

## DEOMI NEWS LINKS 19 FEBRUARY 2021

### HIGHLIGHTS

[First female Muslim chaplain graduates from Air Force Chaplain Corps College](#) [Airman 1st Class Jackson Manske, *Air University Public Affairs*, (Maxwell AFB, Ala.), 17 February 2021] *1st Lt. Saleha Jabeen, the U.S. Military's first female Muslim chaplain, graduated from Air Force Basic Chaplain Course Feb. 5, 2021, on Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. The graduation ceremony for BCC Class 21A was a historic event as the Air Force aims to foster a more diverse and inclusive service. Jabeen, a native of India, said she was grateful for the opportunity and aware of the responsibility she has to set an example and show that there is a place in the military for anyone who wants to serve. "I did not have to compromise on any of my religious beliefs or convictions," said Jabeen. "I am surrounded with people who respect me and are willing to receive what I bring to the table as a woman, a faith leader, and an immigrant. I am provided with numerous opportunities to learn and develop skills that best equip me to be a successful officer and a chaplain in a pluralistic environment. I get to provide spiritual care to all servicemembers, guardians and families and advise the commanders on religious and moral matters regardless of my faith, ethnicity or gender. Like our boss says, it has never been a better time to serve as a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force Chaplain Corps."*

[Groups ask Supreme Court to declare the all-male military draft unconstitutional](#) [Robert Barnes, *The Washington Post*, 18 February 2021]

*President Jimmy Carter called for including women in the military draft more than 40 years ago. The Defense Department decades later agreed the change would improve military readiness and national security. And a special commission set up by Congress to specifically study the issue came to a similar conclusion last year. Requiring women—not just men—to register when they turn 18, it said, would make it "possible to draw on the talent of a unified nation in a time of national emergency." Now the Supreme Court, in a case reminiscent of the lawsuits that brought fame to a feminist lawyer named Ruth Bader Ginsburg, is being asked to force the hand of a reticent Congress by declaring the male-only military draft unconstitutional. "The registration requirement is one of the last sex-based classifications in federal law," says a petition from the American Civil Liberties Union, which represents a group called the National Coalition for Men. "It imposes selective burdens on men, reinforces the notion that women are not full and equal citizens, and perpetuates stereotypes about men's and women's capabilities."*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

["They Know All About It": Pentagon Report Details Military Reach of Supremacist Groups](#)

[Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 18 February 2021]

*Brandon Russell had a tattoo of a radiation symbol on his arm when he enlisted in the Florida National Guard in 2016. The three-bladed symbol didn't raise alarms at the time, but should have been a warning sign. Russell was the co-founder of a dangerous neo-Nazi group called the Atomwaffen Division, considered one of the deadliest in the country. The tattoo represented "atomwaffen," which means "atomic weapon" in German. "I was 100% open about everything*

*with the friends I made at training,” Russell wrote on Iron March, which has been linked to violence worldwide. “They know all about it. They love me too cause im [sic] a funny guy.” The ability for troops with extremist ideologies to serve openly in the military ranks is under renewed scrutiny after the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol that left five dead, including a federal police officer. Several veterans, reservists and a National Guard member have been charged for their alleged roles in the mob, and federal prosecutors say some of those people have ties to anti-government groups such as the Oath Keepers. [Roll Call first detailed](#) the report’s findings Tuesday, saying that the Defense Department is under threat from domestic extremists.*

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## CULTURE

[As a Retired Black Naval Officer, I Believe the Push to Rename Ships Goes Too Far](#) [S.O. Rasbury, *Military.com*, 16 February 2021] [OPINION]

*As the Navy considers renaming a couple of its ships of the line, it’s become obvious to even the most casual of observers that the military has gone whole-hog on cancel culture. I can understand renaming the Nimitz-class carrier Stennis, given its namesake John C. Stennis’ segregationist background. But I am concerned that once we start down this path, there is a risk of creating something that takes on a life of its own. I’m a Navy veteran who also happens to be African American. I get it that a lot of folks want to distance themselves from honoring those who brought discredit upon this nation, but we’re supposed to take the good with the bad and learn from our mistakes. That’s how we progress as a nation. If we start renaming ships due to objectionable historical associations, we risk heading down a slippery slope, from which there may be little chance of recovering.*

[The Complicated Pride Of Native Hawaiians In The Military](#) [Kevin Knodell, *Honolulu Civil Beat*, 17 February 2021]

*Native Hawaiians have had a long and complicated history with the U.S. military, with many generations of the same families becoming service members. The military, which is one of the state’s biggest employers and has bases sprawled across the islands, has provided jobs, housing and health benefits and a way to see the world that otherwise would elude many Hawaiians, who along with other Pacific Islanders make up a disproportionate number of Army recruits. But many veterans and their family members must balance a pride in service with the shadow of the military’s dark past in Hawaii and concern about its current impact. Hawaiians have served in the American military since the days of the Hawaiian Kingdom. The first known Hawaiian to serve in the U.S. military was George Humehume, a prince from Kauai who fought in the War of 1812. Dozens of Native Hawaiians fought in the American Civil War.*

[“The Daughters of Kobani” Tells a Riveting Story of Women in Combat](#) [James Barber, *Military.com*, 18 February 2021]

*Author Gayle Tzemach Lemmon went to the front lines of the war against ISIS to chronicle all-female Kurdish units as they fought to rid Syria of the group’s oppressive rule. Her new book [“The Daughters of Kobani: A Story of Rebellion, Courage and Justice”](#) brings this compelling tale to American readers. How did female troops come to take such a critical leadership role in a*

*part of the world notorious for its oppression of women? What motivated these fighters to take such an active role when women have historically been left out of the battle? Lemmon previously published “Ashley’s War,” which followed American women in a pilot program that put them into combat roles in Afghanistan. Her connections from that book put her onto the story she tells in “The Daughters of Kobani,” a tale that’s sure to shock anyone who believes that combat is exclusively a man’s job. “Ashley’s War” will soon be a movie directed by Lesli Linka Glatter of “Homeland” fame. “The Daughters of Kobani” has already been optioned for a television series to be produced by Hillary and Chelsea Clinton’s HiddenLight Productions.*

[“Green Book” inspires new generation of Black travel guides, podcasts](#) [Morgan Hines, USA TODAY, 18 February 2021]

*At a time when the simple act of traveling through the United States often put Black people in physical danger, “The Negro Motorist Green Book” was an essential guide to safe spaces. Published by Victor Hugo Green annually from 1936 to 1966, the Green Book helped Black travelers in the Jim Crow period find hotels, restaurants, gas stations and other businesses that would serve them. Martinique Lewis, president of the Black Travel Alliance, told USA TODAY that after learning about the Green Book she was inspired to create her own, modern version. Her [“ABC Travel Greenbook: Connecting the African Diaspora Globally”](#) which catalogs Black-owned businesses and Black-focused experiences such as tours, among other resources for international travel.*

[Here’s how the Pentagon will remove the names of Confederates from military bases](#) [Jeff Schogol, Task & Purpose, 12 February 2021]

*Congress and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin have both selected an eight-member commission that has until October 2022 to provide lawmakers with recommendations on how to rename bases, ships, schools, and any other Defense Department assets that have been named for people who voluntarily served with the Confederate States of America, officials announced on Friday. The commission includes retired Navy Adm. Michelle Howard, the first woman to become a four-star admiral; retired Marine Gen. Robert Neller, former Marine Corps commandant; retired Army Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, former commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Kori Schake, a defense policy expert with the conservative American Enterprise Institute think tank in Washington who co-wrote a book with retired Marine Gen. James Mattis on the civil-military divide. “It’s disgraceful that we have military installations named for American citizens who fought against our government and to maintain a system of keeping people in bondage,” Schake told Task & Purpose. “We’re long overdue to correct those mistakes, and it’ll be such a joy to consider all the wonderful Americans we could be celebrating in their stead.”*

[Marine Corps disables comments on Twitter post about women training at San Diego recruit depot](#) [Philip Athey, Marine Corps Times, 18 February 2021]

*A tweet from the official Marine Corps Twitter account about a historical first for women in the Corps has drawn questions because of a decision to disable reader comments. For the first time in history, women arrived at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego to begin boot camp. Though the depot has been training Marines for nearly 100 years, the Corps has exclusively sent*

*men to San Diego—until Friday. The anonymous defense official told Marine Corps Times, “If the service is truly proud of that policy or that decision then there should be no reason to silence opposing viewpoints.” “In fact, if the Marine Corps is serious about confronting discrimination, they could attack it head on, on a public forum and let those individuals know the Marine Corps supports the new female recruits at San Diego,” the spokesperson added. Marine veteran Kate Germano said blocking comments allowed the Marine Corps to turn a blind eye to the problems women in the Marine Corps face.*

[NASCAR’s first Arab-American female driver makes her Daytona debut](#) [Jillian Eugenios, TODAY, 13 February 2021]

*Toni Breidinger, 21, began competing Saturday with the 2021 ARCA season-opener at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona, Florida. This season, she will be competing in a limited ARCA Menards Series and NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, driving a Chevrolet SS and a Chevrolet Silverado. With her first race in the truck series, she will officially make history as the first-ever Arab-American female driver to participate in any NASCAR national series, according to NASCAR. Breidinger is of Lebanese descent. Breidinger is part of NASCAR’s Drive for Diversity program, an initiative that creates more inclusive racing teams. The program has created many opportunities for others, including making Brehanna Daniels NASCAR’s first Black woman to hold the crucial job as a tire changer.*

[Statue of U.S. chief justice who oversaw Plessy to be moved](#) [The Associated Press, 17 February 2021]

*A Maine county board voted to move the statue of Melville Fuller, who was an Augusta native and served as the chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court when it decided Plessy v. Ferguson, the case that legalized racial segregation in 1896. The Kennebec County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously on Tuesday to move the statue, which sits in front of the county court house in Maine’s capital, the Kennebec Journal reported. Fuller was the chief justice of the nation’s highest court when it decided the Plessy v. Ferguson case. That decision established the “separate but equal” doctrine that permitted racial segregation and allowed the passage of Jim Crow laws. It was overturned in 1954 by the landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision that struck down racial segregation in public schools.*

## **DISCRIMINATION**

[British veterans, discharged for being gay under historic law, allowed to get their medals back](#) [Rob Picheta, CNN, 16 February 2021]

*Gay and bisexual British veterans who were stripped of their medals because of their sexuality will now be able to reclaim them, the UK government has said, as it admitted the pre-2000 policy was an “historical wrong.” Only heterosexual people were allowed to serve in the British Armed Forces until the turn of the century, and troops whose sexuality was discovered often saw their honors removed before they were discharged. They can now apply to have them reinstated. It comes after a legal campaign by Falklands War veteran Joe Ousalice, who was forced from the Royal Navy in 1993 for being bisexual, and who lived through poverty on his return to the country. LGBTQ campaigners have urged ministers to also address claims for compensation, lost*

*pension rights, the mental health of veterans, and other issues facing people who fell victim to the pre-2000 legislation.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[This retired baseball player built the largest Black-owned McDonald's franchise operation. Now he's suing the fast-food chain for its "racist" policies.](#) [Tracy Jan, *The Washington Post*, 16 February 2021]

*Herb Washington, a former Oakland A's player who built the country's largest Black-owned McDonald's franchise operation, filed a lawsuit Tuesday accusing the fast food giant of systemic racial discrimination for its pattern of steering Black owners into restaurants in impoverished neighborhoods that yielded less profit, targeting them with unequal assessments that made it harder to renew their contracts, then pressuring them to sell to White owners. Washington, 69, owned 27 McDonald's restaurants in New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania during his four decades as a franchisee, but alleged that the company began a campaign to drive him out in 2017 in retaliation for speaking out against the "predatory, racially biased steering practices" against Black franchisees. Today he owns 14 McDonald's restaurants. "These numbers are not a coincidence; they are the result of McDonald's intentionally racist policies and practices toward Black franchisees," Washington's lawsuit alleges.*

## DIVERSITY

[McDonald's ties executive bonuses to diversity, releases workforce data](#) [Hilary Russ, *Reuters*, 18 February 2021]

*McDonald's Corp on Thursday said it will tie executive bonuses to new goals for diversifying the company and for the first time publicly release demographic details of its workforce. Under the new rules, CEO Chris Kempczinski stands to lose 15% of his approximately \$2.25 million annual bonus if he fails to meet goals to increase the portion of women and Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and other minorities in senior leadership roles. More organizations are seeking to increase opportunities for Black workers, women and other disenfranchised and underpaid groups, after a nationwide reckoning with racism sparked by the May killing of George Floyd, a Black man, by Minneapolis police. As activists have called for more transparency, companies are increasingly reporting demographic data for their workforces and tying executive pay to diversification goals.*

[Meet Cynt Marshall: From one of Berkeley's first Black cheerleaders to the first Black woman CEO in NBA](#) [Mark Medina, *USA TODAY*, 19 February 2021]

*The billionaire NBA owner has become known both for his business-savviness and his brutally honest opinions. When Mark Cuban contacted Cynt Marshall about joining the Dallas Mavericks three years ago, however, Marshall's ignorance emerged. "I didn't know who he was," Marshall told USA TODAY Sports about Cuban. "I had a big job. I'm raising four kids. I just didn't know who he was." With the 61-year-old Marshall becoming the first Black female CEO of an NBA franchise, she ensured changes in varying ways. Marshall listened to various Mavericks employees, who shared concerns both about the allegations and wishes for her to help the organization address them. Marshall asked probing questions to Cuban, who told USA TODAY Sports he had "no reason not to be completely honest with her on that or any issue." And*

*Marshall then implemented various policies to improve the organization's practices. "I want to make sure I do a good job, be a good role model and show that it shouldn't be unusual for a Black woman to be in a job like this. We are capable," Marshall said.*

## **HUMAN RELATIONS**

[Make an Effort? if Rewards and Performance Align](#) [Corrie Pikul, *Futurity*, 17 February 2021]  
*We invest mental effort in a task in response to what we stand to gain, and in response to how much the outcome hinges on our performance, research finds. In three related experiments, the researchers demonstrated that participants performed better on tasks when there was a bigger potential prize and when they felt like their efforts made a difference in earning that prize. Importantly, the [study](#) also identifies the neural activity associated with this kind of decision process. The findings can help explain motivation as well as to figure out what's going on when someone is lacking in it, the researchers say. "This study sheds light on the neural circuits that drive motivation, which in turn help us learn more about why people may have trouble getting motivated, whether it be situational or chronic and due to depression or other disorders," says Amitai Shenhav, study author and an assistant professor of cognitive, linguistic, and psychological sciences at Brown University.*

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

[America's Brutal Racial History Is Written All Over Our Genes](#) [Libby Copeland, *The New York Times*, 16 February 2021] [OPINION]  
*Our country has struggled to reckon with the horrors of the past. Could DNA tests help? The debate around race consuming America right now is coinciding with a technological phenomenon—at-home genetic testing kits—revealing many of us are not who we thought we were. Some customers of the major DNA testing companies, which collectively have sold 37 million of these kits, are getting results that surprise them. Perhaps they or a parent was adopted or donor-conceived and never told, or their families hid their genetic ancestries as an escape from discrimination. Maybe Dad isn't their dad, genetically speaking, or they have a sister they never knew about. Some people are discovering their ancestors were Black, or Jewish. Others are learning their African-American lineages contain more European ancestry than they thought.*

[Education fund sought for descendants of Florida massacre](#) [Bobby Caina Calvin, *The Associated Press*, 17 February 2021]  
*A Florida lawmaker wants his state to establish an education fund to benefit the descendants of African Americans killed, beaten or driven from their homes by White mobs angered by a Black man who had the audacity to demand his right to vote a century ago in the tiny citrus town of Ocoee. Sen. Randolph Bracy, whose district includes the community, is proposing that Ocoee descendants be included in a scholarship program that already benefits the youth of Rosewood, another predominantly African American community in Florida that was destroyed by White mobs. The racial violence in Rosewood, which was dramatized by Hollywood in an acclaimed 1997 movie, occurred three years after the 1920 Election Day massacre in Ocoee. The Election Day massacre in Ocoee was one of the bloodiest periods in American political history, with the*

*number of deaths remaining in question—although some historians estimate the number could be as high as 60.*

[Historic Black colleges to get \\$650,000 to preserve campuses](#) [Christine Fernando, *The Associated Press*, 17 February 2021]

*Several historically Black colleges and universities will receive more than \$650,000 in grants to preserve their campuses as part of a new initiative announced Tuesday. HBCUs have long been underfunded as a result of decades of structural racism and lack of equitable public funding, said Brent Leggs, executive director of the National Trust’s African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, which is supplying the grants. “They stand as a living testament to African American history and the ongoing achievements of highly influential Americans,” he said. “But they continue to be overlooked and underfunded.” The \$650,000 in funding is part of a larger initiative by the National Trust, which launched the action fund in 2017 as a \$25 million campaign to preserve Black culture and celebrate the historic achievements of the Black community.*

[How Soldiers from an All-Black Regiment Saved Their Commander’s Sword for His Family](#) [Blake Stilwell, *Military.com*, 18 February 2021]

*The 1989 film “Glory” told the world the story of Robert Gould Shaw leading the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, an all-African American infantry unit in the Civil War. A longtime abolitionist, he led a short but storied career until he died in combat in July 1863. Shaw famously led the regiment in an ill-fated frontal assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, which protected the approaches to Confederate-held Charleston Harbor. Shaw was shot several times and died approaching the fort’s parapets. Confederate officers, discovering the body of the White commander of an all-Black unit, refused to return it to the Union Army, as was the custom at the time. Instead, Shaw’s body was stripped and tossed into a mass grave with 70 Black soldiers who fell at Fort Wagner. Burying Shaw with the men of the 54th was intended to be an insult to him and his loved ones, but the family instead asked that his remains stay with those of his men. But not only were his clothes stripped, so were his personal effects, including his sword.*

[How to Teach Troops about the Constitution](#) [Paula Thornhill, *Defense One*, 18 February 2021]  
[COMMENTARY]

*As a veteran, I was mortified by the large number of U.S. military veterans involved in the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol. The Joint Chiefs of Staff reacted by reminding service members to abide by their oaths of office—and yet one of the many things the insurrection revealed is that some troops might not understand their sworn duty to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States.” This realization invalidates the longstanding assumption that servicemembers have acquired an understanding of the U.S. Constitution in their high school civics classes, and as one veteran argued recently, suggests that the military needs to fill this crucial educational gap. How might it go about doing so? First, on the day new servicemembers are sworn in, they should receive their own copies of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Symbolism and pageantry should mark this moment. And recruits should understand they should keep this copy close throughout their career.*

[Latinos face barriers like fear, language in getting vaccine](#) [Gisela Salomon, Claudia Torrens and Anita Snow, *The Associated Press*, 16 February 2021]

*From elderly Cuban Americans in Florida to farmworkers in California, Latinos face daunting barriers to getting COVID-19 vaccines, creating risks for public health as the coronavirus mutates and spreads. America's more than 60 million Latinos—like other people of color—have been disproportionately affected by the virus, and many are struggling with issues like a lack of knowledge about the shots, state vaccine websites that don't have Spanish instructions, ways to find appointments in their communities and fears they could be targeted for immigration enforcement. It comes as states, cities and counties are grappling with how to ensure people of color and other underserved communities are getting the vaccine, with some targeting vulnerable ZIP codes and working with community groups to sign people up. In Arizona, where language is a barrier for some Latinos and until recently English was the only option on the state website for vaccine appointments, a university researcher is working on an online Spanish language campaign to address vaccine misconceptions.*

[White troops, especially women, tend to have more mental health concerns, report finds](#)

[Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 15 February 2021]

*While civilians and troops have similar behavioral health concerns across racial, ethnic, gender and sexual-orientation groups, a [recent RAND study](#) found that White service members are more likely to have behavioral health troubles than their non-White counterparts, the opposite of what civilian research shows. The DOD-sponsored study sought to compare the behavioral health of minority service members to the majority, as well as compare any disparities to civilian groups, at a time when the Defense Department is reviewing a host of policies to actively support diversity and an inclusive culture. The researchers based their findings off of five surveys, conducted in 2015 and 2016 with subjects both in the civilian sector and in uniform that looked at behavioral health risk factors and outcomes. They focused on depression, post-traumatic stress and suicidal behavior as one measure of behavioral health, designating problematic alcohol and tobacco habits as another.*

## **RACISM**

[Ballerina Chloé Lopes Gomes alleged racism at her company. Now she says it's time for change](#)

[Chloé Lopes Gomes, *CNN*, 19 February 2021] [COMMENTARY]

*In 2018 I became the first Black ballet dancer to join Berlin's principal ballet company, the Staatsballett. Joining this kind of ballet institution was my dream—it's one of the best in the world. But last October, I was told that my contract would not be renewed this summer. I believe it's because of the complaints I have made about the racist comments and unfair treatment that I have endured from my ballet mistress, though the company has said the decision was made for "artistic reasons." After trying to handle the issue internally, I went public with my story to *Der Spiegel*, *The Guardian* and the *New York Times*. I have suffered depression and humiliation—and I am far from the only dancer who has experienced derogatory comments and verbal abuse during my career. Such behavior is institutionalized within ballet, from the time that we are children and begin our training. We don't talk about it because we are taught not to.*

[A Black Soldier's Heroism, Overlooked in 1965, May Finally Be Lauded in 2021](#) [Dave Philipps, *The New York Times*, 15 February 2021]

*Capt. Paris Davis was in the thick of a pre-dawn raid on an enemy camp in Vietnam when a grenade blasted out several of his teeth and, more troubling, tore off part of his trigger finger. Then enemy fire started pelting the Special Forces team he commanded. His most experienced sergeant was shot down. Then the demolitions specialist. Then the only medic. He made it out alive, and was immediately nominated for the military's highest award, the Medal of Honor. But the Army somehow lost the nomination. His frustrated commander resubmitted it, and inexplicably the nomination disappeared again. Over generations, there are examples of the military struggling with bias when it came to recognizing valor. In the segregated forces that served in World Wars I and II, no Black soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor, despite clear examples of selfless heroism. It was only decades later that some presidents worked to correct past injustices, but veterans' groups say there remains much more to be done.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Case dropped after woman in racist NYC run-in gets therapy](#) [Michael R. Sisak, *The Associated Press*, 16 February 2021]

*Amy Cooper, the White woman arrested last year for calling 911 on a Black birdwatcher in New York's Central Park, had her criminal case thrown out Tuesday after completing a diversionary counseling program that prosecutors said was meant to educate her on the harm of her actions. Assistant District Attorney Joan Illuzzi-Orbon said Manhattan prosecutors were satisfied with Cooper's participation in the program—described as an alternative, restorative justice solution—and were not seeking to pursue the case any further. Such outcomes are standard for first-time offenders facing misdemeanor charges, Illuzzi said. The confrontation, captured on video the same day Minneapolis police killed George Floyd, drew worldwide attention and was seen by many as a stark example of everyday racism.*

[Harassment cases revive worries of racism at Boston College](#) [Collin Binkley, *The Associated Press*, 17 February 2021]

*Students are demanding a stronger response from Boston College after two recent cases in which White students were accused of harassing Black and Hispanic students in a campus dorm. The incidents, which took place three days apart, have revived longstanding concerns about racism on a campus where most students are White and just 4% are Black. Some students say the recent cases are part of a pattern of bias that seems to be tolerated at the Jesuit Catholic school. "We have been dealing with this since our freshman year," said senior Kathryn Destin, 20, who is Black and a member of a campus anti-racist group called FACES. "I've sort of lost that sense of safety." Both recent incidents took place in a stretch of dorm hallway that mostly houses Black and Hispanic women. Known as the Multicultural Learning Experience, it's part of program intended to foster diversity on campus. Men in the program are housed in a different area of the dorm.*

[He became one of the Navy's first Black four-star admirals. The military has work to do on diversity, he says.](#) [Dan Lamothe, *The Washington Post*, 16 February 2021]

*The young midshipman heard the question but kept walking as he neared a group of White students at the Naval Academy. “You know, the only reason you’re here is the quota system, right?” one of them said. Cecil Haney, a Black student from a Black neighborhood in the District of Columbia, did not respond. His family had warned him that he could face racism at the academy, and more than 40 years later, he remembers the remark clearly. “It’s bad enough having one individual ask that question,” Haney said. “But what hurt the most was that tribe he was with said nothing to the contrary of that kind of thing.” Haney, 65, went on to become one of the first Black four-star admirals in Navy history, serving as the commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and the U.S. Strategic Command, where he oversaw nuclear weapons before retiring in 2017. Haney recalled working with a number of White colleagues who were professional and kind during his military career. But he was a rarity: a Black leader at an institution that was mostly White, with a disproportionate number of White leaders going up through the ranks.*

[Why talking about racism in the ranks will only make the U.S. military stronger](#) [Brennan Randel, *Task & Purpose*, 17 February 2021] [OPINION]

*Retired Army Col. Kurt Schlichter does not want the military to address extremism in the ranks. Responding to a Reuters article about Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin’s order for the military to discuss White nationalism and extremism, Schlichter wrote on Twitter, “Complain to your [Inspector General] and seek legal counsel if you are discriminated against for your political beliefs by commissioned officers.” Although the Pentagon allows political expression, it does not permit the promotion of supremacist or extremist ideology. In Schlichter’s America, institutional racism does not exist. Nor, seemingly, does individual racism. After the New York Post reported that a Black sailor found a noose on his bed, Schlichter tweeted, “There is 0% chance this is true.” Unsurprisingly, it was true. It’s in this context that we can best understand Schlichter and his ilk’s hurt feelings. If racism doesn’t exist, then any attempt to address it is an assault on their worldview.*

[Wyoming university event interrupted, investigation launched](#) [The Associated Press, 18 February 2021]

*An investigation was launched in Wyoming after a virtual Black history event hosted by the University of Wyoming’s Black Studies Center was interrupted with racist slurs and pornographic images, authorities said. The university hosted a panel discussion Monday on Zoom about the film “Black Wall Street: Before they Die!” which according to the event description, “explores the death of Black Wall Street from the survivors’ point of view,” the Casper Star-Tribune reported Wednesday. The university said about 30 minutes into the discussion, a pornographic image and a racial slur appeared on the screen followed by an allegedly synthetic voice shouting racist phrases like “KFC and watermelon,” “porch monkey” among other epithets. The University of Wyoming has condemned the acts and said it is working with local and federal law enforcement to determine the person or persons responsible.*

## RELIGION

[Black women were vital to the Black church. Here are 2 stories](#) [Christina Turner, *PBS News*, 12 February 2021]

*While the “backbone of the church has been Black women almost from the very beginning,” historian Henry Louis Gates Jr. said, their roles have both been suppressed within the church and forgotten when recounting its history. In his [latest documentary](#) series and book, “The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song,” Gates examines the cultural institution within Black communities. He explains how the Black Church has played such a vital role in Black liberation, since its beginnings. And along with viewing the Black church through a critical eye and exploring its origin, the new PBS series also pays tribute to the often overlooked work of Black women for the Black church. Two Black women featured in his documentary series—Nannie Helen Burroughs and Mahalia Jackson—separately contributed to two of the greatest movements in America, women’s suffrage and the civil rights movement.*

[Survey: Black Americans attend church and pray more often](#) [David Crary, *The Associated Press*, 16 February 2021]

*Black Americans attend church more regularly than Americans overall, and pray more often. Most attend churches that are predominantly Black, yet many would like those congregations to become racially diverse. There is broad respect for Black churches’ historical role in seeking racial equality, coupled with a widespread perception they have lost influence in recent decades. Those are among the key findings in a [comprehensive report](#) released Tuesday by the Pew Research Center, which surveyed 8,660 Black adults across the United States about their religious experiences. It is Pew’s first large-scale survey on the topic. Survey responses were collected from November 2019 through June 2020, but most respondents completed the survey by Feb. 10, 2020, before the coronavirus outbreak and the racial-injustice protests that spread after the death of George Floyd in May at the hands of Minneapolis police. Among the respondents, 77% said predominantly Black churches had played a role in helping Black people move toward racial equality. Yet just one third said historically Black congregations should preserve their traditional character; 61% said these congregations should become more racially diverse.*

[U.S. faithful mark Ash Wednesday from a distance, celebrate Purim with drive-through carnivals](#) [Sharon Bernstein and Rich McKay, *Reuters*, 17 February 2021]

*Nearly a year since the pandemic curbed large gatherings, communities of faith have grown more creative to reach congregants hungry for spiritual and social connections. In many Catholic communities, ashes will not be worn on the forehead as is traditional in America as a symbol of mortality and penance in advance of the Easter holiday on April 4. Instead, most churches are following guidance from the Vatican to sprinkle the ashes on the congregant’s head. Others are applying them with Q-tips or cotton balls in a drive-through setup. Jewish synagogues will celebrate the festive holiday of Purim on Feb. 25 and 26 with drive-through carnivals, outdoor services and “holiday-in-a-box” packages that congregants can open at home. The Temple Beth Hillel synagogue in Los Angeles typically holds a large community carnival for Purim—a celebration of the Jews’ salvation from genocide in ancient Persia—with amusement park rides, food vendors and crafts.*

## **SEXISM**

[Japan's LDP party invites women to "look, not talk" at key meetings](#) [BBC News, 17 February 2021]

*Days after Japan's Olympics chief was [forced to resign](#) over sexist comments, the ruling party has decided to invite women to attend key meetings—as long as they do not speak. The Liberal Democratic Party proposed allowing five female lawmakers to observe its all-male board meetings. They cannot talk during the meeting—only submit opinions afterwards. Toshihiro Nikai, the 82-year-old secretary general of the Liberal Democrat Party (LDP), told a news conference on Tuesday of the plan to bring a female perspective to the all-male board meetings. He said he was aware of criticism of the male domination of the party's elected board and it was important that female members of the party "look" at the decision-making process, he was quoted by Reuters as saying. The Tokyo Olympics organising committee chief had sparked a firestorm by saying women talked too much in meetings. Yoshiro Mori, 83, had remarked, in discussions over increasing the number of female board members that "we have to make sure their speaking time is restricted somewhat, they have difficulty finishing." He resigned on Friday for what he called his "inappropriate remarks".*

[Pay gap for U.S. female executives narrows but persists](#) [Ross Kerber, Reuters, 17 February 2021]

*Even women who make it to the top ranks of U.S. corporations face a persistent pay gap compared with men in leadership roles, a new study of corporate filings found. Among companies in the Russell 3000 index, covering most of the investable U.S. stock market, the highest paid women earned 84.6 cents for every dollar earned by male counterparts in 2019, up from 81.5 cents in 2015, according to a paper from researcher Morningstar Inc due out Wednesday. But the persistent gap reflects a lack of top female leaders and how those now in place often hold lower-paid posts like heads of marketing or human resources. To change, companies must add more women at all levels to maintain a diverse pool for promotions, she said.*

[Promotions for Female Generals Were Delayed Over Fears of Trump's Reaction](#) [Eric Schmitt and Helene Cooper, *The New York Times*, 17 February 2021]

*Last fall, the Pentagon's most senior leaders agreed that two top generals should be promoted to elite, four-star commands. For then-Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper and Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the tricky part was that both of the accomplished officers were women. In 2020 America under President Trump, the two Pentagon leaders feared that any candidates other than White men for jobs mostly held by White men might run into turmoil once their nominations got to the White House. Mr. Esper and General Milley worried that if they even raised their names—Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost of the Air Force and Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson of the Army—the Trump White House would replace them with their own candidates before leaving office. So the Pentagon officials agreed on an unusual strategy: They held back their recommendations until after the November elections, betting that if Joseph R. Biden Jr. won, he and his aides would be more supportive of the Pentagon picks than Mr. Trump, who had feuded with Mr. Esper and has a history of disparaging women. They stuck to the plan even after Mr. Trump fired Mr. Esper six days after the election.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

## SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

### [Seven soldiers to present their ideas on improving the Army's program targeting sexual assault](#)

[Caitlin M. Kenney, *Stars and Stripes*, 18 February 2021]

*Seven soldiers have been chosen to present their ideas next week as part of the Army's 18th Airborne Corps' attempt to find solutions for eliminating sexual assault and harassment in the service, the corps announced Thursday. The soldiers were chosen from among 41 submissions to the corps' "Dragon's Lair" program that is styled after the "Shark Tank" television show for entrepreneurs, according to a news release. The ideas from soldiers are focused on improving or revising the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, also known as SHARP. The soldiers range in rank from sergeant to lieutenant colonel. Ideas to be presented include virtual reality training with scenarios to build empathy, a competition to create scenario-based videos to eliminate power point training, and changing the SHARP program to include allowing soldiers to report to SHARP representatives outside of their unit.*

### [Two-star under investigation for "inappropriate touching"](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 18 February 2021]

*The two-star general in charge of the Army War College is under investigation by CID special agents after an allegation of "inappropriate touching" was made against him, according to the service. Maj. Gen. Stephen J. Maranian was suspended Feb. 9 from his position leading the graduate-level educational institution for military leaders in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The allegation against Maranian is "unrelated to his current position," said Army spokeswoman Cynthia O. Smith. The Army announced Maranian's suspension earlier this month, but the reason for the adverse action was not disclosed until Thursday. [Task and Purpose reported](#) Thursday that a protective order was issued in early February against Maranian because of a CID investigation into abusive sexual contact with an Army civilian.*

## SUICIDE

### [Seeking the Military Suicide Solution Podcast, Episode 45: Danica Thomas - Suicide Loss Survivor and Advocate](#) [*Military Times*, 17 February 2021]

*Danica Thomas is the widow of Army Staff Sgt. Allen Thomas. In March of 2010, her husband was severely injured in Afghanistan and brought to Walter Reed. Danica was pregnant with their first daughter. She became a caregiver overnight and quickly learned they had a very long road to recovery. They were stationed back at Fort Bragg in August 2010, where he would rehabilitate and transition to medical retirement at the Warrior Transition Battalion and Womack. They had their first daughter in October. Danica experienced the hard trials and errors of being a new mom and caregiver, as well as Army wife. They welcomed a second daughter in the Spring of 2013. Tragically in the late Summer of 2013, her husband lost his long battle to suicide. As a widow and mother of two, she has now made it a mission to work closely within the Military community. Danica has put her heart into helping other Caregivers and Wounded Veterans like her husband.*

[\[LISTEN\]](#)

## VETERANS

[How a homeless orphan from Florida earned the Medal of Honor in Vietnam](#) [David Roza, *Task & Purpose*, 18 February 2021]

*Fifty-three years ago this Sunday, a man who grew up homeless, eating spare milk and donuts from strangers, gave his life so his fellow soldiers could survive one of the most vicious battles of the Vietnam War. Army Staff Sgt. Clifford Chester Sims of the 101st Airborne Division was leading his squad away from a burning ammunition dump just outside the city of Huế on Feb. 21, 1968 when he heard the distinct sound of a booby trap going off. He yelled for his soldiers to get back, then he flung himself on the device, taking the full impact of the blast. Born on June 18, 1942, Clifford Pittman, as he was known at the time, was orphaned at an early age and sent to stay with his stepfather's relatives, according to a 2015 profile of the soldier by the Tennessean. But Pittman was an extra mouth to feed in a household that could not provide for him, so he left one night and stayed in an abandoned bus in nearby Panama City. Finally, at the age of 13, Clifford Pittman became Clifford Sims when he was adopted by James and Irene Sims. The teenager made it to high school, met Mary, fell in love and, in 1961, joined the Army. Mary said it was a perfect fit for him.*

[Retired military may face fewer transition problems than their peers: report](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 17 February 2021]

*Veterans' advocates for years have emphasized the importance of community help in recovery and reintegration for wounded troops. But a [new survey](#) released this week by the Military Family Advisory Network and Wounded Warrior Project suggests that veterans who spend only a few years in the ranks may have an even more difficult time finding those support networks than their retired peers. The survey, which polled 1,276 post-9/11 veterans and caregivers last fall, found less satisfaction with health care access among non-retirees than with retired troops (22 percent negative vs. 11 percent). Fewer non-retiree families had adequate financial savings than their retired peers, with 43 percent of retirees reporting \$5,000 or more in emergency funds on hand compared to 18 percent for non-retirees.*

[World War II Vet, Former Sen. Bob Dole Says He's Been Diagnosed with Stage 4 Lung Cancer](#) [John Hanna, *The Associated Press*, 18 February 2021]

*Bob Dole, a former longtime senator and the 1996 Republican presidential nominee, announced Thursday that he has been diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer. Dole, 97, said in a short statement that he was diagnosed recently and would begin treatment on Monday. "While I certainly have some hurdles ahead, I also know that I join millions of Americans who face significant health challenges of their own," he said. Dole received an immediate outpouring of sympathy, prayers and well wishes from across the political spectrum. Dole, a native of Russell, Kansas, represented the state in Congress for almost 36 years before resigning from the Senate in 1996 to challenge Democratic President Bill Clinton. Dole had unsuccessfully sought the GOP nomination in 1980 and 1988, and he was President Gerald Ford's vice presidential running mate in 1976, when Ford lost to Democrat Jimmy Carter.*