canada is the first country to designate them as a terrorist entity. The terrorist designation means the group may have assets seized and face harsher terrorism-related criminal penalties. A government official said just because they are a member doesn't mean they will be charged with a crime, but if they do engage in violent acts they could be charged with terrorist crimes. Sending money to the organization or buying Proud Boys paraphernalia would also be a crime. The government calls the Proud Boys a neo-fascist organization with semiautonomous chapters located in the United States, Canada, and internationally. It said it engages in political violence and that members espouse misogynistic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant, and White supremacist ideologies.

[Crowdfunding hate: How White supremacists and other extremists raise money from legions of online followers](#) [Will Carless, *USA TODAY*, 5 February 2021]

A mysterious \$500,000 Bitcoin transfer. Online stores selling sham nutritional supplements and buckets of protein powder. Inane, live-streamed video game sessions, full of dog whistles and racial slurs, fed by a steady flow of cryptocurrency donations in the form of virtual lemons. Some of the income streams exploited by America's extremist movements have come under increased scrutiny after last month's attack on the U.S. Capitol, for which some far-right extremists fundraised online. Even as extremists are removed from platforms that serve as reliable sources of followers and money, they find new ways to wring financial support from an army of online haters. "A good analogy is that for every five people who would buy a \$20 T-shirt, there's probably 500 people who would pay a dollar or 50 cents to their favorite streamer to hear them say the N-word or mock minorities online," said Megan Squire, a computer science professor at Elon University who has studied how extremists fundraise online. "The numbers are substantially larger, both in the number of people participating and the number of times they donate."

[Disproportionate number of current and former military personnel arrested in Capitol attack, CNN analysis shows](#) [Sara Sidner, Anna-Maja Rappard and Marshall Cohen, *CNN*, 31 January 2021]

Active military personnel and veterans are over-represented among the first 150 people to be arrested and have records released for federal offenses in the violence and insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Analysis by CNN of Pentagon records and court proceedings show 21 of the 150, or 14%, are current or former members of the U.S. military. That is more than double the proportion of servicemen and women and veterans in the adult U.S. population, calculated from Census Bureau and Department of Defense statistics. In 2018, there were 1.3 million active-duty members of the services and 18 million veterans. Together, they comprised just 5.9% of the

overall 327 million U.S. population at the end of 2018. “What we’ve seen too often is that this kind of ideological militancy is allowed to exist in the military,” said former FBI agent Michael German who spent years undercover in White supremacist and domestic extremist groups and is now a fellow at the Brennan Center For Justice.

[How to Root Out Extremism in the U.S. Military](#) [Heather Williams, *Defense One*, 1 February 2021] [COMMENTARY]

The long-simmering problem of extremists among U.S. military personnel boiled over on Jan. 6, when people serving in the military and veterans were among those who stormed the U.S. Capitol Building. The Justice Department is working to hold these individuals accountable, and those actively in the service may face military prosecution. But the military also has to tackle the underlying issues at play and do more to understand and address extremism in the service. At a strategic level, the military is fighting this battle blind. Only two studies have been commissioned to look at this problem specifically—one in the active-duty Army and one in the Air National Guard—and both are more than two decades old. Like sexual harassment, extremism among the troops may not be reported; its pervasiveness may not be evident until one goes looking.

[Lawmakers expect quick response from Pentagon on issue of military extremist ties](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 4 February 2021]

Members of Congress said they are looking for ways to prevent members of extremist groups from joining the military and booting troops with ties to violent ideology, but will wait on new action to see how the new Pentagon leadership deals with the issue. “I think [Defense Secretary] Lloyd Austin needs to be given his shot to do that cleanup work,” said Rep. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., who will serve as chairwoman of the House Homeland Security Committee’s panel on domestic terrorism issues. “I really believe in keeping things inside the chain of command, unless it’s not working, and I just don’t think we’re at that point on the issue of domestic terrorism and White supremacy yet.” Elizabeth Neumann, former assistant secretary for counterterrorism at the Department of Homeland Security, said that the military connection of some extremists may come as a shock to the general public, but it shouldn’t. “This has been a known challenge for decades,” she told lawmakers.

[Navy Vet in Congress Protests “Thought Police” Screening Troops for Extremist Beliefs](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 4 February 2021]

A congressional hearing on domestic terrorism turned tense when a freshman congressman likened screening military personnel for extremist ties to the “Thought Police” who ferret out unapproved beliefs in George Orwell’s famous dystopian novel “1984.” Rep. Andrew Clyde, a Georgia Republican and retired Navy commander, told experts Thursday that he’s concerned about the push to screen troops, law enforcement members, or those in political office following the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol riot. “This smacks of the ‘Thought Police,’” Clyde said during a Committee on Homeland Security hearing. “We are Americans. We respect every person’s right to their own opinions, especially those with which we do not agree. We all raised our hand and swore to the same oath of office.”

[The Need to inoculate military servicemembers about information threats: The case for digital literacy training for the force](#) [Peter W. Singer and Eric B. Johnson, *War on the Rocks*, 1 February 2021] [COMMENTARY]

Every minute of every day, men and women in uniform are attacked by a weapon that threatens them, their services, and the nation. Yet the U.S. military has not trained them to prepare for this onslaught. It is time for this to change. Over the last several years, misinformation and deliberately spread disinformation, pushed by both foreign and domestic sources, have proliferated online. They have shaped not just what people read and believe, but also how they act. This “weaponization of social media” has created a formidable challenge in nearly every policy area, from aiding the forces of terrorism and extremism, to being a tool of great-power competition, to damaging the vitality of our democracy. This challenge is not just to our wider national security, but also to the military itself. Every day, millions of servicemembers at every rank use social media. In so doing, they regularly are targeted by and engage with the viral spread of false information online. The resulting effects on them and the military affect operational security, force reputation, and even the physical health of servicemembers.

[Pentagon reviewing how to better screen recruits for extremism after U.S. Capitol attack](#) [Tara Copp, *McClatchy Washington Bureau*, 4 February 2021]

The Pentagon is reviewing how to improve screening of military recruits to eliminate extremism in its ranks after the riot at the U.S. Capitol served as a “wake-up call” when members of the military were discovered to have participated, a defense official said. The services screen roughly 500,000 applicants each year who seek to join the military, of which about 200,000 enter as new recruits. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin directed the review Wednesday during a meeting with all of the military service chiefs to get a better understanding of how deep extremist views may have infiltrated military ranks, and to begin to look for options to root them out. “Changes to recruit screening did come up,” Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said in an interview with McClatchy. “Every service did it differently. One of the things that was discussed was when and to what degree do we assess people” for connections to groups with extremist ideologies, he said.

[Speier calls for screening of service members’ social media accounts](#) [John Bowden, *The Hill*, 1 February 2021]

A Democratic representative is urging the federal government and Department of Defense in particular to screen the social media accounts of U.S. service members and other “individuals with sensitive roles” for ties to White supremacist and far-right groups. Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, wrote in a letter to President Biden and his top Defense chiefs obtained by Politico that the federal government must do more to weed out far-right views and White supremacist sympathizers in the armed forces and other areas of government. “Perhaps most importantly, DOD and the U.S. Government at large are not effectively screening servicemembers and other individuals with sensitive roles for White-supremacist and violent-extremist ties,” she wrote in the letter. “This gap is inexcusable,” she added. “Social media is not viewed during the military’s accessions process or even as part of the background investigations process for security clearances.”

CULTURE

[Andra Day did not want to play Billie Holiday out of respect for singer](#) [Fred Topel, *United Press International*, 1 February 2021]

*When singer Andra Day was cast in the lead role of *The United States vs. Billie Holiday*, she didn't think she was ready to do justice to the legendary singer. "If it was my choice, I would've started with a little baby supporting role," Day said. "I didn't anticipate that I would go into acting this soon. I never would have imagined I would have started with a role like this." The film focuses on the Federal Bureau of Narcotics' pursuit of Holiday. FBN commissioner Harry Anslinger assigned FBI agent Jimmy Fletcher to the Holiday case on suspicion of using heroin. "The idea of vindicating her legacy became a lot more enticing to me," Day said. Anslinger banned Holiday from singing "[Strange Fruit](#)." The song describes lynchings, calling the hanging bodies "strange fruit" from the trees. The film shows Holiday integrating nightclubs in the '30s. With White audiences present, she would sing "Strange Fruit" to inform them about lynchings. "People [were] being lynched and everyone needs to be aware of this," Day said. "It needs to be in your face because if you can hide from it, it can persist."*

[\[FILM TRAILER\]](#)

[Army makes "Harlem Hellfighters" nickname official after more than a century](#) [Chad Garland, *Stars and Stripes*, 1 February 2021]

They called themselves the "Black Rattlers" and the French dubbed them "Men of Bronze," but the Army now officially recognizes a historic Harlem unit by what the enemy called them in World War I—the "Hellfighters." The "Harlem Hellfighters" is now the official special designation for the 369th Sustainment Brigade, the New York National Guard said Friday. The unit traces its lineage to the all-Black 369th Infantry Regiment, which earned the moniker over a century ago in fierce fighting that's been credited with helping to break down racial barriers. The regiment was the first unit of the American Expeditionary Force in World War I that allowed Blacks to serve. But they were denied a send-off parade with the 42nd Infantry Division, known as the "Rainbow Division," after their commander was told they couldn't participate because "black is not a color in the rainbow." The soldiers fought under the French army because White American troops refused to fight alongside them.

[Barbie launches Maya Angelou doll ahead of Black History Month](#) [Anagha Srikanth, *The Hill*, 20 January 2021]

Decades after Maya Angelou became the first African American and female poet to speak at a U.S. Presidential inauguration, the first Black woman elected as vice president was sworn in. For Black girls everywhere, their precedent presents possibilities to play with. A new Barbie doll modeled after Maya Angelou's likeness might also be the first to don a head wrap, with its floral pattern matched to a caftan over what Mattel described as a "curvy" body type. The doll, which also bears a golden ring, bracelet, watch and earrings, is holding a miniature replica of Angelou's autobiography, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," which was nominated for a National Book Award upon publication in 1970. "Barbie® recognizes all female role models. [The Inspiring Women™ Series](#) pays tribute to incredible heroines of their time; courageous women who took risks, changed rules and paved the way for generations of girls to dream bigger than

ever before,” said Mattel, which released the tenth doll in the series on Jan. 14 as a “celebration of Dr. Maya Angelou’s extraordinary life and work.”

[Black creative directors leading the way in college sports during time of racial reckoning](#) [Analis Bailey, *USA TODAY*, 5 February 2021]

You may not know the name Chanelle Smith-Walker but she is one of the most unique people in all of college sports. She’s the director of creative media for North Carolina State’s football team, and in the post-George Floyd world, and during a pandemic, she’s had to balance creating enticing content during an unconventional season and advocating for Black athletes during, and after, a summer of racial reckoning in the nation. Smith-Walker is a member of a powerful group of people in college sports called creative directors. They use graphic design, photography, video, social media and other means to shape the image of an athletic program. If the athletes are the heart of a program, creative directors are the painters who illustrate how that heart pumps blood. Smith-Walker, who says she’s the first Black creative director in college football history, and the first Black woman to hold the position, has found herself educating her White counterparts on the importance of allowing student-athletes to use their platforms to promote change.

[The Blind Spot In The Great American Protest Song](#) [Sam Kesler, *NPR*, 3 February 2021]

Woody Guthrie’s “This Land Is Your Land” has long been offered as an “alternative national anthem,” performed by musicians from Bruce Springsteen and Pete Seeger to Chicano Batman and Sharon Jones. Its message seems fairly simple—we are all equally entitled to the rights of this country, including the land we stand on. But Native Americans will just as soon point out that the core of the song, that “this land was made for you and me,” is a wholly colonialist message. Ever since Jennifer Lopez performed the iconic folk tune within a medley at President Biden’s inauguration, alongside “America the Beautiful” and her own “Let’s Get Loud,” the song’s relevance and inclusivity has been called into question, especially as we enter into a new administration that seeks to unite a divided country.

[Chiefs under pressure to ditch the tomahawk chop celebration](#) [Heather Hollingsworth, *The Associated Press*, 4 February 2021]

Pressure is mounting for the Super Bowl-bound Kansas City Chiefs to abandon a popular tradition in which fans break into a “war chant” while making a chopping hand motion designed to mimic the Native American tomahawk. Local groups have long argued that the team’s chop tradition and even its name itself are derogatory to American Indians, yet the national attention focused for years on the Washington football team’s use of the name Redskins and the cartoonish Chief Wahoo logo, long the emblem for the Cleveland Indians baseball team. But in the past year, those teams have decided to ditch their Native American-themed monikers, and the defending champion Chiefs are generating more attention due to a second consecutive appearance on the sport’s biggest stage. The Chiefs made some changes in the fall, barring headdresses and war paint and making a subtle alteration to the chop, with cheerleaders using a closed fist instead of an open palm to signal the beating of a drum.

[Improving barracks to build trust at Fort Hood](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 30 January 2021]

When Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston met with leaders at Fort Hood earlier this month, one subject came up repeatedly—the barracks. “I walked in and I was appalled,” one noncommissioned officer told Grinston during the Jan. 7 meeting. The soldier had recently arrived at Fort Hood and she said the poor, crowded conditions of the barracks were shocking compared to other bases where she had been assigned. “There are no walls,” she said. “They can’t get away from each other.” Grinston announced in October that the Army would spend nearly \$10 billion on barracks renovations during the next 10 years. Fort Hood, one of the Army’s largest bases, has more barracks projects than any other base in the country, he told the group of about two dozen soldiers. “In the military, the small things are big,” Rep. Jason Crow, D-Colo., who served as an Army Ranger, said during the congressional visit. “The command has a big job in front of it. They’ve got to get in front of units and fix this stuff quickly.”

[“I Silenti” gives a voice to those who died in the Romani genocide](#) [Emilie Pons, *The World*, 4 February 2021]

Editor’s note: Tcha Limberger, the featured musician in “I Silenti,” uses the word “Gypsy” to refer to his community—some find that term offensive and recommend “Roma” or “Romani” instead.

Violinist and vocalist Tcha Limberger is deeply connected to the subject matter of “I Silenti,” a performance piece that features his Romani heritage. The work, which translates from Italian to “the silent ones,” pays homage to the hundreds of thousands who died in the Romani genocide during the Holocaust—their story is often left out of history. Limberger, who lives in San Sebastian, Spain, has been having vivid dreams about having to flee the Nazis, and facing death. “I Silenti” mixes opera, theater and dance, all carefully staged. The composer, Cassol, drew from a collage of madrigals—poems or musical pieces—written by Italian Renaissance composer Claudio Monteverdi. Cassol hopes the resulting work will be cathartic. It’s about expressing emotions around the plight of the Roma people, “which is not discussed in Europe.” There is a sort of discomfort around that community, he said. Limberger said the Roma, unlike the Jewish people, haven’t learned to talk about the trauma of the Holocaust. The Roma are bound by the limits of their language, he said, which doesn’t have a concept of the past or future.

[Library of Congress Will Put \\$15M Grant Toward Minority-Focused Digital Futures Program](#) [Aaron Boyd, *NextGov*, 27 January 2021]

*The largest private foundation grant in the Library of Congress’ history will be going, in part, toward building a digital strategy to help content creators better share minority stories. The Library announced Wednesday a \$15 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation will be used for “a new, multiyear initiative to connect more deeply with Black, Hispanic, Indigenous and other minority communities,” [according to a release](#). The new program will include a focus on minority-serving academic institutions, as well as digital content creators from across the nation trying to tell diverse stories. “The new initiative, *Of the People: Widening the Path*, creates new opportunities for more Americans to engage with the Library and add their perspectives to the Library’s collections, allowing the national library to share a more inclusive American story,” the release states.*

[Meet the man who created Black History Month](#) [CNN, 1 February 2021]

February marks Black History Month, a federally recognized, nationwide celebration that calls on all Americans to reflect on the significant roles that African-Americans have played in shaping U.S. history. But how did this celebration come to be—and why does it happen in February? Carter G. Woodson, considered a pioneer in the study of African-American history, is given much of the credit for Black History Month. The son of former slaves, Woodson spent his childhood working in coal mines and quarries. He received his education during the four-month term that was customary for Black schools at the time. At 19, having taught himself English fundamentals and arithmetic, Woodson entered high school, where he completed a four-year curriculum in two years. He went on to earn his master’s degree in history from the University of Chicago and later earned a doctorate from Harvard.

[The Native American couple redefining cultural norms—in photos](#) [Jacqui Palumbo, CNN, 3 February 2021]

*In the summer of 2019, as an overcast sky hung over Minnesota’s Prairie Island Indian Community, photographer and filmmaker Tomás Karmelo Amaya took a portrait of a couple kissing while wearing colorful regalia. The couple, Nevada-based dancers Adrian Matthias Stevens and Sean Snyder, were visiting the reservation to dance in the Tinta Wita Wacipi powwow, a tradition that brought them together—and a tradition in which they are now making history. Stevens, who is of Northern Ute, Shoshone-Bannock and San Carlos Apache heritage; and Snyder, who is of Southern Ute and Navajo heritage, are a Two-Spirit couple that have been together for seven years. Within North American Indigenous communities, Two-Spirit refers to people who possess both masculine and feminine spirits, but it can also be used to represent LGBTQ+ Indigenous people more broadly. “It’s not biological, it’s spiritual, and it ties back to what I was taught growing up,” Stevens told *Vogue* in 2020. “My aunties recognized me as a Two-Spirit individual way before I even recognized it.”*

[The Navy is clarifying its grooming and hairstyle standards to fight the appearance of racial bias](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 3 February 2021]

The Navy will update the language for its hairstyle and grooming standards to avoid any perception of racial bias, service officials announced on Wednesday. The coming changes are a result of the findings of Task Force One Navy, which recently completed its report on how to dismantle racial and gender barriers that prevent sailors from succeeding. Ultimately, the task force found that the Navy’s grooming and hairstyle standards were not racially biased, but several terms, definitions, and other words used in the Navy’s policy were “considered subjective, which may facilitate policy interpretation resulting in the perception of racial bias.” For example, the Navy currently requires that female sailors’ hair color complement their skin tone, said Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. John Nowell. Does that mean that an African-American woman cannot have blond hair? That’s what some of the COs were interpreting,” Nowell told reporters on Monday.

[Navy Task Force Calls for Changing Ship Names that Honor Confederacy](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 3 February 2021]

The Navy needs to modernize the way it names ships, buildings and streets, and the service should rename assets that honor the Confederacy, a task force designed to identify problematic policies recommended this week. Task Force One Navy was directed to identify and dismantle barriers of inequality. The group, led by Rear Adm. Alvin Holsey, who recently commanded Carrier Strike Group 1, held hundreds of listening sessions and focus groups ahead of releasing their recommendations to the CNO. The group found the Navy lacks a consolidated database or process for reviewing the names of ships, streets, buildings and other assets to ensure they reflect the service's core values. "This initiative is an opportunity to honor and name Navy assets for Naval heroes from all classes, races, genders and backgrounds," their report states.

[North Carolina DMV finally removed the Confederate battle flag option for license plates](#) [Haven Orecchio-Egresitz, *Insider*, 3 February 2021]

North Carolinians will no longer have the option to brand their license plate with the Confederate flag. The state has been one of several that has offered the license plates honoring the Old South to members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans—a male-only group of members who claim their ancestors were Confederate veterans. There are 2,527 active license plates bearing the Confederate flag in North Carolina, according to the Wilmington Star News. However, the Division of Motor Vehicles told Insider that as of January 1, 2021, the option was no longer available. The move by the agency comes as states take a closer look at how the flag—a symbol of southern pride to some and racism to many—is displayed.

[This soldier singing "Wayfaring Stranger" in the Library of Congress will give you chills](#) [Paul Szoldra, *Task & Purpose*, 2 February 2021]

One of the most memorable scenes in the film 1917 is when a British soldier sings "The Wayfaring Stranger" for his comrades in a forest before they go into battle. And now, a soldier in the Army National Guard has given us a remarkable rendition of that song from inside the Library of Congress. Although a similar version of the video was recently posted to the Army community on Reddit, the moment was originally captured by a Guard soldier named Stephen Hutto, who said the singing helped boost morale for soldiers on Capitol duty while they were taking a break the day after the presidential inauguration. According to Hutto, the soldiers were inside the James Madison Building of the library, taking a break from standing post outside in the bitter cold, when they heard a woman's voice begin to sing—a soldier from a different unit nearby. McGiffin, who investigates financial fraud for his day job, told Task & Purpose he's enjoyed singing for many years and sang in the men's chorus in high school. "There's [a song] for every circumstance and situation, and it never fails to boost morale," McGiffin said.

DISCRIMINATION

[Clicks on a Job Site Reveal Hiring Discrimination](#) [Franziska Kohler, *Futurity*, 27 January 2021]

Scientists have leveraged big data from recruitment platforms and machine learning to study hiring discrimination. They find that discrimination against immigrants depends, among other things, on the time of day, and that both men and women face discrimination. This type of discrimination violates the principle of equal opportunities. For those affected, this may have long-term disadvantages, such as longer unemployment or lower wages. That's why it is crucial

to understand who experiences discrimination and why. Over 10 months, the researchers analyzed which candidates were contacted for an interview, and how recruiters made their selection. Their novel approach—which has significant advantages over conventional methods of studying discrimination—let them determine how the origin or gender of a candidate influenced the likelihood of being contacted. The [study](#) also finds that both men and women face discrimination. Given equal qualifications, women are mainly discriminated against in typical male professions, and men in typical female professions.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Female workers allege harassment at Kansas Highway Patrol](#) [*The Associated Press*, 1 February 2021]

Six women sued top officials of the Kansas Highway Patrol, alleging they discriminated against female employees and created a hostile work environment. The former and current employees contend in a federal lawsuit filed Friday that the agency violated federal anti-discrimination law, the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment and their First Amendment speech rights, the Topeka Capital-Journal [reported](#). Among the plaintiffs is the former top human resources officer at the agency, Susan Pfannenstiel, who alleges she experienced inappropriate behavior herself and also suffered retribution for helping other women report their allegations.

[Florida says it will enforce ruling on LGBTQ+ civil rights](#) [Brooke Baitinger, *The South Florida Sun Sentinel*, (Ft Lauderdale, Fla.), 4 February 2021]

They've been fighting for more than two decades, and now LGBTQ people in every corner of Florida will have the same civil rights protections their peers enjoy in the more liberal pockets of the state. Florida's Commission on Human Relations (FCHR), the state's civil rights enforcement agency, says it will enforce a Supreme Court ruling that deemed discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation illegal. The decision means the FCHR will investigate claims of anti-LGBTQ discrimination—giving an estimated 880,000 LGBTQ people in Florida a path to pursue justice for the first time. The FCHR said it will be watching for guidance from its federal partners, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. "The FCHR is committed to investigating housing violations based upon sex discrimination due to non-conformity with gender stereotypes," the agency wrote in a statement.

[Justice Department Drops Yale University Admissions Lawsuit](#) [Melissa Korn and Sadie Gurman, *The Wall Street Journal*, 3 February 2021]

The Justice Department withdrew a lawsuit that alleged Yale University violated federal civil-rights law by discriminating against White and Asian-American undergraduate applicants, the latest indication that the Biden administration is shifting the federal government's stance on civil-rights enforcement from that of the Trump administration. The Justice Department's underlying investigation into whether Yale is complying with federal law remains open. The Justice Department first opened an investigation into Yale's undergraduate admission policies in 2018, based on a complaint filed in 2016 with the Justice and Education departments by a group of Asian-American organizations, led by the Asian American Coalition for Education.

[New York governor signs bill to repeal “walking while trans” ban](#) [Lauren del Valle, CNN, 2 February 2021]

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a bill Tuesday repealing a controversial statute commonly known as the “walking while trans” ban. Both houses of the New York Legislature voted Tuesday to pass the bill that repeals a 1976 penal law statute aimed at prohibiting loitering for the purpose of prostitution, but which ultimately led to years of law enforcement discrimination against trans people of color. The statute “led to arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement by targeting women from marginalized groups that are at high risk for sex trafficking and other exploitation and abuse,” according to the sponsor memo from state Sen. Brad Hoylman. The statute allowed police to “stop-and-frisk trans women of color and other marginalized groups for simply walking down the street,” Hoylman said in a news release.

DIVERSITY

[ACLU, for first time, elects Black person as its president](#) [David Crary, *The Associated Press*, 1 February 2021]

Deborah Archer, a professor at New York University School of Law with expertise in civil rights and racial justice, has become the first Black person in the 101-year history of the American Civil Liberties Union to be elected its president. As the ACLU’s eighth president since 1920, Archer will act as chair of its board of the directors, overseeing organizational matters and the setting of civil liberties policies. The fight against racial injustice is expected to be a top priority.

[Advocates hope higher ed shift from standardized tests will aid diversity, but it’s no cure-all](#) [Alina Tugend, *The Hechinger Report*, 27 January 2021]

When Worcester Polytechnic Institute wanted to attract more Black, Hispanic and female students, it became the first nationally ranked science university to make the ACT and SAT standardized tests optional for admission. Eliminating the test requirement can raise the numbers of low-income and first-generation students and those from underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups without affecting graduation rates, according to research conducted in collaboration with the National Association for College Admission Counseling, or NACAC. And White and well-off students from better-resourced high schools and with greater access to private tutoring score better on these tests, according to ACT and the College Board—which administers the SAT—themselves. That’s why the rush by universities and colleges to make the SAT and ACT optional during the pandemic has given hope to advocates for more diversity on campus.

[At least 65% of Americans say Black Americans will gain influence under Biden, Pew Research survey finds](#) [Hollie Silverman, CNN, 2 February 2021]

A majority of Americans in a new survey believe Black people, women, as well as gay and lesbian people will gain influence during Joe Biden’s presidency. The administration has already prioritized diversity and inclusion with the most racially diverse cabinet in U.S. history. The new administration has also made issues such as discrimination against the LGBTQ community a top priority in its first few days by signing an executive order to lift the Trump-era ban on transgender members of the U.S. military. The [report released Tuesday](#) by the Pew Research

Center was based on an online survey of 5,360 adults, who are members of Pew's American Trends Panel, and was conducted from January 8 to 12.

[Black women are leading the Congressional Black Caucus' organizations and efforts](#) [Errin Hayes, *The 19th*, 2 February 2021]

As the Congressional Black Caucus marks its 50th anniversary, four Black women are leading the group and its three auxiliary organizations. New CBC Chair Rep. Joyce Beatty, CBC Foundation Executive Director Tonya Veasey, CBC PAC Executive Director Yolonda Addison, and CBC Institute Executive Director Vanessa Griddine-Jones are shaping the caucus' legislative and political priorities amid a national reckoning aimed at addressing racial inequality. They all say they are among the Black women at the forefront of these issues. "Black women are just tired of being behind the scenes and doing all the work and not getting all the credit," Addison said. "They say if you want something done, ask a busy person. ... Black women are the busiest people I know, and we're finally being seen for getting things done."

[Senate confirms Alejandro Mayorkas to lead Homeland Security and Pete Buttigieg as transportation secretary](#) [Clare Foran and Ted Barrett, *CNN*, 2 February 2021]

The Senate voted Tuesday to confirm Alejandro Mayorkas as Homeland Security secretary, the first Latino and immigrant to serve at the helm of the department. His confirmation will fill a critical role in the new administration and he'll be expected to swiftly begin rolling back Trump administration immigration policies while juggling the response to a global pandemic and national security threats, along with restoring a department that's been rattled by leadership turnover and vacancies in recent years. The Senate also voted Tuesday to confirm Pete Buttigieg as transportation secretary, making him the first Senate-confirmed LGBTQ Cabinet secretary. Buttigieg's confirmation elevates the former South Bend, Indiana, mayor and 2020 Democratic presidential candidate to a top post in the federal government.

[USAF Intelligence, Cyber Branch Preps Diversity Strategy](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Magazine*, 2 February 2021]

The Air Force's intelligence and cyber operations branch will soon roll out a diversity and inclusion strategy to strengthen its workforce and the quality of their analyses. "Diversity, equity, inclusion are critical to our success going forward. It's a national security imperative; it's in the [Director of National Intelligence's] principles for professional ethics," Lt. Gen. Mary F. O'Brien, deputy chief of staff for intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and cyber effects operations, said at a Feb. 2 event hosted by the Intelligence National Security Alliance. O'Brien, who has served as a top general officer on the Air Force's Women's Initiative Team that pushes for gender equity in the service, said she's channeling that experience into a new diversity and inclusion office focused on the ISR and cyber community. A colonel-select and a senior master sergeant manage that work and directly report to O'Brien.

[Women Outnumber Men in The Nevada Legislature. What Difference Does it Make?](#) [Barbara Rodriguez, *The 19th*, 31 January 2021]

Nevada has the only legislature with more women than men in both chambers. Some academics are studying what that representation means. Pat Spearman has no doubt that women make a big

difference at the Nevada legislature. The Democratic state senator pointed to a 2019 debate over a bill that would allow people to access a year's worth of birth control instead of a 30-day supply, something advocates say helps people avoid unintended pregnancy. Spearman said she was surprised when male legislators in the room suggested that people with that much birth control would sell the medication. "Why would they sell them if they need them?" Spearman said she asked. Some Nevada lawmakers say the presence of so many women as peers has changed the kind of bills that have passed. That includes polices to expand protections for pregnant workers, paid sick leave and abortion access; lawmakers in the most recent session debated several bills to help victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking.

HUMAN RELATIONS

[Social fitness can impact overall health and readiness](#) [Military Health System Communications Office, *Health.mil*, 28 January 2021]

Social fitness, or our ability to engage with our social environment effectively and constructively, is an important aspect of holistic health. Simply put, the relationships we have, build, and maintain with people at home, in the workplace, and in our communities influence our general health and performance. For the Department of Defense, social fitness is an important component of the [Total Force Fitness](#) multi-domain program to understand, assess, and maintain everything that affects service members' readiness and ability to meet mission requirements. The program seeks to measurably improve the entire U.S. military's human performance optimization by addressing the eight domains of fitness: Social, physical, financial, ideological and spiritual, mental and dental preventive care, environmental, nutritional, and psychological.

MISCELLANEOUS

[DOD Makes Masks Mandatory on All U.S. Military Installations](#) [Jennifer-Leigh Oprihory and Brian W. Everstine, *Air Force Magazine*, 4 February 2021]

The Defense Department on Feb. 4 issued an order requiring all service members and civilians on U.S. military installations—whether indoors or outdoors—to wear a mask to try to limit the spread of COVID-19, with limited exceptions. However, vaccines against the new coronavirus remain voluntary, and a number of military family members have told Blue Star Families they don't plan on getting a shot. The new order, which Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III announced in a [memorandum](#) to senior Pentagon leaders, combatant commanders, and DOD agencies, rescinds looser guidance from last spring, and means masks have to be on even when outside or socially distanced.

[Do you have the right stuff for leadership? Air Force rolls out new assessment tool](#) [Stephen Losey, *Air Force Times*, 3 February 2021]

The Air Force on Tuesday announced a new addition to the Airman Comprehensive Assessment feedback tool that seeks to measure the leadership qualities of most officers and senior noncommissioned officers. The 10 airman leadership qualities focus on airmen's character and competence, and will be part of the feedback tools for second lieutenants through colonels, and master sergeants, senior master sergeants and chief master sergeants, the Air Force said in a

release. *“The adjustments toward these new leadership qualities are imperative to shift the way we measure, incentivize and reward the airmen we need for the future,”* Chief of Staff Gen. Charles “CQ” Brown said in the release. *“We must have evaluation systems that provide constructive feedback, evaluate against qualities we value, and highlight future potential.”* This form will be voluntary at first, the Air Force said, but leaders will be encouraged to use it as much as is practical.

[The “Father of the Tuskegee Airmen” Led the Fight Against Fascism in Africa](#) [Blake Stilwell, *Military.com*, 4 February 2021]

In 1935, fascism was on the rise in Europe and Asia, but the world had not yet had to fight its territorial expansion on a global scale. Adolf Hitler had been elected as chancellor of Germany just two years prior, and Hideki Tojo was still six years away from bringing the United States into World War II. But Benito Mussolini, who had been in power in Italy since 1922, was bent on finally conquering Ethiopia. It would erase Italy’s failure at the 1896 Battle of Adwa that secured Ethiopia’s independence and kept it from becoming a European colony while establishing Italy as a major world power. Leading Ethiopia’s young air force was African American pilot John Robinson, a young Black activist and aviation enthusiast who would blaze a trail of Black men flying into combat against fascist dictators.

[Mobile vet centers deployed at Capitol to provide mental health resources for siege survivors, responders](#) [Howard Altman, *Military Times*, 2 February 2021]

To help those who responded to the deadly Jan. 6 Capitol siege cope with the unseen wounds of that attack, the Department of Veterans Affairs is moving two of its mobile vet centers onto Capitol Hill. They have been deployed to “ensure those impacted by the events of Jan. 6th can access support and mental health resources needed during this critical time,” according to a joint statement released Tuesday morning by House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano, D-Calif., acting VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Richard Stone, and acting U.S. Capitol Police Chief Yogananda D. Pittman. *The mobile vet centers will provide “free, easily accessible mental health resources and counseling to the U.S. Capitol Police, members of the National Guard, and any congressional staff in crisis,”* the statement said.

[Stutthof camp: Woman, 95, accused of aiding Nazi mass murder](#) [BBC News, 5 February 2021]

The woman, named in media as Irmgard F and who lives in a care home in Pinneberg near Hamburg, is charged in relation to “more than 10,000 cases”. She was secretary to the SS commandant of Stutthof, a brutal camp near modern-day Gdansk, where about 65,000 prisoners died during World War Two. It is unclear if she will face trial. A court for juveniles in Schleswig-Holstein now has to decide whether the ex-secretary’s case should go to trial. At the time of the crimes she was under 21, so counted as a minor. She has claimed that she never knew people were being gassed in the camp. It is an unusual case, as very few women have ever been tried for Nazi camp atrocities, and most cases have focused on camp guards, not secretaries, the BBC’s Damien McGuinness reports from Berlin. The indictment says she “assisted those responsible at the camp in the systematic killing of Jewish prisoners, Polish partisans and Soviet Russian prisoners of war, in her function as a stenographer and secretary to the camp commandant” between June 1943 and April 1945.

MISCONDUCT

[Air Force major charged with sexually assaulting, buying alcohol for junior airmen](#) [David Roza, *Task & Purpose*, 2 February 2021]

An Air Force officer who was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School will face a general court-martial this spring on charges of dereliction of duty, prohibited activities with a trainee, and sexual assault, according to the Air Force JAG Corps' online docket. Maj. Elaine C. Christian, a force support officer, allegedly groped "a specially protected junior member of the armed forces" in the fall of 2019, according to a charge sheet provided to Task & Purpose by the Air Force Academy. Force support officers like Christian specialize in personnel management, which could mean anything from developing education programs for airmen to handling promotion and separation paperwork. She has served in the Air Force since 2006, according to the Air Force Personnel Center.

[Ohio Army National Guard chaplain's social posts "are simply disgraceful, despicable and repulsive;" Accuses military leaders of treason](#) [Danae King, *The Columbus Dispatch*, (Columbus, Ohio), 20 January 2021]

In a Facebook post, a chaplain and lieutenant in the Ohio Army National Guard called a letter from the Joint Chiefs of Staff "seditious." Chris Boyd, of Montpelier in northwest Ohio, posted a letter sent by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Jan. 12 on his Facebook page and called the letter "deceptively seditious," according to screenshots provided by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation. He added that the Joint Chiefs are scared or "in bed with the left." The Military Religious Freedom Foundation, a civil rights organization based in New Mexico but chartered in Washington, D.C., was alerted to Boyd's posts by an anonymous Army captain, and on Friday afternoon sent a letter to Ohio Adjutant General John C. Harris asking for an investigation of Boyd.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

RACISM

[The Black girl who defied segregation, inspiring MLK and Jackie Robinson](#) [Martin Dobrow, *The Washington Post*, 1 February 2021]

Audrey Nell Edwards was still a baby when Jackie Robinson broke Major League Baseball's color line in 1947. In 1963, when the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. proclaimed that it was time to "make real the promises of democracy," Audrey Nell was a 16-year-old, languishing in a cell in the St. Johns County Jail in St. Augustine, Fla. Within a year, both civil rights icons would meet and be inspired by Audrey Nell, a spunky warrior for civil rights, part of a group known as the "St. Augustine Four." They were young people with uncommon courage. They spoke up. They spoke out. They broke color lines and leaned hard against the arc of the moral universe—all at great personal cost. Now, more than a half-century after King's assassination, and nearly as long since Robinson's untimely death, Audrey Nell Edwards Hamilton is the last surviving member of the St. Augustine Four. Her life is barely visible, and her sacrifices are largely forgotten.

[Maine lawmaker wants consideration of racial impact of bills](#) [David Sharp, *The Associated Press*, 3 February 2021]

A proposal to require some future legislation to include a racial impact statement is the first step in recognizing that “many of our laws have produced disproportionate outcomes” for racial minorities, the bill’s sponsor said Wednesday. Assistant Majority Leader Rachel Talbot Ross, D-Portland, is sponsoring the bill that creates a path for lawmakers to join counterparts in about a half-dozen other states in considering racial impacts of legislation. The goal is to provide “impartial, objective and nonpartisan information to inform” the legislative process, said Talbot Ross, who’s the state’s first Black lawmaker to serve in legislative leadership. The racial impact statement would be similar to fiscal impact statements already required of bills and would provide an analysis of the impact of the proposed legislation on different racial groups to highlight potential adverse consequences, supporters said.

[USS Lake Champlain crew member admits to hanging a noose at a Black sailor’s bunk](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 3 February 2021]

A sailor from the cruiser USS Lake Champlain has admitted to hanging what appeared to be a noose at the rack of a Black crew member aboard the ship, a Navy official said. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service began an investigation after the noose appeared on Jan. 26, the official said. The ship was kept in port as investigators conducted extensive interviews with the crew members. Based on a tip they interviewed a sailor who ultimately admitted to placing the noose at the rack. That sailor has been removed from the ship, which has been underway since Feb. 1, the official said. The suspect in the case does not have a history of making racist statements but nothing can be ruled out as the NCIS investigation is ongoing.

[Vaccine skepticism lurks in town famous for syphilis study](#) [Jay Reeves, *The Associated Press*, 1 February 2021]

The coronavirus immunization campaign is off to a shaky start in Tuskegee and other parts of Macon County. Area leaders point to a resistance among residents spurred by a distrust of government promises and decades of failed health programs. Many people in this city of 8,500 have relatives who were subjected to unethical government experimentation during the syphilis study. Tuskegee is not a complete outlier. A recent survey conducted by the communications firm Edelman revealed that as of November, only 59% of people in the U.S. were willing to get vaccinated within a year with just 33% happy to do so as soon as possible. A December survey showed 40% of Black people nationwide said they wouldn’t get the coronavirus vaccine. Such hesitancy is more entrenched than among White people, even though Black Americans have been hit disproportionately hard by the virus.

[VMI could alter honor court over racial disparity concerns](#) [The Associated Press, 29 January 2021]

The interim superintendent for the Virginia Military Institute said he’s considering changes to its student-run justice system over concerns that it expels Black students at a disproportionately high rate. The Washington Post reported Friday that retired Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins is reviewing the system following the newspaper’s reporting and concerns voiced by a vocal group of prominent VMI graduates. Wins was appointed VMI’s first Black leader amid a state-ordered investigation

into racism at the nation's oldest state-supported military college. He told the Post that he's considering a requirement that student juries must be unanimous before convicting a cadet. He's also considering barring the student-run court from naming an expelled cadet during "drum-out" ceremonies to the entire 1,700-member corps.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

RELIGION

[Letter to the editor: Countering Army chaplain's views on transgender community](#) [Chaplain (Major) Rebecca A. Ammons, *Army Times*, 4 February 2021] [COMMENTARY]

I want to thank you for writing your [story](#) about CH (MAJ) Calvert for the Army Times [re: Chaplain's Facebook post denigrating transgender troops under investigation by Army]. It is important to inform people in the military of some of the real issues and views some chaplains in the corps really hold—not just the ones they publicly ascribe to—which inform and influence the way they do business and to whom and how they care for our nation's finest. While it is upsetting that the transgender community has been publicly compared to someone with mental illness, this is hardly the first time we have heard that, and we have endured much worse. I believe there are several issues related to CH Calvert's views and the way he espouses them, and points to what I and many others feel is a fundamental issue in the Army Chaplain Corps. As an Army chaplain, first and foremost, I must be able to hold my personal opinions and beliefs at bay when they come into conflict with another's—most significantly when someone comes to me seeking counsel.

[Pope, Muslim leader celebrate fraternity anniversary](#) [Nicole Winfield, *The Associated Press*, 4 February 2021]

Pope Francis and a top Sunni Muslim came together virtually Thursday to reinforce a message of fraternity, pressing forward with a broad-based Christian-Muslim peace initiative ahead of Francis' planned trip to Iraq next month. Thursday marked the first-ever International Day of Human Fraternity, a U.N.-designated celebration of interfaith and multicultural understanding inspired by a landmark document signed on Feb. 4, 2019 in Abu Dhabi by Francis and Sheikh Ahmad al-Tayyeb, the imam of the Al-Azhar center for Sunni learning in Cairo. The document called for greater mutual understanding and solidarity to confront the problems facing the world. With the backing of the United Arab Emirates, the initiative has gone on to create a high-level commission to spread the message and plans are under way to build in Abu Dhabi a center with a synagogue, mosque and church in a tangible display of interfaith coexistence and sharing.

[Sanctuary movement leaders sue U.S., claiming religious rights violated](#) [Pamela Manson, *United Press International*, 1 February 2021]

Four women who came to the United States seeking asylum from persecution in their home countries allege in a federal lawsuit that Trump administration officials targeted them with exorbitant civil fines because they took sanctuary in churches and spoke out against "unjust and punitive" deportation orders. The plaintiffs allege violations of their First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and association and the free exercise of religion; the Eighth Amendment right to be free of excessive fines; and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which prohibits the federal government from substantially burdening a person's exercise of religion. They also claim

retaliation for exercising their free speech and association rights. The plaintiffs believe they have a religious duty “to welcome the stranger (Matthew 25:35 ‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me’) and to participate collectively to prevent vulnerable human beings and their families from being sent back to countries and conditions that would threaten their lives or well-being,” the suit says.

[Spirituality: Chaplains play important role in overall fitness](#) [Military Health System Communications Office, *Health.mil*, 27 January 2021]

Service members’ personal beliefs and practices help strengthen their ties to hope, meaning, and purpose. Such ideological and spiritual forces play an extremely important role in Total Force Fitness and the ability to persist when confronting adverse situations. “The existence of spiritual strength and faith, whatever that is for the individual, provides the gasoline for the engine, to keep people moving forward in the fight,” said Navy Capt. Raymond Houk, chaplain for Navy Medicine. “In other words, it’s that tenacity, that grit that keeps people engaged and moving forward,” Houk said. “In Defense Health Agency terms, it’s what keeps them taking care of their patients and keeping themselves ready should they be called upon to go to war.” Army Lt. Col. Linda Lesane, chief of the Department of Ministry and Pastoral Care at William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas, explained that every element of a service member’s life is in some way influenced by faith or spirituality.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

SEXISM

[China promotes education drive to make boys more “manly”](#) [Kerry Allen, *BBC News*, 4 February 2021]

A notice from China’s education ministry has caused a stir after it suggested young Chinese men had become too “feminine”. The message has been criticised as sexist by many online users—but some say China’s male celebrities are partly to blame. For a while China’s government has signaled concern that the country’s most popular male role models are no longer strong, athletic figures like “army heroes”. Even President Xi Jinping, a well-known football enthusiast, has long been seeking to cultivate better sports stars. So last week, the education ministry [issued a notice](#) with a title that left no doubt about its ultimate goal. The Proposal to Prevent the Feminisation of Male Adolescents called on schools to fully reform their offerings on physical education and strengthen their recruitment of teachers. The overwhelming majority of Chinese reaction to the notice has been negative. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese have taken to social media to voice their anger, with many branding the government’s message sexist.

[These Marines Devoted Their Lives to the Corps. Then They Were Singled Out for Having Children](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 31 January 2021]

Gunnery Sgt. Julianna Pinder’s 16-year Marine Corps career is about to come to an end—and not by choice. Her reenlistment request was denied twice last year over an adverse 2018 fitness report she received after her second daughter was born. As a staff sergeant based in Okinawa, Japan, Pinder was working to drop her pregnancy weight after her daughter’s 2016 birth. But at four months old, Pinder’s daughter Lillianna was significantly smaller than other babies her age.

Pinder's attention quickly shifted from dropping enough weight to keep her career on track to doing what was needed to keep her daughter healthy. The pediatrician recommended that Pinder breastfeed her baby for at least a year, and she was told to switch to a high-calorie diet and limit her exercise to low-impact options to produce enough milk. Pinder said her leaders at the time knew about the health issues her child was facing. They could have granted her a waiver to give her more time to get back into fighting weight standards after addressing her baby's needs. Instead, she was put on the Body Composition Program, or the BCP—an assignment many in the Marine Corps view as a career killer.

[Tokyo Olympics chief retracts sexist comments, refuses to resign](#) [Sakura Murakami, *Reuters*, 4 February 2021]

Tokyo Olympics chief Yoshiro Mori apologised on Thursday for sexist comments about women talking too much, but said he would not resign, as his remarks sparked a storm of criticism on social media and risked tainting public opinion of the Games. Mori, 83, apologised at a hastily called news conference, but when pressed on whether he really thought women talked too much, he said: "I don't listen to women that much lately so I don't know". Mori, whose term as prime minister was marked by a string of gaffes and blunders, made the comments at a Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC) board of trustees meeting this week. "If we increase the number of female board members, we have to make sure their speaking time is restricted somewhat, they have difficulty finishing, which is annoying," said Mori, according to local media. "We have about seven women at the organising committee but everyone understands their place."

[Women Account For 100% Of Job Losses At The End Of 2020, With Black And Brown Women Hit Hardest](#) [Karen Rouse, *The Gothamist*, 2 February 2021]

Inauguration Day in Washington, D.C. last month signaled great progress for women—especially Black women and Latinas who have traditionally lagged behind men and White women in every marker of success, including wealth and education. But figures released 12 days earlier by the U.S. Department of Labor told a very different story—of the thousands of Black and brown women whose lives have been upended by the pandemic. December's jobs report revealed that men gained 16,000 jobs in December, while women lost 156,000. The nation's total net job loss was 140,000 jobs—all to women, a disproportionately high number of whom were women of color. "These are women who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and continue to be desirous of employment," said Elizabeth Ananet, an economics professor at Barnard College and Columbia University.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[A look inside the complicated assault case the Marine Corps doesn't want anyone talking about](#) [Philip Athey, *Marine Corps Times*, 29 January 2021]

A prosecution's push to silence those working to fight for Marine Cpl. Thae Ohu was struck down by a Marine Corps judge Monday. "I lack sympathy to infringe on constitutional rights," Lt. Col. Michael Zimmerman, the judge in the case, said during a hearing on Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia. Ohu's family says she was an alleged victim of sexual assault by a superior in her chain of command. She later was charged with nine violations of the Uniform Code of

Military Justice, including aggravated assault on an intimate partner and attempted murder, when she allegedly attacked her boyfriend with a knife. She claims the attack was due to trauma from her prior assault. Her case has garnered growing media attention since she was arrested in April 2020—and her lawyers, family and activists say it is shining a light into how the Marine Corps is failing to handle both sexual assault and mental health issues among Marines.

[McDonald's gets approval to sue its ousted CEO, alleging he covered up sexting and inappropriate relationships with subordinates](#) [Kate Taylor, *Insider*, 3 February 2021]

A Delaware judge has approved McDonald's efforts to sue former CEO Steve Easterbrook over allegations the ex-executive covered up sexual relationships with employees. McDonald's sued Easterbrook in August, alleging that the company found new evidence that he covered up sexual relationships with three female employees during his last year leading the company. According to McDonald's, investigators uncovered "dozens of nude, partially nude, or sexually explicit photographs and videos of various women," including three McDonald's employees, on the company's servers. Easterbrook was terminated by McDonald's in November 2019 after an investigation into his relationship with a different McDonald's employee. At the time, McDonald's investigators found evidence that the relationship was sexual but not physical. Easterbrook was terminated and given a severance package worth up to \$57 million.

[Navy drops charges against SEAL accused of sexual assault](#) [Julie Watson, *The Associated Press*, 3 February 2021]

The U.S. Navy on Tuesday dropped sexual assault charges against an enlisted SEAL in a case involving a female sailor at a Fourth of July party in Iraq that had prompted the rare withdrawal of the special operations unit from the Middle East in 2019. Under an agreement accepted by the military court at Navy Base San Diego, Adel A. Enayat pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of assault consummated by battery for biting the sailor's face and grabbing her neck during what his lawyer described as rough, consensual sex. He will immediately serve up to 90 days in the brig. At the special court martial, the judge also reduced his rank of special warfare operator first class by five levels, drastically cutting his pay and benefits, after the masked Enayat wearing his Navy dress uniform said without emotion that he was guilty.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Young men accuse Lincoln Project co-founder of harassment](#) [*The Associated Press*, 31 January 2021]

*The Lincoln Project in a statement on Sunday called co-founder John Weaver, 61, "a predator, a liar, and an abuser" following reports that he repeatedly sent unsolicited and sexually charged messages online to young men, often while suggesting he could help them get work in politics. "The totality of his deceptions are beyond anything any of us could have imagined and we are absolutely shocked and sickened by it," the Lincoln Project, the most prominent "Never Trump" Republican super PAC to emerge during the 45th president's time in the White House, said in its statement. The online magazine *The American Conservative* first reported the sexual harassment allegations earlier this month. Days later, Weaver, a strategist who advised the late Republican Sen. John McCain and former Ohio Gov. John Kasich in their unsuccessful runs for the White*

House, acknowledged in a statement to the web site Axios that he had sent “inappropriate” messages he “viewed as consensual, mutual conversations at the time.”

VETERANS

[Air Force Vet, Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick to Lie in Honor at U.S. Capitol](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 29 January 2021]

*The top leaders in the House and Senate have given approval for the U.S. Capitol Police officer who sustained fatal injuries during the siege at the Capitol earlier this month to lie in the Capitol rotunda as an honor to his service. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., announced Friday that Brian D. Sicknick, a former member of the New Jersey Air National Guard, will lie in honor in the Capitol, a rare recognition typically reserved for members of the federal government who have served their country with distinction. Sicknick will lie in honor, rather than in state, in the Capitol rotunda, because he is a private citizen. Members of the public will be able to pay their respects during this period. Sicknick enlisted in the New Jersey Air National Guard in 1997 and served for six years, spokeswoman Lt. Col. Barbara Brown told *Military.com* Jan. 8.*

[One of the first members of the modern-day Navy SEAL teams has died](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 4 February 2021]

*Harry Beal, one of the first sailors to volunteer for a modern-era Navy SEAL team, died late last month at the age of 90, according to his online [obituary](#) posted at *Legacy.com*. Originally from Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, Beal joined the Navy in 1948 and served as a SEAL from 1962 until 1968, according to the *Associated Press*. During his career as a special operator, he was part of a team that retrieved astronaut John Glenn after his space capsule touched down in the ocean following the Mercury-Atlas 6 space mission in February 1962. His son Mack Beal recalled that the early astronauts would work with SEAL teams to learn how to use breathing apparatuses, but his father never asked to have his picture taken with any of the famous people he met. To Harry Beal, that was all part of the job.*

[Veterans employment discrimination guidance updated](#) [Bradford J. Kelley, *Military Times*, 3 February 2021] [COMMENTARY]

On Nov. 27, 2020, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provided new guidance related to the employment discrimination challenges that face our nation’s veterans. More specifically, the EEOC issued three revised documents that address how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) apply to veteran employees and those employing them. The updated guidance is especially important because post-9/11 veterans have suffered from higher unemployment than other veterans and civilians. Scholars and political leaders have acknowledged that the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and the protracted wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have put many veterans in a perilous employment situation. Even though we have strong laws like ADA and USERRA to protect veterans against employment discrimination, the EEOC’s recent guidance underscores the importance of engaging in targeted outreach to ensure that veterans know about these laws and how to seek enforcement.

[Veterans group launches podcast series for Black History Month on Black veterans and their mental health](#) [Diana Stancy Correll, *Military Times*, 1 February 2021]

*Ellsworth “Tony” Williams, CEO of Veterans Counseling Veterans, has been concerned about the racial unrest the country is facing. That’s why he and his organization are launching a [podcast series](#) for Black History Month to address veterans’ mental health issues through the lens of the Black community. As a result, the series will discuss issues including how PTSD impacts Black veterans and their family members, Black veterans’ experience with military sexual trauma, and research related to Black veterans’ mental health. “I believe understanding is the bridge to empathy,” Williams told *Military Times*. “And that’s what we’re lacking right now—the bridge to empathy.” Altogether, six podcasts will be released to address or feature the following: Black Combat Female Veterans who chose mental health as their second career; Black Veterans and Military Sexual Trauma; Black Combat Veterans who chose mental health as their second career; Black Veterans, their Family and Mental Wellness; Black Veterans and Mental Health Research; Black Veteran Counselors and Mental Health.*