

## DEOMI NEWS LINKS 5 MARCH 2021

### HIGHLIGHTS

[New congressional investigation to examine the link between veterans and extremist groups](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 4 March 2021]

*The House Veterans' Affairs Committee on Thursday launched a new investigation into the targeted recruitment of veterans by extremist organizations in the wake of the deadly attack on Congress earlier this year. The announcement came the same day that Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough promised his own inquiry into the radicalization of veterans by hate groups during a briefing with reporters at the White House, and follows a similar ongoing investigation into the problem by Defense Department leaders. In a statement, committee Chairman Mark Takano, D-Calif., said the move is designed to understand why veterans are being singled out by the groups and determine what can be done to stop it. "The harm from this particular issue transcends veterans, and taken to the extreme, can threaten the very core of our democracy and national security," he said. "Exploiting veterans is unacceptable, and it's our job to identify potential means to identify, intercept, and assist veterans who have been ensnared in such recruitment efforts."*

[Passed Over 3 Times, a Black Marine Colonel Is Being Promoted to General](#) [Helene Cooper, *The New York Times*, 4 March 2021]

*The Marine Corps is promoting Col. Anthony Henderson, a combat-tested Iraq and Afghanistan veteran, to brigadier general, a move that cracks the doorway for the service to potentially promote an African-American to its most senior ranks. The Marine Corps, which had passed over Colonel Henderson for four years, has placed him on a highly selective list of nine colonels to be granted a coveted one star that denotes general rank status—brigadier general. The list, which was signed by President Biden, arrived Wednesday evening at the Senate Armed Services Committee, to start the required confirmation process, according to the committee's website. Normally, such promotions would not garner much attention. But Colonel Henderson is a Black man with combat command experience in a service—the Marines—that has never, in its 245-year history, had a four-star officer who was not a White man. And even the one-, two- and three-star Marine Corps officer positions are predominantly White and male—particularly the ones in the combat specialties that feed the four-star ranks.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Study of Military Links a Climate of Sexual Harassment to Higher Risk of Assault](#) [Nancy A. Youssef, *The Wall Street Journal*, 2 March 2021]

*Military personnel who serve in units with higher levels of sexual harassment are more likely to become victims of sexual assault, according to a study commissioned by the Pentagon that linked the incidence of the two. The study found that the environment created when sexual harassment is permitted to occur heightened dangers for everyone in the unit. It concluded that the U.S. military should treat sexual harassment and assault as a "single underlying disorder," not separate issues. The [study, released Tuesday](#), was conducted by Rand Corp. for the Defense Department.*

*“The whole idea is to get the military to think more about how to stop harassment, even if its ultimate goal is to stop assault,” said Terry Schell, one of the report’s authors. “Many of the prevention measures the military has done for assault, they haven’t done for harassment.”*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

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## **SPECIAL: EXTREMISM**

[FBI chief calls Jan. 6 “domestic terrorism,” defends intel](#) [Eric Tucker and Mary Clare Jalonick, *The Associated Press*, 2 March 2021]

*Director Wray’s comments before Congress, in a rare public appearance since the deadly Capitol attack two months ago, was the FBI’s most vigorous defense against the suggestion that it had not adequately communicated the distinct possibility of violence as lawmakers certified the results of the presidential election. He also described in stark terms the threat from domestic violent extremists and said that, contrary to some Republicans, there is no evidence that anti-Trump groups were involved in the riot. In characterizing the events of Jan. 6 as an act of domestic terrorism, Wray highlighted the FBI’s growing concern about an increase in extremist violence in the U.S., including from militia groups, White supremacists and anarchists. The threat they pose is being treated with the same urgency as that from international terror groups like the Islamic State or al-Qaida. “Jan. 6 was not an isolated event. The problem of domestic terrorism has been metastasizing across the country for a long time now and it’s not going away anytime soon,” Wray said.*

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

[Marines, Infantry Most Highly Represented Among Veterans Arrested After Capitol Riot](#) [Gina Harkins and Hope Hodge Seck, *Military.com*, 26 February 2021]

*More than 40% of the 32 veterans arrested after the Capitol riot are affiliated with the Marines. Thirteen of them served in the Marine Corps, according to service records, and one shipped off to boot camp but was separated mid-training. Jonathan Wong, a former Marine Corps infantry officer who now works as a policy researcher, said he believes there are cultural reasons for the trends seen in the Capitol arrests. “Even before people started confirming there was a high proportion of veterans [in the Jan. 6 riots], I kind of had an inkling,” he said. The Army, the military’s largest branch at nearly three times the size of the Marine Corps, has the next-biggest representation among the veterans arrested, with nine soldiers accused of participating. The Air Force and Navy each had two, and the National Guard three. (One of the National Guard members was previously a Marine.)*

[Marines knew infantryman shared extremist content online months before investigation, records show](#) [Andrew Dyer, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, 28 February 2021]

*When Marine Corps leaders first found out a Camp Pendleton-based infantryman was claiming to be chairman of a nationalist organization and was sharing extremist material on social media, they counseled him to leave the group and remove some his posts but kept him among their ranks and sent him on deployment, recently released documents show. Six months later—one day after *The San Diego Union-Tribune* [asked](#) about the Marine, then-Lance Cpl. Thomas Cade Martin—*

*the Corps launched a formal investigation that determined his actions violated military rules against extremism, reduced him in rank, then separated him from the military, documents show. Marine Corps regulations say it's mandatory that any Marine found to be participating in extremist activities be processed for separation following the first substantiated case of misconduct. That process includes an administrative board hearing that can decide whether or not to remove him from the Marines.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[The Military's Extremism Problem Is Our Problem](#) [Michael Robinson and Kori Schake, *The New York Times*, 2 March 2021] [OPINION]

*There is no doubt that there are far-right extremists among the military community: Service members and veterans have been arrested in connection with violent plots, including a plan by a Coast Guard lieutenant to attack prominent Democratic Party officials and a plot by two Marine Corps veterans to kidnap the governor of Michigan. Wade Michael Page, an Army veteran, killed six people at a Sikh temple in 2012. But the truth is that once one considers the insurrectionists' overwhelmingly male composition, the share of veterans among those arrested over involvement in the Capitol attack does not significantly confound historical averages. Analysts are even unsure whether veterans were disproportionately present at the event or merely more visible during "its most aggressive actions." But focusing on statistical proportions misses the more important issues: No number of veterans involved in violence against their own government would be acceptable. Moreover, the attention to percentages draws focus from more subtle but equally troubling aspects of the problem of extremism among veterans and the military.*

[Oath Keeper charged in Capitol riot renounces militia group](#) [Alanna Durkin Richer, *The Associated Press*, 26 February 2021]

*A member of the Oath Keepers militia group charged with plotting with other extremists in the attack on the U.S. Capitol disavowed the anti-government group in a court hearing Friday, telling the judge she is "appalled" by her fellow Oath Keepers and "humiliated" by her arrest. Jessica Watkins, one of nine members and associates of the far-right militia group charged with planning and coordinating with one another in the Jan. 6 siege, said she plans to cancel her Oath Keepers membership and has disbanded her local Ohio militia group. Watkins' remarks came before the judge ordered her to remain behind bars while she awaits trial. "I did it out of the love of my country but I think it's time to let all of that go," the Army veteran who ran an Ohio bar said during the hearing held via videoconference. "I'm not a criminally minded person... I am humiliated that I am even here today," she added.*

[Pentagon releases training materials to address extremism](#) [Ellen Mitchell, *The Hill*, 26 February 2021]

*The Pentagon on Friday [released documents](#) meant to serve as training materials for the recent department-wide stand down order to address extremism. The one-day stand down, ordered by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in early February, is meant to take place by early April and serve as a first step toward rooting out those who hold White nationalist or other extremist views. The materials released Friday lay out four goals for commanders in broaching the issue, including a review of the meaning of the oaths to the Constitution taken by all service members; an*

*assessment of actions prohibited under law or military policy; the responsibility to report to the chain of command when a prohibited action is seen or learned of, or certain behaviors cause concern; and planned listening sessions.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Pentagon report cites threat of extremism in military](#) [Robert Burns and Lolita C. Baldor, *The Associated Press*, 2 March 2021]

*Domestic extremist groups pose a serious threat to the military by seeking to recruit service members into their ranks and, in some cases, joining the military to acquire combat experience, according to a [Pentagon report released Tuesday](#). The report, prepared last year at the request of Congress, did not assess whether the problem of extremism in the military is growing, but it cited a number of examples of service members with extremist affiliations. It said the number of current and former military members who ascribe to White supremacist ideology is unknown. “Military members are highly prized by these groups as they bring legitimacy to their causes and enhance their ability to carry out attacks,” the report said. “In addition to potential violence, White supremacy and White nationalism pose a threat to the good order and discipline within the military.”*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[The U.S. government can do more to fight domestic terror without any new laws](#) [Seamus Hughes and Bennett Clifford, *The Washington Post*, 2 March 2021] [OPINION]

*In the weeks since the Jan. 6 siege of the Capitol that left five dead and over 100 injured, the debate about domestic counter-extremism policies has reignited, using a narrative that may seem familiar to many of its longtime observers. Some commentators have called for a counterinsurgency strategy in the United States, harking back to America’s efforts in Iraq and perhaps ignoring many of the lessons learned from such approaches. Others toyed with the idea of a new domestic intelligence agency similar to those proposed, but ultimately rejected, in the immediate aftermath of the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001. But after we examined every Capitol Hill arrest, it looks like preventing the next Jan. 6 may not require such sweeping changes. Using existing structures, resources and programs at its disposal, the Biden administration can authorize several steps today that would dramatically improve the efficiency of the federal response to domestic extremism without new laws or authorities.*

[What the policing response to the KKK in the 1960s can teach about dismantling White supremacist groups today](#) [David Cunningham, *The Conversation*, 4 March 2021] [OPINION]

*As a social scientist who researches how White supremacist groups are policed, I understand both the need to vigorously address threats of violence from racist and anti-democratic elements and the calls from some Justice Department officials to expand police powers to do so. But if history is a guide, providing police with new tools to address current White nationalist threats could result in further repression of activists of color. The campaign to police the civil rights-era Ku Klux Klan, for example, offers clear lessons in this respect. While that effort prevented White supremacists from capitalizing on their momentum in the mid-1960s, it also spurred unforeseen consequences.*

[White nationalists are once again using Christian symbols to spread hate](#) [Trevor Hughes, *USA TODAY*, 1 March 2021]

*A screaming man with his fist raised, a Byzantine cross emblazoned in red on his T-shirt. A white flag with a lone green pine tree and the words “An Appeal to Heaven” fluttering over the angry crowd. The Christian flag whipping in the wind from a parked pickup. Those images on display at the Jan. 5-6 rally and riot in Washington, D.C., have raised concerns that some of former President Donald Trump’s most ardent and dangerous supporters, including groups such as the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, QAnon, 3 Percenters and America Firsters, are cloaking themselves in biblical language to justify their actions. The flags and other displays are the latest examples of how White terrorists throughout history, including the KKK, have cited Christianity to justify what they claim is their God-given right to control races and ethnic groups, experts said. The displays—including a prayer from the Senate rostrum by a QAnon shaman who broke into the Capitol—have so alarmed some faith leaders that they published an [open letter](#) Friday signed by more than 1,400 pastors and church leaders condemning the “perversion” of their faith.*

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## CULTURE

[6 Dr. Seuss books won’t be published for racist images](#) [Mark Pratt, *The Associated Press*, 2 March 2021]

*Six Dr. Seuss books—including “And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street” and “If I Ran the Zoo”—will stop being published because of racist and insensitive imagery, the business that preserves and protects the author’s legacy said Tuesday. “These books portray people in ways that are hurtful and wrong,” Dr. Seuss Enterprises told *The Associated Press* in a statement that coincided with the late author and illustrator’s birthday. “Ceasing sales of these books is only part of our commitment and our broader plan to ensure Dr. Seuss Enterprises’ catalog represents and supports all communities and families,” it said. The other books affected are “McElligot’s Pool,” “On Beyond Zebra!,” “Scrambled Eggs Super!,” and “The Cat’s Quizzer.” The decision to cease publication and sales of the books was made last year after months of discussion, the company told AP. “Dr. Seuss Enterprises listened and took feedback from our audiences including teachers, academics and specialists in the field as part of our review process. We then worked with a panel of experts, including educators, to review our catalog of titles,” it said.*

[Amanda Gorman’s Dutch translator stands down after uproar that Black writer wasn’t chosen](#) [Jack Guy and Mick Krever, *CNN*, 2 March 2021]

*Dutch writer Marieke Lucas Rijneveld, who won the International Booker Prize in 2020, has withdrawn from a project to translate Black American poet Amanda Gorman’s work following a backlash against the commission. Rijneveld, who is White and non-binary, announced they were to work on the project with publisher Meulenhoff on February 23, only to say they had handed back the commission three days later. “I am shocked by the uproar around my involvement in the spread of the Amanda Gorman’s message, and I understand the people who feel hurt by Meulenhoff’s decision to ask me,” wrote Rijneveld. Critics of the appointment questioned why a White writer had been chosen to translate the work of a Black writer. Gorman is the U.S. youth poet laureate and was one of the breakout stars of Biden’s presidential inauguration.*

[Dr. Seuss Made World War II Cartoons That Definitely Aren't for Kids](#) [James Barber, *Military.com*, 4 March 2021]

*Many people don't realize that the good doctor had a long and successful career as a commercial illustrator and political cartoonist before he became famous for his kids' literature. The Dartmouth College grad was approaching 40 when he joined the U.S. Army in 1943. He was put in command of the animation department of the 1st Motion Picture Unit, which was created out of the Army Signal Corps. Private Snafu shorts were produced by an all-star team. Geisel wrote the shorts with a team that included children's authors P.D. Eastman ("Go, Dog, Go," "Are You My Mother?") and Munro Leaf ("Ferdinand the Bull"). The writers collaborated with Looney Tunes animators Chuck Jones, Friz Freleng, Bob Clampett and Frank Tashlin and voice actor Mel Blanc (Bugs Bunny, Yosemite Sam) to create a series of forgotten classics. The team made 25 shorts for the War Department, although the last one was never released; it disappeared after the producers turned the master film over to the Army. Anyone who thinks Dr. Seuss always had the best interests of the little ones at heart will be shocked to see Private Snafu in action. Check out these alarming examples.*

[How Black people in the 19th century used photography as a tool for social change](#) [Samantha Hill, *The Conversation*, 26 February 2021]

*To pose for a photograph became an empowering act for African Americans. It served as a way to counteract racist caricatures that distort facial features and mocked Black society. African Americans in urban and rural settings participated in photography to demonstrate dignity in the Black experience. Frederick Douglass is perhaps best known as an abolitionist and intellectual. But he was also the most photographed American of the 19th century. And he encouraged the use of photography to [promote social change](#) for Black equality. In that spirit, this article—using images from the David V. Tinder Collection of Michigan Photography at the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan—examines different ways Black Americans from the 19th century used photography as a tool for self-empowerment and social change.*

[Intertwined threads: Black, Diné history often converge](#) [Cindy Yurth, *Navajo Times*, 25 February 2021]

*African-American and Indigenous history are colorful intertwined threads that run through the tapestry of the American story, sometimes unnoticed in the dense fabric and sometimes prominently displayed. Here on the Navajo Nation, the threads have converged and diverged over the centuries, but there is no doubt the two cultures have influenced and complemented each other in subtle but powerful ways. Although Black folks have been in the Southwest since the 16th Century (as slaves of the Spanish settlers), and the famed "Buffalo Soldiers" fought alongside Navajo Scouts during the Apache wars of the 1860s through the 1880s, a longer and more intimate connection was forged from the 1920s to the present, when African-American teachers came to the reservation to help staff the remote mission and BIA schools.*

[Phoenix to dismantle Squaw Peak, Robert E. Lee street signs](#) [*The Associated Press*, 1 March 2021]

*The city of Phoenix is officially installing new signs for two streets whose names have long been considered offensive. Mayor Kate Gallego will look on Monday morning as workers erect a new*

*sign for Piestewa Peak Drive, formerly Squaw Peak Drive. Historically, “Squaw” is a slur used to describe Native American women. Piestewa honors fallen Native American soldier Lori Piestewa. She was a member of the Hopi tribe and was killed during an ambush in Iraq in 2003. Officials will also unveil signage for Desert Cactus Street, formerly Robert E. Lee Street. Critics say having a street named for the Confederate general glorifies the pro-slavery Confederacy.*

[Space Force sounds like a joke thanks to pop culture—that could be a problem for an important military branch](#) [Wendy Whitman Cobb, *The Conversation*, 19 February 2021]

[COMMENTARY]

*The U.S. Space Force has a serious role to play in the modern world. Its stated mission is to train and equip personnel to defend U.S. interests in space. Given the increasing military and economic importance of space, the USSF is likely to grow in importance. But a quick internet search shows that for most people, the Space Force is more a meme than a military branch. It has been the subject of jokes on “Saturday Night Live,” and Netflix was working on a comedy show before the service was officially formed. None other than Captain Kirk himself, actor William Shatner, has weighed in, arguing for the use of Navy ranks over Air Force ranks in the Space Force—after all, he wasn’t Colonel Kirk. Given this relationship between science fiction and the USSF, few people take it seriously. Modern pop culture depictions of the Space Force as a joke are distracting from the serious responsibilities the USSF is taking on. I am a space policy analyst who has studied the USSF’s relationship with science fiction, and my research shows this is creating a problem for the force.*

[Twitch backtracks after outcry for using “gender neutral” term “womxn”](#) [BBC News, 2 March 2021]

*The company had said it would use the term “womxn” in order to be more gender neutral in its language. But LGBT communities online called the change transphobic because it suggested trans women were not women. “We’re committed to growing from these experiences... and ensuring we’re inclusive to all,” the company tweeted. “Womxn” has become a popular alternative word for people who say that the term “women” has patriarchal roots. Some believe the term is inclusive of trans women and some non-binary people, but that is contested. The spelling “stems from a longstanding objection to the word woman as it comes from man, and the linguistic roots of the word mean that it really does come from the word man,” Dr Clara Bradbury-Rance, fellow at King’s College London, told the BBC in 2018. It echoes a trend in some Spanish-language communities that use the word “Latinx” to move away from the traditional use of genders in the language.*

[We found it, folks: The worst military acronym ever conceived](#) [Paul Szoldra, *Task & Purpose*, 3 March 2021]

*Allow me to introduce CNIDDCCSAAPWSVCSA, the acronym for the Commission on the Naming of Items of the Department of Defense that Commemorates the Confederate States of America or Any Person Who Served Voluntarily with the Confederate States of America. That’s the incredibly unwieldy name lawmakers assigned to a group of people tasked with removing Confederate symbols from U.S. military installations. According to officials, the eight-person group has now been fully assembled and will develop a plan to rename bases named for*

*Confederate generals such as Fort Bragg and Fort Hood by January 2024. Yet the times are changing. While a once-secret study carried out by the Army found that racism may not have played a “major role” in naming decisions of bases amid World War I, several post names were linked to advocacy groups for Confederate veterans and coincided with the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, an extremist group that terrorized and murdered Blacks, along with the establishment of hundreds of Confederate monuments throughout the South. And the decision to strip Confederate names from bases now has bipartisan support.*

[Who’s really Latina? A recent controversy draws outrage over identity, appropriation](#) [Raul A. Reyes, *NBC News*, 28 February 2021]

*Who’s really Latino? For millions of Americans, the issues around racial, cultural and ethnic identity are complicated. There are broad debates about how best to describe Americans of Spanish-speaking, Latin American descent (is it Hispanic? Latinx?), and endless choices reflect self-identification preferences. Claiming Hispanic, Latino or Latinx identity is a matter of personal choice. As the Pew Research Center said in a [2020 report](#): “Who is Hispanic? Anyone who says they are.” But a recent controversy illustrates the tension between identifying as part of a group and being accused of appropriating an ethnic or racial community. Until January, Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan was known as a prominent Latina civil rights lawyer in New York City. Then the online news site Prism alleged that Bannan was not Latina.*

## **DISCRIMINATION**

[Arab Americans, deemed “White” in government records, suffer an unseen COVID-19 crisis](#) [Marc Ramirez, *USA TODAY*, 28 February 2021]

*Arab Americans and their advocates fear alarming rates of COVID-19 infection and deaths in their communities—but there is little data to back up these concerns because most are categorized as “White” by the federal government. The nation’s 3.7 million Arab Americans are unable to self-identify as such on the census and other government forms. As a result, official health care data can be hard to come by, and experts and community leaders are forced to rely on patchwork, often self-compiled data. The issue has been exacerbated by COVID-19 in a community facing numerous risk factors for the virus, including large numbers of immigrants and refugees, poverty, multigenerational households and high rates of hypertension, diabetes and heart disease.*

[Black Amazon manager sues the e-commerce giant, accusing it of race and gender discrimination](#) [Jay Greene, *The Washington Post*, 1 March 2021]

*A Black senior manager at Amazon sued the company, two colleagues and one former co-worker for race and gender discrimination, claiming she was denied promotions and sexually harassed at the e-commerce giant. Charlotte Newman’s suit, filed in federal court in Washington, D.C., accuses co-workers of engaging in racial stereotypes, describing her as “too direct,” “just scary,” and saying she looked “like a gorilla.” One former employee groped Newman’s thigh at a work dinner and propositioned her for sex, according to the suit. “Amazon should harness the power of diverse leadership, instead of dimming the light of Black employees,” Newman, a manager in Amazon’s cloud-computing division, said in an emailed statement provided by her*

lawyer, Douglas Wigdor. Amazon does not tolerate discrimination or harassment, spokesperson Kate Brinks said. “We are currently investigating the new allegations included in this lawsuit,” Brinks said in an emailed statement.

[Caster Semenya appeals to European Court of Human Rights over “discriminatory” testosterone limit](#) [Sara Spary, CNN, 26 February 2021]

*Caster Semenya, the South African Olympic champion runner, has appealed to the European Court of Human Rights to end “discriminatory” testosterone limits imposed on female athletes. Semenya is hyperandrogenous—meaning she has naturally high levels of the male sex hormone—and is fighting against new rules introduced in 2019 by track and field’s governing body World Athletics (previously known as the IAAF) that regulate levels of the hormone in female athletes. World Athletics said the rules were about “leveling the playing field” because, it said, testosterone “provides significant performance advantages in female athletes.” Semenya took the 800 meters gold at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics but the rules mean she will now need to take testosterone-reducing medication in order to compete internationally over distances between 400 meters and one mile—something she has declined to do.*

[Deported veterans, stranded far from home after years of military service, press Biden to bring them back](#) [Jennifer Martinez-Medina, *The Conversation*, 25 February 2021] [COMMENTARY]

*I am a political scientist who studies political rights across borders. I began collecting deported veterans’ stories after my brother, a U.S. Army veteran, was deported to Mexico in 2005. So this work, and this problem, is personal for me. Military service is supposed to qualify veterans for naturalization as U.S. citizens—and extends status benefits to family members—because honorable service satisfies the “good moral character” requirements for naturalization, according to the 1940 Nationality Act. The promise of naturalization is sometimes a military recruitment strategy targeting immigrant communities. After 9/11, immigrant military members even became entitled to expedited citizenship, which could speed up the naturalization process from three years to one year. But in 2017 a Trump administration policy restricted access to the expedited citizenship promised to veterans after 9/11. And, in general, immigrant veterans get very little guidance about how to complete the naturalization process from their military branches once they have served.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#) [\[REPRINT\]](#)

[He Won a Varsity Letter at 16. He Finally Got It When He Was 79.](#) [Carol Pogash, *The New York Times*, 2 March 2021]

*Mr. Ammiano, who would grow up to become one of the country’s pioneering gay leaders, an early openly gay comedian and a prominent California elected official, found that he loved running long distance. He helped his team win meets and in 1958, his junior year, he won his final one-mile run. “That last win put me over the top,” Mr. Ammiano said, and when he was told he had earned a varsity letter, Mr. Ammiano recalled, “I went to seventh heaven.” But before the awards ceremony, he learned that the last meet would no longer count. Mr. Ammiano, then 16, was never given an explicit explanation, but he never doubted the reason: “I was weird and different.” The other day, Mr. Ammiano, who is 79, received a note in the mail from his alma mater, Immaculate Conception High School in Montclair, N.J., that contained some unexpected*

*news—he would finally be getting his varsity letter. How the school reversed its decision six decades later is a story that involves a California cantor, a 90-year-old track coach and school officials who said they were determined to right an old wrong.*

[Lawmakers can't cite local examples of trans girls in sports](#) [David Crary and Lindsay Whitehurst, *The Associated Press*, 3 March 2021]

*Legislators in more than 20 states have introduced bills this year that would ban transgender girls from competing on girls' sports teams in public high schools. Yet in almost every case, sponsors cannot cite a single instance in their own state or region where such participation has caused problems. The Associated Press reached out to two dozen state lawmakers sponsoring such measures around the country as well as the conservative groups supporting them and found only a few times it's been an issue among the hundreds of thousands of American teenagers who play high school sports. In South Carolina, for example, Rep. Ashley Trantham said she knew of no transgender athletes competing in the state and was proposing a ban to prevent possible problems in the future. Otherwise, she said during a recent hearing, "the next generation of female athletes in South Carolina may not have a chance to excel." In Tennessee, House Speaker Cameron Sexton conceded there may not actually be transgender students now participating in middle and high school sports; he said a bill was necessary so the state could be "proactive."*

[Vaccinating by age groups is unfair, particularly to minorities, advisory panel tells CDC](#) [Karen Weintraub, *USA TODAY*, 2 March 2021]

*Many states prioritized COVID-19 vaccines for people over 75, then moved to those over 65, but they shouldn't keep stepping down by age, an advisory committee to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Monday. The approach is inherently unfair to minorities, committee members said, because they have a lower life-expectancy and because people of color are dying of COVID-19 at younger ages than White Americans—even in their 30s, 40s and 50s. "I'm not in favor of any part of an age eligibility bracket under 65," said Dr. José Romero, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock and chairman of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. The committee disagreed with plans in some states to require people to show proof that they have two medical conditions on a pre-specified list before being allowed to be vaccinated.*

["We're born Indian and we die White": Indigenous leaders in California fear COVID deaths are going undercounted](#) [Kate Cimini, *USA TODAY*, 28 February 2021]

*Native American leaders across California said COVID-19 deaths have shrouded their communities, yet state figures show few American Indian people have died here compared with other states with significant Indigenous populations. Leaders and experts fear deaths in their communities have been undercounted because of a long history of Native Americans being racially misclassified. This damaging practice can bar native people from getting the help and resources they actually need, they said. California has the largest number of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States and the largest number of American Indians and Alaska Natives living in urban centers. They are often declared White, Latino or Black on official forms by uninformed hospital workers, according to community leaders and various studies. Sometimes they are simply listed as "other."*

## DIVERSITY

### [African American Federal Executive Association Builds a Pipeline of Talent for Senior-Level Jobs](#) [Courtney Publé, GovExec, 26 February 2021]

*For almost two decades, the [African American Federal Executive Association](#) has been working to build a pipeline of talent for the upper ranks of the federal government. A leader of the association, established 19 years ago and open to active and retired federal employees at the GS-13 level through the Senior Executive Service (or the equivalent), is optimistic about making even more progress under the Biden administration. As of December 2020, 18% of the federal workforce was Black/African American, which was up from 17% in September 2006, according to data from the Office of Personnel Management. For GS levels 13-15, Blacks/African Americans represented 15.5% of the workforce compared to 12% in September 2006. The Senior Executive Service, which is for officials above GS-15, was less than 11% Black, as of June 2020, according to the Senior Executives Association.*

### [Black Army leaders hope to inspire future Soldiers of color](#) [Joseph Lacdan, Army News Service, 26 February 2021]

*Lt. Gen. Scott Dingle can still remember the uncomfortable tension. As a young captain, he said he experienced racism from a supervisor, whose biases were reflected in his evaluations of Dingle's performance. "I ran into the hurdle of racism and prejudice by my boss and was marginalized," said Dingle, now the Army's 45th surgeon general. "It made me angry. Yet I maintained my professionalism and knew that I just must show him, as well as others, I would not to quit and get frustrated. I said, 'OK, let me raise my game.'"* Dingle acknowledged that he and the other six African-American general officers who gathered to discuss their experiences Thursday afternoon endured social obstacles in their careers. A key component of the service's five-year strategic diversity plan, Project Inclusion is a holistic effort designed to listen to Army personnel and promote programs of equity, diversity and inclusion.

### [Brown raises \\$20M to support diversity, equity and inclusion](#) [The Associated Press, 27 February 2021]

*Brown University has received more than \$20 million over the past two academic years in support of its diversity and inclusion plan, the school said. The funds have offered new support for faculty positions, research initiatives, student financial support and other priorities and is part of more than \$157 million the Ivy League college has committed toward the plan over the past five years, the school said in a statement. The funds were raised as part of the university's \$3 billion BrownTogether campaign. At the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America, for example, scholars from across the academic spectrum are convening for urgent explorations on how anti-Black racism permeates American public health, criminal justice and election procedures. At the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, faculty and students are collaborating with the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History to gather stories from descendants of slaves.*

### [Hiring a Chief Equity Officer? Here's What You Need to Know](#) [Alisha Powell Gillis, Route Fifty, 3 March 2021]

*Equity has become an increasingly pressing issue for local governments following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody last year and the racial disparities in Covid-19 infections and deaths. As local officials seek to address the disadvantages felt by communities of color, one action some are taking is to hire equity officers. A relatively new position, cities like Los Angeles, Chicago and Pittsburgh have brought on equity officers to address systemic racism and structural inequities. And this trend doesn't seem to be slowing down. Speaking this week at Govapalooza, a virtual festival for local officials, Siri Russell, the director of equity and inclusion in Albemarle County, Virginia, and Ray Baray, chief of staff at the International City/County Management Association and a former assistant city manager and chief of staff in Austin, Texas, offered guidance on how local governments can successfully add an equity officer to their ranks.*

[Queer in the country: Why some LGBTQ Americans prefer rural life to urban “gayborhoods”](#)

[Christopher T. Conner, *The Conversation*, 4 March 2021] [COMMENTARY]

*Demographers estimate that 15% to 20% of the United States' total LGBTQ population—between 2.9 million and 3.8 million people—live in rural areas. These millions of understudied LGBTQ residents of rural America are the subject of my latest academic [research project](#). Since 2015 I have conducted interviews with 40 rural LGBTQ people and analyzed various survey data sets to understand the rural gay experience. My study results, now under peer review for publication in an academic journal, found that many LGBTQ people in rural areas view their sexual identity substantially differently from their urban counterparts – and question the merits of urban gay life.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Space Force Should Embrace the Natural Inclusivity of Space Nerds](#) [Sarah Mineiro, *Defense One*, 28 February 2021] [OPINION]

*The first Black-White kiss on U.S. television occurred between Lt. Uhura and Captain Kirk, a controversial-for-1968 decision that reflected Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry's broader philosophical [commitment to addressing race](#) in his science fiction. This bold approach to diversity and inclusion is a fundamental element of the self-selecting group of space nerds that comprise the Space Force. As the newest service branch finds its feet, it should embrace this ethos—a [proven aid to recruitment](#), readiness, and mission success—as fundamental to its identity.*

[“Tough as nails:” First Diné woman participates in gender-integrated Marine Corps training](#)

[Donovan Quintero, *The Navajo Times*, 18 February 2021]

*She turned 19 the day she stepped foot onto the yellow footprints. Jordan Peshlakai stepped off the bus on Feb. 9 to be the first Navajo female to train at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, which traditionally trains only men. More importantly, she arrived at Receiving Company to be the first in her family to step on the infamous footprints on which every Marine must first step. It was no accident she was chosen to be the first from her tribe to take the Marine Corps to new and uncharted territory. Her recruiter, Gunnery Sgt. Jesus Fernandez, chose her for her tenacity and willingness. He described Navajo women as being “tough as nails,” which he said Peshlakai is. She'd mesh well with the 59 other young females who signed up to change the antiquated system of training female Marine recruits in only one place while the men had two options.*

[Travis AFB Airmen advance Tuskegee lineage](#) [Senior Airman Jonathon Carnell, *60th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs*, 28 February 2021]

*“In the Air Force we all have a family, but (for) an all-Black crew to come together and achieve such a remarkable thing is nothing short of amazing,” said Capt. David Brown, 22nd Airlift Squadron pilot and aircraft commander. A crew of 27 Black Airmen from Travis Air Force Base flew a heritage flight on a C-5M Super Galaxy, honoring Tuskegee Airmen, Feb. 19-21—a rare feat as only 2% of the Air Force are pilots and only 2% of those pilots are Black, according to Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr. “When I was a captain, I did an interview for Air Force Times, and it talked about the percentage of African Americans that were pilots,” Gen. Brown said in an article published by Airman Magazine in Dec. 2020. “It was 2%. That was 30 years ago. You know what it is right now? It’s still 2%.” Capt. Brown explained that the historic mission was intended to demonstrate that any minority group could be an aviator in the Air Force, and it was deeply meaningful to the Airmen involved. “This was a once in a lifetime flight,” said Capt. Brown. “Being part of an all-Black crew is kind of like having someone on board who gets everything about you. I believe something like this should happen multiple times a year.”*

[“We turn a blind eye”: Boston’s police remain largely White](#) [Alanna Durkin Richer, *The Associated Press*, 1 March 2021]

*For years, Boston city leaders have vowed to diversify the police department so it looks more like the community it serves. Yet the police force is just as White as it was a decade ago, and huge barriers to diversity remain, advocates say. City officials acknowledge more work needs to be done, but insist their efforts to bring in more officers of color are slowly paying off. But critics say the city has failed to back up its pledges with meaningful action. Black and Latinx candidates still consistently get passed over in favor of White applicants over decades-old minor brushes with law enforcement or seemingly arbitrary reasons, advocates say. And some critics say the city’s talk of inclusion rings hollow while it continues to fight a long-running case won by a group of Black officers over a promotional exam a judge found was discriminatory.*

## HUMAN RELATIONS

[Expanded-Operational Stress Control Training](#) [MC2 (SW/AW) Wyatt L. Anthony, *CNSL Public Affairs*, 1 March 2021]

*Naval Surface Force Atlantic, (SURFLANT), leaders, medical personnel and religious program specialists recently received training about the Navy’s Expanded Operational Stress Control (E-OSC) program from the Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control (NCCOSC). “The structure of the [program](#) makes it very flexible, so you don’t have to sit everyone down for hours on end to complete it. Included in the training were sections about Combat and Operational Stress First Aid, which is a multi-step process for assessing and caring for Sailors suffering from psychological stress injuries, and the implementation of Buddy Care and Unit Assessment, which are intervention tools used to assess individuals/units during times of stress. The instruction also focused on use of the “Stress-o-Meter”, is a web-based tool that collects subjective information based on the Stress Continuum and creates a “dashboard” for command leadership to develop an understanding and tracking of staff stress levels.*

[Go Ahead and Fail. Perfectionism can make you miserable. Here's how you can muster the courage to mess up.](#) [Arthur C. Brooks, *The Atlantic*, 25 February 2021]

*The fear of failure has a number of sources, not all of which are obvious. At first thought, it might seem like it is the dread of some known, bad outcome. For example, I might be afraid to give a presentation for my boss because if I fail, I won't get a promotion, with clear implications for my career. But the fear of failure seems to actually be about unknown outcomes, at least for those who are most anxious. In one [recent study](#) conducted at University College London, psychologists devised an experiment in which participants had to decide between a series of gambles with guaranteed rewards and a set of bets with potentially higher wins and losses. Based on this, they found that people who suffered from anxiety were the most unable to estimate the best probable reward, which is consistent with earlier research. The implication of this risk aversion is that if you are particularly anxious about failing, it's the uncertainty about whether you will do so that bothers you more than the actual consequences.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

## MISCELLANEOUS

[Austin calls on DOD workforce to reaffirm values, ethical conduct](#) [Caitlin M. Kenney, *Stars and Stripes*, 2 March 2021]

*Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has called on the Defense Department workforce to reaffirm their values and ethical conduct, according to a [memorandum](#) released Tuesday. In the two-page document dated Monday, Austin tells personnel that they represent the core values of the United States including honesty, integrity, character and selflessness. "I know you treasure these values just as much as I do," Austin wrote. "And I know I can count on you to conduct yourselves always in a manner that leaves no doubt of your fidelity." A request for information to the Pentagon on why Austin wrote the letter to the workforce went unanswered Tuesday. In the memo, Austin described ethical conduct as demonstrating the core values through actions such as being good stewards of taxpayer funding and gaining their trust and confidence.*

[Book Challenges Myths About American Poverty](#) [Neil Schoenherr, *Futurity*, 24 February 2021]

*[Poorly Understood: What America Gets Wrong About Poverty \(Oxford University Press, 2021\)](#), is the first book to systematically address and confront many of the most widespread myths pertaining to poverty. What if poverty is an experience that touches the majority of Americans? What if hard work does not necessarily lead to economic well-being? What if the reasons for poverty are largely beyond the control of individuals? "Within the United States, we tend to view poverty as an issue of 'them' rather than 'us,'" says book coauthor Mark Rank, professor of social welfare at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis and author of numerous books on poverty and the American dream. "Those in poverty are seen as strangers to mainstream America, people of color, falling outside acceptable behavior, and as such, to be scorned and stigmatized. "Yet it turns out that the vast majority of Americans will experience at least one year below the poverty line," Rank says. "Poverty touches all races, all regions of the country, and all age groups. Very few of us are immune from the reach of poverty at some point. This understanding can shift our perceptions of the poor. In a sense, 'We have met the enemy, and they are us.'"*

[Death of South Korea's first transgender soldier spurs calls for change](#) [Sangmi Cha and Josh Smith, *Reuters*, 4 March 2021]

*The death of South Korea's first known transgender soldier, who was discharged last year for undergoing gender reassignment surgery, sparked calls from advocacy groups and activists for better protections and acknowledgement of transgender residents. Byun Hui-su, 23, who was a staff sergeant before being discharged, was found dead by emergency officials at her home in the city of Cheongju, south of Seoul, on Wednesday. "Byun's death resonated even more with the public because the military and this society refused to acknowledge the change," Rainbow Action Against Sexual-Minority Discrimination of Korea, an umbrella association of group of 40 sexual minority groups, said in a statement. Byun's bravery in coming forward had inspired and empowered others, the group said.*

[Massive investment in social studies and civics education proposed to address eroding trust in democratic institutions](#) [Joe Heim, *The Washington Post*, 1 March 2021]

*The U.S. Capitol attacked by thugs. An alleged plot to kidnap a state governor. Bogus claims of widespread election fraud. Violent protests in the streets. Death threats against public health officials. And a never-ending barrage of anger and misinformation on social media directed at, and by, politicians, leaders, pundits and an increasingly bitter and frustrated populace. As the battles have raged, trust in institutions—government, media, the law—has plummeted. So how did we get here? And how do we get out? For many close observers, a direct line can be drawn from today's civics crises to a long-standing failure to adequately teach American government, history and civic responsibility. Now, a diverse collection of academics, historians, teachers, school administrators and state education leaders is proposing an overhaul of the way civics and history are taught to American K-12 students. And they're calling for a massive investment of funds, teacher training and curriculum development to help make that happen. The Educating for American Democracy (EAD) initiative will release a [36-page report and an accompanying 39-page road map Tuesday](#), laying out extensive guidance for improving and reimagining the teaching of social studies, history and civics and then implementing that over the next decade.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Most military families eligible for vaccine starting in April](#) [Caitlin M. Kenney, *Stars and Stripes*, 4 March 2021]

*The Defense Department rollout of its coronavirus vaccine effort will expand to most military families and service members starting in April, Army Lt. Gen. Ronald Place, the director of the Defense Health Agency, said Thursday. The announcement was made during a virtual town hall hosted by Blue Star Families and the American Red Cross for military families about the coronavirus and the availability of vaccines. Speaking as a physician, the safety and effectiveness of the approved vaccines is exceptional. And every passing week, the evidence only grows stronger," Place said regarding people's hesitancy to be vaccinated. Ahead of the military moving season that usually starts in spring, Place said families who are moving will not be prioritized because they will be able to access the vaccine no matter where they are moving to or from. When they are vaccinated will depend on which tier and phase that they fall under for receiving it.*

[Past Marijuana Use Is No Longer a Disqualifier for a Federal Job](#) [Erich Wagner, *GovExec*, 26 February 2021]

*The Office of Personnel Management on Thursday told agencies that past use of marijuana should no longer automatically rule out candidates for federal jobs. In a [memo](#) to agency heads, Acting OPM Director Kathleen McGettigan said that although the use and possession of marijuana is a federal crime, a growing number of states have legalized or loosened restrictions on the drug and the federal government has not interfered with those decisions. So far, 15 states and the District of Columbia have either legalized or decriminalized possession of marijuana, while another 33 states permit its use for medicinal purposes. An individual's past criminal or history of drug use should always be considered on a case-by-case basis, as well as other factors, including the nature of the job they seek; the circumstances surrounding their drug use; their age at the time; "contributing societal conditions"; and any efforts toward rehabilitation, McGettigan wrote.*

[Vernon Jordan, civil rights leader and presidential confidant, dies at 85](#) [Judy Woodruff, *PBS News*, 2 March 2021]

*American civil rights activist, presidential confidant and corporate pioneer Vernon Jordan has died at the age of 85. A family statement said he passed Monday in Atlanta. Jordan was a leading advocate for Black Americans and a mentor to those who came after him. Jordan's own journey began in a segregated public housing project in Atlanta, and from there to DePauw University in Indiana, then to Howard Law School, where he was captivated by civil rights lawyers who practiced arguments in the school's mock trial room, and, upon graduation, back to Atlanta. In 1961, Jordan was part of the legal team that helped desegregate the University of Georgia. He escorted the school's first two Black students, Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes, past a hostile crowd on their first day. Jordan also worked on voter registration drives across the South, before assuming leadership of the United Negro College Fund. In 1971, he moved to the National Urban League, where he served as president for 10 years. His advocacy made him a target, and, in 1980, he survived an assassination attempt in Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

[Younger Military Personnel Reject Vaccine, in Warning for Commanders and the Nation](#) [Jennifer Steinhauer, *The New York Times*, 27 February 2021]

*Americans who go into the military understand the loss of personal liberty. Many of their daily activities are prescribed, as are their hairstyles, attire and personal conduct. So when it comes to taking a coronavirus vaccine, many troops—especially younger enlisted personnel as opposed to their officers—see a rare opportunity to exercise free will. "The Army tells me what, how and when to do almost everything," said Sgt. Tracey Carroll, who is based at Fort Sill, an Army post in Oklahoma. "They finally asked me to do something and I actually have a choice, so I said no." Sergeant Carroll, 24, represents a broad swath of members of the military—a largely young, healthy set of Americans from every corner of the nation—who are declining to get the shot, which for now is optional among personnel. They cite an array of political and health-related concerns.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

**MISCONDUCT**

[CNN: IG Blasts Former White House Doctor Ronny Jackson for Sexual Comments, Drinking, Taking Sleep Meds on Duty](#) [Stephen Losey, *Military.com*, 3 March 2021]

*A new report from the Defense Department's inspector general blasts Rep. Ronny Jackson, R-Texas, for his conduct while White House physician during the Obama and Trump administrations, [CNN reported Wednesday](#). The IG concluded that Jackson, who was a Navy rear admiral at the time, made "sexual and denigrating" comments about a female medical subordinate, according to CNN's report. The IG also talked to 56 witnesses who worked with Jackson between 2012 and 2018 who experienced, saw or heard about him yelling, cursing or belittling subordinates, CNN reported. The IG is expected to release the report publicly Wednesday, but could not be reached by *Military.com* by press time. Jackson's office has not yet returned a call from *Military.com*. But in a statement provided to CNN, Jackson denied consuming alcohol while on duty, and said he takes his professional responsibilities regarding prescription drugs seriously.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

## RACISM

[African-American Sacrifice in the Killing Fields of France](#) [Roger Cohen, *The New York Times*, 28 February 2021]

*The modest granite monument at the entrance to Séchault, a village in eastern France, commemorates the sacrifice of the United States 369th Infantry Regiment, African-Americans who came from Harlem to fight in the last months of World War I. A single word in brackets, "Colored," alludes to the official name of the New York National Guard unit from which the soldiers were drawn. They were the Black warriors of the segregated American armed forces. Denied a send-off parade in New York before shipping out in 1917, assigned to the French Army because their own countrymen refused to fight alongside them, they gave their lives in such numbers during 191 days of continuous combat that they earned for their bravery the moniker "Harlem Hellfighters." It appears that this nickname was given the unit by their German enemy, who called them "Höllenkämpfer." But it took the U.S. Army more than a century to adopt it as the official special designation for the 369th Infantry Regiment, a distinction approved by the Army only last September and announced this year by the New York National Guard on the eve of Black History Month.*

[Germany places entire far-right AfD under surveillance—reports](#) [*Deutsche Welle*, 3 March 2021]

*Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) have placed the Alternative for Germany (AfD) under surveillance, according to local media. That designation gives state agents more powers for surveillance in certain circumstances, including potentially tapping the party's communications. It arrived as a significant opposition force in the Bundestag in 2017, capitalizing in large part on public anger in parts of the electorate over Merkel's 2015 decision to allow in a wave of asylum seekers from conflict-torn countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The party has often caused outrage by questioning Germany's culture of remembrance and atonement after World War II. One of its foremost figures, Alexander Gauland, notoriously described the Nazi era as just "a speck of bird poo" on German history. The party has repeatedly faced accusations of ties to right-wing extremists.*

[The history of attacks against Asian Americans is complicated. Addressing it will be, too](#)

[Harmeet Kaur, *CNN*, 4 March 2021]

*Despite being the fastest growing racial and ethnic group in the country, despite consisting of 20 million people with roots in more than 20 countries, the racism, discrimination and disparities experienced by many Asian Americans are often overlooked, he said. Now, as a string of high-profile attacks has made more people pay attention, that's starting to change. "It's been really quite stunning to witness 'mainstream America' wake up to this invisibility," said Vargas, a journalist whose organization Define American seeks to humanize immigrants through storytelling. Wider recognition of the racism Asian Americans have been facing since the start of the pandemic is a critical step, advocates and experts say. But this moment has also prompted some to consider another question: What is the best path forward?*

["I serve as an example of what is possible"—Top-ranking Black Army leaders reflect on their battles with racism](#) [Haley Britzky, *Task & Purpose*, 3 March 2021]

*As Black History Month neared its end last week, seven Black Army generals spoke with reporters about their experiences in the service, the improvements that they've seen from the Army during their careers, and why they think young Black men and women should still be signing that dotted line. The roundtable came amid efforts by the Army to address racism and extremism in the ranks, all with the goal of making the service a more diverse and inclusive place. The military's problem with racism has been well-documented, but some White leaders say they've made it a point to try to understand to what extent or how Black service members' lived experiences, both in and out of the military, differ from their own. The Army Vice Chief of Staff, Gen. Joseph Martin, told *Task & Purpose* in December that during his listening sessions with soldiers on his staff he was "blown away with some of the adversity that teammates on my team" had experienced.*

[LA police probe fire, vandalism at Japanese Buddhist temple](#) [*The Associated Press*, 1 March 2021]

*Authorities are investigating a vandalism and fire at a Buddhist temple in the Little Tokyo section of downtown Los Angeles. The incident comes amid a rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans. The advocacy group Stop AAPI Hate said it tracked 245 reports of coronavirus-related discrimination against people of Asian descent in Los Angeles County from March through December last year. They included verbal harassment, physical assaults or refusal of service at a business. Los Angeles Police Department Capt. Stacy Spell said it was too early to label Thursday's vandalism a hate crime because the investigation is in the early stages. Ito said the vandalism is part of a troubling pattern of security breaches at the 1 1/2-acre sanctuary during the last two weeks.*

[A Michigan man hung a KKK flag facing his Black neighbor's home. It's not a crime, prosecutors say.](#) [Jaclyn Peiser, *The Washington Post*, 3 March 2021]

*JeDonna Dinges's ex-husband was walking through the alleyway next to their house in suburban Detroit last month when he noticed a red flag hanging in the neighbor's window. Startled, he went inside to tell her. "He informed me that there was a flag in the neighbor's window that said something about the Invisible Empire. I had no idea what it meant," Dinges, who is Black, said in*

*an interview with The Washington Post. Darrell, her ex-husband, who is White and lives with Dinges, explained it was a Ku Klux Klan flag. In disbelief, Dinges, 57, went to the dining room and opened the curtains. “Staring right at me was this Klan flag,” she said. It was the latest disturbing incident in a tense relationship with their neighbor, a 31-year-old White man who has not been publicly identified. But this time was different—Dinges felt unsafe and scared for herself and her 21-year-old daughter.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Patients asked Black Derby nurse if she was qualified](#) [BBC News, 2 March 2021]

*Elita, a registered nurse for nearly 23 years whose full name has not been released by the trust, said: “I’ve had patients who have come to me and said, ‘Is there someone else who could look after me? Are you sure you’re qualified enough to do this job?’ obviously because of my skin colour.” She said some patients had also questioned her ability to speak English. “I’ve stated, ‘I am communicating to you in a way that you can fully understand’,” she said. Elita also lists other offensive patient remarks in the video, released as part of a campaign to get more staff to share stories and speak out against racism. Cathy Winfield, executive chief nurse at the trust, said: “I give my full support to Elita and all our other colleagues. “We are going to do whatever we can to face this head-on and to educate and support our staff and our local communities to understand that racism won’t be accepted or tolerated.”*

[U.K. holiday firm had “undesirable guests” list of Irish names](#) [The Associated Press, 2 March 2021]

*A chain of holiday parks in Britain kept an “undesirable guests” list of Irish last names in an attempt to keep out members of the Irish Traveler community, the U.K. equalities watchdog said Tuesday. The list kept by Pontins, which was displayed on a staff intranet site, contained about 40 largely Irish names, including Cash, Delaney, Gallagher, Murphy and O’Brien. News of the list was broken by the “i” newspaper. Britain’s Equality and Human Rights Commission said Pontins was “directly discriminating on the basis of race” by refusing to serve guests of a particular ethnic group. It said staff refused or canceled bookings made by people with an Irish name or accent. Irish Travelers are a traditionally nomadic group similar to, but ethnically distinct from, Gypsy or Roma people. They are a recognized ethnic minority in Britain, where many have lived for generations, and have long suffered discrimination. Alastair Pringle, the equality commission’s executive director, said it was “hard not to draw comparisons” with “the signs displayed in hotel windows 50 years ago, explicitly barring Irish people and Black people.”*

[U.S. Soccer council member removed after controversial speech](#) [The Associated Press, 1 March 2021]

*The U.S. Soccer Federation’s athletes’ council removed one of its members Sunday, a day after he made a speech at the federation’s annual general meeting against removing an anti-kneeling policy. Seth Jahn, a 38-year-old from Florida who played for the U.S. seven-a-side ParaOlympic team at the 2015 Parapan American Games, spoke against repeal of what was known as Policy 604-1, put in place in response to U.S. women’s team star Megan Rapinoe kneeling in support of Colin Kaepernick. The athlete’s council said in a [statement](#) Sunday that Jahn “violated the prohibited conduct’s policy section on harassment, which prohibits racial or other harassment*

*based upon a person's protected status (race), including any verbal act in which race is used or implied in a manner which would make a reasonable person uncomfortable. The athlete's council does not tolerate this type of language and finds it incompatible with membership on the council. While the council understands that each person has a right to his or her own opinion, there are certain opinions that go beyond the realm of what is appropriate or acceptable."*

[Victims of anti-Asian attacks reflect a year into pandemic](#) [Terry Tang, *The Associated Press*, 2 March 2021]

*Nearly a year after they were almost stabbed to death inside a Midland, Texas, Sam's Club, Bawi Cung and his two sons all have visible scars. It's the unseen ones though that are harder to get over. Cung can't walk through any store without constantly looking in all directions. His 6-year-old son, who now can't move one eyebrow, is afraid to sleep alone. On a Saturday evening in March, when COVID-19 panic shopping gripped the nation, Cung was in search of rice at a cheaper price. The family was in the Sam's Club meat section when Cung suddenly felt a punch to the back of his head. A man he didn't know then slashed his face with a knife. The assailant left but soon returned to stab the boys. He wounded the 3-year-old in the back and slashed the 6-year-old from his right eye to a couple of inches past his right ear. The grisly encounter brought home the dangerous climate Asian Americans have faced since the coronavirus entered the U.S., with racially motivated harassment and assaults occurring from coast to coast.*

## RELIGION

[Pope urges Iraq to embrace its Christians on historic visit](#) [Nicole Winfield and Samya Kullab, *The Associated Press*, 5 March 2021]

*Pope Francis urged Iraqis on Friday to treat their Christian brothers as a precious resource to protect, not an "obstacle" to eliminate as he opened the first-ever papal visit to Iraq with a plea for tolerance and fraternity among Christians and Muslims. Francis brushed aside the coronavirus pandemic and security concerns to resume his globe-trotting papacy after a yearlong hiatus spent under COVID-19 lockdown in Vatican City. His primary aim over the weekend is to encourage Iraq's dwindling number of Christians, who were violently persecuted by the Islamic State group and still face discrimination by the Shiite majority, to stay and help rebuild the country devastated by wars and strife. "The religious, cultural and ethnic diversity that has been a hallmark of Iraqi society for millennia is a precious resource on which to draw, not an obstacle to eliminate," he said. "Iraq today is called to show everyone, especially in the Middle East, that diversity, instead of giving rise to conflict, should lead to harmonious cooperation in the life of society."*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[United Methodist conservatives detail plans for a breakaway](#) [David Crary, *The Associated Press*, 1 March 2021]

*Conservative leaders within the United Methodist Church unveiled plans Monday to form a new denomination, the Global Methodist Church, with a doctrine that does not recognize same-sex marriage. The move could hasten the long-expected breakup of the UMC over differing approaches to LGBTQ inclusion. For now, the UMC is the largest mainline Protestant church in*

*the U.S. and second only to the Southern Baptist Convention, an evangelical denomination, among all U.S. Protestant churches. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the UMC's General Conference—at which the schism would be debated—has been postponed for two consecutive years, and is now scheduled to take place in Minneapolis starting in late August of 2022. Differences over same-sex marriage and the ordination of LGBTQ clergy have simmered for years in the UMC, and came to a head in 2019 at a conference in St. Louis where delegates voted 438-384 to strengthen bans on LGBTQ-inclusive practices. Most U.S.-based delegates opposed that plan and favored LGBTQ-friendly options; they were outvoted by U.S. conservatives teamed with most of the delegates from Methodist strongholds in Africa and the Philippines.*

## **SEXISM**

[I Am an Officer, But Not a Gentleman](#) [Cmdr. Michele V. Rosen, Navy Judge Advocate General Corps, *Military.com*, 1 March 2021] [OPINION]

*Historically, the most challenging obstacle for women serving in the military was changing the hearts and minds (i.e., attitudes) internal to the armed forces, all three branches of government, and the public at large. While silent elements of each group may still oppose women serving in some form—or at all, such views are of a bygone era. Society has evolved and so too has the military when it comes to female service in the armed forces. But despite the opening of all occupational fields to women, there are still reasons and excuses, as well as prevalent and oppressive “signs” of the past, that are an affront to the acknowledgment of women as equals in the U.S. military. One “sign” left hanging, despite law and policy changes that allow women to serve, can be found in the Uniform Code of Military Justice, or UCMJ. A simple, yet significant, advancement would be to remove from Article 133 of the UCMJ the antiquated and superfluous “gentleman,” an affront to those who want the meaning of an “officer” to stand for more.*

[Marine Corps Gets Rid of Male-Only Underwear Allowance After Review](#) [Hope Hodge Seck, *Military.com*, 4 March 2021]

*A Government Accountability Office report released this month revealed systemic inequities in out-of-pocket clothing and uniform costs for male and female service members—a reality colloquially known as the “Pink Tax.” The watchdog organization found that some enlisted women paid more than \$8,000 out of pocket over the course of a career for clothing, while some men actually ended up with allowance overages they could pocket. The disparity, the GAO found, was largely the result of the higher costs of some women's uniform items, and costs of essentials not included in clothing calculations that were higher across the board for women. The investigation also prompted the individual military services to review their own policies and calculations. For the Marine Corps, this resulted in the discovery of inequity and a move to change. In the GAO report, officials emphasized that the root issue was equity: equal pay for equal work.*

[Missouri women earned 78% of man's salary in 2019](#) [Rebecca Martin, *News Tribune*, (Jefferson City, Mo.), 28 February 2021]

*Full-time working women in Missouri earned 78 percent of what their male counterparts did in 2019—the lowest the state's ratio has been since 2015. Missouri's women's-to-men's earnings*

ratio dropped 2.7 percentage points from 2018, and advocates worry the COVID-19 pandemic could further negatively affect women's compensation. Missouri women who were full-time wage and salary workers had median usual weekly earnings of \$786, compared to Missouri men's median usual weekly earnings of \$1,008, [according to information](#) recently released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nationwide, women earned \$821 per week—81.5 percent of the \$1,007 median for men. Missouri's women's-to-men's earnings ratio has ranged from 73.5 percent in 2000 to 80.8 percent in 1998, according to the BLS. Women accounted for 46.6 percent of Missouri's full-time and salaried workforce in 2019, while men made up 53.4 percent.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[The Air Force preaches “zero tolerance” of sexual assault. So why is it retaining an airman guilty of it?](#) [David Roza, *Task & Purpose*, 2 March 2021]

*The Air Force has decided to retain Master Sgt. Jeremy M. Zier, a public affairs airman who was convicted of abusive sexual contact and dereliction of duty in August, despite the service's supposed “zero tolerance” stance on sexual assault and harassment outlined in official reports, statements and policy guidelines. “The United States Air Force maintains the position that sexual assault is a crime in stark opposition to our core values and our culture of dignity and respect,” the service wrote in a report showing it had the biggest increase in sexual assaults across any service in 2019. So why then was Zier retained? The airman he assaulted and a former Air Force judge point to problems in the military justice system that make it easier for commanders to close ranks around favored airmen, such as Zier, and protect them from punishment. “The standard of ‘zero tolerance’ is a slap in the face when it comes from an organization that claims to care about integrity, yet retaliates against survivors who speak their truth,” Staff Sgt. Cambria Ferguson, who testified that Zier sexually assaulted her while both were stationed at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey in 2015, told Task & Purpose. “We are not safe, we are not a priority, and we are not being heard.”*

[Cuomo sorry for remarks aide “misinterpreted” as harassment](#) [Karen Matthews and Marina Villeneuve, *The Associated Press*, 28 February 2021]

*New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo acknowledged for the first time Sunday that some of his behavior with women “may have been insensitive or too personal,” and said he would cooperate with a sexual harassment investigation led by the state's attorney general. In a statement released amid mounting criticism from within his own party, the Democrat maintained he had never inappropriately touched or propositioned anyone. But he said he had teased people about their personal lives in an attempt to be “playful.” Cuomo, one of America's most prominent governors, is facing the most serious challenge of his decade in office following claims he sexually harassed at least two women who worked for him. Democrats in New York and around the nation aren't rallying to his side, leaving him increasingly isolated from traditional allies. His partial admission of wrongdoing came after a day of wrangling over who should investigate his workplace behavior.*

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

[Former NFL Pro Bowler Kellen Winslow II Sentenced To 14 Years For Sex Crimes](#)

[Jaclyn Diaz, NPR, 4 March 2021]

*A judge sentenced former NFL tight end Kellen Winslow II to 14 years in prison Wednesday for rapes and other sexual offenses against several women in Southern California. San Diego County Superior Court Judge Blaine Bowman, who presided over Winslow's trial, called the former player "a sexual predator," according to news reports. His sentence was the maximum allowed under a plea deal reached with the San Diego County District Attorney's office. He was convicted of forcible rape, rape of an unconscious person, assault with intent to commit rape, indecent exposure, and lewd conduct in public, The Associated Press reports. Bowman said Winslow preyed on especially vulnerable women. His victims included a homeless woman he befriended then raped, a 54-year-old hitchhiker and a teen passed out at a party.*

[Former San Jose State top trainer found responsible for sexual misconduct in state probe](#) [Kenny Jacoby and Rachel Axon, USA TODAY, 28 February 2021]

*San Jose State University's longtime sports medicine director, who resigned in August amid reports he sexually abused female athletes more than a decade ago, has been found responsible for at least five of those women's claims in a series of state Title IX investigations. The investigations, conducted by private attorneys under the supervision of the California State University System, determined that Scott Shaw's physical therapy treatments lacked medical basis, ignored proper protocols and violated the system's sexual harassment policies. The findings were issued Friday morning in separate letters to the women. There were at least 10 investigations in all—one for each complainant—all of which might have come to different conclusions. Shounak Dharap, an attorney who represents some of the athletes, told USA TODAY on Friday he was aware of at least five that have resulted in findings of responsibility, adding that he expected to receive more.*

[Navigating Consent Is All About Communication. Here's Where To Start](#) [Mallory Yu and Audrey Nguyen, NPR, 4 March 2021]

*In 2015, the Thames Valley Police in the U.K. released a video that went viral, comparing sexual consent to tea. You wouldn't force someone to drink a cup of tea and you wouldn't pour tea down a sleeping person's throat, they reasoned, so why would you do the same with sex? "Whether it's tea or sex," the video summed up, "consent is everything." Many of us have heard the phrases "no means no" or "yes means yes." These phrases are short and catchy, easy to remember. But they can't really capture the complexity of what it means to consent to sexual activity or touch. They imply that consent is a transaction, something one "gets" and it's all good to go. But it's not that simple, because every person is different and every person's sexual history is different. It's helpful to think of consent as a continuous navigation between sex partners to help ensure that everybody involved is OK with what's happening and actively (if not enthusiastically) participating.*

["Nothing Happened to This Dude:" Soldiers Call for Consequences, Changes to Prevent Sexual Assault](#) [Richard Sisk, Military.com, 26 February 2021]

*Army Sgt. Taylor Kneuve's call for improving the military's response to sexual assaults grew out of her own experience. Kneuve, 28, says she was sexually assaulted by a noncommissioned officer in March 2020 while deployed supporting the Department of Homeland Security at the*

*U.S.-Mexico border. She filed an unrestricted report, which was later joined by the alleged perpetrator's own company commander, who said she too had been sexually assaulted by him two weeks before. The NCO initially claimed that he had been falsely accused, Kneuen said, but the complaint was backed up by an Article 15 fact-finding investigation and resulted in the NCO being issued a letter of reprimand from a general. Despite all that, a three-member Army administrative board decided to keep him in the service.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[The Pentagon's sexual assault review committee wants troop input on policy and culture change](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military.com*, 26 February 2021]

*Every option is on the table when it comes to confronting sexual assault in the military, the chair of the Pentagon's new sexual assault independent review committee told reporters Friday. Lynn Rosenthal, a noted gender violence expert, [has been tapped](#) to head up a group of current and former military leaders, as well as outside experts, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby announced. "This effort, this commission, is dedicated to those service members who have suffered with sexual assault," Rosenthal said. "Both those who have come forward and shared their stories at great personal cost, and those who've suffered in silence and continue to suffer in silence alone, and also at great cost." Details about who else will sit on the committee and how they will conduct their work were not available, but Rosenthal said that travel to installations will likely be part of the plan, as well as an online resource where service members can share their stories and insights.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[This Army lieutenant colonel has built a playbook to kill the "cancer" of sexual assault in the ranks](#) [Haley Britzky, *Task & Purpose*, 1 March 2021]

*Army Lt. Col. Scott Stephens wasn't always like this. Stephens—the commander of the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 1st Armored Brigade—has become a leading voice on the issue of sexual harassment and assault at a time when the Army, along with the rest of the Defense Department, is coming to terms with the truth: The military has a problem. But he'll also be the first to tell you that he was likely part of that problem as a young male soldier. "I've been guilty my whole life," he told *Task & Purpose* on Feb. 19. "And I'd say within the last couple of years I've sort of come to terms with that. And I have personally chosen ... to take this on in my latter years and try to be vocal ... and try to drag some of my peers along." He isn't exactly being subtle about it. Stephens regularly engages on Twitter over the issues of harassment, assault, and gender discrimination, and even co-authored a detailed guide to help leaders spot and address problems in their own units. And it's not just about knowing what to do after a soldier has been assaulted or harassed, as Stephens explained, but recognizing all the ways leaders can get ahead of a potentially bad situation by fundamentally changing the Army's culture.*

[VA leaders will take part in DOD's sexual misconduct review commission](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 2 March 2021]

*Veterans Affairs leaders will play a key role in the Defense Department's sweeping review of sexual misconduct cases and prevention policies in an effort to ensure both federal agencies are providing the best care possible for everyone, officials announced this week. In a social media*

*post Monday, VA Secretary Denis McDonough announced that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had invited VA officials to participate in the 90-day independent review commission. The full slate of commission members has not yet been released, but is expected to include current and former military leaders, advocates and outside experts on the issue of sexual assault. The veterans department has also had its share of public problems on the issue of sexual misconduct in recent years. In December, officials were forced to apologize after thousands of sexual assault victims were invited without warning into a group conference call on available VA benefits, a conversation that included graphic discussions about abuse and personal trauma.*

## **SUICIDE**

[Seeking the Military Suicide Solution Podcast, Episode 50: Reflections with Duane and Shauna](#) [Military Times, 23 February 2021]

*This podcast from Military Times examines the alarming rate of military and veterans' suicide, offering new insights based on research and effective clinical and peer support practices in suicide prevention. Hosted by Duane France, a retired Army combat veteran, author and mental health counselor, and Shauna Springer, a psychologist, author and nationally recognized expert on initiatives to benefit the military community, the podcast aims to move beyond awareness to identify actionable strategies that can impact the rising suicide rate among service members, veterans, and their families.*

[\[LISTEN\]](#)

## **VETERANS**

[Call her coach: Wounded veteran finds camaraderie in competitive esports](#) [J.P. Lawrence, Stars and Stripes, 4 March 2021]

*Jody Farmer spent the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic with little to do as she struggled with injuries from her military career, until an opportunity to coach college esports came along and restored some of the camaraderie she missed from her service. Farmer, a 38-year-old Navy and Army veteran with a spinal cord injury, never thought of herself as a gamer. But she now spends up to 20 hours a week preparing two teams for collegiate video game tournaments. "It wasn't something I was looking for, that's for sure," Farmer said. "But [esports] opened my mind to new possibilities of how I can be productive." She is one of several veterans leading competitive gaming at the University of Oklahoma, which has announced \$100,000 in scholarships for students who want to work in the esports industry. The university's esports department opened last year after beginning as a club founded by Mike Aguilar, another veteran.*

[Lawmakers Push VA to Provide Service Dogs to Vets After a Decade of Failed Efforts](#) [Steve Beynon, Military.com, 3 March 2021]

*A measure reintroduced in the House would order the Department of Veterans Affairs to pay for and provide service dogs to veterans suffering from mental health issues, following years of fruitless attempts. The Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers, or PAWS, Act, introduced by Rep. John Rutherford, R-Fla., would require the VA to create a grant program to pay for and provide service dogs to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health*

ailments. The VA covers some costs of service dogs for veterans with certain physical disabilities, such as blindness, but has never conceded that the animals are beneficial as a mental health treatment, despite studies showing dog therapy can be a critical tool for treating such patients.

#### [Navy WAVE, WWII Code Breaker Will Celebrate 100th Birthday with Her Own Parade](#)

[Richard Sisk, *Military.com*, 1 March 2021]

*A World War II code breaker who helped hunt down Nazi U-boats turns 100 on Tuesday and will be honored with a parade past her house in Pittsburgh. Julia Parsons, who served in the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, or Navy WAVES, said her work was aided enormously by the sheer arrogance of the German High Command in believing that the allies couldn't possibly break their vaunted "Enigma" code despite warnings from their own U-Boat commanders. She told Military.com of deciphering messages from a U-boat commander who surfaced his submarine to contact his controllers. The gist of his message was, "Every time I surface, within a half hour there's an airplane overhead. I think they're reading our code," Parsons said. Parsons—then Julia Potter—was among a remarkable group of women recruited for the WAVES and Women's Army Corps, or WACs, to assist in super-secret intelligence work against the German and Japanese war machines. Their overlooked story was recounted by Liza Mundy in her book, "Code Girls—the Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II."*

#### [VA seeing no difference in coronavirus vaccine reluctance based on race](#) [Nikki Wentling, *Stars and Stripes*, 1 March 2021]

*Black veterans who are eligible for coronavirus vaccines are accepting them at rates similar to veterans of other races, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The department is working to track vaccine hesitancy as it works to vaccinate millions of veterans across the country. The data doesn't show more reluctance for the vaccine among Black veterans—unlike the overall Black population in America. "There's less hesitancy among Black veterans than we feared," VA Secretary Denis McDonough said on a call with reporters. According to a study by the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation, one-third of Black adults in the United States said they didn't plan to get vaccinated. The nonprofit cited barriers for the Black population, including ongoing racism and a legacy of mistreatment by the medical system.*

#### [Women Veterans have access to VA resources](#) [VAntage Point, 4 March 2021]

*Women are the fastest growing demographic in the U.S. military and Veteran populations, and VA stands ready to provide resources. There are currently more than 2 million women Veterans—and that number continues to rise, according to the [National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics](#). In fact, women are expected to make up more than 16% of the U.S. Veteran population by 2043. Women have served the country in many capacities throughout history, however, they did not receive VA benefits until Congress passed the [Women's Armed Services Integration Act](#) in 1948. That act granted them permanent presence in the military, entitling them to VA benefits. In fiscal year 2020, more than 4,900 women Veterans learned about benefits at nationwide woman-focused outreach events. More than 196,000 women Veterans used education benefits and more than 555,000 women Veterans received \$10.7 billion in disability compensation. Hundreds of thousands also engaged VA with pension, home loans, insurance,*

*employment and memorial benefits. In celebration of Women's History Month, we honor the women who have served our nation and encourage all women Veterans and service members to take advantage of the [benefits](#) available to them.*