

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 26 MARCH 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

[Army rolls out latest combat fitness test with different scoring tiers for male, female soldiers](#)

[Corey Dickstein, *Stars and Stripes*, 22 March 2021]

The Army has for a third time in three years adjusted its long-awaited, combat-driven fitness test to include new scoring tiers for male and female soldiers meant to acknowledge their “biological differences,” top service officials announced Monday. The Army will begin testing its soldiers on the Army Combat Fitness Test version 3.0 in April, Sgt. Maj. Of the Army Michael Grinston told reporters. The test’s new version will include new gender-based performance scoring tiers and the permanent implementation of the plank as an option for the six-event test. The changes come as Army officials work to alleviate concerns raised by lawmakers that past versions of the ACFT were unfair to women, who posted a sub-50% pass rate of the Crossfit-style evaluation. In January, Congress halted the Army from fully implementing the ACFT until it was adjusted and studied by an independent group to ensure it did not favor men.

[States make it easier for vets who were kicked out for being gay to access benefits](#)

[Sarah Cammarata, *Stars and Stripes*, 22 March 2021]

While gay service members can now serve openly in the military, veterans kicked out for only their sexual orientation under past policies still face hurdles to access benefits due to “less than honorable” discharges. A bill in New Jersey is expected to be signed into law as soon as next week. It would give veterans kicked out of the military solely due to sexual orientation access to state benefits. It would also direct the state-run Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to streamline the upgrade process at the federal level. More than 100,000 service members were expelled from the military between World War II and the 2011 repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the policy that barred gays and lesbians from serving openly in the military, because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, according to a 2020 report from Harvard Law School.

[Veterans, civilian advocates bring expertise to Pentagon’s commission on military sexual assault](#)

[Caitlin M. Keeney, *Stars and Stripes*, 24 March 2021]

Military veterans and experts on violence against women are among the 12 new members of the Pentagon’s Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military, the organization’s chairwoman announced Wednesday. “I think that these folks who we’re bringing in will be looking at this with fresh eyes,” Lynn Rosenthal said during a news briefing at the Pentagon. The 12 members are split into four “lines of effort”: accountability, prevention, climate and culture, and victim care and support. The commission is made up mostly of women and slightly more than half of the members are veterans, according to Rosenthal. They include military academy graduates, prosecutors, and victim advocates, according to member biographies on the Pentagon’s website regarding the commission. “You will see that there are more women than men serving on this panel, that there are experts in gender integration into the forces serving on this panel, that there are civilian advocates,” she said.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

CULTURE

[The Air Force Directed Units to Get Rid of Problematic Logos, But Didn't Track Results](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Air Force Times*, 20 March 2021]

In January, the Air Force gave commanders from the squadron level and up until Feb. 21 to abolish symbols that are derogatory “to any race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, age or disability status to ensure an inclusive and professional environment,” according to the announcement at the time. But the service did not collate results from the widespread review, an Air Force spokeswoman told Military.com on Wednesday. Don Christensen, president of advocacy group Protect Our Defenders and a retired Air Force colonel, told Military.com on Thursday that the service should have instructed commanders to come forward with their findings and consolidate the information in one comprehensive report. “It’s like a missed opportunity to ensure that things are going the direction [leaders] want them to go,” said Christensen, who was also the Air Force’s chief prosecutor. “The last thing the Air Force wants is for somebody to leak [information] in the media, something embarrassing that a commander didn’t address,” he said. “So get on top of it, make sure that doesn’t happen by alleviating the problem.”

[CSAF Memo to Airmen: Leadership Library](#) [SECAF Public Affairs, 22 March 2021]

In lieu of a traditional reading list, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr. presents a new Leadership Library including his recommendations for books, podcasts and documentaries.

[\[CSAF MEMO\]](#)

[The Generational Split in How Asian-Americans See the Atlanta Shootings](#) [Gish Jen, *The New York Times*, 22 March 2021] [OPINION]

An earlier generation never expected anyone to protect them. My parents’ response to my brother’s being beaten up, as he was just about every day in Yonkers, N.Y., was to sign him up for karate lessons. You had to defend yourself. Of all the figures who have emerged from the recent surge in anti-Asian violence, my parents would have most admired Xiao Zhen Xie of San Francisco. This 75-year-old, having been punched for no reason, picked up a wooden plank and hit her 39-year-old assailant so hard that he ended up on a stretcher. That woman was “hen lihai”—fierce. And yet in his account of the incident, her grandson John Chen emphasized how terrified she was. Hearing this, all I could think was, there has been a sea change. Young people seem to believe that there are forest rangers around who, if they don’t exactly care, can be made to care. To come and help. I can hear my parents’ voices and see their heads shaking: You know what they are, these young people? They are Americanized, that’s what. ... You know what happens if you show you are afraid? You have even more attacks.

[“Sesame Street” debuts two new Black muppets as discussion of race becomes more explicit](#) [Anagha Srikanth, *The Hill*, 23 March 2021]

The cast of “Sesame Street” needed some help to address tough questions and conversations around race that have emerged in the last year, so they’ve called in two new Black characters to

help: 5-year-old Wes and his father Elijah. Wes and his father aren't the first Muppets of color on "Sesame Street," which has launched in more than 30 countries since its debut and currently includes eight international productions. More than half a century later, the cast has expanded to include Spanish-speaking characters, deaf characters and—most recently—two Rohingya-language refugees. Back in the United States, a diverse cast has tackled some tough subjects, but the "ABCs of Racial Literacy" engages with race and racism more directly than ever before. "Children are not colorblind—not only do they first notice differences in race in infancy, but they also start forming their own sense of identity at a very young age," said Jeanette Betancourt, Senior Vice President at Sesame Workshop, in a [statement](#).

[The Simpsons: Matt Groening "proud" of Apu and making "ambitious" plans](#) [BBC News, 22 March 2021]

The Simpsons' creator has said there are "ambitious" plans for Apu—the Indian character who was sidelined over criticism that he was voiced by a White actor and was a harmful stereotype. As a result, the long-running show said White actors would no longer provide the voices of non-White characters. Matt Groening has told USA Today he is still "proud" of the character, the immigrant owner of the Kwik-E-Mart. But he will be absent from Springfield until a suitable new actor is found. The cartoonist, who brought The Simpsons to screens in 1989, described the "fantastic" character as "one of the most nuanced characters on a silly two-dimensional cartoon show". He added that while ending the use of White actors for non-White characters was not his idea, he was "fine with it". "Who can be against diversity?" he asked. "So it's great. However, I will just say that the actors were not hired to play specific characters. "They were hired to do whatever characters we thought of. To me, the amazing thing is seeing all our brilliant actors who can do multiple voices. That's part of the fun of animation, However, to be more inclusive and hire more people, I'm completely in favor of that."

DISCRIMINATION

[Arkansas House sends transgender-athlete restriction to governor](#) [Rachel Herzog, Arkansas Democrat Gazette, (Little Rock, Ark.), 22 March 2021]

A bill that would deter schools from allowing transgender girls and women to play on the sports team that aligns with their gender identity is headed to Arkansas' governor. Senate Bill 354 by Sen. Missy Irvin, R-Mountain View, gives a private cause of action to students "deprived of an athletic opportunity" and students or schools suffering "direct or indirect harm" as a result of a kindergarten-through-12th grade school or higher-education institution not maintaining separate teams for female students to seek injunctive relief against the school, as well as monetary damages. Gov. Asa Hutchinson said through a spokeswoman last week that he is "supportive of the objective of the bill but will continue to review the specific language before announcing his position." House sponsor Sonia Barker, a Republican representative from Smackover, said the bill will "establish a level playing field for girls and women in our Arkansas schools," arguing that athletes assigned the male gender at birth have physiological advantages over cisgender girls and women. Two lawmakers who spoke against the bill Monday said it discriminates against transgender youth and seeks to address a nonexistent problem.

[“Coded Bias” Explores Blurring of Real and Imagined Artificial Intelligence](#) [Craig Phillips, PBS, 18 March 2021]

For her second feature-length documentary, “Coded Bias”, Kantayya follows M.I.T. Media Lab computer scientist Joy Buolamwini, along with data scientists, mathematicians, and watchdog groups around the world, as they fight to expose the discrimination within facial recognition algorithms now prevalent across all spheres of daily life. The chilling film “moves deftly between pragmatic and larger political critiques,” wrote Devika Girish in the New York Times, “arguing that it’s not just that the tech is faulty; even if it were perfect, it would infringe dangerously on people’s liberties.” As for how the film was inspired, Kantayya told WIRE magazine she stumbled upon the work of Buolamwini through a TED talk and read Cathy O’Neil’s book Weapons of Math Destruction, and just fell down a rabbit hole of the dark side of artificial intelligence.

[\[TRAILER\]](#) [\[FULL FILM\]](#)

[Colorado baker sued again over alleged LGBTQ bias](#) [Colleen Slevin, The Associated Press, 23 March 2021]

A Colorado baker who won a partial victory at the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018 for refusing to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple went on trial Monday in yet another lawsuit, this one involving a birthday cake for a transgender woman. Autumn Scardina attempted to order the birthday cake on the same day in 2017 that the high court announced it would hear baker Jack Phillips’ appeal in the wedding cake case. Scardina, an attorney, requested a cake that was blue on the outside and pink on the inside in honor of her gender transition. Her lawsuit is the latest in a series of cases around the U.S. that pit the rights of LGBTQ people against merchants’ religious objections, an issue that remains unsettled by the nation’s top court.

[Families Say Athletic Bans Would Exact Toll on Rural Transgender Youth](#) [Aallyah Wright, Stateline, 24 March 2021]

Katy Binstead’s 13-year-old transgender daughter, Emily Wilson, enjoyed playing basketball recreationally this past summer. When school reopened, she decided to try out for the girls basketball team at her middle school on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The school denied Emily the chance, her mother recalled, telling her to try out for the boys team instead, because her birth certificate identified her as male. Now Emily and her mom have become advocates in the response to dozens of state bills across the country that would restrict transgender girls’ participation in sports. “This tells me that our school district doesn’t know the difference between sex and gender,” Binstead said recently, as Mississippi lawmakers were considering a bill that would institute a similar ban statewide. “She can’t play with the boys because she’s not a boy, so the legislation won’t change the school district’s policy.”

[North Dakota House rescinds ratification of Equal Rights Amendment](#) [The Associated Press, 20 March 2021]

The North Dakota House has voted to rescind the state’s ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, declaring that it expired in 1979. The state Democratic-NPL Party blasted the action late Friday, calling it an “assault on women’s rights.” Democrats questioned why the resolution was moved to the top of the House calendar Friday after having a committee hearing on

Thursday. “Today’s vote, and the fact that this resolution was even introduced, was a slap in the face to every woman in the state of North Dakota,” Executive Director Kylie Oversen said. “This entire legislative session has been a slap in the face to common decency and basic human rights.” The Democratic-led U.S. House this week voted to remove the deadline for states to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. The measure faces a more difficult path in the evenly divided U.S. Senate. It’s part of a decades-long effort to amend the Constitution to expressly prohibit discrimination based on sex. Congress initially required the states to ratify it by 1979, a deadline it later extended to 1982.

[Park City students fight online filters for LGBTQ searches](#) [Michelle Deininger, *The Associated Press*, 21 March 2021]

Park City High School students googled “gay rights in Poland” in a current issues class recently and found the phrase blocked by filtering software that prevents access to inappropriate content on school-issued computers. Out of curiosity, they googled gay, lesbian, queer, and same sex marriage; all were blocked. That was new; before the district’s software upgrade March 11, those terms were searchable. Students wasted no time contacting their principal and requesting the blocks be removed. “It is incredibly difficult to effectively educate and inform when we are prevented from doing further research of our own,” wrote junior Summer McGuire, president of the PCHS Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), in an email to Principal Roger Arbabi. He replied, writing, “The new filter system that is in place will need to be adjusted to accommodate the needs of our community. I was in touch with the Director of Technology at PCSD and have granted access to topics related to LGBTQ+.”

[USWNT players Megan Rapinoe, Margaret Purce speak at White House on equal pay: “So much real work to be done”](#) [Sandra Herrera, *CBS Sports*, 24 March 2021]

United States women’s national team players Megan Rapinoe and Margaret Purce visited the White House on Wednesday for an event on Equal Pay with President Joe Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden. Both Purce and Rapinoe delivered remarks alongside President and Dr. Biden at an event to discuss and raise awareness on the importance of equal pay. Earlier in the day, Rapinoe testified at a hearing titled “Honoring ‘Equal Pay Day’: Examining the Long-Term Economic Impacts of Gender Inequality” and discussed the lawsuit brought by members of the United States women’s national soccer team against U.S. Soccer. The USWNT has been in an ongoing back and forth with U.S. Soccer throughout the lawsuit, and Rapinoe fielded questions from politicians on the disparities USWNT player have faced in defense of the lawsuit. She also touched on the differences between NCAA Men’s and Women’s college basketball tournaments, and expressed solidarity with transgender athletes.

[UN report: Too much prejudice against old and young in world](#) [Edith M. Lederer, *The Associated Press*, 18 March 2021]

Prejudice and discrimination based on age is widespread around the world, affecting millions of older and younger people trying to work and get health care, denying their human rights and costing society billions of dollars, a U.N. report said Thursday. “Its main message is that we can and must prevent ageism and that even small shifts in how we think, feel and act towards age and aging will reap benefits for individuals and societies,” the heads of the U.N. health, human

rights, economic and social affairs and population bodies said in a preface to the report. *The Global Report on Ageism* cites a survey published last year of 83,034 people in 57 countries that found half the people held “moderately or highly ageist attitudes.” Characteristics significantly associated with those having high ageist attitudes were younger age, male gender and lower level of education, according to the [survey](#) by researchers from the World Health Organization, Oxford University and University of Southern California published by Swiss-based MDPI.

DIVERSITY

[Alaska’s first female infantryman has advice for other would-be grunts: “YOLO”](#) [David Roza, *Task & Purpose*, 25 March 2021]

When it comes to making it in the infantry, Sgt. Serita Unin’s advice boils down to four letters: YOLO. “You only live once,” said Unin, the first female infantryman in the Alaska National Guard, in a recent press release. “The standards are physically demanding, but if that’s what you really want to do, all you have to do is work hard, work out, be mentally fit, and just go for it.” Specifically, Unin offered her advice to other women considering the grunt life. She should know, since she followed that advice herself two years ago when she decided to transfer to the infantry. It took a while to get to that point, though: when Unin first joined the Alaska National Guard in 2009, women were still banned from combat units. “I came in as a generator mechanic and did that job for about 10 years,” said Unin, a Cup’ik Eskimo from the Kashunamiut Tribe who grew up in Bethel, Alaska, a city of just over 6,000 people. “At first it was amazing being the first female infantry soldier in the Alaska Guard,” she said, “but then I realized that this was bigger than myself. I realized that me being a noncommissioned officer in the infantry will give other females a chance to become infantry if they wanted.”

[Army’s first Paralympic swimmer credits her military family for success](#) [Brittany Nelson, *Army News Service*, 17 March 2021]

Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Marks is a combat medic but also a heavily decorated Paralympic swimmer, Pat Tillman ESPY award winner, and a 2017 Army Woman’s Hall of Fame inductee. She credits all of this to her mentors, her brothers and sisters in arms. Marks’ story, which is apropos during Women’s History Month, gives proof to Chief of Staff of the Army James McConville’s comments that people are the Army’s number one priority. The armed forces have always influenced Marks’ life. Her father is a Vietnam veteran who worked with Veterans Affairs and as a teenager she attended an at-risk youth academy where she fell in love with the military. “The staff of Arizona Project Challenge were all National Guard or prior service members,” said Marks. “Going to that academy solidified my need to give back to the military community.” Marks originally wanted to be an infantryman like her father and most of the staff at her academy, but when she joined the Army in 2008 that was not an option available for women. “I told the recruiter, ‘OK, what is the closest to that’, and they told me about combat medics,” said Marks. “My father had talked very highly of Naval Corpsmen, (similar to Army medics) so I went for it.”

[Boston turns historic page with 1st Black, 1st female mayor](#) [Steve LeBlanc, *The Associated Press*, 24 March 2021]

Kim Janey, who as a child had rocks hurled at her school bus during Boston's desegregation era, marked her historic elevation as the first woman and first Black person to serve as mayor of the city with a ceremonial swearing-in event Wednesday. Janey replaces fellow Democrat Marty Walsh, who resigned Monday to become President Joe Biden's labor secretary. She was the City Council president and will serve as acting mayor until a mayoral election in the fall. Janey hasn't said whether she'll run. But she embraced the groundbreaking nature of Wednesday's transition. Janey, 55, promised to bring urgency to the job. She said her administration will be open to those who have felt disconnected from the city's power structure.

[A first: Senate confirms transgender doctor for key post](#) [David Crary, *The Associated Press*, 25 March 2021]

Voting mostly along party lines, the U.S. Senate has confirmed former Pennsylvania Health Secretary Rachel Levine to be the nation's assistant secretary of health. She is the first openly transgender federal official to win Senate confirmation. Levine had been serving as Pennsylvania's top health official since 2017, and emerged as the public face of the state's response to the coronavirus pandemic. She is expected to oversee Health and Human Services offices and programs across the U.S. Transgender-rights activists have hailed Levine's appointment as a historic breakthrough. Few trans people have ever held high-level offices at the federal or state level.

[Here's the Air Force's plan to diversify its pilot corps](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Times*, 19 March 2021]

*Air Force leaders have signed off on a new plan to build a more diverse pilot corps by 2030, looking to level the playing field in a profession that remains dominated by White men. The strategy aims to grow opportunities for women and minority airmen in some of the Air Force's premier professions, including manned and unmanned aircraft pilots, air battle managers, and combat systems officers. Their goals fall into three baskets: recruitment, retention, and removing barriers to advancement that minority airmen disproportionately face, according to the strategy paper obtained Wednesday by *Air Force Times*. Aircraft have long been a harder sell to minority communities, whether because of a lack of awareness of those opportunities, fewer resources for science and technology programs, or other socioeconomic factors that can hinder the pursuit of flight, than to White prospects. Now, the Air Force is pledging to beef up Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps and Civil Air Patrol programs, and target underrepresented groups in social media and marketing campaigns.*

[In Change, Army Grants New Mothers a Full Year to Meet Body Fat Standards](#) [Hope Hodge Seck, *Military.com*, 19 March 2021]

The Army is moving to double the physical standards grace period for soldiers who give birth. According to a service announcement released Friday night, new mothers in the Army will have 365 days, up from 180, to get back within body fat standards. "Soldiers will not be entered into the Army Body Composition Program or face adverse administrative actions during this timeframe," officials said in a [release](#). "In addition, Soldiers who are between 181 to 365 days postpartum and were flagged and entered into the ABCP after their pregnancy ended will have their flag removed and they will be removed from the ABCP program." The change applies to

soldiers on active duty and in the Reserve. It comes amid a military-wide conversation about how the services can better support women and mothers in uniform. In Friday's announcement, Army Resilience Directorate chief Dr. James Helis said service leaders should "ensure nutrition counseling, weight management, and behavior modification resources are available to the Soldier" following childbirth.

[One of Army's few female tomb guards reflects on accomplishment](#) [C.J. Lovelace, U.S. Army News Service, 19 March 2021]

His uniform was impeccable. His buttons, badges and boots glistened under the auditorium lights. His movements were methodical and perfectly executed. Then a young private first class, Danyell Walters vividly remembers the first time she witnessed the spectacle of what it took to be a sentinel at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Walters, the first African-American woman to serve as a tomb guard, also remembered that the Soldier performing the routine looked nothing like her. But that was hardly an impediment for what she knew she could achieve. "What I admire most of my younger self was that when I saw the tomb guard presentation, I looked past that it was a man standing out there doing that," Walters said. "I immediately put myself there ... that is what led me to see it through." During Women's History Month, Walters, now a sergeant major serving as the senior enlisted advisor for U.S. Army Medical Logistics Command at Fort Detrick, reflected on her time as a tomb guard nearly 25 years ago.

[Troops with "personal religious or moral beliefs about homosexuality" deserve respect, says retired Army general who led "don't ask, don't tell" report in 2010](#) [Carter Ham, *Military Times*, 21 March 2021] [COMMENTARY]

As one of the co-chairs of the Department of Defense's Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," I read with interest Secretary of Defense Austin's March 12, 2021, Memorandum on Promoting and Protecting the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Persons Around the World. I agree that, as an underlying principle of equity, all in the Department of Defense should model the treatment of others with dignity and respect. One thing not mentioned in Secretary Austin's memorandum is something we found in 2010 about the need to respect service members who have beliefs opposed to LGBTQI+ behaviors and conduct.

[USS Constitution honors 1st female chief petty officer](#) [The Associated Press, 22 March 2021]

The U.S.S. Constitution named one of its cannons in honor of the first woman to serve as a chief petty officer in the Navy. The 24-pound long gun was named Perfectus after Loretta Perfectus Walsh during a ceremony in Boston on Sunday marking Women's History Month, the Navy said in a statement. Walsh was sworn in as the Navy's first chief petty officer on March 21, 1917. "Loretta Perfectus Walsh has made it possible for all women to serve in the military," Command Senior Chief Angela Collins said. "I get to be here because of the women who have gone before me, and I get the honor to serve with amazing women every single day." Four of the warship's female crew members gave a presentation on the significance of Walsh's service.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Woman Marine of 34 Years Leaves Lasting Legacy](#) [Cpl. Naomi May, *Marine Corps Recruiting Command Public Affairs*, 22 March 2021]

Lt. Col. Sally Ann Falco was still in high school in 1987, and she chose to take the Armed Services Vocational - Aptitude Battery to get out of one of her classes. She was surprised when days later, a Marine Corps recruiter visited her at school. Falco was not old enough to sign her own enlistment papers, so her mother co-signed her six-year contract for the Marine Corps. She stepped on the yellow footprints at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island on November 2, 1987. At the time, recruit training lasted only 11 weeks for women, and they were not required or allowed to complete any warrior or combat training. Despite the challenges she has faced in the Marine Corps, Falco said she always strives to think positively and to be a good person, mother and Marine. She said she has one main lesson that she hopes to leave the Marines around her. "It is so important to know the difference between judgement and character," Falco said. "Many things can affect our judgement. To err is human. We learn from our mistakes. We pick up and we move on—resiliency and recovery; but to be who you are, that is your choice. Be known as someone of good character. That is something you own and others don't forget." Falco will soon retire after 34 fruitful years in the United States Marine Corps.

EXTREMISM

[Lawmaker wants to strip benefits from veterans involved in January's attack on Congress](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 19 March 2021]

A Marine-turned-congressman wants federal officials to deny veterans benefits to any current or former military members involved with the attack on the U.S. Capitol building earlier this year, saying they "no longer deserve" the payouts. In [letters](#) to the Veterans Affairs secretary and attorney general made public Friday, Rep. Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz., said eligibility for education and vocational training should be stripped from those individuals, as well as disability compensation and VA health care access. "The behavior of these individuals tarnishes the image of American veterans and service members who have given so much to this country," he wrote. "Yet, many of the veterans and service members who attacked their own government actively and enthusiastically enjoy benefits not available to their fellow citizens." "This situation is unjust. Any retiree or servicemember who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6 forfeited their moral entitlement to the support of the people of the United States."

[Report: Extremist groups thrive on Facebook despite bans](#) [Barbara Ortutay, *The Associated Press*, 23 March 2021]

A new outside report found that Facebook has allowed groups—many tied to QAnon, boogaloo and militia movements—to glorify violence during the 2020 election and in the weeks leading up to the deadly riots on the U.S. Capitol in January. Avaaz, a nonprofit advocacy group that says it seeks to protect democracies from misinformation, [identified 267 pages and groups](#) on Facebook that it says spread violence-glorifying material in the heat of the 2020 election to a combined following of 32 million users. More than two-thirds of the groups and pages had names that aligned with several domestic extremist movements, the report found. All have been largely banned from Facebook since 2020. But despite what Avaaz called "clear violations" of

Facebook's policies, it found that 119 of these pages and groups were still active on the platform as of March 18 and had just under 27 million followers.

[Retired Green Beret assaulted cop with flagpole during Capitol riot, charges allege](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 19 March 2021]

A former Army Green Beret with more than two decades of service was arrested Wednesday and charged with using a flag as a spear against a police officer during the Capitol riot, according to an FBI criminal complaint unsealed Thursday. Retired Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey A. McKellop donned a helmet and gas mask and moved toward D.C. Metropolitan Police lines as officers attempted to prevent a mob of rioters from breaching the Capitol building at about 2:30 p.m. on Jan. 6, the complaint alleged. Police body cameras caught McKellop pushing officers, trying to grab a riot control spray canister from one and throwing a flagpole like a spear at another, causing a laceration to that officer's face, the complaint alleged. Other military veterans have been charged in connection to the Capitol riot, but McKellop appears to be the first Green Beret. The person familiar with McKellop's case said he's currently in police custody in D.C. and has a detention hearing Monday.

[Some Troops See Capitol Riot, BLM Protests as Similar Threats, Top Enlisted Leader Says](#) [Stephen Losey, *Military.com*, 19 March 2021]

Some troops have drawn equivalencies between the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol and last year's protests for racial justice during recent stand-downs to address extremism, worrying the military's top enlisted leader. In a Thursday briefing with reporters at the Pentagon, Ramón "CZ" Colón-López, the senior enlisted adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that some troops have asked, when the Jan. 6 riot is brought up, "How come you're not looking at the situation that was going on in Seattle prior to that?" Colón-López said the confusion some younger troops have expressed shows why the training sessions on extremism are needed. The military's policies are clear, he said: Troops are not to advocate for, or participate in, supremacist, extremist or criminal gang doctrine, ideology or causes. The military remains an apolitical organization, Colón-López said, and it doesn't matter if an extremist group is far right or far left—both are off limits.

[U.S. military branches gather data, conduct training on extremism](#) [Ed Adamczyk, *United Press International*, 19 March 2021]

Military branches are collecting data about extremism in their ranks, and training troops, in anticipation of an April 1 deadline, a Pentagon official said this week. The call to gather data from subordinate commands, train all troops and receive feedback came in early February, when Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered a military-wide, 60-day stand down to deal with extremism in the military's ranks. Guidance for the stand down training came in a [13-page report](#), issued by the Defense Department in February. The report includes case studies identifying paramilitary activity, domestic extremism, organizing and recruiting, and racist and supremacist statements are identified. It also suggests remedies to identified problems, including counseling and corrective training; removal of personnel from certain duties, such as restricted area badge access, flying status, or duties involving firearms; reclassification and suspension of certain eligibilities.

[“Why Are We Talking About It?” Congress May Face Impasse on Extremism in the Military](#)

[Steve Beynon, *Military.com*, 25 March 2021]

As the military faces a reckoning on extremism within the ranks following the Jan. 6 Capitol Hill riot, the issue is turning rapidly into a partisan stalemate in Congress. Extremism in the military is a complex issue for which Congress seemingly doesn't see a straightforward legislative solution. There's a critical balance to strike: Service members don't give up all freedoms of speech and expression when they join the military, and lawmakers and brass are cautious about making policy that infringes on the rights they do have. Then there's the issue of how to define extremist activity, which can turn quickly into rhetorical jiu-jitsu. “Something I've wrestled with is, it's going to be in the eye of the beholder. There are certain worldviews we are not going to accept. If you're in line with the Nazi Party or the Ku Klux Klan or Hamas, we're not going to accept you,” Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.) said. “It's not simply free speech; we have to make a choice as a society of what we tolerate. It's where the debate gets lost.”

HUMAN RELATIONS

[3 Decades Of Female Friendship, Caught On Film](#) [Melody Rowell, *NPR*, 24 March 2021]

When photographer Karen Marshall was in her 20s, she couldn't shake the feeling that friendships between women were, she says, “special” and “different.” She had grown up in a liberal household in the 1970s, and was surrounded by discussions of women's liberation and consciousness raising. After being introduced to 16-year-old Molly Brover, a junior in high school in New York City, Marshall started photographing her and her friends' daily lives. She wanted to catch glimpses of that ineffable bond between teenage girls. The project began in 1985, and no one could have guessed how many decades it would span, or the tragic event that made the project feel necessary for Marshall. “When I began, this notion of using documentary photography and visual storytelling as a way to talk about emotional bonding was an abstract concept for a lot of people,” Marshall remembers, “because their notion of documentary practice was that something was a conflict or something was how to be about human rights, or something about how to be exotic. “Things are not just all about conflict,” she continues. “And I truly believe that in order to understand who we are as human beings, we have to look at how we get along.”

[Veterans, Military Families Could Lead the Way in Making America Civil Again, Groups Say](#)

[Stephen Losey, *Military.com*, 24 March 2021]

With political divisiveness increasingly fracturing American society and distrust of the military on the rise, it might be up to service members to take the first step to bridge that gap, veteran activists say. During an online roundtable Tuesday hosted by the [Veterans and Citizens Initiative](#), representatives of a variety of groups talked about the military-civilian divide, and how to fix it. The nonpartisan group of veterans, military families and military support organizations formed last year to encourage a peaceful post-election period. VCI's [recent survey](#) showed a lot of work has to be done to heal American society. When asked if the differences between Americans were so great they cannot come together, the 6,000 survey respondents became considerably more pessimistic over the last two years. In November 2018, 76% felt the differences weren't that great and 24% felt they were. But by December 2020, that difference had shrunk to 65% vs. 35%.

[Work from home or always working? Remote workdays during COVID-19 are longer thanks to technology](#) [Terry Collins USA TODAY, 22 March 2021]

It's not just you. The workday working from home during the coronavirus pandemic doesn't just feel longer. For many of us, it actually is longer. The very technology that enables us to do our jobs from most anywhere also makes it that much harder to step away. For Tina Schweiger, spending 12-hour-plus workdays staring at laptops has become far too familiar. Since the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic a year ago, many companies allow employees to work remotely, and in some cases, permanently. Screens, keyboards, and computer mice on dining room tables are now commonplace, and videoconferencing is the new normal. However, the convenience of having that technology at home is creating a never-ending workday for some employees who struggle to decide when it's time to turn off the switch. A Harvard Business School [study](#) of more than 3 million people in 16 cities worldwide found that the average workday increased by 48.5 minutes during the pandemic's early stages.

MISCELLANEOUS

[Acclaimed Egyptian feminist Nawal Saadawi dies at age 89](#) [The Associated Press, 21 March 2021]

*Nawal Saadawi, a renowned Egyptian feminist, psychiatrist and novelist, whose writings have stirred controversy for decades in an overwhelming conservative society, died of age-related health problems in Cairo on Sunday, officials said. She was 89. As a fierce advocate of women rights in Egypt and the Arab world, her writings focused mainly on feminism, domestic violence against women and religious extremism. She was a vocal opponent of female genital mutilation in Egypt and worldwide. When she published her famous book, "Women and Sex" in 1972, she faced a storm of criticism and condemnation from Egypt's political and religious establishment. She also lost her job at the Health Ministry. She was detained and jailed for two months in 1981 as part of a wide political crackdown waged by then-President Anwar Sadat. While in jail, Saadawi wrote down her experience in a book entitled: *Memoirs from the Women's Prison*, using a roll of toilet paper and a cosmetic pencil. Saadawi was the founder and head of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association and co-founder of the Arab Association for Human Rights.*

[Attack on kissing men fuels push for Italy hate crime law](#) [The Associated Press, 21 March 2021]

A recent attack in a Rome train station on two men who were kissing fueled calls by Italian political leaders Sunday for quick passage of a hate crimes law to protect members of the LGBTQ community, women and people with disabilities. Italian TV on Sunday aired what it said was video footage of the attack, which occurred on the platform at a local train station in late February. In the video, a man can be seen swinging at two young men. One of the pair is seen trying to fend off the blows, and the attacker keeps swinging at him. The proposed law aims to protect the LGBTQ community, women and people with disabilities from hate attacks. A conviction under the law carries a potential prison sentence of 18 months, as the bill is currently drafted. After passage in the Italian Parliament's lower chamber in November, the bill has been awaiting scheduling for debate in the Senate. The right-wing party League led by Matteo Salvini has opposed the legislation.

[Growing Number of Cities Weigh Tribal “Land Acknowledgements”](#) [Caitlin Dewey, *Stateline*, 17 March 2021]

“We wish to acknowledge that Tempe is the homeland of the Native people who have inhabited this landscape since time immemorial,” the resolution begins. The unusual resolution, popularly known as a land acknowledgement, declared that Tempe sits on traditional O’Odham and Piipaash lands—and celebrates the contributions the two tribes made to the region. Garlid, who is Navajo, grew up hearing her grandmother’s stories of being kidnapped into an American Indian boarding school in the 1930s. Staff beat the children for speaking the Navajo language, part of what is now recognized as a national project to erase Indigenous cultures. Tempe is one of an increasing number of city and state governments that have published formal statements recognizing Indigenous people and, in some cases, the violence they’ve endured. Such statements often are read before government meetings and at public events, much like the Pledge of Allegiance, and surface in official signage, government websites and email signatures. The practice, which draws from Indigenous traditions and has become common in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, both recognizes Indigenous communities and encourages listeners to acknowledge the painful reality of colonization.

[In “Landmark” Ruling, Court Raises Threshold for Firing Feds](#) [Erich Wagner, *GovExec*, 19 March 2021]

Federal agencies are now facing new requirements to fire employees thanks to a court ruling that reversed a decade’s old precedent. In Santos v. NASA, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit found the space agency failed to justify putting one of its engineers, Fernando Santos, on a performance improvement plan, or PIP. It was a ruling with sweeping implications, as agencies had never before been forced to establish cause for placing employees on a PIP. The plans are typically used by managers as a warning for poorly performing workers before initiating disciplinary action. Santos’ manager put him on a PIP after he missed meetings, which he argued he only missed when he took leave due to his requirements as a commander in the Navy Reserves. Under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, civilian employers cannot take disciplinary action against employees for missing time due to military service obligations. Debra Roth, a partner at the firm who the court assigned to write the brief, said PIPs generally put employees in a “precarious” position that makes it difficult for them to retain their jobs. The new ruling will force agencies to prove such a significant step was necessary, when previously Roth could not even collect evidence that her clients’ performance was not acceptable.

[Lawmakers call on Biden to make COVID vaccines mandatory for the military](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Navy Times*, 24 March 2021]

Calling unvaccinated troops “a critical threat to our national security and public health,” U.S. Rep. Jimmy Panetta, D-Calif., sent a letter to the White House Wednesday urging Biden to issue a “waiver of informed consent” that would force troops, if ordered, to get the vaccines as soon as they were eligible. “Vaccinating every eligible servicemember will improve readiness and have an immediate and positive impact on the communities in which they serve,” Panetta wrote. “Requiring DOD to obtain informed consent prior to vaccination is not only harmful to our national security, but contrary to the best interests of servicemembers, their families, communities and colleagues.” The letter, co-signed by six other congressional Democrats, cites testimony by

military officials last month that roughly a third of servicemembers had thus far declined the COVID-19 vaccines. A December report from the nonprofit advocacy group Blue Star Families found that just 40 percent of active-duty troops planned to get the vaccine, while 49 percent planned to decline it and 11 percent were undecided.

[On National Medal of Honor Day, civilians are recognized for valor and service](#) [*Stars and Stripes*, 25 March 2021]

Recipients of the nation's highest military honor marked National Medal of Honor Day on Thursday with ceremonies curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic, but a traditional continued with the [announcement](#) of the annual Citizen Honors Award recipients. In the past, those who received the citizen award from the Congressional Medal of Honor Society were participants in ceremonies in the Washington area on March 25. This year, however, Citizen Honors Service awardees (Service Act, Youth Service and Community Service) will be given on July 14 at a banquet in Charleston, S.C., and the Citizen Honors Valor awardees (Single Act of Heroism and Young Hero) will be honored at a dinner in Boston on September 10.

[Robina Asti, Who Made History on the Ground and in the Air, Dies at 99](#) [Clay Risen, *The New York Times*, 23 March 2021]

Robina Asti, a World War II veteran and mutual-fund executive who inspired a generation of transgender people in the 2010s with her successful fight for her husband's Social Security benefits, and who just last year became the world's oldest active flight instructor, died on March 12 in San Diego. She was 99. Ms. Asti transitioned in the 1970s and had been living quietly as a woman for nearly 40 years when she applied for survivor benefits from the Social Security Administration in 2012, a few months after her husband died. It took a year for the agency to deny her application, on the grounds that she was not legally a woman at the time of her marriage. Lambda took the government to court in June 2013. Not only did Ms. Asti win her case; the administration changed its rule regarding transgender survivors—and the documentation requirements for proving one's gender in the first place.

[Rugby study identifies new method to diagnose concussion using saliva](#) [University of Birmingham (UK), *Science Daily*, 23 March 2021]

A University of Birmingham-led [study](#) of top-flight UK rugby players—carried out in collaboration with the Rugby Football Union (RFU), Premiership Rugby, and Marker Diagnostics—has identified a method of accurately diagnosing concussion using saliva, paving the way for the first non-invasive clinical test for concussion for use in sport and other settings. The scientific breakthrough provides a new laboratory-based non-invasive salivary biological concussion test, which could have wide-reaching use and potential to reduce the risk of missing concussions not only in sport—from grassroots to professional levels—but also in wider settings such as military and healthcare.

[Survey: White Parents Less Optimistic Than Others About Outlook for Kids in U.S.](#) [Brent Woodie, *Route Fifty*, 18 March 2021]

Most people raising kids in America are hopeful about the outlook for their children in the U.S., but their views differ by race and ethnicity, with White parents most downbeat, according to a

new poll. In a [survey](#) commissioned by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the share of parents and caregivers who agreed with the statement “I am optimistic about the future of this country for my children” ranged from 64% among White respondents, to 81% among both Latinos and Asian American and Pacific Islanders. About three-quarters of Black and Indigenous parents agreed. At the same time, relatively few parents in any of those groups appeared to believe that all kids have equal access to the same opportunities. The survey, “Raising the Next Generation: Research with Parents and Caregivers,” examined a slate of issues related to what it is like raising children in the U.S. today.

[University of Central Oklahoma suspends cheerleading squad for alleged hazing incident](#) [Ivan Pereira, ABC News, 21 March 2021]

Administrators at the University of Central Oklahoma announced Saturday that it suspended its cheerleading squad’s operations and activities for the remainder of the school year while it investigates an alleged hazing incident. School president Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar did not offer details about the reported hazing involving the cheerleaders in her letter but said that the school immediately began an investigation into the matter. “Hazing of any kind has no place at the university and will not be tolerated,” she wrote. In addition to suspending the team’s activities, Neuhold-Ravikumar announced the team will not be allowed to participate in national competitions for two years.

[WWII codebreaker Turing honored on UK’s new 50-pound note](#) [Pan Pylas, *The Associated Press*, 25 March 2021]

The rainbow flag flew proudly Thursday above the Bank of England in the heart of London’s financial district to commemorate World War II codebreaker Alan Turing, the new face of Britain’s 50-pound note. The design of the bank note was unveiled before it is being formally issued to the public on June 23, Turing’s birthday. Turing’s image joins that of Winston Churchill on the five-pound note, novelist Jane Austen on the 10-pound note and artist J. M. W. Turner on the 20-pound note. Turing was selected as the new face of the 50-pound note in 2019 following a public nomination process that garnered around 250,000 votes, partly recognition of the discrimination that he faced as a gay man after the war. Among his many accomplishments, Turing is most famous for the pivotal role he played in breaking Nazi Germany’s Enigma code during World War II. The code had been believed to be unbreakable as the cipher changed continuously. Historians say the cracking of the code may have helped shorten the war by at least two years, potentially saving millions of lives.

MISCONDUCT

[Officer pleads guilty to charge for assaulting fiancée](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Navy Times*, 22 March 2021]

A U.S. Navy pilot whose conviction for strangling his fiancée was overturned by an appeals court last summer pleaded guilty earlier this month to a charge of assault consummated by a battery for the same incident, according to the Navy. Lt. Cmdr. Jason Doyle initially pleaded guilty in April 2019 to aggravated assault for strangling his fiancée in Florida in December 2017. He was sentenced to a reprimand, nine months’ confinement and dismissal from the sea service. But last

August, the Navy-Marine Corps Criminal Court of Appeals threw out that decision and called for a rehearing after ruling that the trial judge failed to properly define the level of force Doyle exerted upon the woman. At a general court-martial rehearing on March 8, Doyle pleaded guilty as part of a pre-trial agreement to assault consummated by a battery, according to Navy Region Northwest spokeswoman Liane Nakahara.

RACISM

[Atlanta Killings: Sex Worker Advocate Sees Deadly Consequences Of Overlapping Hatreds](#)

[Emma Bowman, NPR, 21 March 2021]

The man accused of killing six Asian women told police that he attacked the Georgia massage businesses because they contributed to his “sex addiction.” The spas, police said, were a source of “temptation for him that he wanted to eliminate.” For Yves Nguyen—an organizer for Red Canary Song, a New York City-based group that supports Asian sex workers and allies—whether the women victims provided sex services is beside the point. To her, the gunman’s target was clear—and part of a history of race and gender-based violence against Asian women, immigrants and sex workers. “If these women weren’t sex workers, the person who killed them certainly thought that they were,” Nguyen said in an interview with Weekend Edition’s Lulu Garcia-Navarro. “It is a reality that some people who work in massage businesses do engage in sex work ... and obviously some people don’t,” she said. But the racist and fetishistic perceptions around women of Asian descent, she said, especially immigrant Asian women involved in low-wage work, “make it so that people think that they’re sex workers anyways.”

[Changing how the military handles racial bias in the ranks](#) [CBS 60 Minutes, 21 March 2021]

[VIDEO]

David Martin reports on the new efforts being put forth to address inequality in the military, this time under the watch of the country’s first Black secretary of defense, Lloyd Austin.

[Cops’ posts to private Facebook group show hostility, hate](#) [Claudia Lauer and Thalia Beaty, *The Associated Press*, 22 March 2021]

In a private Facebook group called the Pittsburgh Area Police Breakroom, many current and retired officers spent the year criticizing chiefs who took a knee or officers who marched with Black Lives Matter protesters, whom they called “terrorists” or “thugs.” They made transphobic posts and bullied members who supported anti-police brutality protesters or Joe Biden in a forum billed as a place officers can “decompress, rant, share ideas.” The Associated Press was able to view posts and comments from the group, which has 2,200 members, including about a dozen current and former police chiefs—from mainly Allegheny County and some surrounding areas stretching into Ohio—and at least one judge and one councilman. After the AP began asking about posts last week, the group appeared to have been deleted or suspended from view. Concerns about explicit bias on officers’ social media accounts were renewed in the last year after a summer of protests demanding an end to police brutality and racial injustice in policing and pro-Trump protests in January that led to a violent siege on the Capitol.

[A high school football team told adults they were spat on and called the n-word. Nothing changed until a player posted, “enough is enough!”](#) [Theresa Vargas, *The Washington Post*, 20 March 2021]

In recent days, parents, educators and other adults in Northern Virginia have publicly stood up and stood by football players from an Arlington high school who say they were called slurs, including the n-word and “boy,” and spit on by members of an opposing team. But before that grown-up outrage showed itself online, and led to calls for action, a teenager declared through a social media post “enough is enough!” Monique Brown-Bryant, who is African American and facilitates conversations about diversity in Arlington schools for the organization Challenging Racism, is the mother of a Wakefield football player. She says that Hatcher and other players who spoke publicly about what happened didn’t do so without considering how it could affect their college prospects and other aspects of their lives. They figured they would likely draw online attacks—and they did. But, she says, the students and their parents had expressed concerns to administrators and the players waited nearly two weeks for an adequate response. That didn’t come, she says.

[Illinois investigating racist post directed at Kofi Cockburn following NCAA tournament loss](#) [ESPN News Service, 22 March 2021]

Illinois big man Kofi Cockburn is the second player to say he faced racist comments on social media following a loss in the NCAA men’s basketball tournament. Cockburn, who was born in Jamaica but later moved to New York, posted a screenshot of the post and responded by writing: “I blame his parents.” Cockburn’s post came a day after Ohio State’s E.J. Liddell received threatening and insulting social media messages following the second-seeded Buckeyes’ loss to No. 15 seed Oral Roberts. He posted images of the messages, including one that said, “I hope you die I really do.” Other messages included racist insults. An Illinois spokesman told ESPN’s Adam Rittenberg that the school is looking into the situation and has spoken with Cockburn.

[Mother: White headmaster made Black son kneel during apology](#) [The Associated Press, 21 March 2021]

The White headmaster of a New York Catholic school forced an 11-year-old Black student to kneel while apologizing to a teacher and later explained that the punishment was an “African way,” the boy’s mother said. Headmaster John Holian of St. Martin de Porres Marianist school on Long Island was placed on temporary leave after details of the Feb. 25 incident came to light, the Daily News reports. The student’s mother, Trisha Paul, told the newspaper that her son, Trayson, finished his reading early that day and took out another assignment. Paul said the boy’s English teacher reprimanded Trayson for working on the wrong assignment, ripped up the paper and marched him to Holian’s office, where the headmaster told the sixth-grader to get on his knees and apologize to the teacher. Paul said she called the school on March 1 and asked Holian if forcing students to kneel was standard disciplinary practice. Holian said it was not but added that he’d learned the approach from a Nigerian father who said it was an “African way” of apologizing, Paul said.

[National Security Professionals Call for Action on Hate Crimes and Racism Against Asian-Americans](#) [Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders in National Security, *Defense One*, 18 March 2021] [COMMENTARY]

We are foreign policy and national security professionals, including active and retired military members, diplomats, civilian government employees, government contractors, intelligence officers, investors, scientists, and academics. We are Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, or AAPI, who come from diverse backgrounds, from third-generation Chinese-Americans whose ancestors sought more opportunities and labored to build the vital infrastructure of America's westward expansion, to first-generation immigrants whose parents wanted to achieve the American Dream. As a community, it has been heart-wrenching to hear—and personally experience—the latest surge of hate crimes targeting Asian-Americans across our beloved country, the same country for which thousands of Asian-Americans have fought and died. Simultaneously, the xenophobia that is spreading as U.S. policy concentrates on great power competition has exacerbated suspicions, microaggressions, discrimination, and blatant accusations of disloyalty simply because of the way we look.

[NFL, class counsel poised to remove race-norming from concussion settlement program](#) [Pete Madden, *ABC News*, 23 March 2021]

As the NFL and the class counsel representing former players in the league's landmark concussion settlement program prepare for a court-ordered mediation to address concerns about race-norming, both sides appear to agree that race should no longer be a factor in determining eligibility for compensation for head injuries. The controversial practice has sparked a firestorm of criticism against the league for what critics says is a two-tiered system—one for Black players and one for White players—to calculate payouts to some former players who claim to be suffering from the lingering effects of head trauma sustained during their careers. Instead, the looming negotiations will likely focus on how to measure and address the impact of race-based adjustments on past claims, with millions of dollars in potential compensation hanging in the balance.

[Race in the ranks: An F-22 pilot on the sting of racial bias in the Air Force](#) [Jacqueline Dinick, *60 Minutes Overtime*, 21 March 2021]

The U.S. Air Force Inspector General released a survey on racial disparity at the end of last year. It found that “2 out of every 5 [African Americans in the Air Force] do not trust their chain of command to address racism, bias and unequal opportunities.” The study also reported that “3 out of every five [Black Air Force service members] ... believe they do not... receive the same benefit of the doubt as their White peers if they get in trouble.” Major Daniel Walker says he has always felt the sting of racial bias since he joined the Air Force. Walker is an F-22 pilot, and he told correspondent David Martin that he believes he has always been treated differently than White pilots. Walker explained that he, and he believes other African Americans in the military, have had to learn to moderate their behavior to accommodate the biases of their White counterparts. Walker told Martin that the unspoken message he perceived is: “You're big, you're Black, with a deep voice. You're intimidating.”

[Rallies in Atlanta, nation against hate after spa shootings](#) [Kate Brumback, *The Associated Press*, 25 March 2021]

A diverse crowd gathered Saturday near the Georgia state Capitol to demand justice for the victims of recent shootings at massage businesses and to denounce racism, xenophobia and misogyny. Hundreds of people of all ages and varied racial and ethnic backgrounds gathered in Liberty Plaza in Atlanta, and in similar rallies across the country, waving signs and chanting slogans. Georgia lawmakers last year passed a hate crimes law allowing additional penalties for certain offenses when motivated by a victim’s race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender or disability. A hate crime is not a standalone crime under Georgia law, but can be used to add time to a sentence of someone convicted of another crime. A couple hundred people gathered in a separate Atlanta park and marched through the streets to join the larger rally, chanting “Stop Asian hate” and “We are what America looks like.”

[Stop Blaming Tuskegee, Critics Say. It’s Not An “Excuse” For Current Medical Racism](#) [NPR, 23 March 2021]

“It’s ‘Oh, Tuskegee, Tuskegee, Tuskegee,’ and it’s mentioned every single time,” says Karen Lincoln, a professor of social work at USC and founder of Advocates for African American Elders. “We make these assumptions that it’s Tuskegee. We don’t ask people.” When she asks Black seniors in Los Angeles about the vaccine, Tuskegee rarely comes up. People in the community talk about contemporary racism and barriers to health care, she says, while it seems to be mainly academics and officials who are preoccupied with the history of Tuskegee. “It’s a scapegoat,” Lincoln says. “It’s an excuse. If you continue to use it as a way of explaining why many African Americans are hesitant, it almost absolves you of having to learn more, do more, involve other people—admit that racism is actually a thing today.”

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Woman sentenced for role in White supremacist kidnapping](#) [*The Associated Press*, 21 March 2021]

Amanda Rapp, 40, was sentenced Friday to 262 months in prison after pleading guilty in October to two counts of kidnapping two people who were suspected by the New Aryan Empire of cooperating with law enforcement. She had faced a potential sentence of life in prison. Rapp is one of dozens of the gang’s members who were indicted in 2017 and 2019 on kidnapping, drug, racketeering and weapons charges. Acting U.S. Attorney Jonathan Ross said 49 of defendants have now pleaded guilty, including gang leader Wesley Gullett. Prosecutors say New Aryan Empire began as a prison gang in the 1990s and later became involved in narcotics trafficking, witness intimidation and violent acts.

RELIGION

[Americans Grow More Confident in Safety of In-person Religious Services, Poll Finds](#) [Brent Woodie, *Route Fifty*, 23 March 2021]

Three-quarters of U.S. adults who normally attend religious services now say they are “very” or “somewhat” confident they can do so safely, without spreading or catching the coronavirus—up 12 percentage points from July of last year, new polling research finds. The Pew Research Center

[findings](#) were designed to gauge how the coronavirus outbreak is affecting the way Americans participate in their religious congregations. The research is based on responses to surveys conducted in July 2020 and March 2021. Overall, Americans are increasingly confident they can safely go to services at a church, temple, mosque or other houses of worship. The finding comes as more Americans are getting the coronavirus vaccine and as cases are down sharply compared to the fall and winter months.

[Three-quarters of Black Americans believe in God of the Bible or other holy scripture](#) [Jeff Diamant, *Pew Research Center*, 24 March 2021]

Nearly all Black Americans believe in God or a higher power, regardless of their religious affiliation. But what type of God do they have in mind? About three-quarters (74%) of Black Americans believe in God “as described in the Bible” or, if they identify with a non-Christian religion, the holy scripture of that faith, according to a recent [Pew Research Center survey](#). About eight-in-ten (81%) say God has the power to control what goes on in the world, and roughly seven-in-ten (68%) believe in a God who directly determines all or most of what happens in their lives. Additionally, nearly half of Black Americans (48%) believe that God or a higher power talks to them directly, according to the survey of 8,660 Black adults conducted Nov. 19, 2019-June 3, 2020.

SEXISM

[Female basketball players gets unreliable COVID testing, less online promotion from NCAA](#) [John Yang and Ryan Connelly Holmes, *PBS News*, 22 March 2021]

The NCAA women’s basketball tournament got underway Sunday. But even before the opening tip, new anger and frustration erupted last week over the NCAA’s different approaches to the women’s and men’s teams—including less reliable COVID testing. The problems were first laid bare on the social media platform TikTok. It began Thursday, when the University of Oregon’s Sedona Prince posted a video from a tournament site in San Antonio. University of South Carolina head coach Dawn Staley, a member of the basketball Hall of Fame, slammed the NCAA. “Either it’s miscommunication, no communication or just not downright caring that people know what’s happening on our side of things. And that must stop.”

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[In the U.S. Navy, I learned about honor, courage, commitment and sexism](#) [Stephanie Flores, *CNN*, 24 March 2021] [OPINION]

Over more than three years as a Navy sailor, I bore a burden. I served during a time when the number of women in the armed forces was growing, but still saw firsthand the obstacles that exist for us as we serve our country and make history every day. Ten years removed from my time in active duty, those obstacles—and my story—are hardly relics of the past. I can clearly remember, for example, a supervisor asking what my “Latina stripper name” would be and that it should be something “exotic.” I remember questions about supposed sexual favors—referenced with explicit, sexual language—I “must have given” in order to earn the qualifications I worked hard to achieve. I even remember the simple degradation of being tasked with the menial work my male counterparts didn’t want to do in our ship’s workshop. Those were some of the everyday

aggressions I faced during my active-duty service, and those are some of the stories that defined my time in the United States Navy.

[Military brass denounced Tucker Carlson’s remarks about a “feminine” force. Women say barriers remain for pregnant troops.](#) [Missy Ryan, *The Washington Post*, 20 March 2021]

When Fox News host Tucker Carlson called military efforts to better integrate women a “mockery” of the warrior ethos, pointing out a new pregnancy flight suit and more flexible hairstyle rules, Pentagon leaders mounted an unusually sharp public counterattack. America’s female troops “will dominate ANY future battlefield we’re called to fight on,” Michael Grinston, the Army’s top enlisted official, wrote on Twitter in response to Carlson’s complaints about a more “feminine” military. But despite the expressions of support, female service members continue to face an array of systemic challenges, including underrepresentation at the military’s highest levels; widespread sexual harassment and abuse; and pregnancy-related career impediments. While the military has taken steps in recent years to accommodate pregnant and postpartum troops, women report ongoing stigmatization and obstacles to promotion associated with childbearing, both of which contribute to the military’s female retention problem.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Deshaun Watson lawsuits up to 14, with 24 accusers](#) [Mike Florio, *NBC Sports*, 23 March 2021]

The numbers keep increasing for Deshaun Watson, as his camp remains silent. Lawyer Tony Buzbee told FOX 26 in Houston on Monday night that the total number of assault lawsuits against the Texans quarterback has reached 14, with 24 total claims now under consideration by Buzbee’s firm. “Most of the cases allege the same, or similar, conduct,” Buzbee said of the civil complaints alleging misconduct during massages. Through it all, Watson and his representatives have said very little. Although the time for responding formally to these complaints has not yet arrived, Watson’s silence has become deafening, as far as the court of public opinion is concerned. Even if there are no additional plaintiffs, the sheer magnitude of claims makes it more and more difficult to think that there’s an innocent explanation or that they are embellishing, fabricating, or flat-out lying.

[Episode 6: The continuing problem of sexual assault and harassment in the military](#) [*Stars and Stripes*, 19 March 2021] [PODCAST]

When a Marine’s TikTok video lashing out at a general over the handling of a sexual misconduct case went viral in February, the issue of sexual assault in the military once again found an uncomfortable spotlight. This week’s episode of Military Matters looks at this longstanding, continuing problem in discussions with social media personality and Army Sgt. 1st Class Astin Muse and with a soldier who recounts her own story of sexual assault. “That’s not supposed to be accepted in the military,” Muse says about her initial reaction to the video. “You keep saying zero tolerance. And I don’t think you know what that means.”

[Exclusive: U.N. staffer who complained of sexual assault loses dismissal case—documents](#) [Emma Farge, *Reuters*, 23 March 2021]

A policy adviser who filed a sexual assault complaint and was later fired by the U.N. agency fighting AIDS has lost an appeal against her dismissal for misconduct and been refused a copy of an investigation into her alleged assault, documents show. Martina Brostrom, 41, from Sweden, was fired for sexual and financial misconduct in December 2019. She denies the charges and says her dismissal was in retaliation for reporting a sexual assault by a senior official at UNAIDS. Then-UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director Luiz Loures denies Brostrom's accusation that he groped her in a hotel elevator in Thailand in 2015 and tried to drag her towards his room as well as her allegation that he triggered Brostrom's misconduct probe. Brostrom went public with her assault complaint in 2018.

[GOP Rep. Tom Reed Won't Seek Elected Office Following Sexual Misconduct Allegations](#)

[Jaclyn Diaz, NPR, 22 March 2021]

U.S. Rep. Tom Reed of New York apologized Sunday for sexual misconduct following allegations that a former lobbyist made against him. He said in a statement he took "full responsibility" for his actions. The accusations made by Nicolette Davis, a former lobbyist, were first reported by The Washington Post on Friday. Davis told the paper that during a 2017 networking trip in Minneapolis a group, including lobbyists and Reed, stopped at an Irish pub in the city. She told the Post that a drunk Reed unhooked her bra from the outside of her blouse and moved his hand up her thigh. Davis, 25 at the time and a junior lobbyist for the insurance company Aflac, said she asked for help from a colleague sitting next to her, who intervened and stopped Reed. Reed first denied Davis' account, telling the Post, "This account of my actions is not accurate." He declined to respond to further questions from the newspaper. But on Sunday Reed backed down from his denial. He said while he doesn't recall the interaction with Davis, he believed her.

[No jail time for senior Air Force NCO convicted of sex crime](#) [David Roza Task & Purpose, 20 March 2021]

A senior Air Force non-commissioner officer convicted of abusive sexual contact and dereliction of duty was reduced one rank and will face a mandatory discharge proceeding but no jail time, the San Antonio Express-News reported on Wednesday. As a convicted sex offender, Senior Master Sgt. Jeremy M Zier, 41, could have received one year in jail, six months' forfeiture of pay and allowances, three months' hard labor and reduction in rank to airman basic, the Express-News reported. The comparatively light sentencing angered the victim of Zier's abusive sexual contact, Staff Sgt. Cambria Ferguson, 26, who at the time of the assault was an Airman First Class at Incirlik Air Base in Turkey. "Going through the assault followed by a yearlong investigation process that ended in extremely disappointing sentencing today has me angry, sad, nauseous... so many other things I'm not ready to discuss," Ferguson wrote on her Facebook page last week. Though the assault happened in 2015, it has stuck with her ever since, Ferguson wrote on her [personal website](#).

[USC to pay \\$1bn over abuse claims against gynaecologist George Tyndall](#) [BBC News, 25 March 2021]

It is the biggest sex abuse-linked pay-out in higher education history. George Tyndall was arrested in 2019 and charged with sexually assaulting 16 female patients, allegations he denies. More than 350 women have spoken out about their experiences as patients of the gynaecologist.

Dr Tyndall, now 74, is awaiting trial. In a 2019 statement he said he “remains adamant” he would be “totally exonerated”. Lawyers for a final group of 710 women suing the university told a judge at the Los Angeles Superior Court they had settled their claims for \$852m. USC had already agreed in 2018 to pay \$215m in a class action case. The case arose after the Los Angeles Times published accounts from former and current employees about Dr Tyndall’s alleged sexual misconduct as a gynaecologist. Hundreds of women came forward to report misconduct by Dr Tyndall, according to police, though not all cases met the requirements for charges. The women claimed he made lewd comments, photographed and groped them during medical examinations.

[Watchdog: Ex-Navy auditor sexually harassed female workers](#) [Lolita C. Baldor, *The Associated Press*, 24 March 2021]

A former Navy civilian auditor sexually harassed at least a dozen female employees for more than two decades as part of a pervasive pattern of misconduct and retaliation, according to a government watchdog report released Wednesday. The report by the Defense Department’s inspector general found that former Navy Auditor General Ronnie Booth engaged in “quid pro quo sexual propositions when interacting with female subordinates at the Naval Audit Service.” It said he requested “sexual favors in exchange for career advancement, all under the guise of professional career ‘mentoring’.” Booth also was in a “sporadic long-term sexual relationship” with one subordinate in exchange for job promotions and other professional help, the report said. The report noted that some employees complained about Booth’s behavior in anonymous comments in the 2018 job climate survey that workers fill out.

VETERANS

[Coast Guard Training Center Annex Named for Arnold Palmer](#) [Megan Tomasic, *The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, 25 March 2021]

In honor of his time as a member of the U.S. Coast Guard, Arnold Palmer’s name will live on at a California training center. Palmer, who died in 2016, was a Latrobe native and professional golfer who served as a yeoman in the Coast Guard from 1951-53. Now, yeoman trainees in Petaluma, Calif., will undergo entry-level training at the Arnold D. Palmer Professional Annex, located in the Juliet Nichols Building on Training Center Petaluma. “My dad said that the U.S. Coast Guard ‘made (him) a better person for the world,’” said Amy Palmer Saunders, chair of the Arnold & Winnie Palmer Foundation. “He would be touched to know that others will be given the same opportunity to learn and grow in a space named for him.”

[Lack of data on female veterans makes seeking care challenging](#) [Kacie Kelly, *The Dallas Morning News*, 18 March 2021] [OPINION]

Even before the pandemic, female veterans—the fastest-growing segment of the veteran population—were two times more likely to die by suicide than their civilian counterparts, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Throw the pandemic into the mix, and the challenges facing those veterans become even more worrying. Women overall are projected to face worse mental health outcomes from COVID-19 than physical. We know that women are dropping out of the workforce at alarming rates and single mothers in particular are at risk from isolation. Women have already reported facing harassment and discomfort when they try to tap

into veterans' resources, making them less likely to ask for help. Women currently make up 10% of the veteran population, a figure expected to grow to 17% by 2040. Elected leaders, government agencies and private partners serving veterans must act together—today—to use technology to make it easier to obtain care and to use data science to identify subpopulations, such as women, who may be at increased risk for behavioral health challenges or suicide.

[Navy memories and birthday cake on Yvette Vary's 100th birthday](#) [Mark Reynolds, *The Providence Journal*, (Providence, R.I.), 21 March 2021]

Yvette Vary was a bit cranky after she woke up on her 100th birthday Sunday morning. "Ticked off," is how the 100-year-old put it. But Vary is a Navy veteran who keeps it moving and her day perked up quickly. Not too far away, U.S. Sen. Jack Reed and U.S. Rep. David N. Cicilline were headed toward a meetup point where a parade of cars and SUVs was taking form. And U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Shoshana Chatield, president of the Naval War College, had heard about Vary's birthday, too. She was on her way. Recruiting posters for WAVES, which was the women's branch of the U.S. Naval Reserves, nabbed the attention of Vary and her sister Noella after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the start of World War II. The two of them enlisted in 1944. Both were assigned to Davisville. Vary held the rank of seaman first class. She worked at Quonset Naval Air Station.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[PTSD Linked to Ischemic Heart Disease in Female Veterans](#) [*Health Day News*, 24 March 2021]

*In female veterans, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is associated with an increased risk for ischemic heart disease (IHD), especially for younger women and for racial/ethnic minorities, according to a [study](#) published online March 17 in *JAMA Cardiology*. Ramin Ebrahimi, M.D., from the Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Health Care System, and colleagues examined whether PTSD is associated with incident IHD in female veterans in a retrospective, longitudinal cohort study. A total of 398,769 female veterans were included in the study: 132,923 with PTSD and 265,846 never diagnosed with PTSD.*

[Veterans treatment courts seek to rehabilitate veterans in lieu of punishment after an arrest](#) [Chad Lennon, *Military Times*, 25 March 2021] [COMMENTARY]

If you had served the country and have been arrested you might be thinking to yourself, "how did I get here, and where should I go from here?" Going from serving your country to facing criminal charges is a dramatic change, but there is a way you can get through this situation and come out better afterwards. The veterans treatment courts ([VTC](#)) were started in 2008 and have since established a total of 461 courts as of 2016. These are specialized courts that look to assist those who have served and offer them treatment for issues they may have from their time serving. While the VTC is looking to help, the process of negotiation with them may be difficult or confusing for some.