

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 12 FEBRUARY 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

[Biden emphasizes diversity in first visit to Pentagon](#) [Morgan Chalfant and Rebecca Kheel, *The Hill*, 10 February 2021]

President Biden on Wednesday paid tribute to the men and women serving in the U.S. military, pledging to uphold diversity and promising never to politicize their work in his first visit to the Pentagon as commander in chief. Harris and Biden each paid tribute to Black History Month, noting the sacrifices of Black service members. After Biden's speech, they toured the African Americans in Service corridor of the Pentagon along with Austin, who is the first African American man to lead the Defense Department. Biden said that the contributions of Black service members throughout history had helped America move toward "greater equality." "Right now, more than 40 percent of our active duty forces are people of color. It's long past time that the full diversity and full strength of our force is reflected at every level in this department," Biden said.

[DOD has a blind spot for civilian employee sexual assaults](#) [Jessie Bur, *Federal Times*, 9 February 2021]

As the different military services grapple with cases of sexual assault and harassment in the ranks, civilian employees at those services currently stand a lower chance of their cases being noticed by the Department of Defense at large. The DOD cannot accurately say how many of its civilian employees have experienced or perpetrated sexual assault or harassment, a problem of policy and guidance idiosyncrasies that lets certain kinds of cases fall through the cracks, according to a Feb. 9 Government Accountability Office [report](#). In its review of DOD sexual harassment and assault reporting practices, GAO found that the agency not only lacked standardization for the kind of information that was reported to a central repository, but also did not require components to report all kinds of incidents in the same way that military service member incidents must be reported.

[Female Marine Recruits Arrive at San Diego Boot Camp for Historic Coed Training](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 10 February 2021]

Sixty female recruits have arrived at the Marine Corps' all-male training site, where they'll complete boot camp in a coed company for the first time in the base's 100-year history. About 450 men and women will spend the next three months training together at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego as part of Lima Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, said Capt. Martin Harris, a spokesman for the training depot. The Marine Corps traditionally has trained women only at its East Coast training base in Parris Island, South Carolina. Anne Margret Frazier, one of the female recruits, told NBC 7 San Diego that being among the first women to train at the historically all-male base felt empowering. The 19-year-old recruit's father served in the Marine Corps. "I feel like it's ... a sign of change," Frazier told the station.

SPECIAL: EXTREMISM

[Air Force Launching Extremism Review as DOD Mulls Problem](#) [Brian W. Everstine, *Air Force Magazine*, 11 February 2021]

The Department of the Air Force will conduct its own comprehensive assessment of White supremacy and other forms of extremism in its ranks, while senior leaders in the next few weeks begin to discuss the problem with Airmen and Guardians as part of a Pentagon-wide look at the issue. In question are the effects on the force—and the United States at large—of personnel who sympathize with or actively participate in local militia groups, White supremacist organizations, and other extremist factions. In a [letter](#) to Airmen and Guardians on Feb. 11, acting Air Force Secretary John P. Roth, Chief of Space Operations Gen. John W. “Jay” Raymond, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force Roger A. Towberman, and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass said that the vast majority of service members uphold the nation’s laws, policies, and standards.

[Army leaders call out extremism, other “corrosive behavior”](#) [Ellen Mitchell, *The Hill*, 10 February 2021]

The Army’s top civilian leader on Wednesday called on the force to combat “corrosive behavior” including discrimination, extremist views and sexual harassment. “Corrosive behavior such as discrimination, extremism and sexual harassment or assault have no place in our formations and tear at the fabric of the Army,” acting Army Secretary John Whitley said in a prerecorded message to the service. “To maintain our combat effectiveness and remain the best Army in the world, we must live the Army values each and every day,” he added. Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston, the most senior enlisted member of the service, released his own statement on Wednesday calling on leaders to broach the topic with those under them. “Have you talked to your teams about extremism? My goal is that everyone trusts their leaders and teammates enough to have these difficult conversations and confront these issues together,” Grinston tweeted.

[Army Special Operations School Drops “III” Logo Adopted by Extremist Group](#) [Matthew Cox, *Military.com*, 9 February 2021]

An element of Army Special Operations Command has distanced itself from a unit logo that has been adopted by a domestic extremist group. Just last week, the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School advised all of its personnel to avoid using more than a dozen symbols linked by law enforcement to extremist activity. One, featuring a Roman numeral “III” surrounded by a circle of stars, is now the symbol of the Three Percenters, a “militia movement/paramilitary group with members who adhere to a far-right/libertarian ideology with a primary focus on firearms ownership right and opposition to expansive U.S. federal government authority,” according to a JFK SWCS slide briefing. The image had been part of the long-time unofficial symbol of Trauma 3, an 18-month, special operations medical course focused on tactical combat casualty care.

[Exclusive: Navy CNO On Rooting Out Extremists](#) [Paul McLeary, *Breaking Defense*, 5 February 2021]

Following Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's order to military leaders to identify and confront hate groups operating within the ranks, the Navy's top admiral says he's focused on not only rooting out extremists, but finding ways to keep them from joining in the first place. "We absolutely have to understand those within our ranks that are involved in those organized activities, as well as take further actions to stem the accession of people that belong to those kinds of groups," he told Breaking Defense in his first comments on Austin's new marching orders, which include a 60-day stand-down to discuss the issue across the services. The issue of neo-Nazi, far-right and other racist hate groups working and recruiting inside the military has increasingly alarmed the Pentagon, backed by a Military Times poll last year in which one in three active-duty service members who responded reporting they have "personally witnessed examples of White nationalism or ideological-driven racism within the ranks in recent months," an increase from the previous year's survey.

[Keep White Supremacists Out of the Military by Never Letting Them In](#) [Chris Marvin, *Military.com*, 5 February 2021] [OPINION]

The military has recently come under fire as a harbor for violent extremists. According to Military Times, more than one-third of active service members have witnessed White nationalism or ideological-driven racism inside the military. While the military has taken steps meant to root out White supremacists from its ranks, such as prohibiting military personnel from "advocating supremacist, extremist or criminal gang doctrine, ideology or causes," military leaders must also step back and reexamine the services' recruiting and initial training processes to prevent those who espouse any form of hatred from joining. What military recruiting has not figured out yet—or at least has not implemented—is how to deny initial entry for recruits who show signs of hate-based extremism. Thus, short of a criminal incident in a recruit's past, an avowed White supremacist would face little friction enlisting.

[The Military Doesn't Bar Troops from Being Members of Hate Groups. That Could Change](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 6 February 2021]

A nearly decade-old Defense Department order that prohibits troops from actively participating in gangs or hate groups—but doesn't forbid them from being members—could soon get an update. A 2012 Pentagon policy on handling dissident and protest activities among military personnel conspicuously doesn't ban troops from being members of organizations that advocate supremacist, extremist or criminal gang ideologies. What is prohibited, according to the order, is "active participation" in the groups. That could change, the top Pentagon spokesman said on Friday, as defense officials take on the issue of extremism in the ranks. "Membership is not considered inconsistent with service in the military," John Kirby told reporters. "It is really about what you do with that membership. I'm not going to be predictive one way or the other about where this discussion is going, but I think membership in these groups is certainly something that I would expect [the defense secretary and Joint Chiefs] to look at."

[The Navy has no idea how many sailors it has booted for extremist activity](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Navy Times*, 11 February 2021]

The U.S. Navy has a regulation for everything, it sometimes seems, and kicking enlisted sailors out for "supremacist or extremist conduct" is no exception. But the sea service has no idea how

many sailors it has actually booted under that reg because it doesn't track such violations. News of this knowledge gap comes as the Pentagon works to assess supremacist extremism in the ranks following the Jan. 6 Capitol attack. Section 1910-160 of the Naval Military Personnel Manual, known in mil-speak as MILPERSMAN, covers "separation by reason of supremacist or extremist conduct" and lays out the circumstances under which a sailor should be separated. "Members must be processed following disciplinary or administrative action for any substantiated incident of serious misconduct resulting from participation in supremacist or extremist activities," the regulation states. But when Navy Times filed a Freedom of Information Act request last month seeking records for sailors separated under this supremacist and extremist regulation, Navy Personnel Command officials admitted that they don't track how many sailors are separated under that or any MILPERSMAN section.

[Navy officials address 2 racist incidents on West Coast](#) [Lolita C. Baldor, *The Associated Press*, 10 February 2021]

Senior U.S. Navy commanders met with sailors on ships on the West Coast Monday and Tuesday, after two recent racist incidents triggered one of the first military stand-downs to address extremism in the ranks. The meetings came after a noose was found on one ship, and hate speech was found written on a wall on another ship. But the discussions with sailors and admonishments by leadership were spurred by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's recent orders for all military commanders to meet with troops in the next 60 days to talk about extremism and racism. "We cannot be under any illusions that extremist behaviors do not exist in our Navy," Adm. Mike Gilday, chief of naval operations, said in a message to the force. "We must better understand the scope of the problem, get after this issue, and eliminate conduct that is driven by extremist beliefs. No doubt, this is a leadership issue. We will own this."

[Pentagon: Extremist groups recruit from military](#) [Ellen Mitchell, *The Hill*, 8 February 2021]

Extremist groups "very aggressively recruit" military service members to leave the ranks, the Defense Department's top spokesman said Monday. "Some of these groups are very organized. They very aggressively recruit soon-to-be veterans," spokesman John Kirby told reporters at the Pentagon. Veterans are a major recruitment pool for far-right militia movements due to their experience with weapons, organization and leadership skills. Pentagon leaders have long struggled with rooting out such thinking in the military and preventing service members from entering extremist groups, though the issue came to the forefront after the Jan. 6 breach of the U.S. Capitol by supporters loyal to former President Trump. Nearly 1 in 5 people charged in the insurrection were either active-duty service members or veterans, according to an analysis based on court cases.

[SECDEF stand down on extremism not meant to be panacea, says Pentagon spokesman](#) [Todd South, *Military Times*, 8 February 2021]

Two major initiatives of the new defense secretary are advancing as the Pentagon head steers the department in his effort to tackle major personnel problems—extremism in the ranks and sexual harassment. Speaking with reporters Monday, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby acknowledged that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's memo to the services calling for 60-day stand down to address extremism was not designed to be a panacea. "This is an opportunity for leadership to

listen to the men and women they lead,” Kirby told reporters. “This is just a step in what the secretary believes will be very deliberate process to try and tackle this problem. He understands a one-day stand down does not solve anything. It might bring to light concerns and experience that he might not be aware of.”

[Special operations training center warns soldiers of symbols co-opted by extremists](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 10 February 2021]

The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School shared an infographic in recent weeks to familiarize leaders with some new extremist symbols after one of their medical courses had to change its logo because it was nearly identical to imagery used by an anti-government militia movement. The initiative isn’t focused on official Army logos, which go through a formal review process, according to Col. Matt Gomlak, JFK SWCS’ chief of staff. Instead, leaders are trying to educate soldiers on what imagery to avoid when they craft the type of informal symbols made by special operations teams for T-shirts or patches. “We have a culture of small unit esprit de corps, and part of that culture involves building logos that help team cohesion,” Gomlak said over the telephone Wednesday. “The fact is, those symbols are patriotic in nature and what we realized ... in our informal investigation into it, is that extremist organizations are also migrating toward this ‘patriotic symbology.’”

CULTURE

[The Air Force’s top enlisted leader opens up about her recent Facebook firestorms](#) [David Roza, *Task & Purpose*, 9 February 2021]

The Air Force’s top enlisted leader gave her side on a series of social media comments that ignited a wave of rage-filled posts directed at her from airmen on Facebook and Reddit. Specifically, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne Bass apologized for posting an article on her Facebook page late last month that appeared to judge an Air Force pararescueman unfairly. However, she said the number of insulting, disrespectful comments that cropped up against her and the airmen involved was unwarranted, inappropriate, and could even pose a national security risk. “As we focus on our culture, particularly concerning respect, I ask that every Airman think about what they post, comment on, share and allow themselves be influenced by,” the chief said in an email to Task & Purpose. “We are living in an era of information warfare, where the second and third-order effects of actions online can have lasting repercussions offline. We need every airmen to understand that, and the role they have in it.”

[Alabama university removes Wallace name from building](#) [*The Associated Press*, 8 February 2021]

The University of Alabama at Birmingham has removed the name of four-term governor and presidential candidate George C. Wallace from a campus building over his support of racial segregation. A resolution unanimously approved by trustees Friday said Wallace rose to power by defending racial separation and stoking racial animosity. While noting Wallace’s eventual renouncement of racist policies, the resolution said his name remains a symbol of racial injustice for many. A UAB building that was named after Wallace in 1975 will now be called simply the Physical Education Building. Removing Wallace’s name from the structure “is simply the right

thing to do,” trustee John England Jr. said in a statement. Wallace vowed “segregation forever” at his 1963 inaugural and was paralyzed in an assassination attempt while running for president in 1972. He has a “complex legacy” that includes his apology to the late Rep. John Lewis, who was beaten by Alabama state troopers while trying to march for voting rights in Selma, England said.

[Army’s Revamped ACFT Would Create “Gender-Specific” Promotion Evaluation Categories](#)

[Matthew Cox, *Military.com*, 11 February 2021]

The U.S. Army is evaluating a new version of its gender-neutral Army Combat Fitness Test, one that would likely create “gender-specific” evaluation categories for men and women when it comes time for promotion. The move would back away from the Army’s original plan to have the new six-event test be gender-neutral in all aspects. It’s in recognition of data showing that physiological differences between men and women cause individual scores to differ by 100 points on average by gender, according to an Army official familiar with the effort. The new approach to the ACFT, comes after lawmakers, concerned about fairness, directed the service to conduct an independent review of the test, set to replace the current Army Physical Fitness Test.

[Aunt Jemima finally has a new name](#) [Chauncey Alcorn, *CNN Business*, 9 February 2021]

Quaker Oats is releasing a new name and logo for its “Aunt Jemima” products, finally retiring the racist stereotype that has adorned its pancake mixes and syrups for decades. The name “Aunt Jemima,” long criticized as a racist caricature of a Black woman stemming from slavery, will be replaced with the Pearl Milling Company name and logo on the former brand’s new packaging, according to parent company PepsiCo. “We are starting a new day with Pearl Milling Company,” a PepsiCo spokesperson said. “A new day rooted in the brand’s historic beginnings and its mission to create moments that matter at the breakfast table.” The new brand is scheduled to launch in June, one year after the company announced the change. Aunt Jemima was one of several food brands—including Uncle Ben’s, Cream of Wheat and Mrs. Butterworth’s—to announce redesigns as protests against systemic racism erupted across the United States this past summer.

[Bismarck schools amends tolerance policy on hate symbols](#) [*The Associated Press*, 9 February 2021]

Bismarck Public Schools has updated an existing tolerance policy after a student asked for the Confederate flag to be banned. Marianna Miller, a 16-year-old Black student, earlier told school board members that the flag should be banned because it causes distractions to the learning environment and makes some people feel uncomfortable. Miller cited a recent incident in which a White student wearing a piece of clothing with the Confederate flag was confronted by another White student. Critics have long said the Confederate battle flag is a racist symbol that is flown by the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups. The amended policy allows teachers and staff to be more proactive in prohibiting items that can be disruptive, including clothing, symbols and messages that promote intolerance or hate. The Confederate flag is not mentioned by name.

[Coast Guard honors Black veteran, NFL great Emlen Tunnell](#) [Pat Eaton-Robb, *The Associated Press*, 6 February 2021]

Before he became the first Black player inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, Emlen Tunnell served in the Coast Guard during and after World War II, where he was credited with saving the lives of two shipmates in separate incidents. Now, a Coast Guard cutter and an athletic building on the Coast Guard Academy campus are being named in honor of the former NFL defensive back, who died in 1975, as the service aims to highlight his little-known story and its own efforts to do better when it comes to race and celebrating diversity. “I think it’s important, because you have a teachable moment with young people when you talk about a guy like Emlen Tunnell,” Coast Guard Academy football coach C.C. Grant said. “They need to understand what he did, what he went through and what kind of a person he was.”

[Documentary on Iowa-born World War II Monuments Men leader George Stout now online](#)

[Diana Nollen, *The Gazette*, (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), 6 February 2021]

George Clooney played him in “The Monuments Men” feature film in 2014, but his name was changed to Frank Stokes, so George Stout’s name continues to fly under the radar. His actions, however, continue to change and preserve history. And now his story can reach a worldwide audience in the [documentary](#) “Stout Hearted: George Stout and the Guardians of Art.” It’s the first project by filmmaker Kevin Kelley, 65, and producer Marie Wilkes, 66, of Iowa City, through the couple’s new nonprofit organization, New Mile Media Arts. The 81-minute documentary debuted March 30, 2019, in Stout’s hometown of Winterset, then sold out all three screenings the following week at FilmScene in Iowa City. It has since traveled to 20 film festivals around the world, and now anyone anywhere can see it through the Heritage Broadcasting Service, a subscription video-on-demand platform and subsidiary of The Archaeology Channel.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Gina Carano fired from “Mandalorian” after social media post](#) [The Associated Press, 11 February 2021]

Lucasfilm says Gina Carano is no longer a part of “The Mandalorian” cast after many online called for her firing over a social media post that likened the experience of Jews during the Holocaust to the U.S. political climate. A spokesperson with the production company said in a statement on Wednesday that Carano is not currently employed by Lucasfilm with “no plans for her to be in the future.” “Nevertheless, her social media posts denigrating people based on their cultural and religious identities are abhorrent and unacceptable,” the statement read. Carano fell under heavy criticism after she posted that “Jews were beaten in the streets, not by Nazi soldiers but by their neighbors.... even by children.” The actor continued to say, “Because history is edited, most people today don’t realize that to get to the point where Nazi soldiers could easily round up thousands of Jews, the government first made their own neighbors hate them simply for being Jews. How is that any different from hating someone for their political views?”

[Here’s why Army helicopters have Native American names](#) [Haley Britzky, *Task & Purpose*, 8 February 2021]

Black Hawk. Apache. Comanche. Lakota. Notice anything? The Army’s history of naming its helicopters after Native American tribes and figures stems from an Army regulation made decades ago. The regulation has since been rescinded, but the tradition has carried on over the years. An Army press release posted Wednesday explained the backstory of the U.S. military’s

“long history” with Native Americans—and specifically the American Indian Wars. “But Native Americans also served as some of the fiercest fighters for the United States for more than 200 years,” the release said. “In fact, 32 Native Americans have earned the nation’s highest military award, the Medal of Honor.”

[Lunar New Year celebrations this year aim to help struggling Chinatowns](#) [Victoria Namkung, NBC News, 5 February 2021]

Lunar New Year celebrations usually mean colorful lion dance parades, thumping drumbeats, popping firecrackers and massive feasts with family and friends. While the holiday will certainly look different in the Covid-19 era, wishes for health, wealth and good fortune are louder than ever in America’s struggling Chinatowns. The Year of the Ox begins Feb. 12, and organizations, grassroots groups and volunteers throughout the country are using the Lunar New Year to raise money for Chinatown businesses hit especially hard since the onset of the pandemic. Creative initiatives and virtual events are using art, storytelling, culture and community to highlight the people behind the businesses that make Chinatowns beloved places for countless Asian Americans.

[Marine Recruit’s Boot Camp Death Could Become a TV Series on Hazing](#) [Gina Harkins, Military.com, 8 February 2021]

The Los Angeles-based 101 Studios acquired the article about Marine Corps Recruit Raheel Siddiqui, entertainment news site Deadline reported last week. The article will be used “as source material for a scripted limited series produced by 101 Studios,” according to the outlet. “We feel privileged to have the opportunity to tell this story,” David Glasser, 101 Studios’ CEO, told Deadline. “Raheel’s death was tragic and his family’s loss is immeasurable, but his death has revealed he is not the only victim. We intend to further explore the brutal hazing and torture that has riddled Parris Island for decades and tell the stories of the other victims who have silently suffered.” Siddiqui died at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island in South Carolina just days after arriving to train there. He fell nearly 40 feet to his death in a barracks stairwell, and investigators uncovered troubling examples of misconduct among drill instructors at the recruit depot.

[Native Americans use technology to keep traditions, language alive during pandemic](#) [Sara Reardon, Kaiser Health News, 9 February 2021]

Lawrence Wetsit misses the days when his people would gather by the hundreds and sing the songs that all Assiniboine children are expected to learn by age 15. “We can’t have ceremony without memorizing all of the songs, songs galore,” he said. “We’re not supposed to record them: We have to be there. And when that doesn’t happen in my grandchildren’s life, they may never catch up.” Such ceremonial gatherings have been scarce over the past year as Native American communities like Wetsit’s isolate to protect their elders during the covid-19 pandemic. Reservations have been hit especially hard, with Native Americans nearly twice as likely to die as White people. Wetsit, a tribal elder and former chair of the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, said his tribe lost one person a day on average to the disease during October and November. The deaths are doubly devastating to Native communities when they strike elders, as they are seen as the keepers of tribal history and culture. Wetsit worries that the combination of

deaths and lockdowns will permanently harm the tribe's ability to share traditional knowledge and oral history.

DISCRIMINATION

[Maori MP ejected from NZ parliament for refusing to wear tie](#) [BBC News, 9 February 2021]

Male MPs can only ask questions in the debating chamber if wearing a tie. Speaker Trevor Mallard twice prevented Rawiri Waititi from asking questions. "It's not about ties, it's about cultural identity mate," Mr Waititi said while exiting the chamber, local media reported. He has called ties "a colonial noose" and wore a greenstone pendant instead. After being stopped for a second time, Mr Waititi continued with his question until Mr Mallard ordered him to leave the chamber. Mr Waititi called Mr Mallard's treatment of him "unconscionable", adding that he was wearing "Maori business attire". Co-leader of the Maori Party, Debbie Ngarewa-Packer, who was herself wearing a tie, pleaded her colleague's case but to no avail.

[A proposed law in California seeks to ban NDAs that prevent workers from speaking up about discrimination and abuse](#) [Harmeet Kaur, CNN, 10 February 2021]

State Sen. Connie Leyva, who was behind California legislation banning non-disclosure agreements in cases of workplace sexual assault and harassment, is now hoping to prevent workers from having to sign such settlements in all cases of discrimination and abuse. The bill, known as the Silenced No More Act, was announced on Monday. It is co-sponsored by Equal Rights Advocates, a San Francisco-based organization that advocates for gender justice in workplaces and schools, and the California Employment Lawyers Association. "It is unacceptable for any employer to try to silence a worker because he or she was a victim of any type of harassment or discrimination—whether due to race, sexual orientation, religion, age or any other characteristic," Leyva said in a statement on Monday. "SB 331 will empower survivors to speak out—if they so wish—so they can hold perpetrators accountable and hopefully prevent abusers from continuing to torment and abuse other workers.

[A student athlete sparked national change after being disqualified from a volleyball match for wearing a hijab](#) [Alaa Elassar, CNN, 6 February 2021]

U.S. high school volleyball players no longer need approval to wear religious head coverings during matches, thanks to a 14-year-old Muslim player who inspired the rule change. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), which sets competition rules for most U.S. high school sports, announced on Thursday the new rule and said it could extend to other sports. Support for the rule change swelled in September after Najah Aqeel, a freshman at Valor Collegiate Prep in Nashville, Tennessee, was disqualified from a volleyball match for wearing a hijab or headscarf. A referee refused to let her play, citing a casebook rule that required athletes who wear a hijab to be granted authorization from the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA). Najah said she did not have authorization, but that it wasn't an issue for previous matches.

[WVa lawmaker faces fresh criticism for discrimination stance](#) [John Raby, The Associated Press, 7 February 2021]

A Republican lawmaker in West Virginia who resigned after posting an anti-gay slur but then was re-elected is drawing fresh criticism for an extended online diatribe opposing protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. House Delegate John Mandt said in a now-deleted Facebook post last week that he opposed the proposal known as the Fairness Act. “Oftentimes evil cloaks itself in pleasant sounding terms, and that is exactly what the Fairness Act does,” Mandt wrote. “There is nothing fair about it.” Republican Delegate Joshua Higginbotham has said he would be the lead sponsor of the legislation, which would ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing and public spaces. Similar protections exist in 22 states and the District of Columbia.

DIVERSITY

[ASL performer steals the show during Super Bowl national anthem](#) [Drew Weisholtz, Today, 7 February 2021]

Eric Church and Jazmine Sullivan weren't the only one who crushed the national anthem prior to Sunday's Super Bowl. Warren “Wawa” Snipe, who is deaf, performed the song in American Sign Language, and won over fans in the process. He also performed during H.E.R.'s rendition of “America the Beautiful.” “Known affectionately by many as Wawa, he has been a trailblazer as an acclaimed recording artist in the Hip Hop world and developed his own niche: Dip Hop, which he defines as ‘Hip Hop through deaf eyes,’ the National Association of the Deaf wrote while announcing he would be performing the anthem, as well as “America the Beautiful.” The viewing audience certainly loved how passionate Snipe was.

[Clark to become first female CEO of U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) [The Associated Press, 10 February 2021]

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has appointed Suzanne Clark as its next CEO, the first woman to hold the position. Clark, who's currently president of the U.S. Chamber, will succeed Thomas J. Donohue. The position is effective on March 11. Clark was named president in June 2019. She serves on the boards of agricultural equipment maker AGCO and TransUnion, a global risk and credit information provider. Donohue served as CEO of the U.S. Chamber for 24 years.

[Documentary Asks: Do “Women In Blue” Police Differently Than Male Officers?](#) [Terry Gross, NPR, 8 February 2021]

In 2014, Eric Garner, an unarmed Black man, was killed on a sidewalk in Staten Island, N.Y., when a male police officer put him in a chokehold during a misdemeanor arrest. Filmmaker Deirdre Fishel, who was working just a few blocks away, remembers asking a female police officer if what had happened to Garner could have happened on her watch. The officer said no—that a female officer would have been more likely to deescalate the situation. “And I just started to think: Do women police differently?” Fishel says. “I really wanted to explore this question of what could women potentially bring to police departments.” Fishel's new PBS documentary [Women in Blue](#), on the Independent Lens series, focuses on four women who worked for the Minneapolis Police Department. Alice White, one of the women profiled, joined the department in 2004. In 2018, she became one of only six Black women on the force to hold the rank of sergeant. White agrees that women tend to police differently than men.

[Ford making N95 masks with clear panels to help the deaf and ease communication](#) [Megan Cerullo, CBS News, 10 February 2021]

Ford is using its engineering prowess to solve a thorny coronavirus problem: Designing a medical-grade face mask that reveals wearers' facial expressions and also allows hearing-impaired people to read lips. The automaker, which began producing personal protective equipment early on in the coronavirus pandemic, has developed a face mask with clear panels that also filters most airborne particles. "In those early days, everyone was learning what it was like to live in a masked environment. We quickly identified that while it's difficult for everybody to wear a mask all day long, for folks suffering from hearing impairment, it's an even bigger challenge," Jim Baumbick, the leader of Ford's PPE manufacturing effort, told CBS MoneyWatch. "That inspired us to think about how we could help serve those people because effectively [with a mask] you're taking away another sense from them that they rely on for communication and connection." Baumbick also sees potential for Ford's clear respirators to improve interactions between doctors and patients as well as teachers and students.

[The Marine Corps now has a physical training handbook for pregnant Marines](#) [Paul Szoldra, Task & Purpose, 10 February 2021]

Marines now have an official handbook to help keep them in shape through pregnancy and beyond. On Monday, the Marine Corps released its pregnancy and postpartum physical training [handbook](#) which features sample workout programs and guidance for Marines and their commanders on how to "maintain fitness levels" during pregnancy and help them get back in shape after giving birth. The handbook is a supplement to a 29-page guidebook the Corps released in March. "The continued success of our warfighting organization is credited to the incredible talents of the individual Marine," the Corps' announcement read, which credited the service's Human Performance Branch with building a "physical training (PT) program to empower a pregnant or postpartum Marine to design her own PT regimen during this natural life event."

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

HUMAN RELATIONS

[Depression and Anxiety Have Skyrocketed During the Pandemic, Study Finds](#) [Kate Elizabeth Queram, Route Fifty, 10 February 2021]

Rates of depression and anxiety have more than doubled in adults across the United States amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to [research](#) published last month in the Journal of Public Health. The study, led by a researcher from New Mexico State University, used an online survey to query nearly 2,000 adults on their mental health status in July. The timing was crucial, researchers said, because questioning participants several months into quarantine gave a better sense of the "mental health impact of sustained isolation and loneliness." Health-care workers, people making less than \$60,000 per year and parents with kids at home were particularly at risk for depression, anxiety and psychological distress, the research suggests.

MISCELLANEOUS

[CDC Report Signals the Agency Will Resume Work on LGBTQ+ Health, Advocates Say](#) [Kate Sosin, *The 19th*, 9 February 2021]

The CDC released a report last week detailing the many health disparities that make lesbian, gay and bisexual Americans particularly vulnerable to complications from coronavirus. Information on transgender people was not included, because the survey turned up too small a sample size of respondents, the CDC noted. Intersex people are also not represented in the dataset. LGBTQ+ organizations have been sounding the alarm for a year about the ways in which queer Americans are being hard-hit by the virus, but until now, federal reports have given little weight to those fears. “This report affirms what LGBTQ advocates and organizations have known all along: that our community is at greater risk and disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 health crisis,” Alphonso David, president of the Human Rights Campaign, said in a statement to the media. “It is critical that health disparities in marginalized communities are fully captured by government data collection so they can be swiftly addressed.”

[Dianne Durham, first Black US women's gymnastics champion, dies](#) [Will Graves, *The Associated Press*, 4 February 2021]

Dianne Durham, the first Black woman to win a USA Gymnastics national championship, died Thursday in Chicago following a short illness, her husband said. She was 52. Durham was a pioneer in American gymnastics. Her victory in the all-around at the 1983 national championships as a teenager was the first by a Black woman in the organization’s history. “I think between her and Mary Lou Retton, they felt they introduced more of a power gymnastics,” said Durham’s husband, Tom Drahozal. “Dianne was a pioneer for Black gymnasts as well ... She paved the way for others.” That group includes Olympic champions Simone Biles and Gabby Douglas as well as Dominique Dawes, a gold medalist on the storied 1996 U.S. Olympic team.

[Holocaust scholars ordered to apologize in Polish libel case](#) [Vanessa Gera and Monika Scislowska, *The Associated Press*, 9 February 2021]

A court in Warsaw ruled Tuesday that two prominent Holocaust researchers must apologize to a woman who claimed her deceased uncle had been slandered in a historical work, citing alleged inaccuracies that suggested the Polish man helped kill Jews during World War II. Lawyers for 81-year-old Filomena Leszczynska argued that the scholars had unfairly harmed her good name and that of her family, violating the honor of the uncle. The family says he saved Jews during the German occupation of Poland during World War II. The case has been closely watched because it was expected to set a precedent in the field of Holocaust research. The ruling was not final, however, and Barbara Engelking, the author of the passage in question, said her side planned to appeal. At stake in the case was Polish national pride, according to the plaintiffs, and according to the defendants, the future independent research into an extremely sensitive issue.

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

[Utah parents drop Black history curriculum opt out request](#) [*The Associated Press*, 8 February 2021]

Parents who sought to opt out their children from learning Black History Month curriculum at a charter school in northern Utah have withdrawn their requests. Maria Montessori Academy in North Ogden experienced a public backlash after announcing plans to make participation

optional, the Standard-Examiner reported Saturday. “We regret that after receiving requests, an opt-out form was sent out concerning activities planned during this month of celebration,” a statement from Academy Director Micah Hirokawa and the school’s board of directors said. School officials said a few families requested the exemption from the instruction, but declined to say how many or specify the reasons given. Betty Sawyer, head of the Ogden chapter of the NAACP, said she contacted the school Saturday morning about the decision to make Black History Month curriculum optional.

[Why the military should educate its members about the Constitution](#) [Chris Dalton, *Military Times*, 10 February 2021] [COMMENTARY]

Every American service member takes an oath to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States.” The oath is not to the country, the government, or the flag. It is to the Constitution. But precious few service members truly know what that oath means because the military makes no effort to teach it. I speak from experience: I served in the Marine Corps for nine years, after which I attended law school, where it took only a few weeks before I had learned infinitely more about the Constitution than I learned during my nine years defending it.

MISCONDUCT

[Government, Naval Academy midshipman’s attorney spar over free speech rights of military members](#) [Heather Mongilio, *The Capital Gazette*, (Annapolis, Md.), 11 February 2021]

The First Amendment protects, in most cases, the free speech of people from government regulation. But when it comes to the military, it gets a bit complicated. That complication will be on display Friday as a judge is likely to decide if a midshipman’s speech threatened the good order and discipline of the Navy or if it is covered by the First Amendment. Judge Ellen Hollander will hear the latest in the case of Midshipman First Class Chase Standage, who is suing the Naval Academy superintendent and former Navy secretary over his expulsion, which is temporarily on hold until Feb. 19. Standage’s attorney, Jeffrey McFadden, argues that the separation violates the midshipman’s First Amendment, as well as his Fifth Amendment rights. Racist speech and inappropriate speech—unless inciting violence—falls under the First Amendment. At least it does for civilians, although only when it is being punished or regulated by the government. The First Amendment does not protect a civilian from being fired by a private company or banned from a social media platform.

[Nearly 90% of Military Hazing Complaints Come from the Marine Corps, Data Shows](#) [Hope Hodge Seck, *Military.com*, 7 February 2021]

A year after a Marine drill instructor was sentenced to 10 years behind bars for hazing Muslim recruits, throwing one in an industrial dryer and figuring in another’s death, data shows that nearly nine out of 10 hazing reports in the military still came from within the Corps. An annual report on hazing within the military, obtained via a public-records request, shows that the Marine Corps, the smallest Defense Department service by population with the exception of Space Force, owns the lion’s share of hazing complaints and substantiated hazing incidents. The data, from fiscal year 2018, shows that 256 of 291 total hazing complaints that year, more than 88%, were made in the Corps, and 91 of 102 substantiated hazing incidents took place among Marines.

RACISM

[8 minority jail officers allegedly kept off Chauvin's guard](#) [Amy Forliti, *The Associated Press*, 9 February 2021]

Eight Minnesota jail guards filed a lawsuit Tuesday alleging racial discrimination after they were barred from working on the floor where a former police officer charged in George Floyd's death was being held. The eight guards, who identify as African American, Hispanic, Pacific Islander American and multiracial, say they were segregated and prevented from doing their jobs at the Ramsey County jail solely because of the color of their skin. They say their supervisor believed they could not be trusted to professionally perform their duties around Derek Chauvin, the White Minneapolis officer who pressed his knee on the neck of Floyd, a handcuffed Black man who was pleading for air. "Segregation has no place in society or the workplace and on May 29, 2020, eight Ramsey County correctional officers experienced blatant discrimination based on their race and skin color," said Lucas Kaster, an attorney for the guards. "Ramsey County's segregation order caused immediate and lasting harm to the correctional officers and the jail environment."

[Air Force must address inequalities, lack of opportunities for Hispanic airmen](#) [Brig. Gen. (ret.) Ricardo Aponte and Brig. Gen. (ret.) Carlos E. Martinez, *Air Force Times*, 10 February 2021] [COMMENTARY]

We recently reviewed the Air Force's Independent Racial Disparity Review, published in December, which focused on disparities affecting Black airmen and provided recommendations to develop action plans addressing them. The IRDR study presented a significant amount of data that showed racial disparities for Black service members. Because the focus of the report was on issues affecting Blacks, it did not include complete data on Hispanics. Yet, the limited Hispanic data the review did include clearly shows disparities for Hispanics as great or even greater than those affecting Blacks. Consequently, we believe that while the IRDR is a good first step towards addressing racial and ethnic disparities in the Air Force, it is incomplete and its recommendations are premature. Based on our collective and personal experience as former senior leaders and minority officers, we suggest the Air Force immediately commission another IRDR-type review focusing on the largest ethnic minority in the U.S. Air Force, Hispanic airmen.

[Jewish frat at California school vandalized with swastikas](#) [*The Associated Press*, 8 February 2021]

Police are investigating after swastikas and other anti-Semitic graffiti were spray-painted on a Jewish fraternity house at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. The Tribune reports the vandalism was reported Friday night at the Alpha Epsilon Pi house. Interim Police Chief Jeff Smith tells the newspaper that the department's hate crime investigator is looking into the matter. However, since no one witnessed the incident, police did not have any leads as of Sunday morning. A school statement says the graffiti has been cleaned up, but "the emotional scars will last much longer." The fraternity wrote on Instagram that "our chapter and the entire San Luis Obispo Jewish community stand together proudly against those who are uneducated and who encourage hateful acts."

RELIGION

[AP PHOTOS: Afro-Brazilian religion ritual before Carnival](#) [Bruna Prado and Marcelo Silva De Sousa, *The Associated Press*, 7 February 2021]

Laura D'Oya, a priestess of an Afro-Brazilian religion, was at the center of the ceremony. Crouched down, she held a cigar in one of her hands and a top hat in the other. The temple in Rio de Janeiro was illuminated by red lights and dozens of practitioners sang and danced to the rhythm of an atabaque, a traditional hand drum. The faithful of Umbanda, a religion that was born in Brazil, always perform rituals of spiritual protection as part of the pre-Carnival traditions. A spiritual mentor walked past Laura in her Casa de Caridade Santa Barbara Iansa temple and prayed to activate a protective field to shield her from bad energies. "Many people take advantage of this period to do good actions, but others do bad things. It (the ceremony) is for protection against events that can be more common (during carnival)," Laura said before the ritual. The ceremony at Laura's temple is for both spiritual and physical protection, she said. At the end of the ritual, all the practitioners leave the temple protected, once again, against the bad energies of the Carnival.

[Nun named to voting position at Vatican praises "brave" pope](#) [Nicole Winfield, *The Associated Press*, 10 February 2021]

A French nun who has become the first woman to hold a voting position at the Vatican said Wednesday that her appointment is evidence the "patriarchal mindset is changing" as more and more women assume high-level decision-making responsibilities in the Catholic hierarchy. Sister Nathalie Becquart said during a news conference that her appointment as an undersecretary in the Vatican's Synod of Bishops office was a "brave signal and prophetic decision" by Pope Francis, who has repeatedly stressed the need for women to have a greater say in church governance. "What I hope is that this will be seen also in the field, in the dioceses, in the parishes," she said. "I hope this act will encourage other bishops, priests, religious authorities, and that all this will include women more and more." Women have long complained of having a second-class status in the Catholic Church, where the priesthood and top Vatican offices, including the papacy itself, are reserved for men.

SEXISM

[Mori is gone but gender issues remain for Tokyo Olympics](#) [Stephen Wade, *The Associated Press*, 12 February 2021]

Yoshiro Mori resigned as the president of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee on Friday after sexist comments made last week in which he said women "talk too much." The resignation of the former Japanese prime minister at an executive board meeting has left a mess in its wake. And it comes just over five months before the postponed Olympics are to open in the middle of a pandemic with public sentiment overwhelmingly against the games. The executive board did not immediately choose a successor for Mori, which CEO Toshiro Muto said would come "as soon as possible" and will be made by a review committee. Muto also declined to say if Mori's replacement would be a woman. Gender inequality in Japan is exactly the issue that was raised last week by Mori's demeaning comments, and what drove his ouster. Women are largely absent in the boardroom and in top politics in Japan, and Muto acknowledged that the organizing committee has too few women in leadership roles, and no women at the vice president level.

[An obscure Air Force height requirement is preventing some women from becoming career enlisted aviators](#) [David Roza, *Task & Purpose*, 11 February 2021]

A branch whose motto is “Aim High” might set its height requirements a little lower for airmen who want to be career enlisted aviators, which is the umbrella term for 10 enlisted flying jobs such as loadmaster, flight engineer, inflight refueling specialist, or even sensor operator for a remotely piloted aircraft. The current height standard for career enlisted aviators (CEAs) is between 5 feet 4 inches and 6 feet 5 inches. However, that standard dates back to 1967 and is based on male pilots sitting at control stations, not CEAs moving around the aircraft throughout the flight. “CEAs are different than pilots,” Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Dawson, the Air National Guard CEA career field manager explained in a press release. Women are most affected by the outdated standards. Dawson’s predecessor, Chief Master Sgt. Kurt Uchimura, noticed that most of the people who were turned down for CEA jobs were women. To find out why, Uchimura reached out to the Air National Guard’s Diversity and Inclusion Office, which found that 43.5% of American women, particularly women from minority groups, fell below the minimum height standard of 5 feet 4 inches.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARRASSMENT

[A call to end gender-based violence in the military](#) [Melissa E. Dichter, Gala True and Glenna Tinney, *Military Times*, 11 February 2021] [COMMENTARY]

On Dec. 8, 2020, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy suspended or fired 14 military leaders for failing to adequately prevent, stop, or intervene in a culture of sexual assault and violence at Fort Hood Army base. This was necessary, but nowhere near sufficient. Such violence, which includes sexual assault and sexual harassment, is prevalent throughout society and prominent in military settings, which are by nature male-dominated and patriarchal. One in three women veterans receiving care from the Veterans Health Administration report having experienced sexual assault or harassment while serving in the military. The Fiscal Year 2019 Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military found a 3 percent increase in sexual assault reports by service members over the previous year, with the overwhelming majority of reports from women service members, and the highest rates among those serving in the Army. The true numbers, of course, are likely even worse than what we’re seeing, as underreporting of gender-based violence due to fear of retaliation, career impacts, and stigma is common.

[Army’s 18th Airborne Corps is looking for soldiers’ ideas to curb sexual assault and harassment](#) [Corey Dickstein, *Stars and Stripes*, 8 February 2021]

The Army’s 18th Airborne Corps wants soldiers to pitch ideas for improving the service’s sexual assault and harassment prevention program that they believe would better address the long-standing problem within its ranks, the corps announced Monday. At least two soldiers will get the opportunity to personally pitch their ideas Feb. 22 to corps leadership and experts at Fort Bragg, N.C., as part of the corps’ Dragon’s Lair program, an Army innovation-focused competition based on the popular television series “Shark Tank,” according to the corps. Soldiers have until midnight Feb. 16 to submit their ideas. The winning pitch could be implemented across the 18th Airborne Corps, which includes 92,000 soldiers at 14 Army posts, the announcement said.

[Lawmakers near big response to military “rape epidemic”](#) [John M. Donnelly, *CQ Roll Call*, 4 February 2021]

Lawmakers, frustrated by the Defense Department’s inability to curb rape in the ranks, are moving closer to possibly making a momentous change in the military justice system. Members of the Senate Armed Services Committee are increasingly receptive to a long-standing proposal by New York Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand, chairwoman of the Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee, to move responsibility for prosecuting sexual assault, and perhaps other major crimes, from military commanders to independent prosecutors. Several committee members this week hinted that they would back Gillibrand, in some cases reversing earlier positions. And, in so doing, they rebuffed abiding Pentagon resistance to the proposal. Momentum may be gathering, meanwhile, behind a similar House proposal by Jackie Speier, the California Democrat who chairs the comparable Armed Services personnel panel. Nearly half the House co-sponsored her bill in the last Congress.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[MLB opens harassment hotline after Porter, Callaway scandals](#) [Jake Seiner, *The Associated Press*, 10 February 2021]

Major League Baseball has created a hotline for people not employed by the league or teams to report harassment or discrimination after New York Mets general manager Jared Porter and Los Angeles Angels pitching coach Mickey Callaway were accused of sending lewd text messages to female reporters. The league will also require anti-harassment and discrimination training for executives during spring training. Porter was fired for cause Jan. 19 about nine hours after ESPN reported he sent sexually explicit, uninvited text messages and images to a female reporter in 2016 while he was working for the Chicago Cubs in their front office. Callaway was suspended and is under investigation by the Angels and MLB following allegations of inappropriate behavior toward several women who work in sports media. The hotline gives individuals the right to remain anonymous, although the entry in the league’s Code of Conduct says “the more information that is provided will aid in any investigation that is conducted.”

[Sexual assault survivors are twice as likely to leave the military voluntarily, report finds](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 9 February 2021]

The two years after a sexual assault are a make-or-break time for military careers, according to a Rand Corp. [study](#) published Monday, as survivors are twice as likely to leave service during the first 28 months after an attack. This is particularly true for men, the study found, as they are especially likely to seek a discharge after an assault. “Sexual assault and sexual harassment are associated with a wide range of harms to individual service members, but this study highlights another negative impact of these crimes—higher rates of attrition and associated harms to force readiness.” Andrew Morral, lead author of the report, said in a release. Researchers compared that report to separation data from 2015 through 2016, gauging the effects of both suffering an assault and reporting an assault on a service member’s decision to end his or her military career.

[VA Gynecologist Who Traumatized Patients, Made Lewd Comments Was Kept On for Years Despite Complaints](#) [Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 10 February 2021]

A Department of Veterans Affairs gynecologist in Biloxi, Mississippi, made graphic and lewd comments to patients while conducting pelvic examinations, joked about sex with them and otherwise traumatized veterans under his care, yet he remained on staff for years after an administrator became aware of complaints, a VA investigation has found. In a [33-page report](#) released Wednesday by the VA's Office of Inspector General, the department's top watchdog said a staff gynecologist at the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System was disrespectful, rude and offensive to at least five veteran patients, all of whom said their experiences with the physician left them feeling violated. John Daigh, the VA's assistant inspector general for health care, said these events had a long-term impact on patients. "The OIG determined that these provider-patient interactions resulted in patients reporting negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression, hopelessness, and feelings of re-traumatization or powerlessness," Daigh wrote.

SUICIDE

[After Army Alaska's alleged suicides, one battalion gets "sensing sessions"](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 7 February 2021]

A command team from the Hawaii-based 25th Combat Aviation Brigade visited one of their battalions at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, in January to hold sensing sessions in which troops discussed their opinions on mental health, loss and grief. The trip came after two soldiers from 1st Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, died by suicide in late December and January, and a third soldier attempted suicide in that same time period, according to two people and an email from a unit official obtained by Army Times that describes the three incidents. An Army Alaska command team also visited the post "a day after the second death," said spokeswoman Lt. Col. Catina Barnes, who added that "more similar meetings are planned." But Barnes said she could not discuss the deaths, or confirm they were suicides, due to ongoing investigations. Army Alaska has acknowledged grappling with suicide in the past. It's a problem that has disproportionately affected Fort Wainwright in the remote interior of Alaska, where the long, dark winters can be difficult for some people's mental well-being.

[Air Force Reviewing Support Services Amid Suicides, COVID-19](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Magazine*, 11 February 2021]

The Department of the Air Force is launching a review of its mental health, family advocacy, and other support programs for Airmen and Guardians, as part of an ongoing struggle with suicide in the ranks and to offer better care during the coronavirus pandemic. A new Air Force task force called "Operation Arc Care" is taking a fresh look at bolstering service members' resiliency in the face of stress and adversity. "Our people are the most important resource we have," said Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass in a Feb. 11 [release](#). "We've been hearing their challenges, and we owe it (to) them to build a strategy that ensures our Airmen, Guardians, and families get the care they need, wherever they are, and whenever they need it." The group plans to issue recommendations later this year for potential changes in those areas that "remove policy barriers and ... improve the experience of care" for service members and their families, Col. Laura Ramos, Air Force Resilience strategic partnership division chief, said in the release.

[Service members in several minority groups more likely to attempt suicide, report finds](#) [John Vandiver, *Stars and Stripes*, 9 February 2021]

Black, Hispanic and Asian troops report “significantly higher” rates of suicide attempts than their White counterparts, a new study that examined mental health disparities within the ranks has found. Although there were no widespread differences between races and ethnicities in terms of overall behavioral health, the disparities in attempted suicide rates warrant Defense Department attention, the nonprofit research group Rand Corp. said in a [recent report](#). Rand recommended the Pentagon “consider focusing attention on suicide attempts, particularly among non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic Asian military personnel.” The higher rate of suicide attempts among Black and Hispanic troops when compared to Whites is at odds with the pattern found in the civilian world, Rand said.

VETERANS

[New VA Secretary Vows to “Redouble” Efforts to Help Military Sexual Trauma Survivors](#)

[Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 9 February 2021]

Department of Veterans Affairs during a ceremonial swearing-in ceremony Tuesday at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in Washington, D.C. He will “ensure that VA welcomes all veterans, including women, veterans of color and LGBTQ veterans” and strive to make sure employees live up to the department’s core values of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect and excellence in “all our interactions,” he said. “This means that all VA patients, staff, their families, caregivers, survivors, visitors and advocates must feel safe in a workplace free of harassment and discrimination. I will not accept discrimination, harassment, or assault at any level or at any facility within VA. We will provide a safe, inclusive environment for Veterans and VA employees,” McDonough said. He also singled out veterans who were sexually assaulted while serving in the military, saying the department will “redouble efforts” to provide care and services for them.

[Marine boxing teammate says Leon Spinks “brought a lot of joy” to Camp Lejeune community](#)

[Trevor Dunnell, *The Daily News*, (Jacksonville, N.C.), 10 February 2021]

Hall of Famer, boxing heavyweight champion, Olympic gold medalist, Marine. The résumé of Leon Spinks goes well beyond those four accomplishments, but each one has a unique story for how those experiences formed him into the man many in Onslow County and around the world admired. His last fight came to an end on Friday when he died at the age of 67 from complications with prostate cancer. Before he became a champion among many other things, Spinks first had to fight his way out of poverty, stricken by asthma as a child and dropping out of high school in order to join the Marine Corps in 1973 at the age of 20. When he joined the All-Marine boxing team after being stationed at Camp Lejeune, Spinks became a well-known character around Jacksonville. Mike Cline, chairman of the All-Marine Boxing Hall of Fame said “he really liked the Camp Lejeune area and the town of Jacksonville.” Cline was teammates with Spinks on the All-Marine Corps Boxing Team. “He brought a lot of joy to the community here as a Marine Corps boxer. This is a big boxing community and a lot of people liked to see him in the ring. When he won that gold medal in ‘76 it made everyone proud, especially here, because Camp Lejeune was his home,” Cline added. [\[REPRINT\]](#)