

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 9 APRIL 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

[Education Department to Conduct Thorough Title IX Review, Propose Changes](#) [Brent Woodie, *Route Fifty*, 6 April 2021]

The U.S. Department of Education said Tuesday it will examine policies set forth by Title IX, including amendments issued by the Trump administration that took effect Aug. 14. The amendments required schools to change processes around reporting and investigating sexual harassment and assault claims, holding them liable if they failed to respond to notices by bus drivers, coaches, cafeteria staff and others. A [letter released](#) by the Education Department said the review process will allow students, parents, school officials and advocates to provide feedback before the Biden administration offers its proposal for how schools and colleges receiving public funding must respond to allegations of sexual assault and harassment. After hearing from the public and completing its review, the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights said it expects to publish proposed rule-making to amend the Title IX regulations.

[Navy Recruiting Could See Changes Following Diversity Listening Sessions](#) [Mallory Shelbourne, *USNI News*, 7 April 2021]

The Navy is considering changes to how it recruits sailors—including offering its aptitude test in another language—after receiving feedback from the fleet. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday said today the service is weighing the possibility for potential recruits to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test, required from all recruits, in Spanish. “Everybody has to have a command of the English language to serve in the U.S. military, but some people might do better in a written exam like that if it’s in Spanish,” Gilday said during a virtual forum hosted by the Center for New American Security. “And so, why not offer that to get a better sense of what their attributes are—what their aptitude is—so that we place them in an optimum career path in the Navy that turns it into a win-win for them and for the institution.” In addition to adding a Spanish-language option, the service is evaluating how it uses standardized test scores to screen candidates for its ROTC program. Gilday noted that the current SAT score average for the program is 1450, but the requirements may have inadvertently hindered the service’s recruitment of minority applicants.

[Over 200 Groups Call for Whistleblower Reform for Public Servants](#) [Courtney Bubl , *GovExec*, 1 April 2021]

A diverse group of 264 organizations, led by the Government Accountability Project, sent the [letter](#) to leaders to emphasize the important role whistleblowers play in holding the government accountable. They argued that current whistleblower laws—such as the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act, 1989 Whistleblower Protection Act and 2012 Whistleblower Enhancement Act—are outdated and insufficient to protect “courageous” individuals who disclose wrongdoing. “Improvements to whistleblower protections, historically passed by Congress with bipartisan and nearly unanimous support, and supported by 86% of Americans according to a recent [Marist poll](#), are a crucial first step to ensuring accountability and establishing safeguards in the federal government,” they wrote. “Public servants should be able to disclose evidence of wrongdoing without fear of reprisal or futility.”

SPECIAL: DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

[A Proclamation on Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust, 2021](#) [President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., [WhiteHouse.gov](#), 4 April 2021]

“On Yom HaShoah—Holocaust Remembrance Day—we stand in solidarity with the Jewish people in America, Israel, and around the world to remember and reflect on the horrors of the Holocaust. An estimated six million Jews perished alongside millions of other innocent victims—Roma and Sinti, Slavs, disabled persons, LGBTQ+ individuals, and others—systematically murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators in one of the cruelest and most heinous campaigns in human history...”

[Holocaust Doc Final Account Reveals the “Ordinariness of the People Who Perpetrate Genocide”: Watch the Trailer](#) [Alexia Fernández, *PEOPLE*, 9 April 2021]

A new documentary is taking a close look at how ordinary men and women conformed to Adolf Hitler's society. In a PEOPLE exclusive look at the trailer for Final Account, director Luke Holland examines what made an entire generation of people participate in Hitler's Third Reich and the Holocaust that followed. Dr. Stephen D. Smith, the Finci-Viterbi Endowed Executive Director of the USC Shoah Foundation, tells PEOPLE, “Understanding who the Nazis were is essential if we want to counter the hateful ideologies of antisemitism and White supremacy we continue to see today.” “I was struck by how much Final Account reveals about the ordinariness of the people who perpetrate genocide, and how vigilant we must remain as ordinary people today,” says Smith.

[Holocaust survivors use social media to fight anti-Semitism](#) [David Rising, *The Associated Press*, 7 April 2021]

Alarmed by a rise in online anti-Semitism during the pandemic, coupled with studies indicating younger generations lack even basic knowledge of the Nazi genocide, Holocaust survivors are [taking to social media](#) to share their experiences of how hate speech paved the way for mass murder. With short video messages recounting their stories, participants in the [#ItStartedWithWords](#) campaign hope to educate people about how the Nazis embarked on an insidious campaign to dehumanize and marginalize Jews—years before death camps were established to carry out murder on an industrial scale. The campaign, launched to coincide with Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day, was organized by the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, which negotiates compensation for victims. It is backed by many organizations, including the United Nations.

[Report: Pandemic amped up anti-Semitism, forced it online](#) [Laurie Kellman, *The Associated Press*, 7 April 2021]

Coronavirus lockdowns last year shifted some anti-Semitic hatred online, where conspiracy theories blaming Jews for the pandemic's medical and economic devastation abounded, Israeli researchers reported Wednesday. That's raised concerns about a rise in anti-Semitism in the post-pandemic world. The findings, which came in an [annual report by Tel Aviv University's](#)

[researchers on anti-Semitism](#), show that the social isolation of the pandemic kept Jews away from those who wish to harm them. The number of violent incidents toward Jews across some 40 countries dropped last year, from 456 to 371—roughly the same levels the researchers reported from 2016 to 2018. Worrying trends included gradual rises in violent incidents in the United States and a sharper increase in Germany. Online, the scene was much different, researchers reported—a potential warning sign that as pandemic restrictions ease, hateful conduct toward Jews could intensify as it has during some of humanity’s other historic struggles.

[Why the Stories of Jewish Women Who Fought the Nazis Remained Hidden for So Long](#) [Judy Batalion, *TIME*, 8 April 2021]

On Yom Hashoah, we light memorial candles and mourn the dead. But which narratives of the Holocaust do we recall? Why have certain stories predominated our understanding while others have seemingly vanished?... Over a decade, I learned many reasons why the tale of Jewish female resistors fell to the footnotes. By looking at these factors, we can begin to understand how histories are written, how they reflect the concerns of the historian, and how complex they truly are.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

CULTURE

[Duolingo adds Yiddish to its language lessons](#) [Odeya Pinkus, *NBC News*, 6 April 2021]

The Duolingo learning app on Tuesday is adding a new language to its offerings: Yiddish. It’s the 40th language to be added to the app—and one that builds on efforts to include languages that are not as common as they once were. “We’re really excited that we’re able to get into linguistic diversity,” said Myra Awodey, Duolingo’s lead community specialist. “Not only preserving languages but also helping to teach languages that are kind of on the brink or shrinking.” It’s hard to know the definitive number of Yiddish speakers worldwide, but Jeffrey Shandler, a professor of Jewish studies at Rutgers University, said that estimates range from 500,000 to 1 million, down from around 11 million on the eve of World War II. Shandler said Yiddish is known as a “heritage language” that people often study to connect with family histories.

[For Navy grooming standards, terms like “faddish” and “outrageous” are out](#) [Theron Godbold, *Stars and Stripes*, 5 April 2021]

Sailor feedback has prompted the Navy to change grooming standards terms that are considered vague and sometimes arbitrarily applied, according to a recent Navy administrative message. A series of changes are coming to hair standards, especially, that are aimed at “enhancing clarity, interpretation and application of uniform policies,” according to [Naval Administrative Message 072/21 issued Thursday](#). Terms like “faddish,” “good taste” and “outrageous” will be deleted from the regulation, according to the message. Other terms like “professional appearance,” are being revised, or added, like “professional military appearance.” The message comes after a Navy review of its hair and grooming standards in the summer and fall of 2020. The service assembled focus groups of sailors, male and female, officer and enlisted, and asked them whether the existing standards are racially biased, the message states.

[In “Exterminate All the Brutes,” Raoul Peck Takes Aim at White Supremacy](#) [Robert Ito, *The New York Times*, 6 April 2021]

After completing his 2016 documentary “I Am Not Your Negro,” the director Raoul Peck felt he’d had his say on the topic of U.S. race relations. Or at least his subject, the writer James Baldwin, had. In the film, Baldwin called Whiteness a “metaphor for power” and called out this country’s legacy of racism in the bluntest of terms. What more could Peck say that Baldwin hadn’t? “Baldwin is one of the most precise scholars of American society,” Peck said in a video interview from his home in Paris. “If you didn’t understand the message, that means there is no hope for you.” “What was the origin story of all of this?” Peck said he wondered. “Where did the whole ideology of White supremacy begin?” That search is the focus of Peck’s latest project, “Exterminate All the Brutes,” a supremely ambitious, deeply essayistic undertaking that combines archival footage, clips from Hollywood movies, scripted scenes and animated sequences.

[\[TRAILER\]](#)

[Military must reject “slavery and treason” of Confederate base names, commissioner warns](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 5 April 2021]

*One of the outside experts charged with helping rename military sites currently honoring Confederate leaders on Sunday blasted the Confederate flag as a symbol of “treason” and said America should stop venerating individuals who “fought against this country to support and create a slave society.” Ty Seidule, former head of the history department at the U.S. Military Academy and an appointee to the Defense Department’s Confederate Base Naming Commission, said in an interview with ABC’s *This Week on Sunday* that the panel’s work is important so that all Americans can better understand the myths of nobility and romanticism around the Confederacy and its leaders’ goals. “We’re changing commemoration,” he said. “History is what historians do to look at the past to try to understand what happened, but commemoration is who, as a society, we honor. And we should honor those who lived the value that we cherish today, not those who fought for slavery and treason 160 years ago.”*

[New Book on Navy Reading List Prompts Senator to Introduce Bill Banning Racial Bias Training](#) [Steve Beynon, *Military.com*, 6 April 2021]

*Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., has introduced a bill aiming to squash racial bias training in the military as the force faces a reckoning on extremism and White supremacy in the ranks. The *Combat Racist Training in the Military Act* would prohibit the military from examining what Cotton considers “racist theories,” most notably *Critical Race Theory*. The military would be forbidden to “promote or otherwise encourage anti-American and racist theories that demoralize and divide its members,” the bill states. The text adds that the force would not be allowed to facilitate any teaching that the “U.S. is a fundamentally racist country.” A statement from Cotton’s office suggests that he was motivated to offer the bill after the Navy added “How to Be an Antiracist” by Ibram X. Kendi to a list of 74 books it recommends to leaders; that list is overwhelmingly focused on warfare and leadership. It is unclear what specifically about the book spurred the action; Cotton’s office did not return a request for comment.*

[Project will identify Black heritage places in Los Angeles](#) [*The Associated Press*, 6 April 2021]

Places linked to African American heritage in Los Angeles will be identified in an effort to preserve them, the [Getty arts organization](#) and the city announced Tuesday. The three-year Los Angeles African American Historic Places Project will work with local communities and cultural institutions to identify places that best represent the African American experience in the city, the collaborators said in a statement. Just over 3% of the city's 1,200 designated local landmarks are linked to African American heritage despite extensive efforts to record LA's historic places, they said. The project will be led by the Getty Conservation Institute and the city's Office of Historic Resources. "Historic preservation is about the acknowledgment and elevation of places and stories," said Tim Whalen, the institute's director. "The point of this work is to make sure that the stories and places of African Americans in Los Angeles are more present and complete than previously." The work is also about making sure that preservation methods are examined for systemic bias, he said.

[Technical training now includes respect in curriculum](#) [Capt. Lauren Woods, Air Education and Training Command, 3 April 2021]

A cultural development course, delivered to Airmen during their initial technical training, is adding respect to their mandatory curriculum. The decision to add the new mandatory curriculum on respect came about in recognition of the importance of diversity in the Air Force. "Respect was chosen to be included as a core lesson because our Airmen need to have awareness of our diverse culture and the important role every Airman plays in supporting our National Defense Strategy," said Master Sgt. Kristen Jordan, Second Air Force military training leader functional manager. Senior Airman Courtney Collins, 335th Training Readiness Squadron, recently completed Airmanship 200 and found the discussion on respect to be especially valuable to younger Airmen. "Respect is the foundation for professional and personal relationships, no matter your rank," Collins said.

[Thandie Newton reverts to original spelling of first name, Thandiwe](#) [BBC News, 5 April 2021]

The actress has hitherto been known as Thandie, an anglicised version of her name with the "w" absent. All of Newton's films will be credited with the name Thandiwe (pronounced "tan-DEE-way") Newton in future. "That's my name. It's always been my name. I'm taking back what's mine," Newton told British Vogue. Newton also told Vogue she welcomed how much representation of ethnic minority groups has improved in the entertainment landscape. "The thing I'm most grateful for in our business right now is being in the company of others who truly see me. And to not be complicit in the objectification of Black people as 'others', which is what happens when you're the only one," she said. Newton was born in London to a White British father, Nick, and a Zimbabwean mother, Nyasha. Her family settled in Penzance, Cornwall, when Newton was three years old.

[With a wave and smile, Lee Elder helps open the Masters](#) [Tim Reynolds, The Associated Press, 8 April 2021]

The applause started when Lee Elder's golf cart began moving toward the first tee. It only got louder when he arrived and slowly made his way to his seat. And moments later, Masters Chairman Fred Ridley said words 46 years in the making. "Lee, it is my privilege to say, you have the honors," Ridley said. That prompted the first roar of the 2021 Masters Tournament.

Elder—the first Black man to play the Masters—rose from his chair, hoisted his driver skyward for a moment, then nodded, smiled and waved in appreciation of the hundreds of people who crowded around the first tee to see history happen. He joined Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus as an honorary starter for the Masters on Thursday morning, the first time he had been part of the ceremony. Augusta National—mindful of the ongoing national conversation about racial injustice—announced last year that it would honor Elder with two scholarships in his name at Paine College, a historically Black institution.

DISCRIMINATION

[Arkansas lawmakers enact transgender youth treatment ban](#) [Andrew DeMillo, *The Associated Press*, 7 April 2021]

Arkansas lawmakers on Tuesday made the state the first to ban gender confirming treatments and surgery for transgender youth, enacting the prohibition over the governor’s objections. The Republican-controlled House and Senate voted to override GOP Gov. Asa Hutchinson’s veto of the measure, which prohibits doctors from providing gender confirming hormone treatment, puberty blockers or surgery to anyone under 18 years old, or from referring them to other providers for the treatment. Opponents of the measure have vowed to sue to block the ban before it takes effect this summer. Hutchinson vetoed the bill Monday following pleas from pediatricians, social workers and the parents of transgender youth who said the measure would harm a community already at risk for depression and suicide. The ban was opposed by several medical and child welfare groups, including the American Academy of Pediatrics.

[Four companies enter consent decree to end discrimination](#) [*The Associated Press*, 1 April 2021]

The Illinois attorney general’s office announced Thursday it reached consent decrees with four companies, including a temporary staffing agency, to resolve allegations of workplace segregation and sex discrimination in hiring. DSI Holdings Corp., the parent of Service Master; Alternative Staffing Inc. and Resource Management Group Inc., which operate jointly; Amylu Foods LLC; and Fibre Drum Sales Inc. agreed to pay a total of \$280,000 in penalties to resolve the allegations of misconduct, according to the attorney general’s office. In a statement, Attorney General Kwame Raoul said the companies didn’t do much to hide their discriminatory hiring practices by assigning positions based on gender stereotypes about the work women can perform. He said discrimination is almost commonplace within the temporary staffing industry.

[N.C. bill would ban treatment for trans people under 21](#) [Bryan Anderson, *The Associated Press*, 5 April 2021]

Three North Carolina Republican lawmakers introduced a bill Monday that would prevent doctors from performing gender reassignment surgery for transgender people younger than 21. The legislation follows a nationwide trend of GOP-controlled state legislatures looking to limit treatments for transgender adolescents. Unlike other states, however, North Carolina would classify adults between the ages of 18 and 21 as minors under the “Youth Health Protection Act.” Medical professionals who facilitate a transgender person’s desire to present themselves or appear in a way that is inconsistent with their biological sex could have their license revoked and face civil fines of up to \$1,000 per occurrence. The measure bars doctors from providing gender

confirming hormone treatment, puberty blockers or surgery. Senate Bill 514 would also compel state employees to immediately notify parents in writing if their child displays “gender nonconformity” or expresses a desire to be treated in a way that is incompatible with the gender they were assigned at birth. LGBTQ advocates fear the bill would out people under 21 who tell state workers that they may be transgender.

[South Carolina House gives key approval to hate crimes bill](#) [Michelle Liu, *The Associated Press*, 7 April 2021]

South Carolina moved one step closer Wednesday to becoming the 48th state in the nation to pass a hate crime law. House representatives gave key approval by a 79-29 vote on the proposal to allow harsher penalties for killings, assaults and other violent crimes motivated by hatred for someone’s race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, sexual orientation or physical or mental disability—all protected groups recognized by federal law. “Protecting against violent criminal acts motivated by proven hatred is not a liberal or conservative issue,” said Republican Rep. Weston Newton, one of the bill sponsors. “It is not a Republican or Democrat issue, it is not a White or Black issue, and it is not a gay or straight issue.” South Carolina is one of only three states—along with Arkansas and Wyoming—without a hate crimes law.

DIVERSITY

[A chance to “rise”: St. Louis elects 1st Black female mayor](#) [Jim Salter, *The Associated Press*, 7 April 2021]

St. Louis Treasurer Tishaura Jones, who has been outspoken in her criticism of the criminal justice system’s “arrest and incarcerate” model, won election Tuesday and will take over as the first Black female mayor in a city beset by yet another wave of violent crime. Jones defeated Alderwoman Cara Spencer in the general election with 51.7% to Spencer’s 47.8%, based on unofficial results posted on the city’s website. She will be sworn in April 20. “St. Louis: This is an opportunity for us to rise,” Jones said in her victory speech. “I told you when I was running that we aren’t done avoiding tough conversations. We are done ignoring the racism that has held our city and our region back.” Spencer, in her concession, noted the historic achievement of her opponent. “This is something we should all celebrate,” Spencer said. “Our city broke a glass ceiling tonight, a ceiling that shouldn’t have been there.”

[First-class aviator reflects on her storied career](#) [Annette Crawford, *37th Training Wing Public Affairs*, 4 April 2021]

Kathy La Sauce didn’t blaze trails during her 20-year Air Force career. She scorched them. She joined the Air Force in 1972, after receiving one of only two Officer Training School slots for the Long Island, New York area. “When I graduated from college, I wanted my life to matter so I looked at joining the Air Force,” La Sauce said. “Fortunately, the Air Force had just increased the number of women that would be allowed to serve, and it opened up some of the nontraditional career fields.” Her next stop was Chanute Air Force Base, Illinois, where she became part of the first maintenance officer class to include women. “When I learned that they were going to open up flying to women, I was excited about the possibility of the opportunity to learn to fly,” she said. La Sauce said she found pilot training to be “extremely demanding but yet thrilling.” While

many Americans were celebrating the huge step in equal rights for women, not everyone was on board with the changes. “Some of our flight commanders didn’t want us there,” she said. “And some of them even said, ‘Well, if I had my way, none of you would graduate’.” Despite the negativity, La Sauce didn’t let it stop her from achieving her goals. She thought of what it would mean if she didn’t succeed.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Fort Stewart sending first all-female team to Best Sapper Competition](#) [Corey Dickstein, *Stars and Stripes*, 8 April 2021]

A pair of Fort Stewart, Ga.-based engineering officers is set to become the first all-female team to compete for the title of the Army’s best-skilled combat engineering duo next month in Missouri. The 3rd Infantry Division will send the all-female team of 1st Lt. Trish Burden and 2nd Lt. Amanda Atkinson to the Army’s Best Sapper Competition May 1-4 at Fort Leonard Wood, Army officials said. Burden and Atkinson are engineering officers with the 3rd ID’s 9th Engineer Battalion, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team. “It’s an honor to compete and represent our unit, and even if we weren’t the first all-female team just to go is a very, very good opportunity for us,” said Burden, who commissioned into the Army in 2017. “We’re really proud to be able to do that, [and] to show other Sappers that it is possible to go as an all-female team is exciting.”

[New Marine Corps Maternity Uniforms: Designed by Women, For Women](#) [Matt Gonzales, *Marine Corps Systems Command*, 7 April 2021]

In April, Marine Corps Systems Command will begin releasing a series of modifications to the service, dress, combat and physical training maternity uniform items to address capability gaps involving fit, comfort and appearance. The efforts include improvements to existing uniforms and the development of new clothing items. The enhanced maternity uniforms incorporate clothing attributes reflective of innovative commercial industry technology in design and fabric development. This multiphase project exemplifies the Marine Corps’ investment in equipping Marines with comfortable, effective clothing as well as their dedication to supporting the recruitment and retention of Marines—an objective featured in 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David Berger’s Commandant’s Planning Guidance. “The population of expectant Marines may be small,” said Lucinda Stocks, a program analyst with MCSC’s Program Manager Infantry Combat Equipment. “But developing these maternity uniforms is important for the future of the Marine Corps.”

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Officials Aim to Diversify the U.S. Quantum Workforce Early On](#) [Brandi Vincent, *NextGov*, 2 April 2021]

Quantum information science is an on-the-rise field that merges quantum mechanics-based concepts—or those that hone in on how things operate at the subatomic level—with theories on storing, transmitting, computing or measuring information. “The numbers that I could find said something like a total few thousand quantum experts worldwide. Worldwide, there is a shortage,” Abiodun Ilumoka, a program director in the National Science Foundation’s Education and Human Resources Directorate told Nextgov recently. “In the United States, there is definitely a shortage. And yes, there’s definitely a diversity gap: a huge diversity gap.” University of

Chicago's Associate Professor in Computer Science and Director of Computer Science Education Diana Franklin told Nextgov that she, too, has seen how the technology communities that trickle out of these topics generally "have a shortage of people of color" and depending on the subject matter, less women. "I have definitely felt [the diversity gap]. I mean, there are very few women in my department and very few females in my classes. The ways that it plays out—well, it's interesting for me because in computer science education, actually that is not male-dominated," Franklin explained.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[United rolls out ambitious new plan to train at least 2,500 women and people of color as pilots by 2030](#) [Errol Barnett, CBS News, 6 April 2021]

United Airlines is announcing a new plan to train 5,000 pilots by 2030, CBS News' Errol Barnett reports. The airline, which is the only major one in the U.S. to own a flight school, says at least half of those trainees will be women or people of color. Across the American airline industry, less than 6% of all pilots and flight engineers are women. Only about 10% of them are Black, Asian, Hispanic or Latino Americans. Just 7% of United Airlines' pilots are women, which it says is one of the highest percentages in the industry. People of color make up only 13% of their pilots. According to United CEO Scott Kirby, "they simply don't have the access or the opportunity." Kirby told CBS News about the new effort to bring balance to the flight deck. "We're excited at United to be announcing the United Aviate Academy to address the structural issues with the makeup of our pilots," he said. The academy will have a focus on enrolling underrepresented groups, and will allow potential trainees to apply for both partial and full scholarships.

EXTREMISM

[The Extremism Question the Military Can't Answer](#) [Paul D. Shinkman, U.S. News & World Report, 8 April 2021]

The 60-day stand-down Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered to analyze troubling rates of extremism within the military ranks comes to an end this week. Each of the service branches will submit reports to him by Friday about what they learned from the period designed to get a better grip on a poorly understood but clearly insidious problem and come up with a path toward potential solutions. Yet perhaps the most pressing issue facing the Defense Department is the extent to which it will ever be able to define the problem itself...

[The Military Confronts Extremism, One Conversation At A Time](#) [Tom Bowman, NPR, 7 April 2021]

When Lloyd Austin became defense secretary, he called for these sessions, or "stand downs." These discussions were prompted by the storming of the Capitol on Jan. 6 following a speech by then-President Donald Trump and the presence there of some military veterans. More than 300 people at the Capitol that day have been arrested, and around 15% have former military ties, according to an NPR analysis. About 7% of U.S. adults are veterans, [according to the Census Bureau](#). 1st Lt. Madeline Hoffman, who's in charge of a Marine infantry logistics unit at Twentynine Palms, Calif., was about to run her own stand down on extremism and acknowledged the topic was something fairly new. The Marines under Hoffman's command say they felt the

military's reputation for being apolitical has been under siege for a while. One Black civilian—a former Marine—said it's important to have a diverse military to deal with these issues. More minority officers are needed, he said.

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

[Neo-Nazi pleads guilty in journalist threat case](#) [The Associated Press, 7 April 2021]

An organizer of a neo-Nazi campaign to threaten journalists and Jewish activists in three states has pleaded guilty in federal court in Seattle. Cameron Shea was one of four members of the neo-Nazi group Atomwaffen Division charged earlier this year with having cyberstalked and sent Swastika-laden posters to journalists and an employee of the Anti-Defamation League, telling them, “You have been visited by your local Nazis,” “Your Actions have Consequences,” and “We are Watching.” Shea pleaded guilty to two of the counts in the five-count indictment: a conspiracy charge that carries up to five years in prison and interference with a federally protected activity, which carries up to 10. He is scheduled to be sentenced in June. Atomwaffen has been linked to several killings, including the May 2017 shooting deaths of two men at an apartment in Tampa, Florida, and the January 2018 killing of a University of Pennsylvania student in California.

HUMAN RELATIONS

[The harmful ableist language you unknowingly use](#) [Sara Nović, BBC News, 5 April 2021]

Some of our most common, ingrained expressions have damaging effects on millions of people—and many of us don't know we're hurting others when we speak. About 1 billion people worldwide—15% of the global population—have some type of documented disability. In the U.S., this proportion is even larger, at about one in four people, with similar rates reported in the UK. Despite these numbers, disabled people experience widespread discrimination at nearly every level of society. This phenomenon, known as “ableism”—discrimination based on disability—can take on various forms. Personal ableism might look like name-calling, or committing violence against a disabled person, while systemic ableism refers to the inequity disabled people experience as a result of laws and policy. If ableist language is so harmful, why is it so common? Why might someone who would never purposefully insult a disabled person outright still find ableist expressions among their own vocabulary?

MISCELLANEOUS

[Commerce Secretary Raimondo defends census privacy method](#) [Mike Schneider, The Associated Press, 8 April 2021]

Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo on Wednesday defended a controversial privacy technique being used by the U.S. Census Bureau in the 2020 census, a method the agency promised would only make small changes to actual numbers in counts of racial and ethnic groups. The technique called “differential privacy” adds mathematical “noise,” or errors, to the data to obscure any given individual's identity while still providing statistically valid information. Bureau officials say the change is needed to prevent data miners from matching individuals to confidential details that have been rendered anonymous in the massive data release expected as early as August. It

will be applied to race, age and other demographic information in geographic areas within each state. In counts of racial and ethnic groups, the statistical agency has a target of being accurate within 5 percentage points of the real numbers at least 95% of the time at the smallest geographic levels, such as neighborhoods. That accuracy range improves to at least 99.9% of the time as the size of the geographies get larger, the Census Bureau said.

[Jill Biden unveils next phase of military families program](#) [Morgan Chalfant, *The Hill*, 7 April 2021]

First Lady Jill Biden said that the administration will work to ensure spouses of military members have access to employment opportunities and receive quality child care. Additionally, she said the initiative will be focused on partnering with educators to get military-connected children the tools they need to succeed in the classroom. Finally, she said officials will support the health and well-being of service members and their families by bolstering access to mental health resources and ensuring they can put food on the table. “You may not wear a uniform, but you serve and you sacrifice for us all,” Biden told a virtual gathering of military family members, advocates and other stakeholders at the White House. “Military families are as critical to our national defense as a rudder is to a ship and we must always act to that truth.” While [Joining Forces](#) is a major focus of the new first lady’s portfolio, she is also using her time to raise awareness about cancer and focus on education opportunities, both of which were priorities for her as second lady in the Obama administration.

[Office buildings are opening back up. Not all employees want to return.](#) [Elizabeth Chuck, *NBC News*, 5 April 2021]

As office spaces that the pandemic shuttered begin opening back up, not every employee is eager to return. With concerns from health to rusty social skills to preserving the new work-life balance that some discovered when their commutes disappeared, many are reluctant to give up their remote work setups. Whatever companies decide, experts say, they should recognize that Covid-19 vaccines may not eliminate employees’ anxiety. A [survey](#) released last month by the American Psychological Association found that 49 percent of adults feel uneasy about returning to in-person interactions once the pandemic is over. Vaccination status did not affect that: 48 percent of those who have already been vaccinated say they, too, feel uncomfortable with in-person interactions. That could be in part because of the uncertainty that remains over the vaccines, Wright said, even as encouraging evidence emerges indicating that they offer protection for at least six months.

[Sleep Issues Are Soaring in U.S. Military: Study](#) [Robert Preidt, *U.S. News and World Report*, 5 April 2021]

Serving in the U.S. military can be stressful, and [new research](#) suggests the effect of that is showing up in a dramatic increase in two types of sleep problems. From 2005 to 2019, insomnia increased 45-fold and sleep apnea rose more than 30-fold among those who serve, researchers found. Those most likely to be diagnosed with either of the sleep disorders included personnel who were married, male, White, 40 and older, and higher-ranking enlisted members of the Army. The study examined medical data on active-duty members of the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force. The study also found that diagnoses of the two sleep disorders were lower in

women than in men, which came as a surprise because women in the military were expected to have lower rates of sleep apnea but not lower rates of insomnia, according to the researchers.

MISCONDUCT

[Fort Hood brigade commander relieved for bullying and poor judgment](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 8 April 2021]

The commander of a brigade deployed to Europe was brought back to his home station of Fort Hood, Texas, and relieved Thursday based on his poor judgment while in command, according to post officials. An investigation against Col. Michael Schoenfeldt, who led 1st Armored Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, was initiated after allegations arose of counterproductive leadership and violations of COVID-19 mitigation policy while in Europe, division spokesman Lt. Col. Chris Brautigam said in late March. An administrative investigation determined Schoenfeldt engaged in bullying and counterproductive leadership, though examples were not provided in a 1st Cavalry Division statement announcing his departure.

[Navy punishes author of letter that disparaged enlisted sailors at base in Japan](#) [Erica Earl, *Stars and Stripes*, 8 April 2021]

A Navy officer has been punished for penning a letter to the Yokosuka Naval Base housing office that excoriated his enlisted neighbors as “deviants” and “perverts.” Yokosuka Naval Hospital determined that Lt. Nathanael Allison wrote the letter, in which he complained of being forced to live with his family in a building for enlisted families, [according to](#) Task and Purpose, a military news site... On Thursday, Yokosuka hospital spokeswoman Erika Figueroa said the matter was concluded with non-judicial punishment, which is administered by a unit commander for minor offenses. A screenshot of the letter, written in February on Allison’s Google email with his name attached, began circulating on social media last week. It said that the Ikego Housing Detachment, a housing area seven miles from the naval base, is a dangerous place for an officer and his family. Enlisted members are more likely than officers to abuse drugs and alcohol and commit violent crimes such as sexual assault, according to the letter, which contained many spelling and grammatical errors.

RACISM

[A Brief History Of How Racism Shaped Interstate Highways](#) [Noel King, *NPR*, 7 April 2021]

In his \$2 trillion plan to improve America’s infrastructure, President Biden is promising to address the racism ingrained in historical transportation and urban planning. Planners of the interstate highway system, which began to take shape after the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, routed some highways directly, and sometimes purposefully, through Black and brown communities. In some instances, the government took homes by eminent domain. It left a deep psychological scar on neighborhoods who lost homes, churches and schools, says Deborah Archer, a professor at the New York University School of Law and national board president of the American Civil Liberties Union. Archer [recently wrote for the Iowa Law Review](#) about how transportation policy affected the development of Black communities. “I think it’s also important for us to think about how we will shift culture within the relevant agencies so that White middle-

class and affluent neighborhoods will not continue to be favored at the expense of communities of color, producing lopsided and skewed patterns of infrastructure development.”

[The Forgotten History of the Western Klan](#) [Kevin Waite, *The Atlantic*, 6 April 2021]

The Ku Klux Klan was on the rise in the spring of 1869. Vigilantes could measure their success that season by the carnage they left behind: marauded homesteads, assaulted politicians, a church burned to the ground. According to a local report, insurance companies considered canceling their policies, “owing to the Ku Klux threats.” A school serving students of color was supposedly next on the Klan’s hit list. Such havoc could describe almost any southern state in the late 1860s. But in this particular instance, it describes California. With help from the journalist Knute Berger, I’ve uncovered more than a dozen attacks attributed to the Klan in California from 1868 to 1870, as well as a smaller number in Utah and Oregon. That figure is minuscule compared with what the former Confederate states endured in these years. Nonetheless, each of these western attacks left victims and sowed terror. And collectively, they challenge common assumptions about America’s long history of White-supremacist violence.

[Trial by trauma: The Derek Chauvin trial is retraumatizing Black Americans](#) [Fabiola Cineas, *Vox*, 5 April 2021]

It’s been more than 300 days since Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin pinned down George Floyd’s neck—but time hasn’t dampened the mental anguish of seeing a Black man die under the weight of a White man sworn to protect the public. For the public who watched Floyd’s death on their screens, the trial has been similarly retraumatizing, particularly for the Black Americans who have grown familiar with how casually America handles Black death, and who are well aware of the country’s long history of brutalizing Black people. In 2018, [researchers](#) at Boston University, the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard University and Massachusetts General Hospital found that police killings of unarmed Black people have adverse mental health effects on Black adults who were not directly affected by the incident itself: stress, depression, and difficulties with emotions that manifested in “poor mental health days.”

[What is racial trauma? How Black therapists are helping patients cope](#) [Rheana Murray, *TODAY*, 2 April 2021]

Racial trauma is the cumulative effect of racism on someone’s mental and physical health. That includes direct acts of racism such as hate crimes or being discriminated against at work; systemic racism, which includes health disparities, pay inequity, lack of diversity and more; as well as microaggressions, which are more subtle acts of racism in the form of comments or questions that often perpetuate racial stereotypes. Racial trauma looks a lot like post-traumatic stress disorder, therapists said. “The symptoms of PTSD are similar to how the trauma of racism shows up in people,” said Brittney R. Cobb, a licensed clinical social worker in North Carolina, who runs the Instagram account @ablackfemaletherapist. Part of what therapists are doing is helping patients simply identify their own racial trauma and where it comes from. “When we talk about racial trauma, we think of present-day occurrences,” she added, pointing to the police brutality and the coronavirus pandemic. “But what we’re not always considering is the intergenerational trauma, the cumulative effects of slavery. How it gets passed down, and how it

directly affects the sense of well-being. There is always a bit of anger and trauma underneath the surface for many people of color.”

RELIGION

[Alabama revises voter form with religious oath, lawsuit ends](#) [Jay Reeves, *The Associated Press*, 7 April 2021]

An atheist group asked a judge Wednesday to end its federal lawsuit against the state of Alabama since officials have revised its voter registration forms, which required an oath to God. The [Freedom From Religion Foundation](#) and Secretary of State John Merrill’s office jointly requested that a court dismiss the case, which was filed last year over a required oath for would-be voters that includes the words “so help me God,” court documents show. The [updated form](#) still includes the wording, but it also has a box that allows registrants to opt out of the religious portion of the oath “because of a sincerely held belief.” Applicants still must “swear or affirm” to requirements including being a U.S. citizen; being eligible to vote; and not being affiliated with groups that advocate the overthrow of the government.

[Kenya Lamu mosque: Anger over T-shirt worn by Jay-Z](#) [BBC News, 7 April 2021]

A U.S.-based designer has apologised for using a portrait of a historic mosque in Kenya’s island of Lamu on a T-shirt worn by celebrity Jay-Z, an official in charge of the site has told the BBC. Riyadhha Mosque’s leaders had objected to the T-shirt as it could be worn to “sacrilegious joints” like bars. Lamu is a Unesco-listed World Heritage site and the 19th-century mosque is a top tourist attraction. It has manuscripts dating back to 1837, and is one of the oldest continuously functioning Islamic teaching institutions in East Africa. Designer Zeddie Loky reportedly produced the T-shirt to promote Lamu. Worshippers became angry when they saw WhatsApp group photos of U.S.-based music mogul Jay-Z wearing a T-shirt with a print of the mosque, said Abubakar Badawy, the secretary general of Riyadhha Mosque and Islamic Centre. Mr Badawy said he had since received a letter from Mr Loky, promising to remove “all inappropriate portrayals”.

[The long history of how Jesus came to resemble a White European](#) [Anna Swartwood House, *The Conversation*, 4 April 2021] [COMMENTARY]

The portrayal of Jesus as a White, European man has come under renewed scrutiny during this period of introspection over the legacy of racism in society. As protesters called for the removal of Confederate statues in the U.S., activist Shaun King went further, suggesting that murals and artwork depicting “White Jesus” should “come down.” His concerns about the depiction of Christ and how it is used to uphold notions of White supremacy are not isolated. Prominent scholars and the archbishop of Canterbury have called to reconsider Jesus’ portrayal as a White man. As a European Renaissance art historian, I study the evolving image of Jesus Christ from A.D. 1350 to 1600. Some of the best-known depictions of Christ, from Leonardo da Vinci’s “Last Supper” to Michelangelo’s “Last Judgment” in the Sistine Chapel, were produced during this period.

[U.S. Supreme Court declines to hear claims of workplace religious bias](#) [Andrew Chung, *Reuters*, 5 April 2021]

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday sidestepped a chance to further expand religious rights, turning away two cases in which employees accused companies of violating federal anti-discrimination law by insufficiently accommodating requests for time off to meet religious obligations. The justices declined to hear appeals by two men of different Christian denominations - a Jehovah's Witness from Tennessee and a Seventh-day Adventist from Florida - of lower court rulings that rejected their claims of illegal religious bias. Lower courts found that the accommodations the men sought would have placed too much hardship on the employers. At issue in the cases was the allowances companies must make for employees for religious reasons to comply with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on religion as well as race, color, sex and national origin.

SEXISM

[Marwa Elselehdar: "I was blamed for blocking the Suez Canal"](#) [Joshua Cheetham, *BBC News*, 4 April 2021]

Last month, Marwa Elselehdar noticed something strange. News had broken about a huge container ship, the Ever Given, that had become wedged across the Suez Canal, bringing one of world's major shipping routes to a halt. But as she checked her phone, online rumours were saying she was to blame. "I was shocked," says Marwa, Egypt's first female ship's captain. At the time of the Suez blockage, Ms Elselehdar was working as a first mate, in command of the Aida IV, hundreds of miles away in Alexandria. Marwa Elselehdar, 29, told the BBC she has no idea who first spread the story or why they did it. "I felt that I might be targeted maybe because I'm a successful female in this field or because I'm Egyptian, but I'm not sure," she said. It's not the first time she's faced challenges in an industry historically dominated by men. At present, women only account for 2% of the world's seafarers, according to the International Maritime Organisation.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[18 Army instructors charged with sexual abuse since 2019, data shows](#) [Davis Winkie, *Military Times*, 5 April 2021]

Between January 2019 and January 2021, the Army charged 18 soldiers under a new law (Article 93a) designed to protect trainees, cadets and applicants from sexual abuse, according to data the Army provided to Military Times. "Sexual misconduct by Soldiers in a special position of trust (training, drill sergeants, recruiters) before Jan. 1, 2019, was most often charged as a violation of Service or local regulations under Article 92, UCMJ or as maltreatment under Article 93," said Matthew Leonard, an Army spokesperson. "We are not able to distinguish between these violations of Article 92 and 93 [before 2019] with others." A defense official told Task & Purpose last week that the Army views trainees as "incapable of consent" to their instructors due to an imbalance of power. The Defense Department requires recruiters to avoid "personal, intimate or sexual relationship[s] with a recruit or trainee," to include even "dating, handholding ... [and] social networking."

[An Air Guard colonel was allowed to quietly retire while his unit was investigated for sexual misconduct](#) [David Roza, *Task & Purpose*, 9 April 2021]

A colonel in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard will retire despite the unit he commanded being investigated for sexual harassment claims that were revealed last summer in a sweeping article by the Philadelphia Inquirer. Col. William Griffin, who had commanded the 111th Attack Wing since December 2017, completed his last drill weekend on Sunday, March 7, and is now on terminal leave in advance of his planned retirement, the deputy public affairs officer for the Pennsylvania National Guard, Brad Rhen, told Task & Purpose. Col. Deane Thomey, of the Arkansas National Guard, is replacing Griffin as head of the unit. The former chief prosecutor of the Air Force, Don Christensen, explained that in the active-duty Air Force, airmen typically have a hold placed on them that prevents them from retiring or completing a permanent change of station if they or their command is being investigated. The rules are different in the National Guard, he said, where leaders under investigation have been allowed to retire. However, just because Griffin is being allowed to retire doesn't mean he's off the hook entirely, Rhen explained. "Per Air Force regulation, a member who has retired may still be subject to action as an outcome of an adverse finding of an investigation," Rhen said. He declined to comment on the status of the investigation since it remains ongoing.

[Building cohesive teams during Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month](#) [Russell Toof, *Regional Health Command Europe*, 5 April 2021]

National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month is observed each year during the month of April to raise awareness and educate communities on the prevention of sexual assault. This year's theme is "Building Cohesive Teams through Character, Trust and Resilience. Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission." "The most important part for me is the work we do with victims and their supporters," said Julia Armstrong, the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program Manager for Regional Health Command Europe. "It is important to build relationships with the other professionals who assist victims and to work closely as the Sexual Assault Response Team. This team develops a holistic support plan to assist victims throughout the entire process and is built on the needs of the individual we are helping."

[A former Google engineer said she endured a year of harassment. She's now vowing to "never love a job again."](#) [Tyler Sonnemaker, *Insider*, 7 April 2021]

Workers have long coveted jobs in the tech industry because companies promise things like good pay, prestige, luxurious perks, and innovative cultures. But Emi Nietfeld, a Google engineer from 2015 to 2019, [wrote in an op-ed for The New York Times](#) on Wednesday that she left her tech job because Google's supposed reputation as a great place to work masked the reality that—just like other companies—it ultimately looks out for itself. Nietfeld said in the op-ed that one her male managers sexually harassed for more than a year, calling her "beautiful," "gorgeous," and "my queen"—and that Google's reputation made it that much harder to speak up. "Saying anything about his behavior meant challenging the story we told ourselves about Google being so special," Nietfeld wrote, adding: "Google was the Garden of Eden; I lived in fear of being cast out."

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Navy one-star admiral fired over sexual harassment allegation](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 6 April 2021]

The Navy one-star admiral in charge of repair depots for Navy and Marine Corps aircraft has been fired amid an ongoing investigation into whether he committed sexual harassment, Task & Purpose has learned. No information about the sexual harassment accusation was immediately available. Officially, Rear Adm. Trent DeMoss was relieved of overseeing Fleet Readiness Centers because the head of Naval Air Systems Command lost confidence in his ability to command, the Navy announced in a terse statement. DeMoss is currently assigned to Naval Air Systems Command headquarters. Sam LaGrone of USNI News first reported on Monday that DeMoss had been relieved following a preliminary review of a sexual harassment complaint with an investigation into other complaints pending.

[A New Study Says Troops Are Leaving The Military Because Of Sexual Assaults And Harassment](#) [Carson Frame, *North Carolina Public Radio*, 4 April 2021]

When Amber Davila joined the Army in 2011, she planned to stay in for “the full 20”—or until retirement. The San Antonio native, then 26 years old, took pride in her communications security job. That all changed when a fellow soldier sexually assaulted Davila in Korea in 2012. During a night out with members of her squad, Davila became intoxicated and disoriented. A noncommissioned officer in her platoon threw her over his shoulder, telling onlookers that he would get her safely back to the barracks. “He took me back to his room, where he then assaulted me. I was raped,” she said. “I kind of came to and tried to stop it, but I was unsuccessful.” She spiraled into anxiety and destructive behavior and spent more and more energy trying to appear fine. When it came time to reenlist, she had a panic attack. “That’s when I decided I couldn’t do it anymore, that I needed to get out,” she said. Davila isn’t alone in that decision. According to a [new study](#) by the RAND Corporation, sexual assault doubles the odds that a service member will leave the military within 28 months. About a quarter of troops who were sexually harassed didn’t re-up.

SUICIDE

[Active-duty suicide numbers level off after summer spike, but reserves soar](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 5 April 2021]

Last fall, Army leaders went to the Associated Press to announce that they had seen a worrying increase in suicides since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic; the data showed a 30-percent increase in that service alone between the months of July and September. The Defense Department did not offer any official explanations for the spike, but it appears to have been isolated to that summer, according to [new data](#). While active-duty suicides jumped about 8 percent overall last year—to 377 total, compared to a 7-percent jump the previous year, or 348 total—the final months of last year saw a leveling-off of that worrisome summer spike, with 99 total suicides from October to December, compared to 100 during the same period in 2019. The reserve component, on the other hand, held steady in the first nine months of the year, before exploding with deaths by suicide in the fall and winter—a 128-percent spike, from 25 deaths in late 2019 to 57 in late 2020. Most of that spike was concentrated in the National Guard, which

went from 14 suicides to 39 during the same period; 23 of those deaths were in the Army National Guard, specifically.

[\[SEE SLSO\]](#)

[Army's 18th Airborne Corps Turns to "Dragon's Lair" for Ideas to Address Suicide](#) [Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 6 April 2021]

The Army's 18th Airborne Corps wants to hear soldiers' ideas for decreasing military suicide, using a format previously employed to address issues such as sexual assault in the ranks and range management. Five soldiers will be chosen May 6 to present their ideas to military leaders and subject matter experts at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as part of the unit's ["Dragon's Lair" program](#)—a pitch-fest based on the format of ABC's "Shark Tank" show. "For us, this is about using our most-recognized program to save our teammates," said Col. Joe Buccino, XVIII Airborne Corps innovation officer. "This is about using the Dragon's Lair platform to raise awareness and give our soldiers a voice."

[VA suicide prevention staff face burnout as workload rises, watchdog warns](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 5 April 2021]

As demand for mental health services and suicide prevention programs increases within Veterans Affairs offices, staffers there may be at risk of exhaustion and burnout if changes aren't made to better track and manage those employees, an outside watchdog warned Monday. In a [new report, the VA Inspector General said](#) that department leaders have not done a thorough enough review of VA suicide prevention teams' staffing, workloads and challenges. Without that, they cautioned, leaders do not have enough visibility over operations to ensure new prevention programs are being implemented properly. VA officials have made suicide prevention among veterans one of their top clinical priorities in recent years. About 17 veterans a day die by suicide, according to the latest data released by the department. That number has remained largely unchanged in recent years despite increased attention and funding from lawmakers on the issue.

VETERANS

[4 things to know before entering the civilian workforce after disability retirement](#) [Meredith Mathis, *Task & Purpose*, 6 April 2021]

Disability isn't an unemployment sentence. Not enough veterans are talking honestly about the challenges that come with having your military career cut short by unexpected disability—how hard it is to claim a new identity, adapt to a new way of day-to-day living, and enter the civilian workforce, perhaps for the first time. After being medically retired from the military in 2016 after a debilitating stroke, I struggled to find employment and a sense of purpose as a civilian on top of having a disability to reckon with. What I thought would be a seamless transition from soldier to contributing member of society turned out to be a battle for which I wasn't adequately prepared.

[Female veterans served America, but the VA system doesn't serve and protect them](#) [Kaitlynn Hetrick, *USA TODAY*, 31 March 2021] [OPINION]

After more than four years of legislative advocacy, Congress passed of the [Deborah Sampson Act \(DSA\)](#) was a significant step in recognizing the need for a more equitable and inclusive

Department of Veterans Affairs. Despite this groundbreaking legislative win and women veterans being the fastest-growing group within the veteran community, there are still glaring systemic issues that must be addressed to ensure equitable access to high-quality care for all women veterans. Without proper access to safety measures such as locks on the changing room doors, a choice to see only female physicians, and accessible OB-GYN, women veterans are being pushed out of the VA health care system and choosing to seek care through private insurance or not at all. The sad reality is, according to the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America's (IAVA) most recent [survey](#), 14% of our female members still feel unsafe receiving care in VA facilities, and the specific measures of the DSA have yet to be fully implemented.

[Memorial Day veterans' motorcycle ride set to return in May, if Pentagon approves](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 8 April 2021]

Thousands of veterans advocates are set to renew their annual Memorial Day motorcycle ride around the National Mall next month, but they're still waiting on Pentagon planners to respond to requests for help making the event safe amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. "These people are coming no matter what," said Joe Chenelly, national executive director of AMVETS, organizers of the Rolling to Remember rally. "This is something that means a lot to people. So we're trying to make sure there is a safe, responsible environment for them." Now, with just 52 days until the event, Chenelly said he is worried military leaders will wait too long on a final decision for the group to get backup plans in place. The motorcycle parade is the successor to the annual Rolling Thunder ride which was held for 32 years to draw attention to American service members still missing in action from wars overseas.

[Nation's oldest Medal of Honor recipient dies at 99](#) [Claire Barrett, *Military Times*, 8 April 2021]

On April 6, the nation's oldest Medal of Honor recipient, Charles H. Coolidge, died at the age of 99. The unassuming and quiet Coolidge passed peacefully while surrounded by family at his namesake, the Charles H. Coolidge National Medal of Honor Heritage Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee. On June 18, 1945, in a rare battlefield ceremony at a bombed out-airfield near Dornstadt, Germany, Coolidge was awarded the Medal of Honor by Lt. Gen. Wade H. Haislip. After leaving the military in 1945, Coolidge joined his family's business, Chattanooga Printing & Engraving, where he worked until his retirement in 2017 at the age of 95. Coolidge frequently spoke of his time in the Army, but despite any adulation, the soft-spoken Tennessean was adamant that, when it came to fighting, "There are a lot of people scared to death, especially if you're a replacement, never been in combat. "There's no glory in the infantry."

[Study: Many veterans say their outlook has improved during COVID-19 pandemic](#) [Karin Zeitvogel, *Stars and Stripes*, 8 April 2021]

A surprising number of U.S. military veterans say they feel more positive about life, relationships and themselves since the coronavirus pandemic began, bucking predictions of a dire mental health crisis caused by the outbreak, a study published Thursday said. More than 3,000 veterans were surveyed between November 2019 and March 2020—before COVID-19 had been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization—and again in November and December 2020 when the pandemic was in full swing. Of those, 43% said they had experienced positive psychological changes despite lockdowns, isolation, economic hardship and illness. The most notable change

was a greater appreciation for life, followed by closer personal relationships and an enhanced sense of personal strength, the study found.

[VA provides free support to help Veterans heal from military sexual trauma](#) [Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, VA.gov, 5 April 2021]

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is launching a national outreach effort during Sexual Assault Awareness Month to inform Veterans of free counseling and treatment being offered at VA for mental and physical health conditions related to military sexual trauma (MST). Veterans do not need to have a VA disability rating, have reported MST or have other documentation of the experience to get this care. These services may also be available to Veterans not eligible for other VA care. “Sexual assault and military sexual trauma are real, the implications are serious, and the impacts are lasting,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “VA is here to support military sexual trauma survivors. We want you to know that you have a safe environment here at VA and our professionals stand ready to provide you the resources you require.” While significant numbers of Veterans of all genders and backgrounds may have experienced MST, many survivors feel alone, ashamed or unable to ask for help. Veterans who have experienced MST and would like to learn more about VA support may call their nearest VA Medical Center or Vet Center and speak with the MST coordinator or a VA health care provider.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)