

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 23 APRIL 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

[53 Women Officially Become Marines at Formerly All-Male Boot Camp](#) [Gina Harkins, *Military.com*, 22 April 2021]

Dozens of new female Marines completed the grueling final exercise required of recruits in boot camp this week, setting them up to become the first women in the service's history to graduate from the historically all-male Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. Fifty-three women in the first-ever coed company to train at the Marine Corps' West Coast training base completed the Crucible Thursday morning. The demanding three-day event is the culminating exercise at boot camp, and the recruits were presented with the coveted eagle, globe and anchor pins afterward and called Marines for the first time.

[Senate OKs bill to fight hate crimes against Asian Americans](#) [Mary Clare Jalonick, *The Associated Press*, 22 April 2021]

The Senate on Thursday passed a bill that would help combat the rise of hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, a bipartisan denunciation of such violence during the coronavirus pandemic and a modest step toward legislating in a chamber where most of President Joe Biden's agenda has stalled. The measure would expedite the review of hate crimes and provide support for local law enforcement in response to thousands of reported violent incidents in the past year. Police have seen a noted uptick in such crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

[Two-star to be court-martialed for sex assault, the Air Force's first prosecution of a general](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Times*, 21 April 2021]

Maj. Gen. William Cooley, the former commander of the Air Force Research Laboratory, will face court-martial on a sexual assault charge, marking the first time the Air Force has ever opted to prosecute a general officer. Cooley is accused of making unwanted sexual advances toward a civilian woman, kissing and touching her through her clothes while off duty in Albuquerque, N.M., in August 2018. The two-star general also faces allegations that he made the woman touch him sexually through his clothing, without her consent. The woman is not a military employee. He faces one charge under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice, spanning three acts of sexual assault as described by the code's Article 120. The trial date has not yet been scheduled.

[SEE ALSO: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)]

CULTURE

[2 documentaries up for Oscars tell stories of nonagenarians](#) [Lindsay Bahr, *The Associated Press*, 16 April 2021]

The Oscar isn't the only one celebrating its 93rd trip around the sun at the Academy Awards ceremony this year. The shorts category features two documentaries, [“A Concerto is a Conversation”](#) and [“Colette,”](#) about fellow nonagenarians who have led extraordinary and extraordinarily different lives. One, Horace Bowers, is a 93-year-old Black man born in the Jim Crow South who became a successful business owner in California and the grandfather of a prominent composer. The other, Colette Marin-Catherine, is a French woman who was part of the resistance during World War II. She turns 93 on April 25, the day of the ceremony. Neither ever dreamed that they would have any connection to the movies at all, let alone Hollywood's greatest honor.

[A cheerleader's Snapchat profanity gets U.S. Supreme Court's attention](#) [Andrew Chung, *Reuters*, 23 April 2021]

Two days after Mahanoy Area High School in Pennsylvania held its cheerleading tryouts, ninth-grader Brandi Levy was still fuming about being passed over for a spot on the varsity squad. While a younger girl had been picked for varsity, Levy was facing another year relegated to the junior varsity cheer squad. That Saturday afternoon in May 2017—standing not on school grounds but in the Cocoa Hut convenience store in Mahanoy City in the state's coal country—Levy pulled out her cellphone and, along with a friend, raised her middle finger to the camera. Levy, age 14 at the time, posted the photo to the Snapchat social media platform, adding a caption using the same curse word four times to voice her displeasure with cheerleading, softball, school and “everything.” That posting prompted the school to banish her from the cheerleading squad for a year. It also led to a major U.S. Supreme Court case testing the limits of one of America's bedrock constitutional rights. The nine justices on Wednesday are due to hear arguments on whether this disciplinary act by a public school—a government institution—violated the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech.

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[Georgia park honoring confederacy gets first Black chair](#) [The Associated Press, 22 April 2021]

The board overseeing an Atlanta area park that has centuries-old ties to the Ku Klux Klan and contains the largest Confederate monument ever crafted will be headed for the first time by an African American. Gov. Brian Kemp on Wednesday announced that he had appointed the Rev. Abraham Mosley to serve as chairman of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, the state authority responsible for overseeing Stone Mountain Park about 15 miles (24 kilometers) northeast of Atlanta. The park is a popular hiking and tourist site but is replete with Confederate imagery. Mosley, pastor of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Athens, Georgia, was previously a member of the association's board. His elevation to chairman comes as the park's Confederate symbols face renewed opposition, with some calling on park leaders to stop maintaining its signature feature—a colossal sculpture of Gen. Robert E. Lee, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson that is carved into the mountain's northern face.

[Longhorn Band will be required to play “The Eyes of Texas”](#) [Jim Vertuno, *The Associated Press*, 22 April 2021]

The University of Texas has announced that its traditional marching and pep bands will be required to play “The Eyes of Texas” when they return to performing, but a new band will also be created that won’t play the school song with racist elements in its past. The move was sharply criticized by the state chapter of the NAACP and it comes nearly two months after school President Jay Hartzell said no student or athlete would be required to sing the song that has been mired in controversy. A group of Texas athletes and students last summer called for the song to be dropped amid racial injustice protests after the killing of George Floyd. Hartzell, with the full backing of the school’s Board of Regents, said the song would stay, and a university report released in early March concluded there was “no racist intent” behind the song, whose roots are in early 1900s minstrel shows with musicians often in blackface.

[Meet the humble Kansas City woman who wrote the WW II poem “heard ’round the world”](#) [Joanna Marsh, *The Kansas City Star*, (Kansas City, Mo.), 18 April 2021]

It was a hot June night in 1943, and Frances Angermayer could not sleep. So, she arose after midnight, went to her typewriter, and—in 20 minutes—wrote what was to become the most famous poem of World War II. This week’s “What’s Your KCQ?” explores the astonishing story of “Conversion,” a verse about a soldier’s talk with God that brought hope to millions of readers during the height of the war. The poet, an unassuming secretary from Kansas City, could not have foreseen that her simple composition would find its way into the hands and hearts of countless soldiers across the globe. Before Frances Angermayer wrote “the poem heard ’round the world,” she led a quiet life. Born in 1907, she was a lifelong resident of Kansas City and a devout parishioner of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church, where she also attended parochial school. Later, she became a secretary at the office of pediatrician Dr. Joseph B. Cowherd, a position she held until retirement.

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[Utah governor defends support for NBA minority scholarship](#) [*The Associated Press*, 21 April 2021]

The governor of Utah has defended his position to support a minority scholarship program sponsored by the Utah Jazz despite criticism from some who have called the program racist. Republican Gov. Spencer Cox was asked last week on a radio show about an initiative started under new Jazz owner Ryan Smith for the team to offer a four-year scholarship to an underrepresented or minority student for each of the team’s wins this season, FOX13 reported Monday. FOX13 reported that the unidentified caller asked Cox what he would do to stop the team from acting “in this racist manner?” Cox told the caller that he did not think the program was racist and later reinforced his comments in a Twitter post saying, “If you’re outraged by a private individual trying to help disadvantaged minority kids go to college, then I’m definitely not your guy.”

DISCRIMINATION

[Advocates renew push to end the military's remarriage penalty for spouses of fallen troops](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 23 April 2021]

When Capt. Philip Menagh was killed in a training exercise in 1984, his death left his wife and five young children with an unfillable emotional loss but also with military death benefits to ensure they could live comfortably in his absence. But if Nancy Menagh remarried, those benefits would disappear too. "It was a constant question in my mind of whether I would remain single my whole life or would I be able to make it financially if I got remarried and lost my benefits," said Menagh, now president of Gold Star Wives of America. "It was already a difficult and emotional decision, and the financial part just made things harder." Menagh never remarried, and is now one of the primary advocates for amending military death benefits rules to allow surviving spouses to marry again without losing thousands in payouts each year.

[Air Force Survey Shows One-Third of Respondents Fear Reprisal for Reporting Mistreatment](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 21 April 2021]

About one-third of respondents to a new Air Force diversity [survey](#) say they fear reprisal if they report discrimination, harassment or other poor treatment in their unit. Approximately 14,000 airmen and civilians answered the Air Force Materiel Command survey, which will be presented to senior leaders from Air Force manpower, personnel and services and the newly created Office of Diversity and Inclusion, said Bill Snodgrass, director of AFMC's Manpower, Personnel and Services at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. The survey, officials say, could inform future studies about inclusion efforts across the workforce.

[Black ex-firefighter awarded \\$2.43M in discrimination case](#) [*The Associated Press*, 22 April 2021]

A Black Kansas City firefighter was subjected to racial discrimination then fired in retaliation for his complaints, a federal jury found Thursday in a trial that highlighted systemic racism in the department. The Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas, was ordered to pay Jyan Harris more than \$2.43 million for back pay, future pay and compensatory damages for his discrimination and retaliation claims, the Kansas City Star reported. "Hopefully now it shows them that you can't do people like that," Harris said after the verdict. "You have to do your due diligence before you take somebody's livelihood away, especially somebody who's giving you their livelihood." Several witnesses testified at trial about racial discrimination in the fire department, saying Black firefighters are frequently moved into one fire station, are often passed over for promotions and are not actively recruited to serve in the racially diverse city.

[Colorado Guard JAG officer suing superiors over his participation in BLM protests](#) [Davis Winkie, *Army Times*, 22 April 2021]

The Colorado National Guard is investigating the disciplinary actions and potential reprisal by a senior officer after one of the state's part-time soldiers filed a federal lawsuit against his entire chain-of-command, alleging that his superiors infringed upon his First Amendment right to participate in Black Lives Matter protests. Army Capt. Alan Kennedy, a part-time Judge Advocate General Corps officer whose civilian work is in civil rights and constitutional law, faced repeated command investigations, reprimands, and other sanctions for writing op-eds in local newspapers and participating in Black Lives Matter protests while not in a duty status, according to the

lawsuit he filed. “There’s a double standard,” said Kennedy in a phone interview, pointing to other politically-active guardsmen like Florida state Rep. Anthony Sabatini, a firebrand conservative who is an officer in the Florida National Guard. “The Colorado National Guard’s investigated my participation in Black Lives Matter protests and op-eds while not investigating the op-eds of another judge advocate in my unit.”

[New Air Force Survey Investigates Justice Disparities in Asian, Hispanic, Native Communities](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 21 April 2021]

The U.S. Air Force will wrap up its second survey on disparity in the ranks in the next few weeks, a service spokesperson said Tuesday. The service began the survey earlier this month as part of an Inspector General Independent Disparity Review. The review, which covers both Air Force and Space Force personnel, is focused on racial disparities in the administration of military justice by race, gender and ethnicity within the Asian, Hispanic and American Indian communities, the service said. The latest review, which will also include Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander and Latinx members, will mirror the first through anonymous online surveys distributed forcewide to enlisted, officer and civilian members; targeted interviews and small-group surveys; and a comprehensive review of available data, the release said. While the survey will conclude in a few weeks, the second overall review will take six months to complete.

[New poll shows Americans overwhelmingly oppose anti-transgender laws](#) [Matt Loffman, *PBS News*, 16 April 2021]

The rights of transgender Americans has been a growing topic of debate on sports fields, in state capitols and in Congress. The Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ advocacy organization, says more than 30 state legislatures have proposed more than 115 bills that would limit transgender rights, from participation on sports teams to access to medical care. But two-thirds of Americans are against laws that would limit transgender rights, a new [PBS NewsHour/NPR/Marist poll](#) found. That opposition includes majorities of every political ideology from liberal to conservative and every age group. These proposed bills have emerged as a new culture war, with Republican state legislators introducing and voting for them amid Democratic opposition, while a majority of Americans who identify as Republicans are against such laws, according to the poll.

DIVERSITY

[Biden to announce first woman four-star admiral for the Coast Guard](#) [Aaron Mehta, *Defense News*, 19 April 2021]

President Joe Biden plans to nominate Coast Guard Vice Adm. Linda Fagan to the role of vice commandant, making her the first woman to achieve a fourth-star in the service, Defense News has learned. Fagan, the head of the Coast Guard’s Pacific area of operations, would replace Adm. Charles Ray, who has been the Coast Guard’s No. 2 officer since May 2018. The announcement is expected to be official Monday. According to her biography, Fagan has served on all seven continents. She previously held command roles along the east coast, and also served as deputy director of operations for Headquarters at U.S. Northern Command.

[Gender and Security](#) [Hilary Matfess, Robert Nagel and Doyle Hodges, *War on The Rocks*, 16 April 2021] [PODCAST]

In this episode of Horns of a Dilemma, Doyle Hodges, executive editor of the Texas National Security Review, sits down with Hilary Matfess (a Ph.D. candidate at Yale University and a Peace Scholar Fellow at the United States Institute for Peace), and Robert Nagel (a postdoctoral research fellow at the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security), to discuss gender in conflict and the issues surrounding women in the field of security.

[GovExec Daily: How to Manage the Zoomers in Your Office](#) [Adam Butler and Ross Gianfortune, *GovExec*, 21 April 2021] [PODCAST]

The generation born after 1996, commonly called Gen Z or Zoomers, are entering the workforce now, causing managers to adapt to Gen Z's unique needs, complications and strengths. Management can be complicated. As technology and the world changes, the workforce and management will change, as well. Kat Clowes is the founder and CEO of March Consulting, an educational consultant and the author of Put College to Work: How to Use College to the Fullest to Discover Your Strengths and Find a Job You Love Before You Graduate. Robin Paggi is a veteran HR manager and the training and development specialist at Worklogic HR. They cowrote the new book, Managing Generation Z: How to Recruit, Onboard, Develop, and Retain the Newest Generation in the Workplace.

[Hawaii Army “trailblazer” Maj. Gen. Suzanne Vares-Lum retires](#) [William Cole, *The Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, 18 April 2021]

Hawaii Gov. David Ige recently noted that Maj. Gen. Suzanne Vares-Lum made history as the first Native Hawaiian female to attain the rank of general officer in the Army. Her 34 years in the Army—leading up to her retirement in a ceremony last week on the fantail of the battleship Missouri—charted the increasing inclusivity of the military. “We lead the way, really, in diversity and inclusion in our nation,” said Vares-Lum, who most recently was mobilization assistant to the commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command on Oahu. “In fact, we’ve seen it over the last century, paving the way to integration for all races and women (having a seat) at the table.” Vares-Lum, who joined the Army Reserve as a private first class in 1986, said that if anyone had told her she would work for two four-star admirals at Indo-Pacific Command, “meeting the most incredible people around the world, I know I would not have believed you.”

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[Navy certifies first female Steam Generating Plant Inspector](#) [Christen McCurdy, *United Press International*, 22 April 2021]

A Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center sailor recently became the first woman certified as a Steam Generating Plant Inspector for the U.S. Navy, the service announced Thursday. Marya Hudgens, a chief machinist’s mate assigned to the MARMC Engineering Department’s Steam and Propulsion Branch, completed the SGPI certification course after a lengthy process including screenings, shipboard qualifications and courses of knowledge. “When I was aboard USS Boxer as an E-5, this was a goal I set for myself,” Hudgens said in a [press release](#) issued by the branch. “Everyone was telling me there had never been a female boiler inspector in the Navy. I remember

saying, ‘One day I’m going to be the first.’” According to the Navy, there are more than 6,000 machinist mates in the service, but only about 25 certified SGPis.

[New State Department Diversity Officer Met with Praise](#) [Courtney Bubl , GovExec, 16 April 2021]

The appointment of a veteran diplomat to be the first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at the State Department earlier this week met with a warm reception as the department has had mixed success at improving diversity in its workforce. On Monday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that Amb. Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, who joined the Foreign Service in 1985 and has 30 years of diplomatic experience, would hold the new position. The Government Accountability Office reported last year that from fiscal 2002 to 2018 there was “uneven progress” in strengthening diversity at the State Department. “From Me Too, to Black Lives Matter, to the recent attacks on Asian Americans, we’re grappling with the profound ways that race, gender, and other parts of our identity have so often been grounds for discrimination, dehumanization, and violence—for treating people as ‘less-than,’ ” said Blinken during his remarks. “The State Department has to reckon with this too—and foster within our building the kind of inclusive environment that we’re fighting out—that we’re fighting for out in the world.”

[New St. Louis mayor pledges to fight all discrimination](#) [Jim Slater, *The Associated Press*, 20 April 2021]

Tishaura Jones has called systemic racism the biggest obstacle to progress in St. Louis, and the city’s new mayor used her inauguration speech on Tuesday to pledge to fight back against all types of discrimination. Jones was sworn in during a coronavirus-mandated socially distanced ceremony at City Hall that included fewer than 100 people on the first-floor, seated six feet apart, though many others watched from balconies. Jones, a Democrat, is St. Louis’ third Black mayor, but the first Black woman to lead the city. “I am going to walk into an office that my ancestors could never have imagined that I’d be working in,” Jones said. “But I’m here.”

[They Told Her Women Couldn’t Join the Ambulance Corps. So She Started Her Own.](#) [Emma Goldberg, *The New York Times*, 19 April 2021]

For decades, the Orthodox Jewish community has relied on its own E.M.T. services through the volunteer ambulance group Hatzalah. But because Hatzalah has an all-male local E.M.T. force, Orthodox women—who might want to preserve their modesty, even in medical emergencies—have not always been able to get proper medical care. The women’s E.M.T. services are coordinated by a nonprofit organization, Ezras Nashim, which was established in 2014 to serve Orthodox women. It was founded by Judge Rachel Freier, known as Ruchie, and its launch got a frosty reception in the Orthodox community. Many saw the group’s members as agitators, upending gender norms for no good reason. But in the last year, as the number of calls to the organization have ticked up, members of Ezras Nashim have all but made their case that the need for more emergency medical responders is crucial—especially in a community hit so hard by Covid-19.

EXTREMISM

[Military commanders disavow notion of extremists in their ranks](#) [Andrew Clevenger, *Roll Call*, 20 April 2021]

Two top military officers on Tuesday told senators there are “zero” White supremacists under their command, despite evidence of a long-simmering problem within the ranks that came to the forefront following the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol involving some currently serving military personnel and veterans. “I am very confident that the number of extremists in my forces is zero,” said Adm. Charles Richard, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, which includes some 150,000 military and civilian personnel overseeing the nation’s nuclear arsenal. “Every person in my organization has to have a security clearance, for starters, right? And when you fill that form out, and I’ve been filling it out for 40 years, there is an extensive battery of questions designed to get after that very point.” The assertions of the two commanders seem to run counter to what is publicly known about the proliferation of White supremacy within the military, which is trying to get a handle on the full extent of the problem following the Jan. 6 pro-Trump mob. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin has told the military that it is “not an insignificant problem” and has labeled it a leadership issue, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby has said.

[Pentagon extremism adviser lays out challenge facing military after two commanders deny a problem exists](#) [Barbara Starr, *CNN*, 21 April 2021]

One day after two four-star military commanders told Congress they did not have problems with extremists in their ranks, the top adviser on the issue to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin took a different view and stated plainly that he believes the opposite. “It would be remiss if we didn’t admit that there is a problem with extremist behavior in the military. That is to say that one extremist is one too many,” Bishop Garrison on Wednesday told a Center for American Progress think tank seminar on ending White supremacist violence. Garrison is overseeing Austin’s effort to better define the scope of the extremist problem in the ranks and ensure that troops know what behaviors are not acceptable. However, it is not clear the military will be able to come up with a specific definition of what constitutes extremism, one senior Defense official told CNN.

[STRATCOM boss clarifies comments on “zero” extremism in his organization](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 22 April 2021]

*It’s great to be confident, but there can be too much of a good thing when it comes to throwing out unscientific claims in front of Congress. Defense Department officials have clarified dozens of times since the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol that they do not have a good idea of the prevalence of extremist views or activity among troops. Those questions arose after revelations of some current and dozens of former service members were among those who violently fought their way past police and mobbed the hallways looking for lawmakers. “I know of none, right?” Richard told *Military Times* on Thursday, clarifying his earlier comments. “And I’m looking really hard.” While it’s true that STRATCOM’s sensitive intelligence and nuclear weapons responsibility require a higher level of security clearance than most organizations in the military, the security clearance process has proven to not catch everything.*

[Number of Capitol riot arrests of military, law enforcement and government personnel rises to 52](#)

[Olivia Rubin, *ABC News*, 23 April 2021]

As authorities investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol continue to pore over images and video of the riot, they've encountered a distressing trend: A growing number of alleged perpetrators had previously served their country. At least 52 active or retired military, law enforcement, or government service employees are among the over 400 suspects arrested for their alleged actions at the Capitol, according to an ABC News investigation based on military records, court records, interviews, and publicly available news reports. The arrests include over half a dozen ex-police officers and multiple former elected officials—and represent some of the most significant and violent charges brought in connection with the deadly insurrection.

[Post-riot effort to tackle extremism in the military largely overlooks veterans](#) [Paul Sonne, Alex Horton and Julie Tate, *The Washington Post*, 20 April 2021]

*The Defense Department is focusing on how to weed out possible extremists from the active-duty ranks in the wake of the Capitol riot, with a recent, military-wide “stand down” for troops to discuss the issue ahead of policy decisions on the matter by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. But the arrest data from the riot shows that allegedly criminal participation in the insurrection on Jan. 6 was far more prevalent among veterans than active-duty forces, a more difficult problem for the U.S. government to address. Of the nearly 380 individuals federally charged in connection with the riot, at least 44 are current or former members of the U.S. armed forces, according to service records and data compiled by *The Washington Post*. At least three other veterans are among more than two dozen people charged in D.C. Superior Court for crimes like trespassing and curfew violations. Apart from two Army reservists and a National Guard soldier, all the defendants with military ties are veterans.*

[These are the faces of extremism in the military](#) [Paul Szoldra, *Task & Purpose*, 19 April 2021]

*No one knows exactly how many extremists are in the U.S. military, but it takes only one to wreak havoc within the ranks. Ethan Melzer is a prime example, according to prosecutors. Last year, the 22-year-old Army private allegedly plotted with a Satanic neo-Nazi group to carry out a “mass casualty” attack on soldiers of his airborne unit during a deployment to Turkey, according to the Justice Department. In order to gauge the scope of the problem in the military for service members, veterans, lawmakers, and researchers alike, *Task & Purpose* compiled this list of dozens of current and former service members sentenced for, discharged over, or identified in news reports as having ties to extremist activity in recent years. Many have been removed from military service as a direct result of their alleged ties and actions. Some have not.*

[U.S. neo-Nazi group should be banned in UK, home secretary says](#) [Daniel De Simone, *BBC News*, 19 April 2021]

An American neo-Nazi group linked to five murders in the U.S. should be banned in the UK as a terrorist organisation, the government has said. Home Secretary Priti Patel will ask for permission from MPs to outlaw the group called Atomwaffen Division (AWD). Prosecutors have cited AWD as an influence on a number of teenagers in the UK convicted of terror offences. Ms Patel said she was taking action “to protect young and vulnerable people from being radicalized”. AWD would be the fourth neo-Nazi group to be banned in the UK, joining National

Action, Sonnenkrieg Division and Feuerkrieg Division. A formal ban, which will come into effect this week if the move is approved in Parliament, will make it a terror offence to be a member of the group or invite support for it.

HUMAN RELATIONS

[Misinformation, disinformation and hoaxes: What’s the difference?](#) [Michael J. O'Brien and Izzat Alsmadi, *The Conversation*, 21 April 2021]

In the 21st century, new technology makes manipulation and fabrication of information simple. Social networks make it easy for uncritical readers to dramatically amplify falsehoods peddled by governments, populist politicians and dishonest businesses. Our [research](#) focuses specifically on how certain types of disinformation can turn what might otherwise be normal developments in society into major disruptions.

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[There’s a Name for the Blah You’re Feeling: It’s Called Languishing](#) [Adam Grant, *The New York Times*, 19 April 2021]

It wasn’t burnout—we still had energy. It wasn’t depression—we didn’t feel hopeless. We just felt somewhat joyless and aimless. It turns out there’s a name for that: [languishing](#). Languishing is a sense of stagnation and emptiness. It feels as if you’re muddling through your days, looking at your life through a foggy windshield. And it might be the dominant emotion of 2021. As scientists and physicians work to treat and cure the physical symptoms of long-haul Covid, many people are struggling with the emotional long-haul of the pandemic. It hit some of us unprepared as the intense fear and grief of last year faded.

[Why “Zoom Fatigue” Is Worse For Women](#) [Melissa De Witte, *Futurity*, 19 April 2021]

*The research shows that overall, one in seven women—13.8%—compared with one in 20 men—5.5%—reported feeling “very” to “extremely” fatigued after Zoom calls. These new findings build on a paper the same researchers recently published in the journal *Technology, Mind and Behavior* that explored why people might feel exhausted following video conference calls. Now, they have the data to show who is feeling the strain. For their follow-up study, the researchers surveyed 10,322 participants in February and March using their “Zoom Exhaustion and Fatigue Scale” to better understand the individual differences of burnout from the extended use of video conferencing technologies during the past year. These findings add to a growing understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting certain groups of people, says Jeffrey Hancock, professor of communication at Stanford University and coauthor of the [new paper](#), available online via the Social Science Research Network.*

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MISCELLANEOUS

[Ceremony heralds opening of WWI Memorial in Washington](#) [Lolita C. Baldor, *The Associated Press*, 16 April 2021]

The new World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C., will open to the public Saturday, and its launch was marked by a ceremony and flag-raising in honor of the 4.7 million veterans who served in what's known as America's Great War. In remarks during the virtual ceremony, President Joe Biden paid tribute to the 4.7 million who served in the war, and the 116,516 Americans who lost their lives in it. In December 2014, President Barack Obama signed legislation authorizing the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission to establish the memorial. And it re-designated Pershing Park, an existing memorial to General John J. Pershing, commander of American forces in World War I, as the national World War I Memorial.

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[Family policy appointee will bring more military family voices to DOD, including her own](#)

[Karen Jowers, *Military Times*, 23 April 2021]

*Long before Patricia Barron was sworn in as head of military community and family policy at the Defense Department, she was well aware of persistent challenges for military families. She's lived the life. During her husband's 30-year Army career, they made 14 permanent change of station moves, and she has nursing licenses from seven states. The most lasting impact was the effect their military experience had on their three children, she said. "I recognize how hard it was for them. It affected my oldest child the most. I am very sensitive to the challenges of PCS moves and starting all over again," said Barron, in a recent interview with *Military Times*. In this role at the Pentagon, Barron oversees policy for many quality-of-life programs for military families, such as child care and youth programs, spouse employment, Military OneSource, non-medical counseling programs, morale, welfare and recreation programs, commissaries and exchanges, family advocacy programs, casualty and mortuary affairs and others.*

[Federal Agencies Can Require COVID-19 Testing for Employees, CDC Says](#) [Eric Katz, *GovExec*, 20 April 2021]

Federal employees who have a testing requirement to enter their workplace and refuse can face "consequences," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said, though it did not specify what those might look like and said all facets of testing policy were up to individual agencies. CDC issued the [guidance](#) in response to an [executive order](#) from President Biden, emphasizing it consisted of strategies for agencies to consider rather than policy requirements. CDC noted the Americans with Disabilities Act allows for employer-mandated testing of workers if it is "job related and consistent with business necessity," and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has deemed it acceptable to make COVID-19 testing a condition to enter a workplace. Agencies must have an employee's consent to administer a test and predetermine any consequences for those who decline. CDC encouraged federal agencies to "consider providing alternatives as feasible and appropriate" for employees who do not agree to tests, such as reassigning them duties that can be completed remotely.

[New bill would protect service members with disabled family members from additional housing costs](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 16 April 2021]

A House bill introduced last week attempts to clarify that private companies leasing to military families on bases cannot charge for needed upgrades to meet a resident's disability. The Military Housing Advocacy Network, a nonprofit that helps military families with on-base housing

problems, including Fournier, conducted a survey of 100 families who need ADA-compliant housing or reasonable accommodations in their housing. It found that this practice of companies charging military families for disability accommodations happens across the country, across service branches and leaves families living in housing that can limit a person's independence.

[Violence against Indigenous women is “a crisis.” Deb Haaland’s new Missing & Murdered Unit could help, advocates say.](#) [Cecilia Nowell, *The Lily*, 20 April 2021]

In the United States, homicide is the third-leading cause of death among Native American women. They are also murdered at a rate as high as 10 times the national average, according to the Justice Department. The National Crime Information Center includes 1,500 American Indian and Alaska Native missing persons, but according to the Urban Indian Health Institute, most cases go unreported. When information on missing persons is collected, law enforcement often omits or misclassifies racial data—making it difficult to assess the true extent of the violence, according to advocates. “Violence against Indigenous peoples is a crisis that has been underfunded for decades. Far too often, murders and missing persons cases in Indian Country go unsolved and unaddressed, leaving families and communities devastated,” said Deb Haaland in a news release about the Missing & Murdered Unit (MMU).

MISCONDUCT

[51 West Point Cadets Caught Cheating Must Repeat a Year](#) [Michael Hill, *The Associated Press*, 16 April 2021]

Most of the 73 West Point cadets accused in the biggest cheating scandal in decades at the U.S. Military Academy are being required to repeat a year, and eight were expelled, academy officials said Friday. The cadets were accused of cheating on an online freshman calculus exam in May while students were studying remotely because of the coronavirus pandemic. An investigation was launched after instructors noticed irregularities in answers. All but one were freshmen, or plebes, in a class of 1,200. The other was a sophomore. Cadets at the centuries-old officer training academy on the Hudson River are bound by an honor code that they “will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.” The cheating scandal is the biggest at West Point since 1976 and preceded the tightening of an academy policy that spared many cadets in this case from being kicked out.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Air Force Colonel Allowed to Retire Amid Reports of “Frat-Boy Atmosphere” in Unit](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 16 April 2021]

A colonel in charge of an Air National Guard MQ-9 Reaper wing in Pennsylvania has retired despite news reports that a “frat-boy atmosphere”—including crude and sexist behavior—ran rampant in the unit. Col. William Griffin of the 111th Attack Wing retired earlier this month, in line with his mandatory retirement date based on age and service, spokeswoman Maj. Nicole Reigelman told Military.com on Wednesday. A [Philadelphia Inquirer investigation](#) last summer reported that Griffin fostered a “vindictive culture of unprofessional retaliation,” according to a fellow commander at Horsham Air Guard Station. The extensive investigation detailed

allegations of sexual harassment and discriminatory behavior, which Griffin allegedly fostered from the time he took over the wing in December 2017.

[Were you hazed while serving in the military? GAO may want to hear from you](#) [Eric White, *Federal News Network*, 14 April 2021]

The Government Accountability Office is looking for service members who were victims of hazing while they served. The office is collecting the information for a study on the Defense Department's efforts to prevent and respond to hazing. Victims will be able to share their perspective in confidence. GAO also wants to know what factors led to reporting the hazing or not. Those interested in participating can email MilitaryHazing2021@gao.gov.

RACISM

[4 Black soldiers harassed by IHOP patron](#) [Sarah Sicard, *Army Times*, 21 April 2021]

When four Black soldiers from Fort Belvoir, Virginia, went to lunch at an off-post IHOP April 19, they were expecting to have a quiet meal and some conversation before returning to work. It didn't quite work out that way. An unidentified White woman offered cash to pay for their meals, but returned shortly after to take the money back. She then began harassing them, as well as other patrons and restaurant workers. One of the soldiers, all of whom remain unnamed, filmed the incident and uploaded it to TikTok, and Fort Belvoir officials are now investigating. "She offered to pay for their meal, which is not uncommon when people meet military personnel, it's a gesture as a way to thank them for their service," said Joe Richard, director of public affairs for Fort Belvoir, in a statement to Military Times. "She placed \$30 on their table." Moments later, however, she took \$24 back, leaving just \$6 on the table as she exited, Richard noted. Shortly thereafter, she returned to the restaurant and began harassing the four of them, claiming that they had stolen her money.

[Asian-owned businesses say they're reeling from hate and violence, operating in fear](#) [Vignesh Ramachandran, *PBS News*, 19 April 2021]

Oregon's Jade District is a 10-block area neighborhood in East Portland that is home to dozens of Asian-owned businesses, from grocery stores to herbal markets, bakeries and restaurants that include a James Beard-recognized Vietnamese soup spot. But in the first two months of the year, at least 13 businesses there had their windows smashed, which community leaders say was the result of anti-Asian hate fueled by misguided scapegoat rhetoric about COVID-19. A month after the fatal March 16 shootings at Atlanta-area spas that left eight people dead, including six Asian American women, Asian American businesses across the country are reeling from the spate of hate and violence, and some say they're operating in fear—adding to the economic crisis many businesses have been grappling with since the beginning of the pandemic.

[Black soldier mistreatment common even before Virginia case](#) [Ben Finley and Tom Foreman, Jr., *The Associated Press*, 17 April 2021]

Lt. Caron Nazario had been pulled over in rural Virginia by the two officers, who repeatedly demanded that he step out of the vehicle. Nazario, who is Black and Latino, didn't move and continually asked, "What's going on?" The episode was a grim reminder too many Black

Americans that even being in military uniform doesn't necessarily protect them from mistreatment by police. Further, there's a long history of violence against veterans and service members of color, whose military status was seen by some as a provocation. "I don't think the uniform provokes in the same way that it once did, but it absolutely doesn't shield," said Bryan Stevenson, executive director of the Alabama-based Equal Justice Initiative. "And there will be people who will be provoked by Black achievement. ... It can create a kind of a desire to humiliate and demand obedience." Thousands of Black men who served in the Civil War, World War I, and World War II were targeted because of their service and threatened, assaulted or lynched, according to [2017 Equal Justice Initiative report](#).

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Colorado judge resigning after censure for racial slur](#) [Colleen Slevin, *The Associated Press*, 19 April 2021]

A Colorado judge will resign after being censured for repeatedly saying a racial slur in a conversation with a Black employee, expressing her views on racial justice while on the bench as well as using court employees to work on personal business. The Colorado Supreme Court issued the censure for 18th Judicial District Judge Natalie T. Chase on Friday, endorsing the state judicial disciplinary commission's conclusions that Chase undermined confidence in the judiciary and violated a rule against showing bias or prejudice based on race or ethnicity. According to the court's ruling, Chase, who is White, drove a former court clerk and a family court facilitator to and from a training in Pueblo in early 2020 and, on the way back, asked the facilitator, who is Black, why Black people can use the N-word but not White people and whether it was different in the word ended with an "er" or an "a."

[Floyd verdict gives hope, if only fleeting, to Black America](#) [Aaron Morrison and Kat Stafford, *The Associated Press*, 21 April 2021]

Relief, even if fleeting and momentary, is a feeling that Black Americans have rarely known in America: From slavery to Jim Crow segregation to enduring punishments for living while Black, a breath of fresh air untainted by oppression has long been hard to come by. Nonetheless, the conviction of ex-cop Derek Chauvin for murdering George Floyd nearly a year ago allowed many across this city and the nation to exhale pent-up anxiety—and to inhale a sense of hope. But what might they feel hope for? The fate of Chauvin—found guilty of murder and manslaughter for holding a knee to Floyd's neck, choking off his breathing until he went limp last May—showed Black Americans and their compatriots once again that the legal system is capable of valuing Black lives. Or at least it can hold one White police officer in Minnesota accountable for what many declared an unambiguous act of murder months ago. "This may be the beginning of the restoration of believing that a justice system can work," said civil rights leader Martin Luther King III, echoing a sentiment that many expressed Tuesday.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[How the Military Attempts to Right Racial Wrongs](#) [Paul D. Shinkman, *U.S. News & World Report*, 20 April 2021]

Gen. Charles "C.Q." Brown Jr. has spent much of his career flying F-16 fighter jets and other aircraft, as well as commanding all U.S. air forces in the Pacific. Since August, he has navigated

a new role: as the top officer for the U.S. Air Force. Brown has been a pioneer throughout his military tenure, including becoming the first African American service chief and the second ever on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He recently spoke with U.S. News as part of The Racial Divide, a series that explores race relations in America and how to improve diversity and inclusion in a range of fields.

[How White Americans' refusal to accept busing has kept schools segregated](#) [Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Washington Post*, 20 April 2021]

Fifty years ago April 20, the Supreme Court issued the landmark decision of Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg, the most far-reaching school desegregation case since Brown v. Board of Education in 1954. The Swann ruling upheld a lower court-imposed plan to integrate the public schools of metropolitan Charlotte through two-way busing between the segregated White suburbs and the all-Black central city neighborhoods. During the next few years, busing helped transform the public schools in the states of the former Jim Crow South into the most racially integrated in the nation. The technique proved successful despite intense opposition that ranged from White resistance movements to the administration of president Richard Nixon. But the Supreme Court deserves very little credit for this development, which depended on the NAACP's visionary litigation and Charlotte having previously merged its schools with the outlying suburbs of Mecklenburg County. Chief Justice Warren Burger, the author of the Swann decision, actually wanted to overturn the Charlotte busing plan but could not achieve a majority to do so.

[One-third of Asian Americans fear someone might threaten or physically attack them, survey finds](#) [Kimmy Yam, *NBC News*, 22 April 2021]

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have growing concerns about their safety amid attacks that have targeted them during the pandemic, a [new survey](#) shows. The Pew Research Center survey, released Wednesday, revealed that roughly one-third of Asian Americans feared someone might threaten or physically attack them, a larger share than all other races. More than 80 percent say violence against them is increasing. Researchers conducted the survey earlier this month, following the March 16 shooting at three Atlanta-area spas that claimed the lives of eight people, including six Asian women. The interviews, conducted in both English and Spanish, included responses from more than 5,100 adults across races, including 352 Asian Americans.

[Prosecutor: Man charged in Long Island hate crime spree](#) [The Associated Press, 16 April 2021]

A New York man who authorities say went on a hate crime spree targeting people based on their religion and sexual orientation has been indicted on 36 criminal charges, Suffolk County District Attorney Timothy Sini announced Friday. Christopher Keller, 36, of Manorville on Long Island, terrorized numerous people in 2020, shooting at homes and businesses and sending harassing messages via phone and social media that were anti-Semitic and anti-LGBTQ, Sini said. No one was injured, but the crimes "terrorized" many community members, he said. Keller is charged with hate crimes, gun crimes, aggravated harassment, menacing and numerous other crimes. Police said they seized several firearms and large-capacity ammunition magazines from his home. Sini said some of the charges are related to five shootings in Suffolk County last year, including ones involving a home, several businesses and vehicles. Prosecutors allege Keller also

sent victims messages that included anti-Semitic rhetoric, Holocaust imagery, death threats and violent pornographic images.

[UK apologizes for racism in memorials to WWI dead](#) [Danica Kirka, *The Associated Press*, 22 April 2021]

British authorities apologized Thursday after an investigation found that at least 161,000 mostly African and Indian military service personnel who died during World War I weren't properly honored due to "pervasive racism." It said that number could possibly range up to 350,000. The investigation found that those service members were either not commemorated by name or weren't commemorated at all, according to a report commissioned by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Between 45,000 and 54,000 other casualties were "commemorated unequally." The treatment of these soldiers, who served in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, contrasts with that of the men and women who died in Europe. It also violates the principle that all war dead should be remembered in the same way because they all made the same enormous sacrifice.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Where hate finds safe harbor, accountability is the answer](#) [Doug Jones, *CNN*, 18 April 2021]

[\[OPINION\]](#)

In the years after I prosecuted and secured convictions for two of the Klansmen responsible for the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, I traversed the country giving presentations about the case and the contributing factors that led to that fateful day in 1963. Perhaps one of the most important contributing factors was this: Words matter. That is, the rhetoric employed by our public officials and community leaders can have real-life consequences. In the case of my home state of Alabama, people like 1960s public safety commissioner Bull Connor and Governor George Wallace strategically used dog-whistle rhetoric that fed a White backlash to the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement. It's no surprise, then, that the Klansmen who were responsible for the 1963 church bombing believed they had cover from the very top. The Klan at large felt invincible, because at the time the Klan's reach extended throughout government and law enforcement from the local level on up.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

RELIGION

[Florida will start school days with a moment of silence if DeSantis signs the bill](#) [Ryan Dailey, *The Miami Herald*, 22 April 2021]

Florida public school students might soon have a required moment of silence at the start of each day under a measure passed Thursday by the Florida Senate and headed to Gov. Ron DeSantis' desk. The Senate voted 32-6 to pass the bill ([HB 529](#)), which was approved by the House last month in a 94-24 vote. Under the measure, school principals would be required to direct first-period teachers to institute a one- to two-minute moment of silence at the beginning of each day. Lawmakers have considered similar proposals in previous years but have not passed them. Under the bill, teachers would not be able to "make suggestions as to the nature of any reflection that a

student may engage in during the moment of silence,” and students “may not interfere with other students’ participation.”

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Is magic immoral? It played a role in the development of early Christianity](#) [Shaily Shashikant Patel, *The Conversation*, 14 April 2021]

Americans are fascinated by magic. TV shows like “WandaVision” and “The Witcher,” books like the Harry Potter series, plus comics, movies and games about people with powers that can’t be explained by God, science or technology, have all been wildly popular for years. “Magic” is often defined in the West as evil or separate from “civilized” religions like Christianity and also from the scientific observation and study of the world. But the irony is that magic was integral to the development of Christianity and other religions—and it informed the evolution of the sciences, too. As an expert in ancient magic and early Christianity, I study how magic helped early adherents develop a Christian identity. One part of this identity was morality: the inner sense of right and wrong that guides life decisions. Of course, the darker side of this development is the slide into supremacy: seeing one’s own tradition as morally superior and rightfully dominant.

[Sikhs in America: A religious community long misunderstood is mourning deaths in Indianapolis mass shooting](#) [Simran Jeet Singh, *The Conversation*, 17 April 2021]

On April 16, 2021, a gunman opened fire at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis killing eight people and injuring several others before taking his own life. Four members of the Sikh community were among those gunned down. The site was reported as having a significant number of Sikh employees, and the massacre has left the community shaken and in grief. Sikhs have in the past been targeted in racist attacks. The shooter’s motive is not yet known. In a statement following the incident, the Sikh Coalition, an advocacy group, called on authorities to conduct a full investigation “including the possibility of bias as a factor.” As a scholar of the tradition and a practicing Sikh myself, I have studied the prejudices and barriers that many Sikhs in America face. I have also experienced racial slurs from a young age. The bottom line is there is little understanding in the U.S. of who exactly the Sikhs are and what they believe. So here’s a primer.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

SEXISM

[Biden wants Congress, not courts, to decide on adding women to military draft](#) [Todd South, *Military Times*, 17 April 2021]

The Biden administration has asked the Supreme Court to let Congress resolve the potential constitutional problem of a male-only draft. President Joe Biden’s Acting Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar filed a legal brief Wednesday in a case that is challenging whether the current male-only Selective Service System, which requires only that men ages 18 to 25 register for a potential military draft, is unconstitutional. In the brief, Prelogar said that since Congress is considering requiring women to sign up as well, the high court should let the legislative branch resolve the question. “Congress’s attention to the question may soon eliminate any need for the court to grapple with that constitutional question,” she wrote.

[Sarah Voss: German gymnast's outfit takes on sexualisation in sport](#) [BBC News, 23 April 2021]

Until now women and girls have only covered their legs in international competition for religious reasons. Voss—from Germany—was supported by her country's gymnastics federation and said she was proud of her decision. "We hope gymnasts uncomfortable in the usual outfits will feel emboldened to follow our example," she said. The German federation (DTB) said its gymnasts were taking a stand against "sexualisation in gymnastics", adding that the issue had become all the more important to prevent sexual abuse. Under the rules of the international gymnastics federation (FIG) competitors are allowed to wear a "one-piece leotard with full-length legs—hip to ankle" provided it is of elegant design. Elisabeth Seitz said everyone trained in full-body outfits and at one point they asked themselves why they should not do the same in competition.

[State Supreme Court to consider women-only areas of gyms](#) [The Associated Press, 18 April 2021]

Connecticut's Supreme Court is preparing to hear a case that could have a wide-ranging effect on anti-discrimination laws. The court will consider whether it is discriminatory for gyms to have areas restricted to women only that formerly were for both sexes. Experts say if the court exempts women from anti-discrimination laws, it could eventually erode existing laws that ban discrimination against other groups in public places or organizations. The [suit stems from two separate complaints](#) brought by male gym-goers who said they had to wait in line to use equipment in their crowded gym while the space reserved for women was under-used and mostly empty. They argued to the state's Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities that any segregation by sex is illegal under state law.

[Stymied in the Trump Era, Lawmakers Launch New Attempt to Make VA Motto Gender-Neutral](#) [Steve Beynon, *Military.com*, 22 April 2021]

A bipartisan group of lawmakers is again moving to change the Department of Veterans Affairs' motto to be more inclusive toward women and LGBTQ troops after the effort failed during the Trump administration. The VA's current motto, in use since 1959, quotes President Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address in 1865: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan." A new measure introduced Thursday by Reps. Kathleen Rice, D-N.Y., and Steve Stivers, R-Ohio, would change the motto to read, "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those 'who shall have borne the battle' and for their families, caregivers, and survivors." The move to remove the word "him" from the motto has been a yearslong effort by veteran activists and lawmakers who argue that the change is just a small part of a larger push to make the VA a more welcoming place for women. It would also reflect female troops' dramatically expanded role in the armed forces, they say, including combat roles opening up to women relatively recently.

[You don't have a male or female brain—the more brains scientists study, the weaker the evidence for sex differences](#) [Lise Eliot, *The Conversation*, 22 April 2021]

Everyone knows the difference between male and female brains. One is chatty and a little nervous, but never forgets and takes good care of others. The other is calmer, albeit more impulsive, but can tune out gossip to get the job done. These are stereotypes, of course, but they hold surprising sway over the way actual brain science is designed and interpreted. Since the

dawn of MRI, neuroscientists have worked ceaselessly to find differences between men's and women's brains. This research attracts lots of attention because it's just so easy to try to link any particular brain finding to some gender difference in behavior. But as a neuroscientist long experienced in the field, I recently completed a painstaking [analysis](#) of 30 years of research on human brain sex differences. And what I found, with the help of excellent collaborators, is that virtually none of these claims has proven reliable.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Advocates Hope First Female Army Secretary Brings Change](#) [Tara Copp, *Defense One*, 18 April 2021]

When Christine Wormuth was nominated to be U.S. Army secretary last week, attorney Natalie Khawam's phone lit up with messages from her clients. Khawam has helped service members for years seek justice after sexual assault. She became a national voice last year as she stood beside the tearful family of murdered soldier Spc. Vanessa Guillén. Learning that a woman may lead the Army—if confirmed, Wormuth would be the first—has generated excitement about the change and some guardedness, said Khawam, founder of the Whistleblower Law Firm. “A lot of my clients texted me news about the announcement of a female secretary,” Khawam said. “Some of them are happy that we have a female in power, to take it from a different perspective.” As to whether Wormuth's gender would make a difference, Khawam said she would have to wait and see. The attorney was displeased with Brig. Gen. Donna Martin, who led the Army's investigation at Fort Hood. Khawam said it was a frustrating experience that did a disservice to both Guillén and her family.

[Army outlines actions taken across the force to implement Fort Hood Independent Review Committee recommendations](#) [U.S. Army Public Affairs, 16 April 2021]

The Army today announced a slate of actions taken across the force to implement the recommendations of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee (FHIRC), which examined the command climate and culture at Fort Hood and the surrounding military community to determine whether they reflect the Army's commitment to safety, respect, inclusiveness, diversity, and freedom from sexual assault and sexual harassment. Notably, the Army is in the process of re-structuring the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID) and redesigning the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program to address shortcomings identified in the [FHIRC report](#). In addition to taking actions to significantly address each of the 70 recommendations set forth in the FHIRC report, the Army is working to achieve transformational cultural change by executing initiatives such as [This is My Squad \(TIMS\)](#), the Army's first-ever noncommissioned officer strategy, and the Command Assessment Program, which will ensure that only exemplary leaders are placed into critical positions of trust and responsibility.

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

[Asia Graham case: Fort Bliss soldier Pfc. Christian Alvarado faces new sex assault charges](#) [Daniel Borunda, *The El Paso Times*, (El Paso, Tex.), 19 April 2021]

A Fort Bliss soldier accused of raping Pfc. Asia M. Graham and other women has been charged in connection with four additional sexual assaults, military officials said. Pfc. Christian G. Alvarado now faces a general court martial on a total of seven sexual assault charges dating back to December 2018. The cases are pending in military court. Officials said evidence in the newest allegations was found during an Army criminal investigation following the death of 19-year-old Pfc. Asia M. Graham at Fort Bliss on New Year's Eve. Alvarado is accused of raping Graham while she was unconscious on Dec. 30, 2019, within the first month of her arrival at Fort Bliss, her first duty station after joining the Army five months earlier.

[DOD Resources for Providers Treating Service Members Disclosing Sexual Harassment](#) [Elyse N. Mowle, Ph.D., Psychological Health Center of Excellence, 19 April 2021]

What should I do if my patient tells me they are experiencing sexual harassment? This is a frequent question among military mental health providers. In fact, PHCoE regularly receives requests for more information and resources focused on sexual harassment. There is no requirement of psychological harm to the victim for the behavior to constitute sexual harassment. However, threats to pay or career, repeated unwelcome advances, and a hostile work environment are all likely to impact service members' wellbeing. [One study](#) of former reservists found that sexual harassment was associated with poorer mental health and symptoms of depression and posttraumatic stress disorder for both men and women. It is important for providers to know what resources are available to victims of sexual harassment.

[Family of Slain Fort Hood Soldier Vanessa Guillén Urges Action as Anniversary of her Death Nears](#) [Heather Osbourne, *The Austin American-Statesman*, (Austin, Tex.), 21 April 2021]

With the anniversary of Spc. Vanessa Guillén's death just two days away, the slain Fort Hood soldier's two sisters traveled Tuesday to Austin, Texas, to continue fighting for laws meant to protect military members from sexual abuse. Speaking from inside the Capitol, Lupe Guillén, a 17-year-old Houston native and the youngest of the three Guillén sisters, said that instead of mourning her sister Vanessa privately, she wants to continue being outspoken during this heartbreaking week to help prevent other families from feeling the same pain. On Wednesday, the Texas House is going to take up House Concurrent Resolution 51, "urging the United States Congress to pass the I Am Vanessa Guillén Act." A Texas Senate committee will also hold a hearing Wednesday on its version of the resolution. If the committee decides to approve the resolution, it will go to the full Senate for consideration.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[House Bill Would Direct Agencies to Examine Sexual Harassment in STEM](#) [Brandi Vincent, *NextGov*, 22 April 2021]

A bipartisan pair of senior lawmakers introduced [legislation](#) that would prompt multiple federal entities to comprehensively study—and inform new policies to reduce—sexual harassment impacting America's science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM workforce. Reps. Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Texas, and Frank Lucas, R-Okla., on Tuesday put forth the Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act. "This bill supports research and data collection to understand the causes, consequences, and mitigation of sexual harassment in federally funded research environments," Johnson said. "The bill also requires federal agencies that fund research to do

their part to ensure that such funds do not go to researchers who are found to be harassers.” The 17-page piece of legislation first points to official reports published in recent years that suggest sexual harassment holds heaps of women back professionally, and that reporting procedures among government agencies to target it are not consistent.

[Marine in court admits to sexual assault on Okinawa; judge delays case](#) [Matthew M. Burke, *Stars and Stripes*, 21 April 2021]

A Marine accused of sexually assaulting a woman in a Naha parking lot and then shoving a police officer pleaded guilty Wednesday during his first appearance in Naha District Court. Pfc. Marvin Earl James Jr., 24, a transmission systems operator with 3rd Marine Division at Camp Courtney, is charged with forcible indecency and interfering with the public duties of police. Prosecutors alleged James forced himself on the woman early on Jan. 31 and later shoved a police officer attempting to question him. James admitted the charges, said he was drunk at the time and believed he had the woman’s consent. But, he said in court, he may have been mistaken. “I don’t want to blame it on drinking,” James said as he stood before a three-judge panel Wednesday. “The self-control, I didn’t have at the moment.”

[The military’s inspector general system must be reformed, former DOD IG says](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 20 April 2021]

When Spc. Vanessa Guillén’s remains were found near her Fort Hood, Texas, duty station, after her family had been saying for months that she’d be sexually harassed by a member of her unit, the Army sent an inspector general to the post to audit its Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Prevention program. He gave it the all-clear. Five months later, an independent panel dropped a bombshell report detailing a toxic command climate and environment of sexual harassment and assault at Fort Hood, specifically calling out that Army Forces Command IG team, who didn’t investigate Guillén’s 3rd Cavalry Regiment. “Excuse me, but he failed. He absolutely failed in his job,” Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., said Thursday, presiding over a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee’s personnel subcommittee. “He talked to very few people. He came back with the wrong assessment. He was criticized by this independent review committee, and he’s still in his position.” She was talking to the Army Department’s lead IG, Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, after he informed her that the FORSCOM IG in question is still in his position.

[Stop staring at my breasts—oh wait, that’s where my rank is](#) [Lt. Col. Rachael Hoagland, *Army Times*, 18 April 2021] [COMMENTARY]

A shortsighted 2004 uniform change intended to protect soldiers paradoxically has left female service members more vulnerable, but to a different, internal threat. The new Army uniform has a collar designed to be worn in an up-position to protect the neck while wearing body armor, thus changing the rank location from the collar to the chest. However, this well-intentioned shift has had unforeseen consequences in creating a possible sexual harassment and assault factor. The new rank placement has created some uncomfortable situations for male and female soldiers alike—and effectively gives service members and civilians a free pass to ogle a women’s breasts, while both parties are left in the dark regarding the other’s intentions.

[These are the rights every military sexual assault survivor needs to know](#) [David Roza, *Task & Purpose*, 21 April 2021]

The past year has seen a wave of news stories about sexual assault and harassment in the military. From the harassment, disappearance and death of Army Spc. Vanessa Guillén to the Air Force retaining an NCO convicted of sexual assault, it's clear that sexual assault and harassment is a widespread and persistent problem in the military. However, there may be a chance to hold offenders more accountable for their actions. The former chief prosecutor of the Air Force, retired Col. Don Christensen, wants to give military sexual assault survivors the tools they need to avoid getting outflanked by a military justice system which many experts say is flawed and defaults toward protecting perpetrators. That's why Protect Our Defenders, the advocacy group of which Christensen is president, is launching [Know Your Rights](#), a resource that shows survivors how they can seek help and what their rights are in the military justice process.

SUICIDE

[Air Force suicides plateaued above 100 deaths in 2020](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Times*, 22 April 2021]

The Air Force avoided a spike in suicides among uniformed personnel amid the pandemic and isolation of 2020, but has not managed to bring down the number of deaths despite a push to address mental health. Eighty-one active-duty personnel, 16 Air National Guard members and 12 Air Force Reserve personnel killed themselves in calendar 2020, according to Pentagon data. Those figures include Space Force guardians as well. Numbers for 2020 won't be finalized until the Pentagon releases its formal report this fall, after death investigations have run their course. "The last two years have not been the best for the United States Air Force," Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles "CQ" Brown said during a Monday town hall. "The goal is to actually get it as close to zero as we can, and get those who are having challenges the help they need before they make the ultimate decision that can't be reversed."

[CID found little was done to find Sgt. Elder Fernandes in first 48 hours after he disappeared](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 21 April 2021]

Within minutes of learning that Sgt. Elder Fernandes was missing from his unit at Fort Hood, Texas, Army investigators began making calls and identifying leads to locate the soldier. However, Fernandes had been missing for 48 hours before anyone contacted the Army Criminal Investigation Command, setting agents far behind in the race to find Fernandes, who had spent the previous week hospitalized for contemplating suicide. The 23-year-old Fernandes was found dead Aug. 25 in Temple, Texas, about 30 miles from the central Texas Army base where he served as a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear specialist in the 1st Cavalry Division's sustainment brigade. An investigation by the Temple Police Department and autopsy results show he hung himself from a tree near the railroad tracks about three days after he left the hospital.

[VA needs to staff up suicide prevention teams for greater effectiveness, GAO says](#) [Tom Temin, *Federal News Network*, 21 April 2021]

Like homelessness, suicide among veterans is a persistent and tragic problem which the Department of Veterans Affairs has been working for years to prevent. Now the Government

Accountability Office has come out with some [recommendations](#) on how VA can better staff-up and use its suicide prevention teams. For more insight, the GAO's Director of Health Care Issues, Debra Draper, spoke to Federal Drive with Tom Temin.

VETERANS

[“Dirty, Embarrassing Secret:” Veterans with PTSD Struggle to Shed Stigma of Bad Paper Discharges](#) [Richard Sisk, *Military.com*, 21 April 2021]

A sailor helped prevent the sinking of the destroyer John S. McCain. A Marine received the Purple Heart when his vehicle was blown off the road in Afghanistan. Both now bear the lifetime stigma of having their service branded as “other than honorable” by the military. They are among thousands of veterans cut off from Department of Veterans Affairs benefits by so-called “bad paper” discharges despite a Defense Department directive and an act of Congress ordering discharge review boards to give “liberal” consideration to upgrades for those with diagnoses of post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injury.

[Murphy signs new law “streamlining the process” for LGBTQ veterans to get benefits](#) [Sammy Gibbons, *NorthJersey.com*, 19 April 2021]

Gov. Phil Murphy cut a clearer path for LGBTQ veterans who wish to upgrade their discharge designations with a new law he signed Monday. The law instructs the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to create a process to help veterans who were discharged solely for their gender identity or sexual orientation to revise their designation to show they were discharged honorably. Service members let go for being LGBTQ before 2011—when President Barack Obama repealed a policy that forced people who enlisted to hide their LGBTQ identities—were discharged under less-than-honorable conditions. That designation blocked them from receiving state and federal veterans' benefits, including tax exemptions and insurance options. The New Jersey law would also help transgender veterans who were again denied honorable discharges, and could not enlist in the first place, due to a Trump administration policy put in place in 2017. President Joe Biden lifted the ban in January.

[Sen. Kaine reintroduces Veterans Medical Marijuana Safe Harbor Act](#) [NBC12.com, 19 April 2021]

U.S. Senator Tim Kaine joined colleagues in reintroducing the Veterans Medical Marijuana Safe Harbor Act, which would allow doctors at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to prescribe medical marijuana to veterans in states that have established medical marijuana programs. According to a press release from Senator Kaine's office, there are currently 36 states in the U.S., including Virginia, that have established medical marijuana programs. The [press release](#) says the bill would allow doctors to prescribe medical marijuana to help U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs patients to manage pain, and would create a temporary, five-year safe harbor protection for veterans who use medical marijuana. The bill would also direct the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to research how medical marijuana could help veterans better manage chronic pain and reduce opioid abuse.

[Study of 400,000 Female Vets Links PTSD to Heart Disease](#) [Jim Absher, *Military.com*, 19 April 2021]

A recent study in the Journal of the American Medical Association reports that female veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are more than twice as likely as male veterans to suffer from ischemic heart disease than those without PTSD. The study examined nearly 400,000 female veterans, of which nearly one-third suffered from PTSD. The results of that study reflected that female veterans suffering from PTSD were 44% more likely to have the debilitating heart disease than their fellow veterans who did not have PTSD. The study further found that female veterans who suffered from PTSD at relatively young ages, especially those under 40 years old, were at greater risk for heart disease.

[VA establishes 120-day task force on inclusion, diversity, equity and access](#) [Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, 16 April 2021]

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Denis McDonough established a 120-day task force April 1 to conduct a whole-of-VA review and to design and implement a holistic and integrated VA mission on inclusion, diversity, equity and access. VA strives to provide quality care and services to all Veterans regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity but a [2019 Government Accountability Office report](#) reveals that Veterans from underserved communities continue to face barriers to accessing VA health services. “Systemic barriers that underserved communities face many times negatively impact Veterans,” said McDonough. “In order to overcome many of these barriers, VA must tap into its vast diversity and use it as a major source of strength. The implementation of this task force will help the department become the inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible team our Veterans, their families, survivors and caregivers deserve.”