

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 7 MAY 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

[Army announces CID restructure and SHARP policy improvements](#) [U.S. Army Public Affairs, 6 May 2021]

Acting upon recommendations of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee, the Army announced today that it will restructure the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command and immediately implement measures to better protect and inform victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Most notably, the duties and responsibilities currently assigned to one general officer, who serves simultaneously as the Army's provost marshal general and the CID commanding general, will be split. The Army will hire a civilian member of the Senior Executive Service with criminal investigative experience to lead the restructured CID. To maintain and ensure independence of Army criminal investigations, the civilian director will initially report to the Under Secretary of the Army. Acting Secretary Whitley also signed Army Directive 2021-16 which improves the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program by better protecting and informing victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The new directive immediately implements several SHARP-related findings and recommendations from the FHIRC report.

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

[A Proclamation on Asian American and Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Heritage Month, 2021](#)

[Joseph R. Biden, Jr., *The White House Press Office*, 30 April 2021]

This May, during Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month, we recognize the history and achievements of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) across our Nation. In the midst of a difficult year of pain and fear, we reflect on the tradition of leadership, resilience, and courage shown by AANHPI communities, and recommit to the struggle for AANHPI equity. Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders make our Nation more vibrant through diversity of cultures, languages, and religions. There is no single story of the AANHPI experience, but rather a diversity of contributions that enrich America's culture and society and strengthen the United States' role as a global leader.

[White House Seeks Ideas on How Agencies Can Deliver Services More Equitably](#) [Eric Katz, *NextGov*, 6 May 2021]

The Office of Management and Budget on Wednesday solicited advice to better ensure agency programs are serving groups based specifically on race, sexual orientation and identity, religion, disabilities and others affected by inequality. It issued a [request for information](#) seeking input from the public sector, private sector, advocacy groups, nonprofit organizations and philanthropists. The effort will boost communication between federal agencies and community and civil rights groups. OMB asked for input related to five main topics. Groups were asked to provide input on how agency policies advance equity, which the White House said could lead to a restructuring of the budgeting and regulatory process. OMB asked what requirements, documents and overly complex eligibility formulas might inhibit equitable access to services, as well as for advice on balancing program integrity and resource constraints with addressing deeply rooted discrimination.

CULTURE

[Army Embraces Anime in New Recruiting Campaign](#) [Matthew Cox, *Military.com*, 6 May 2021]
The Army has launched a new marketing campaign featuring soldiers transformed into anime characters to tell their personal stories in support of an upcoming recruiting surge known as Army National Hiring Days 2021. “The Calling” is a series of short videos being aired on YouTube focused on five soldiers from difficult backgrounds. One begins with Army Reserve Spc. Jennifer Liriano narrating an anime-illustrated story of a frightening childhood memory. The marketing effort launched this week uses these short, animated videos “to help as kind of complementary [effort] to what we are doing in Army National Hiring Days 2021,” a massive recruiting effort scheduled from May 10 to June 14 that’s designed to connect with about 60,000 young people from Generation Z, Brig. Gen. Patrick Michaelis, deputy commander of U.S. Army Recruiting Command, or USAREC, told reporters Wednesday during a telephonic roundtable.

[Asian Americans see generational split on confronting racism](#) [Sudhin Thanawala, *The Associated Press*, 2 May 2021]

The fatal shootings of eight people—six of them women of Asian descent—at Georgia massage businesses in March propelled Claire Xu into action. Within days, she helped organize a rally condemning violence against Asian Americans that drew support from a broad group of activists, elected officials and community members. But her parents objected. “We don’t want you to do this,” Xu, 31, recalled their telling her afterward. “You can write about stuff, but don’t get your face out there.” The shootings and other recent attacks on Asian Americans have exposed a generational divide in the community. Many young activists say their parents and other elders are saddened by the violence but question the value of protests or worry about their consequences. They’ve also found the older generations tend to identify more closely with their ethnic groups—Chinese or Vietnamese, for example—and appear reluctant to acknowledge racism.

[At Tehran garage, Iranian woman polishes cars and her dreams](#) [Mohammad Nasiri, *The Associated Press*, 3 May 2021]

It’s a men’s-only club in the tangle of auto repair shops on the traffic-clogged streets of Iran’s capital, Tehran. Among them, workers toil in dim garages, welding and wrenching, fabricating and painting. That’s until Maryam Roohani, 34, pops up from under a car’s hood at a maintenance shop in northeastern Tehran, her dirt- and grease-stained uniform pulled over black jeans and long hair tucked into a baseball cap—which in her work, replaces Iran’s compulsory Islamic headscarf for women, or hijab. “I have sort of broken taboos,” Roohani said at the garage, where she carefully coats cars with attention-getting gleams and scrapes sludge from their engines. “I faced opposition when I chose this path.” The auto industry remains male-dominated around the world, let alone in the tradition-bound Islamic Republic. Still Iranian women, especially in the cities, have made inroads over the years. They now make up over half of all college graduates and a sizable part of the workforce.

[Cinco de Mayo is a Mexican holiday. So why does the United States celebrate it more?](#) [Jordan Mendoza and Gabriela Miranda, *USA TODAY*, 5 May 2021]

Contrary to popular belief, Cinco de Mayo doesn't commemorate Mexico's Independence Day. May 5 marks the Mexican army's victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War in 1862. Mexico's Independence Day is celebrated on September 16. A [2018 survey](#) by NationalToday.com showed only 10% of Americans knew the true reason behind the holiday, yet it has turned into a day where people can get cheap margaritas and wear sombreros. "Most people drinking in the bars have no idea that it's celebrating the strength in the power and the resilience of Mexican people to overcome invaders who are trying to take their land," said Alexandro Gradilla, associate professor of Chicana and Chicano Studies at California State University, Fullerton.

[Debate Erupts at N.J. Law School After White Student Quotes Racial Slur](#) [Tracey Tully, *The New York Times*, 3 May 2021]

The controversy over the use of a racial slur that has embroiled a public law school in New Jersey began with a student quoting from case law during a professor's virtual office hours. The first-year student at Rutgers Law School in Newark, who is White, repeated a line from a 1993 legal opinion, including the epithet, when discussing a case. What followed has jolted the state institution, unleashing a polarizing debate over the constitutional right to free speech on campus and the power of a hateful word at a moment of intense national introspection over race, equity and systemic bias. The tension comes at a time of heightened sensitivity to offensive words on college and law school campuses, where recent uses of slurs by professors during lessons have resulted in discipline and dismissal.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Elliot Page "collapsed" after the "Inception" premiere. What to know about gender dysphoria](#) [Sara M Moniuszko and Kristin Lam, *USA TODAY*, 3 May 2021]

In his first televised interview since coming out as transgender, Elliot Page opened up about his experience with gender dysphoria. He told Oprah Winfrey about panic attacks he struggled with at movie premieres pre-transition, including a moment where he "collapsed" at an after-party for the 2010 film "Inception." Gender dysphoria can manifest in many ways and can include physical symptoms like the ones described by Page. We've broken down what you need to know about gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is a discomfort or distress caused by a discrepancy between a person's gender identity and sex assigned at birth. The battle is not atypical for transgender people, who account for about 1.4 million American adults, [according to a 2016 report](#) by a UCLA think tank.

[English soccer leads social media racism boycott](#) [Rob Harris, *The Associated Press*, 30 April 2021]

There will be no goal clips, lineup announcements, banter between clubs or even title celebrations. Four days of silence across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram by soccer leagues, clubs and players in England began on Friday in a protest against racist abuse that has been adopted more widely. There was initially a joint boycott announcement by the English Football Association, English Premier League, English Football League, Women's Super League, Women's Championship as well as player, manager and referee bodies, anti-discrimination group Kick It Out, and the Women In Football group. Ahead of the boycott which began at 1400

GMT on Friday through 2259 GMT on Monday, other English sports including cricket, rugby, tennis and horse racing said they would fall silent on social media. FIFA, UEFA and the Premier League's British broadcasters also said they wouldn't post online across four days.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Liz Cambage: Australian criticises Olympic team photo shoot](#) [BBC News, 7 May 2021]

An Australian basketball player has threatened to boycott the upcoming Olympics due to an alleged lack of diversity in a promotional photo shoot. An image released this week showed Australian Olympians and Paralympians in sponsored outfits, but did not feature any athletes of colour. WNBA player Liz Cambage later said the photo had been "Whitewashed". The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) has said more should have been done to reflect the team's diversity. Ms Cambage first raised the issue on her Instagram stories. The Las Vegas Aces player and 2012 Olympics bronze medallist was born in London to a Nigerian father and an Australian mother. A former coach of the Australian women's basketball team has meanwhile criticised Ms Cambage, calling her comments "inappropriate". "Was there a homosexual athlete represented? Was there a Chinese Australian athlete mentioned? I mean, where does it end?" Tom Maher reportedly said on Friday.

[One State's Proposal to Regulate—or Recall—Obscene License Plates](#) [Kate Elizabeth Queram, Route Fifty, 6 May 2021]

Custom license plates in Maine could face tighter content restrictions—or be recalled entirely—for profanity or obscenity under a trio of proposals underway in the state legislature. To address the problem, the three pieces of legislation before the committee would create a review process for license plate language, and allow the secretary of state to both reject a vanity plate proposal and recall a plate that's been issued. Those guidelines advise that "defined and documented criteria for unacceptable license plates" may include profanity, sexual terms, references to acts of violence, and derogatory references to groups "based on age, race, nationality, ethnicity, gender or religion." But those criteria still violate free speech, said Zachary Heiden, chief counsel for the ACLU of Maine, who testified against all three proposals.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Tennessee girl's request leads app to add Black hairstyles](#) [The Associated Press, 1 May 2021]

An educational app has responded to the request of a 7-year-old Tennessee student by adding hairstyle options for Black girls to its avatars, *The Tennessean* reported. Last month, Morgan Bugg, of Brentwood, was using the Freckle app as a part of her online, first-grade curriculum. The app gives students the opportunity to win coins while completing math and reading activities. But when Morgan went to redeem her coins and create her own avatar, she saw no hairstyle options for Black female students like her. "I felt kind of sad and jealous that there wasn't any girl hair for me," Morgan told the newspaper. "So then I just got off the store, and I was really mad." Morgan suggested they ask Freckle to add Black girl hair options and drew a picture with several examples. Joyner sent Morgan's illustrations and a message requesting more hair options to Freckle's support team. At first she just received an automated reply, but a month later she got a response that Freckle had added Black girl hairstyles to the app, saying it used Morgan's illustrations for guidance.

DISCRIMINATION

[4 ex-cops indicted on U.S. civil rights charges in Floyd death](#) [Amy Forliti and Mike Balsamo, *The Associated Press*, 7 May 2021]

A federal grand jury has indicted the four former Minneapolis police officers involved in George Floyd's arrest and death, accusing them of willfully violating the Black man's constitutional rights as he was restrained face-down on the pavement and gasping for air. A three-count indictment unsealed Friday names Derek Chauvin, Thomas Lane, J. Kueng and Tou Thao. Specifically, Chauvin is charged with violating Floyd's right to be free from unreasonable seizure and unreasonable force by a police officer. Thao and Kueng are also charged with violating Floyd's right to be free from unreasonable seizure, alleging they did not intervene to stop Chauvin as he knelt on Floyd's neck. All four officers are charged for their failure to provide Floyd with medical care. Conviction on a federal civil rights charge is punishable by up to life in prison or even the death penalty, but those stiff sentences are extremely rare and federal sentencing guidelines rely on complicated formulas that indicate the officers would get much less if convicted.

[Asian American business leaders seek to fight discrimination](#) [Haleluya Hadero, *The Associated Press*, 3 May 2021]

Asian American business leaders are launching a foundation to challenge discrimination through what they call the largest philanthropic commitment in history by Asian Americans geared to support members of their own community. The Asian American Foundation, which announced its launch on Monday, said it has raised \$125 million from its board members to support Asian American and Pacific Islander organizations over the next five years. The foundation has also raised an additional \$125 million from individual and corporate donors through its "AAPI Giving Challenge." The Asian American Foundation says its giving will focus on three areas: supporting organizations and leaders who are measuring and challenging violence against Asian American and Pacific Islanders; developing a common data standard that tracks violence and hate incidents; and helping create K-12 and college curriculums that "reflect the history of Asian American and Pacific Islanders as part of the American story."

[He was innocent. But a facial recognition "match" got this Black man arrested](#) [John General and Jon Sarlin, *CNN*, 29 April 2021]

In February 2019, Nijeer Parks walked into the Woodbridge Police Department to clear his name. Parks, a 31-year-old Black man living in Paterson, New Jersey, had received a frantic phone call from his grandmother telling him that police from Woodbridge, a town 30 miles away, had come looking for him at the apartment they shared. The charges were serious: aggravated assault, unlawful possession of weapons, using a fake ID, possession of marijuana, shoplifting, leaving the scene of a crime, resisting arrest. On top of that, Parks was accused of nearly hitting a police officer with a car. According to a police report obtained by CNN, the evidence presented by the police officers that led to Parks' arrest was a "high profile comparison" from a facial recognition scan of a photo from what was determined to be a fake ID left at the crime scene that witnesses connected to the suspect. The facial recognition match was enough for prosecutors and a judge to sign off on his arrest.

[Idaho's Transgender Sports Ban Faces A Major Legal Hurdle](#) [Melissa Block, NPR, 3 May 2021]

Do transgender women and girls have a constitutional right to play on women's sports teams? That question will be argued before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday. The landmark case stems from an Idaho law passed last year—the nation's first transgender sports ban. For plaintiff Lindsay Hecox, a student at Boise State University, the answer to that question is clear. She is transgender, and Idaho's law, if upheld, would prohibit her from competing on women's teams. "I'm just a 20-year-old girl, and I just want to be able to compete," she says. "It was just so blatantly wrong for politicians to legislate this." But 19-year-old Madison Kenyon, who is cisgender, takes the opposite view. She runs track and cross-country at Idaho State University, and signed on as a party in the case, asking that Idaho's law be upheld.

[Louisiana Senate agrees to ban discrimination on hairstyles](#) [The Associated Press, 4 May 2021]

The Louisiana Senate unanimously voted to make it illegal for employers to discriminate against someone because of their hairstyle, a measure striking at tactics that have targeted Black people who wear their hair naturally. Senate Bill 61, by Sen. Troy Carter, a New Orleans Democrat recently elected to a congressional seat, would expand Louisiana's existing anti-discrimination law, which bars employers from discriminatory practices based on a worker's race, religion, sex or national origin. The [legislation](#) would spell out that prohibited discrimination on the basis of race includes hair texture and hairstyles such as braids, twists and natural hair. The Senate's 36-0 vote Monday sent the measure to the House for debate. If passed there, it would take effect Aug. 1. Several other states have passed similar legislation.

[A restaurant manager who forced a Black man to work without pay owes him more than \\$500,000 in restitution, court rules](#) [Scottie Andrew, CNN, 3 May 2021]

A South Carolina man who was forced to work over 100 hours every week for years without pay and subjected to verbal and physical abuse was supposed to receive close to \$273,000 in restitution after his former manager pleaded guilty. But that initial amount was too low, an appellate court ruled in April. The man should have received more than double that amount—closer to \$546,000—from the manager to account for federal labor laws, according to the ruling. John Christopher Smith was forced to work at a cafeteria in Conway without pay for years. His manager, Bobby Edwards, pleaded guilty to forced labor in 2018 and was sentenced to 10 years in prison for his abuse of Smith, a Black man who has intellectual disabilities. Smith feared Edwards, who once dipped metal tongs into grease and pressed them into Smith's neck when Smith failed to quickly restock the buffet with fried chicken, the ruling says. Edwards also whipped Smith with his belt, punched him and beat him with kitchen pans, leaving Smith "physically and psychologically scarred," according to the ruling.

[U.S. hits new record for transgender killings. Puerto Rico is the epicenter of the violence.](#) [Marc Ramirez, USA TODAY, 6 May 2021]

She was an amazing dancer. But on April 13, 2020, Penélope Diaz was found beaten and hanged at a men's correctional facility to which she'd been wrongfully assigned in Bayamon, becoming the ninth of what would be 44 transgender killings in the United States and its territories last year. It was the country's deadliest year on record. Nowhere has the crisis been more pronounced than in Puerto Rico, where 12 transgender victims, most of them women, were killed

in a two-year span. The violence comes amid a shifting national debate on transgender rights and moves by the territory to deal with its long history of brutality against women. Puerto Rico's transgender community and its allies blame the killings on a mix of religious fundamentalism, transphobia, indifference from authorities and lingering economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Maria. Activists said action is urgently needed. Transgender killings in the United States are on rapid pace to exceed last year's record violence, with 20 cases so far – most recently the death of 49-year-old Keri Washington, who was found dead May 1 in Clearwater, Florida.

[Whistleblower protection bill gives feds facing retaliation avenue for relief outside MSPB](#) [Jory Heckman, *Federal News Network*, 4 May 2021]

Whistleblowing federal employees and contractors who face retaliation from their agencies would have a new legal remedy available to them through a bill introduced by members of the House Oversight and Reform Committee. The [Whistleblower Protection Improvement Act](#) would grant whistleblowers access to a federal district court jury trial if the Merit Systems Protection Board does not issue a decision in 180 days, or 240 days in complex cases. The MSPB is currently unable to hear these cases in its 3,500-case backlog because it hasn't had any members in three years, and hasn't had a quorum in four years.

DIVERSITY

[Army Allows Female Soldiers to Wear Long Ponytails in All Uniforms](#) [Matthew Cox, *Military.com*, 6 May 2021]

Army uniform officials just approved a change to the service's grooming standards that allows female soldiers to wear long ponytails with all uniforms. The Army rolled out new grooming standards in February that included a set of significant changes to approved hairstyles such as ponytails with certain uniforms and buzz cuts for women. Initially, female soldiers could wear long ponytails only while conducting fitness training and during field training to prevent their hair from interfering with the combat helmet. But after hearing feedback from the ranks, the Army has adjusted the policy to allow long ponytails with all uniforms, according to a news release the service put out Thursday.

[Blinken's battle to make State Department more diverse will face steep resistance, diplomats of color say](#) [Nicole Gaouette, *CNN*, 6 May 2021]

The Black diplomat who was handed a set of keys in the State Department parking garage by a White colleague who seemed to assume he worked there, not in the offices above, and could fetch her car. The young Latina in tears after an older White diplomat counseled her on being "too vibrant." Her boss, another older White man, told her to ignore the reproach and keep shining. The unofficial list of colleagues to avoid because of their perceived hostility to diversity that diplomats quietly share among themselves. Asian American diplomats who say they face a tougher struggle to get security clearances than their non-Asian peers. These are just some of the microaggressions, quiet bigotries and structural hurdles that diplomats say ripple under the State Department's cosmopolitan veneer. Now, a national reckoning about racial justice is driving

calls to create a diplomatic corps that looks more like the country it represents, work that Secretary of State Antony Blinken has made a [priority](#).

[Elevated State Dept. chief diversity officer looks to move needle on decades-long challenges](#)

[Jory Heckman, *Federal News Network*, 3 May 2021]

The State Department's first chief diversity and inclusion officer is picking up where the Trump administration left off drafting a multi-year diversity and inclusion strategy, but is also now sitting on the committee that reviews candidates to serve as chiefs of mission and as deputy assistant secretaries. The department earlier this month named Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, a career employee with more than 30 years of experience, to serve as its first CDIO. It's a position Secretary of State Antony Blinken told members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee he would make a top priority, and would elevate its authority, during his confirmation hearing. While Abercrombie-Winstanley outlined several goals to meet during her tenure, she said her top priority is "restoring trust" in a workforce that has seen diversity and inclusion work fall by the wayside across multiple administrations.

[Murphy nominates woman to lead New Jersey's National Guard](#) [*The Associated Press*, 3 May 2021]

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy on Monday named Col. Lisa Hou as his pick to head of the state's National Guard and serve as commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Hou currently serves as the interim adjutant general and department commissioner. She will be the first woman and first Asian-American in the role if confirmed by the state Senate, Murphy said. She took over the role six months ago after Murphy dismissed the previous adjutant general amid the COVID-19 outbreak, which hit the New Jersey's state-run veterans homes hard. She joined the National Guard in 1994 while she was a medical student at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. She received a doctorate in osteopathic medicine in 1996 and is now pursuing an MBA at Rutgers Camden.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Report: As U.S. Black Population Grows, Self-Identity Diversifies](#) [Brent Woodie, *Route Fifty*, 29 April 2021]

There are 46.8 million people living in the U.S. who identify as Black, and as the demographic grows, the way they self-identify has changed too, according to a new [Pew Research Center report](#). The study finds that "Black" and "African-American" residents increasingly consider themselves either Hispanic or multiracial. It also points out, among the U.S. Black population, both multiracial and Hispanic numbers have grown since 2000. To gather results, the report relied on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey. According to the analysis, the change in self-identification can be attributed to the population growth of foreign-born Blacks and the varied histories of African-American ethnicities.

[To be truly inclusive, companies must recruit and hire military spouses](#) [Meredith Lozar, Lauren Weiner and Donna Huneycutt, *Military Times*, 7 May 2021] [COMMENTARY]

U.S. businesses are hiring again and we would like to remind managers and hiring authorities about an underutilized, remote workforce that is available and ready to work: the highly skilled

military spouses located all over the world. These men and women are masters of adaptability, ingenuity, and perseverance due in part to the impact that life as an active duty military spouse has on their personal and professional endeavors. If you give a project to a military spouse, it will get done and it will be done efficiently. They are also fiercely loyal—to their employer, their family and their country. And military spouses have high levels of cultural sensitivity and awareness due to living and working in a variety of environments. If these attributes are so common in this workforce, why is their unemployment rate so high? We believe that military spouse resumes are often overlooked due to unusual gaps in employment, unclear career paths when compared to their civilian counterparts, and periods of un- and under-employment.

[Top U.S. general urges greater racial diversity in military](#) [Robert Burns and Lolita C. Baldor, *The Associated Press*, 5 May 2021]

The U.S. military must widen opportunity and improve advancement for Black service members, who remain vastly underrepresented in some areas, including among Air Force pilots and in the most senior ranks, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said Wednesday. Army Gen. Mark Milley told a Howard University ROTC commissioning ceremony that diversity is an important strength of the military but is still inadequate. “We must get better,” he said. As an example of the failure to increase racial diversity, Milley said that when the current chief of staff of the Air Force, Gen. Charles Q. Brown, was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1984, only 2% of Air Force pilots were Black. Today, Milley said, the Air Force pilot population remains 2% Black.

[Utah Army National Guard promotes first woman to rank of brigadier general](#) [Mitch Shaw, *The Standard Examiner (Ogden, Utah)*, 2 May 2021]

For the first time in its history, a woman will reach the rank of brigadier general in the Utah Army National Guard. Utah Guard Public Information Officer Illeen Kennedy said Col. Charlene Dalto was to be promoted to brigadier general Saturday at Camp Williams. Dalto, a resident of Farmington, will take over as commander of the Utah Army National Guard’s Land Component. Dalto will replace Brig. General Thomas Fisher, who has led the Land Component outfit since 2016. Kennedy described the change of command as a “historic occasion,” noting that Dalto will become the first woman to be promoted to brigadier general in the history of the Utah Army National Guard. According to [military.com](#), brigadier general, or a “one-star” general, is one of highest positions someone can reach in the military. In the Army, only major general, lieutenant general and Army chief of staff rank higher.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Vermont becomes first state to allow women to enlist for combat in its National Guard](#) [Cameron Jenkins, *The Hill*, 30 April 2021]

Vermont’s National Guard announced this week that it will now allow women to fill roles in its combat arms units, making it the first state in the country to do so. The announcement came in a [press release](#) on Wednesday, with officials hailing the move as creating a more “effective fighting force.” Previously, women were able to transfer into combat roles, but not enlist in them directly. Since 2016, combat roles have been open to women in all branches of the military. “There is no doubt in my mind that the inclusion of women in our units makes us a more effective fighting force,” Col. Brey Hopkins, the commander of the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, said in the

release. “We will make every effort to recruit women into all units and mentor them to contribute as the leaders of tomorrow.” In order for women to secure combat positions in the state in the past, they were required to first be placed in leadership roles and undergo “gender integration” training and prove that they could demonstrate a “healthy unit culture,” the release noted.

[What Listeners Told Us About The Importance Of Getting Names Right](#) [Clare Lombardo, NPR, 2 May 2021]

What’s in a name? For many people, the answer to that question is, a lot. Names are often rooted in family, culture and religion. They’re an extension of our identities. That’s why a few weeks ago, [Life Kit published](#) an episode about why pronouncing names correctly is no small thing. Host Noor Wazwaz spoke with author and inclusion expert Ruchika Tulshyan about her experiences getting her name mispronounced her whole life—and for tips to correct yourself and others. Ruchika said that until very recently, she’d felt ashamed, even embarrassed, about her name. Sometimes she even made restaurant reservations with the name Rachel to avoid the hassle of correcting people.

EXTREMISM

[A former Georgia deputy called beating a Black man a “sweet stress relief” in an extremist group chat, the FBI says](#) [Taylor Audrey, Insider, 1 May 2021]

A former Georgia sheriff’s deputy gloated in an extremist group chat that he had illegal weapons and that he “beat the s--- out of a Black man” during an arrest, adding that it was a “sweet stress relief,” according to media reports and court documents. The FBI discovered the racist comments made by Cody Richard Griggers, 28, in the group chat last August, while they were searching through the phone records of a different extremist, according to court documents and The Washington Post. The group chat was dubbed “Shadow Moses” or “Shadmo.” In the group chat, Griggers also said he planned to charge Black people to prevent them from voting, according to an affidavit from an FBI agent. “It’s a sign of beautiful things to come. Also, I’m going to charge them with whatever felonies I can to take away their ability to vote,” Griggers said, according to the documents. According to the affidavit, the group chat “discussed militia-type prepping, including lengthy discussions of weapons, combat gear, and survivalist techniques.”

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Ku Klux Klan membership records made public in Denver](#) [The Associated Press, 3 May 2021]

History Colorado digitized the hate group’s ledgers, which include about 30,000 entries, to highlight the widespread racism built into the city’s political and cultural history, The Denver Post reported. Researchers know some of the entries are repeats of the same people, so the total number of members is unknown, History Colorado spokesperson John Eding said. The digitized ledgers include specific locations, people and institutions, including History Colorado, the State Capitol, the city fire department and the state hospital. The Ku Klux Klan is a hate group that was organized in the South after the Civil War to assert White supremacy, often using violence against Black people, Jews and members of the LGBTQ community.

[Optional extremism questions added to command climate surveys](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military.com*, 3 May 2021]

The Defense Department's efforts to study and eliminate extremism in the force have seen a one-day stand-down to address domestic extremism among service members, a working group to take on some short and long-term projects, and now, a test run of extremism questions on command climate surveys. Starting this year, DoD is legally required to survey troops about whether they have experienced or witnessed extremism at work, spokeswoman Lisa Lawrence confirmed to Military Times on Tuesday. The questions are part of a "research block" being used as a pilot for possible future use on more surveys. The section of the survey allows a service member to answer "yes" or "no" to whether they have witnessed or heard various types of extreme or discriminatory language or behavior, then note whether they considered them extreme, list the organizations or ideologies they might have specifically heard supported and then whether and/or who they reported the incident(s) to.

[The Pentagon wants to take a harder line on domestic extremism. How far can it go?](#) [Missy Ryan, *The Washington Post*, 5 May 2021]

Pentagon officials are considering new restrictions on service members' interactions with far-right groups, part of the military's reckoning with extremism, but the measures could trigger legal challenges from critics who say they would violate First Amendment rights. A newly formed extremism task force, which includes officials from across the Defense Department, has until July to make recommendations on potential changes to military justice, rules on extremism and related issues that apply to uniformed military personnel, the Coast Guard and Defense Department civilians. One step the task force is examining would alter a regulation that prohibits troops' "active" participation in extremist organizations—activities such as fundraising, attending rallies and distributing propaganda—but permits what officials have called "passive" membership, which could include being admitted to groups or possessing their literature. "But keep in mind that we have also taken oaths, and we also have a set of values that we as a military and we as a department espouse," a senior defense official said. "And if that speech isn't in line with our values, then it makes it arguably impossible for that individual to be a good teammate and to be in line with the good order and discipline of units."

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[White House completes domestic extremism review](#) [Morgan Chalfant, *The Hill*, 4 May 2021]

The White House said Tuesday that it has completed its assessment of the threat posed by domestic extremism and is looking at making policy recommendations in the coming weeks. "I can report that we completed our policy review in the 100 days we allotted for it," White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at a briefing when asked about the status of the assessment. "We are taking a look at what occurred during that review, lessons that we've learned and ensuring that the policy responses that we have been discussing and developing are the right ones." "The policy recommendations will be weeks, not months," Psaki added. The NSC-led review was meant to determine how the government can counter domestic violent extremism by better sharing information, supporting efforts to prevent radicalization and disrupting extremist networks.

[Wisconsin Guard soldier, friend charged in Capitol attack](#) [*The Associated Press*, 3 May 2021]
Abram Markofski and Brandon Nelson have been charged with four counts including entering and remaining in a restricted building and disorderly or disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds, federal prosecutors announced Monday. Markofski joined the Guard in 2019 and is currently a private first-class in the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, Guard spokesman Joe Trovato said. He declined further comment, saying he couldn't discuss "personnel matters." An FBI affidavit said Nelson told agents that he and Markofski drove to Washington to see President Donald Trump's political rally. Both admitted they entered the Capitol, the affidavit said.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

HUMAN RELATIONS

[Are men-dominated offices the future of the workplace?](#) [Hannah Hickok, *BBC News*, 6 May 2021]

As workers trickle back into offices, some will face tough choices about when and how to return to their desks. Although certain familiar faces and routines may reappear—it's back to bumping into Iain from accounting at the coffee machine – the composition of the workplace could also be significantly altered. With many companies expected to offer employees newly flexible and hybrid formats, given the option, women and men may make different decisions. A [recent UK-based poll](#) of 2,300 leaders, managers and employees showed that 69% of mothers want to work from home at least once a week after the pandemic, versus just 56% of fathers. If more men opt to go back to work in-person while more women choose to work remotely, offices might become increasingly dominated by men. This scenario could intensify gender inequality across the spectrum by reinforcing domestic roles, and stalling women's earning potential and prospects for career advancement—many of which are positively correlated with in-person work.

[Coronavirus restrictions hurt morale, may hit retention, Navy commander writes](#) [Seth Robson, *Stars and Stripes*, 4 May 2021]

*Coronavirus restrictions have hurt sailors' morale and may prompt some to jump ship when their terms of service expire, a Navy commander wrote recently in an independent journal. Cmdr. Matt Wright, a 2002 U.S. Naval Academy graduate who leads Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 22 at Norfolk, Va., brought up his concerns in the April edition of the U.S. Naval Institute's monthly magazine, *Proceedings*. Pandemic restrictions ordered by the Navy last summer eliminated many outlets for stress relief and were still in place last month, according to Wright. "I can clearly see the results of those restrictions on the morale and mental health of my squadron, but more important, I am concerned that Navy personnel have already suffered significant and unnecessary damage to their long-term health," he wrote. Sailors may cite the pandemic restrictions as a reason for leaving the Navy in the event of a booming, post-pandemic economy, he added. Wright cited the case of a promising naval MH-60S Seahawk pilot who plans to quit the Navy, writing that, "the preceding year's restrictions on his individual liberty played a significant part in his desire to leave."*

[He Asked Strangers About Things They Regret Not Saying. The Replies Were Cathartic](#) [Julia Weng and Michele Abercrombie, NPR, 2 May 2021]

*In 2018, Gelay Concepcion was going through a difficult time, having just immigrated to the San Francisco Bay Area from his home in Manila, Philippines. While his wife began working at a local café, he bore the responsibility of taking care of their daughter, leaving little time for his passion for photography. It was a change that led Concepcion to turn inwards, setting him on an unexpected path to exploring the sometimes harrowing and overwhelming feelings that can accompany loneliness—in his own life at first, and then in the lives of others following the onset of the pandemic. Nearly a year-and-a-half later, those reflections are the focus of a new collection from Concepcion called *Things You Wanted To Say But Never Did*. Thirty responses came in at first. Concepcion took them and paired them with some of his own archived photos from the Philippines, “vandalizing” the messages from his followers onto the pictures, he says. “At first I was just like, ‘Oh, I’ll make maybe a series of 40 images.’ And then after my first post, I think I got like 90 more responses. That’s when I told my wife, ‘I think I just started something.’”*

[How “optimism bias” shapes our decisions and futures](#) [Jessica Mudditt, BBC News, 29 April 2021]

Gina Vangeli’s life hasn’t been easy. As a child, she was bullied; as an adult, she faced abuse, along with the breakdown of two marriages and recurring health problems—including being hit by a truck in 2016. Last year, Covid-19 wiped out the 52-year-old’s livelihood as a pastry chef. By her own admission, Vangeli looks on the bright side of life. She tends to overestimate the likelihood of positive events happening to her, and subsequently underestimate potentially negative ones. This is known as optimism bias, something that [80% of the global population possess](#) to some degree. Thinking positively is an evolutionary hallmark, because it facilitates envisioning what is possible, allowing us to be courageous and innovative. Levels of optimism bias vary according to our mental state and current circumstances, and there are ways to temper or increase it. That’s good, because a surfeit of optimism can lead to underestimating risk. Understanding where you sit on the optimism spectrum can help you adjust for your bias—and maybe even make better choices.

[If Your Brain Feels Foggy And You’re Tired All The Time, You’re Not Alone](#) [Rhitu Chatterjee, NPR, 6 May 2021]

In recent weeks, Dr. Kali Cyrus has struggled with periods of exhaustion. “I am taking a nap in between patients,” says Cyrus, a psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins University. “I’m going to bed earlier. It’s hard to even just get out of bed. I don’t feel like being active again.” Exhaustion is also one of the top complaints she hears from her patients these days. They say things like, “It’s just so hard to get out of bed” or “I’ve been misplacing things more often,” she says. Mental health care providers around the U.S. are hearing similar complaints. And many providers, like Cyrus, are feeling it themselves. This kind of mental fog is real and can have a few different causes. But at the root of it are the stress and trauma of the past year, say Cyrus and other mental health experts. It’s a normal reaction to a very abnormal year.

[What the sound of your name says about you](#) [Sophie Hardach, BBC News, 2 May 2021]

Picture two cartoon characters, one round and the other spiky. Which would you name Bouba, and which one, Kiki? And which do you then think is more outgoing? Perhaps surprisingly, most of you will probably attribute the same name and characteristics to each of the shapes. A growing body of [research](#) suggests that people tend to make a range of judgments based on nothing but the sound of a word or name. At its most basic, this is known as the bouba-kiki effect, or maluma-takete effect, because of how our minds link certain sounds and shapes. Across many different languages, people tend to associate the sounds b, m, l and o (as in the made-up words bouba and maluma) with round shapes. The sounds k, t, p and i, as in the nonsense words kiki and takete, are commonly seen as spiky. These associations may be partly rooted in the physical experience of saying and hearing sounds, with some feeling more effortful and abrupt than others. Surprisingly, the bouba-kiki effect even extends into human relationships, and how we imagine the personalities of people we've never met.

[Why We Remember More by Reading—Especially Print—than from Audio or Video](#) [Naomi S. Baron, *NextGov*, 5 May 2021]

During the pandemic, many college professors abandoned assignments from printed textbooks and turned instead to digital texts or multimedia coursework. As a professor of linguistics, I have been [studying how electronic communication compares to traditional print](#) when it comes to learning. Is comprehension the same whether a person reads a text onscreen or on paper? And are listening and viewing content as effective as reading the written word when covering the same material? The answers to both questions are often “no,” as I discuss in my book “How We Read Now,” released in March 2021. The reasons relate to a variety of factors, including diminished concentration, an entertainment mindset and a tendency to multitask while consuming digital content.

[You're Probably Not As Open-Minded As You Think. Here's How To Practice](#) [Rose Eveleth and Andee Tagle, *NPR*, 3 May 2021]

Do you consider yourself an open-minded person? Most people would likely say yes. I mean, who wants to be closed-minded? But the reality is that many of us are probably not as open to new ideas as we might like. It can be hard to reconsider long-held beliefs, and even harder to question things you didn't even know you believed in the first place. I spend the vast majority of my time thinking about the future—I make a podcast about possible tomorrows, and just published a book about them, too. And what I've learned is that the only way you can really successfully think about future scenarios is by being open-minded to new ideas, and especially to the possibility that what we have today isn't the best way of doing things. It's not easy, but I believe that it's work that's worth doing. So how can you practice open-mindedness? Here's what the experts I spoke with say.

MISCELLANEOUS

[As Campus Life Resumes, So Does Concern Over Hazing](#) [Audie Cornish, Karen Zamora and Patrick Jarenwattananon, *NPR*, 4 May 2021]

There were zero reported deaths from college hazing incidents in 2020, but as campuses reopen to students, there have already been [two hazing-related deaths this year](#). Eight men face a range

*of charges, including involuntary manslaughter, reckless homicide, evidence tampering and failure to comply with underage alcohol laws, after Stone Foltz, a sophomore at Bowling Green State University, died on March 7 of alcohol poisoning. At a [news conference](#) on April 29, Wood County Prosecutor Paul Dobson described the fraternity event in which initiates were told to drink 750 milliliters of hard alcohol—or about 40 shots, according to Hank Nuwer, author of *Hazing: Destroying Young Lives*. Dobson said Foltz’s death was “the result of a fatal level of alcohol intoxication during a hazing incident.” Experts like Nuwer are concerned that as students return to in-person learning and are eager to take part in “the college experience,” more hazing-related deaths may be on the way.*

[Black Freedmen struggle for recognition as tribal citizens](#) [Sean Murphy, *The Associated Press*, 2 May 2021]

As the U.S. faces a reckoning over its history of racism, some Native American tribal nations that once owned slaves also are grappling with their own mistreatment of Black people. When Native American tribes were forced from their ancestral homelands in the southeastern United States to what is now Oklahoma in the 1800s—known as the Trail of Tears—thousands of Black slaves owned by tribal members also were removed and forced to provide manual labor along the way. Once in Oklahoma, slaves often toiled on plantation-style farms or were servants in tribal members’ homes. Nearly 200 years later, many of the thousands of descendants of those Black slaves, known as Freedmen, are still fighting to be recognized by the tribes that once owned their ancestors. Today, the Cherokee Nation is the only tribe that fully recognizes the Freedmen as full citizens, a decision that came in 2017 following years of legal wrangling.

[Families, advocates mark day of awareness for Native victims](#) [Felicia Fonseca and Susan Montoya Bryan, *The Associated Press*, 5 May 2021]

From the nation’s capitol to Indigenous communities across the American Southwest, top government officials, family members and advocates gathered Wednesday as part of a call to action to address the ongoing problem of violence against Indigenous women and children. U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and other federal officials commemorated the annual day of awareness as a caravan of female motorcycle riders planned to hit the streets in Phoenix, advocates took to social media, and families prepared for a night of candlelight and prayer vigils. Before and after a moment of silence, officials from various agencies vowed to continue working with tribes to address the crisis. President Joe Biden issued a [proclamation](#) Tuesday on [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day](#). He has promised to bolster resources to address the crisis and better consult with tribes to hold perpetrators accountable and keep communities safe.

[German call to ban “Jewish star” at Covid demos](#) [BBC News, 7 May 2021]

Germany’s anti-Semitism commissioner, Felix Klein, has urged authorities to stop protesters using the Nazis’ yellow star forced on Jews in World War Two. Some protesters have replaced the word “Jude” (Jew) with the phrase “ungeimpft” (unvaccinated), equating Covid restrictions with the persecution of Europe’s Jewish population. The yellow Star of David has also been seen in protests in London. Mr Klein said he hoped German cities would follow Munich in banning it. “If people pin so-called Jewish stars on themselves in demonstrations, thereby drawing

comparisons that relativise the Holocaust, then the means provided by law should be applied against them,” he told Tagesspiegel newspaper. The head of the UK-based Centre for Countering Digital Hate, Imran Ahmed, said anti-vaxxers in particular had “instrumentalised” anti-Semitism as it had given them new audiences, and he was angered by the use of the yellow Star of David. “I cannot think of many things more disgusting than comparing vaccines that will save countless lives to the industrial slaughter of Jews in the Holocaust,” he told the BBC.

[German far-right crime rises; police arrest alleged neo-Nazi](#) [Frank Jordans and David Rising, *The Associated Press*, 4 May 2021]

Berlin police arrested a 53-year-old German man on suspicion of sending dozens of threatening letters to politicians, lawyers and journalists that were signed with the acronym of a neo-Nazi group, as officials warned Tuesday of a disturbing rise in far-right extremism across Germany. Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said far-right crimes rose 5.65% in 2020, accounting for more than half of all “politically motivated” crimes. “This shows again that right-wing extremism is the biggest threat for our country,” Seehofer told reporters Tuesday. In carrying out Monday’s arrest in Berlin, police seized an unencrypted hard drive with data that might help with an ongoing probe, said Holger Muench, the head of Germany’s Federal Criminal Police Office. The suspect, whose name wasn’t released for privacy reasons, has previous convictions for “numerous crimes, including ones motivated by right-wing ideology,” said prosecutors in Frankfurt who are handling the case.

[Guard chief wants free health care for all troops, activated or not](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 4 May 2021]

The head of the National Guard Bureau wants free health care coverage for every guardsman, calling it an issue of both strategic and moral importance for the military force. “What happens if they get sick or injured when they come off orders?” said Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the bureau, during testimony before the House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday. “They’re doing the same job as their active or reserve counterparts, but they are treated differently. “One of my most pressing concerns is premium free health care for every guardsmen who serves in uniform.” The comments came during a congressional review of the National Guard’s spending priorities for fiscal 2022. Last year was the busiest for the Guard in the last eight decades, with more than 120,000 guardsmen deployed to overseas missions and domestic operations, including the pandemic relief effort. But that increased workload has also brought increased attention to the benefits available to part-time troops.

[Post-vaccination Inertia Is Real](#) [Katherine J. Wu, *The Atlantic*, 29 April 2021]

The world is a long way from vaccinating most of the human population. But here in the United States, nearly a third of Americans have gotten the COVID-19 shots they need for full immunity; we have three safe and effective vaccines, and in the coming months, more will join them. With inoculation comes a ballooning list of perks. But after a year underground, many people, myself very much included, are hesitant to shed their solitude and reestablish the norms we so staunchly swore off. “You can’t just turn off that anxiety; it’s got to power down,” Kenneth Carter, a psychologist at Emory University, told me. The newly vaccinated have been tasked with reclassifying a whole suite of behaviors that were very recently dangerous, breaking months-long

habits that were set and solidified during a time of crisis. “Recalibrating around that is tough,” Carter said.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[The Professional Women Who Are Leaning Out](#) [Olga Khazan, *The Atlantic*, 2 May 2021]

*The competing demands of work and motherhood have some white-collar women choosing part-time work—and loving it. In the U.S., high-paying, part-time jobs are not very common, because American bosses tend to frown on workers asking to work less, and existing part-time jobs are less likely to come with high salaries or good benefits. For more American women to work part-time, more companies would have to be willing to hire people part-time. Child care would have to get cheaper and more accessible, because some women currently can’t afford even part-time child care. Paid parental leave would have to become a standard beyond the whitest of white-collar work, so that having a baby didn’t mean risking your job and livelihood. And women would need more time on their hands to push for these things. Some of the women I spoke with hesitated to admit they were working less; that is not the way of the boss lady. Through Sheryl Sandberg, Gloria Steinem, Barbie, Ann Taylor, the real-estate market, *Sex and the City*, and practically every other implement of capitalism, white-collar moms have absorbed the message that you should work as hard as you can and make as much money as humanly possible. Working fewer hours in order to spend more time with your kids isn’t leaning in. It is anachronistic.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Students who scrawled swastikas and lewd images on Rota school walls won’t be expelled, officials say](#) [Jennifer H. Svan, *Stars and Stripes*, 7 May 2021]

*The four students, who scrawled swastikas, homophobic messages and images of genitalia on the walls of the elementary and the middle/high schools, were suspended after the incident in late February, said Department of Defense Education Activity Europe spokesman Stephen Smith. DODEA officials and base investigators held disciplinary hearings and determined that “appropriate administrative actions have been taken,” Navy Lt. Lyndsi Gutierrez, a Rota spokeswoman, said in a statement. A community member who felt the actions taken against the students were not strong enough contacted *Stars and Stripes* several weeks after the event to describe the graffiti. The vandalism occurred the same weekend as three other Rota students “communicated what are considered bullying statements on Instagram,” targeting other students, Smith said. The messages were shared among students “outside of the instructional day and subsequently shared with school and law enforcement officials by concerned parents,” he said.*

[White House releases statement marking this year’s Public Service Recognition Week](#) [Federal News Network, 30 April 2021]

Every year, the White House recognizes public sector employees the first week of May during Public Service Recognition Week. It honors the work of the employees that make up our federal, state, county, local and tribal governments. This year was unlike any other, and the role our public servants have and continue to play in helping the nation get through the COVID-19 pandemic has been critical. The White House has [released this proclamation](#) from President Joe Biden recognizing this year’s celebration and the important efforts of public servants: “In the face of unprecedented challenges this past year, America’s dedicated public servants have risen

to the moment—bringing strength, healing, and hope to their communities and to our Nation. Our public servants are a living reminder that, here in America, we take care of one another and leave no one behind. As we work to defeat the pandemic and rebuild our economy, it is more important than ever to recognize and reflect upon both our collective loss and our collective resilience. During Public Service Recognition Week, we celebrate and thank our public servants at the local, State, and Federal levels who exemplify dedication to the common good.”

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

MISCONDUCT

[Navy investigates woman’s allegation that San Diego recruiter broke into her home](#) [Andrew Dyer, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, 5 May 2021]

A San Diego Navy recruiter was removed from that duty in November after a woman accused him of breaking into her house and refusing to leave until she gave him a hug, according to court testimony from the Navy man and the victim. After a San Diego police investigation, the City Attorney’s Office, which prosecutes misdemeanors, declined to pursue charges of trespassing and battery against Chief Petty Officer Nakari McWhorter, according to the City Attorney’s Office and the investigator’s report. The alleged victim, retired Navy veteran Diane Porter, told the Union-Tribune that the decision in March by the city not to prosecute McWhorter felt like “a slap in the face.” Porter was given a temporary domestic violence restraining order against McWhorter after reporting the incident.

RACISM

[How Firefighters and EMTs Handle Racism on the Job](#) [Julia Yarbough, *Next Avenue*, 27 April 2021]

Miami-Dade (Fla.) Fire Rescue firefighter and paramedic James Weldon, 55, recalls the myriad of emotions pumping through him during a routine rescue call when he was a rookie 17 years ago. Not because of the severity of the medical treatment, but for the words the female patient in her 80s hurled his way. “As soon as I walked in, she looked at me and said, ‘I don’t want that ‘N-word’ touching me!’” recalled Weldon. “At that moment I was shocked. I was embarrassed and I was angry.” Those in the fire service point to limited minority representation as one culprit for offenses like that one. If more persons of color were firefighters and rescue workers, that might lead to the general public to treat them more inclusively. A [2018 report](#) from the National Fire Protection Association tabulated that of the 1.15 million career and volunteer firefighters in the United States, only about 9% were Hispanic or Latino, 8% were African American, 1% were Asian and 5% were women. White men historically and currently account for the largest percentage of U.S. firefighters.

[How Systemic Racism Continues To Determine Black Health And Wealth In Chicago](#) [Terry Gross, *NPR*, 6 May 2021]

There is a 30-year gap in the life expectancy of Black and White Chicagoans depending on their zip code. On average, residents of the Streeterville neighborhood, which is 73% White, live to be 90 years old. Nine miles south, the residents of Englewood, which is nearly 95% Black, have a

life expectancy of 60. Journalist Linda Villarosa says the disparity of life expectancies has its roots in government-sanctioned policies that systematically extracted wealth from Black neighborhoods—and eroded the health of generations of people. She writes about her family’s own story in the [New York Times Magazine article](#), “Black Lives Are Shorter in Chicago. My Family’s History Shows Why.”

[Man charged with hate crimes in string of attacks on Bronx synagogues](#) [Ryan W. Miller, USA TODAY, 3 May 2021]

A man arrested in a string of attacks on synagogues in the Bronx has been charged with multiple hate crime-related offenses, New York police said this weekend. Jordan Burnette, 29, faces over 40 charges, according to online court records, related to the attacks last week on multiple synagogues in the Riverdale neighborhood of the Bronx, which included broken windows, damaged prayer books and a stolen bike. NYPD Deputy Inspector Jessica Corey said at a [news conference](#) Saturday that Burnette was being charged with “burglary as a hate crime and also faces numerous charges related to the many acts of vandalism as hate crimes that have taken place in this community.”

[Prison guard says he has been target of anti-Muslim hate](#) [Pat Eaton-Robb, The Associated Press, 6 May 2021]

A fake report at the Cheshire Correctional Institution that mocks a Muslim prison guard will be internally investigated, the Connecticut’s Department of Correction said Thursday. Officer Shem Brijbilas filed a complaint after being shown the fake document by other correction officers on April 21, according to a report filed on the incident. The document, which includes numerous racial slurs and references to White supremacy, is written to look as if it had been filed by Brijbilas, according to the officer’s complaint, which was first reported by The Hartford Courant. Copies of it were loaded into the paper tray of a printer at the prison, putting it on the back of several other reports printed that day, Farhan Memon, the chairman of Connecticut chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said Thursday. Part of it reads, “The White man has done so much for us People that we need to shut up and take what is given without complaints.”

[Some Black parents say remote learning gives racism reprieve](#) [Christine Fernando, The Associated Press, 4 May 2021]

Before schools shuttered during the pandemic, Ayaana Johnson worried every time she dropped her daughters off at school. Johnson, a Black woman, says racism is rampant in her predominantly White Georgia town. At her daughters’ school, a student once used racial slurs and told another child he doesn’t play with “brown people.” She says teachers are quick to punish or reprimand Black children and Ku Klux Klan flyers can be found in mailboxes. “I knew from pregnancy on that this would be something we’d have to deal with,” said Johnson, who asked that the town not be identified because she was concerned about potential fallout. “This is the kind of area we live in, so you can imagine that you’re always going to feel protective of your children.” As schools reopen across the country, Black students have been less likely than White students to enroll in in-person learning—a trend attributed to factors including concerns about the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on communities of color, a lack of trust that their

schools are equipped to keep children safe, and the large numbers of students of color in urban districts that have been slower to reopen classrooms.

[The story of how the Freedom Riders revolutionized American travel, transit 60 years ago](#) [Safiya Charles, *The Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, Ala.), 4 May 2021]

It's hard to imagine today that only 60 years ago, boarding a Greyhound bus and taking a seat next to a passenger of another race was revolutionary; an act that could leave you flat out on the pavement or at risk of fatal harm. But Montgomery's Freedom Rides Museum is in the business of remembering. For a decade, the museum has told the stories of more than 400 young men and women, Black and White—the youngest of them 13 and the oldest 22—who boarded interstate buses headed south in the summer of 1961 with a strict purpose: to compel authorities to enforce Supreme Court decisions banning segregation on buses and in transportation facilities throughout the U.S. On the 60th anniversary of the Riders sojourn from Washington D.C., the Freedom Rides Museum and Alabama Historical Commission unveiled a new mobile exhibit: a restored Greyhound bus of the same model that carried Riders south.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

RELIGION

[Army's top chaplain helps celebrate "revival of Jewish life" at Bliss](#) [David Poe, *Army News Service*, 2 May 2021]

The Army's top chaplain joined the Fort Bliss Religious Support Office, the Jewish worship community at Fort Bliss and El Paso, and distinguished guests for a traditional dedication of the Torah scroll at Fort Bliss, Texas, April 26, 2021. Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Thomas Solhjem, the U.S. Army's Chief of Chaplains, and Sgt. Maj. Ralph Martinez, the U.S. Army Chaplains Corps' regimental sergeant major, joined the Bliss RSO and unit ministry teams from across the installation as they gathered before installing the Torah in a face-lifted Chapel 3, the synagogue at Fort Bliss. The dedication of the Torah scroll, the installation's first in 20 years, marked the end of a three-month grassroots renovation progress for the synagogue, located at 1441 Pershing Road on west Bliss. Before transporting the Torah scroll from the Field of Honor to its permanent home in Chapel 3, Klein said he was "in awe" to see the show of support for something he holds dear—his faith.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Austin still mum on whether to prosecute sexual assaults outside chain of command](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 6 May 2021]

An independent panel of a dozen experts has recommended that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin establish a body outside the chain of command to prosecute sexual assaults. His top uniformed adviser, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Mark Milley, is also on board. And Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., says that after nine years pushing, she believes she has the votes in the Senate to make it law. But Austin isn't taking a public position. He's waiting for the service chiefs and secretaries to weigh in, and he's given them until the end of this month. But unlike Milley, Austin is keeping his initial thoughts under tight wraps. Results have shown that not only

are both men and women dubious that their leadership will prosecute assaults, they report that someone in their chain of command is often their assailant, and they are often intimidated in the face of the possibility of retaliation from those leaders.

[Defend U.S. troops against sexual assault and harassment in the military—finally](#) [The Editorial Board, *USA TODAY*, 7 May 2021] [OPINION]

If the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and each time expecting a different result, the decades-long practice of relying on the U.S. military to cure its epidemic of sexual assault has been stunningly crazy. Finally—exhaustively—that may change. A bill providing much-needed reform was introduced last week by Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and a champion of this issue for years, and Joni Ernst of Iowa, the GOP’s only female combat veteran in the Senate. Colleagues of both parties are moving to join the legislation in hopes of attracting 60 votes and making it filibuster-proof. It now has 56 co-sponsors. This is a fundamental change that could help ensure that allegations of sexual assault and abuse are taken seriously, that the guilty are punished and that victims can find accountability. Civilians aren’t required to report sexual abuse to their bosses, and the same should be true for service members.

[COUNTERPOINT]

[Removing military commanders from sexual assault cases won’t yield meaningful solutions](#) [Victor M. Hansen, *USA TODAY*, 7 May 2021] [OPINION]

The problem of sexual assault in the military needs to be a top focus of military and civilian leaders, and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin should be applauded for making early efforts to address this issue. Any changes to the military justice system in response to this problem must actually contribute to meaningful solutions. Unfortunately, the most recent proposed legislation co-sponsored by Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, and which would remove military commanders from the court-martial charging process for these cases, is unlikely to provide meaningful solutions to this serious and important problem. First, those supporting this legislation argue that the charging decision should be placed in the hands of legally and professionally trained military lawyers. However, this argument is an inaccurate characterization of the current system.

[New panel to advise VA leaders on better response to sexual misconduct issues](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 6 May 2021]

Faced with controversy and watchdog concerns about sexual harassment and misconduct within Veterans Affairs facilities, department officials are looking for volunteers for a new working group tasked with finding solutions how those cases are handled and how to prevent them in the first place. The panel, mandated by Congress as part of comprehensive VA reform legislation passed last year, comes as new department leaders have promised to address the issue, after a series of high-profile incidents suggested systemic problems with how officials handle sexual misconduct claims. A Government Accountability Office review last summer found that VA leaders do not have a reliable process for collecting or reviewing those complaints, undermining their promises to address the issue.

[Spc. Vanessa Guillén's harasser was a known toxic leader, Army report shows](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 5 May 2021]

The sexual harassment that Spc. Vanessa Guillén faced before her death last year from a noncommissioned officer at Fort Hood wasn't an isolated incident. There had been four other complaints filed against her platoon sergeant for his mistreatment of subordinates, yet leaders continued to move him and keep him in charge of soldiers, according to an Army report released last week. The sergeant, whose name was redacted in the public release of the report, was known to yell, belittle and threaten soldiers with counseling, delayed promotion or denial of leave, while playing favorites and speaking Spanish in the workplace, which isolated those who didn't understand the language, according to the report. Though the redacted report does not include his position in Guillén's unit, he was identified as her platoon sergeant by Gen. Michael Garrett, the commander of Army Forces Command who initiated the internal administrative investigation, known as a 15-6.

[A stunning 21 Army leaders will be disciplined over Vanessa Guillén's disappearance and death](#) [Haley Britzky, *Task & Purpose*, 30 April 2021]

Nearly two dozen Army leaders will be disciplined in the fallout of the Spc. Vanessa Guillén case, Army officials said Friday ahead of the [release of a long-awaited investigative report](#) into her disappearance and death at Fort Hood. A total of 21 officers and noncommissioned officers are being relieved, receiving General Officer Memorandums of Reprimand, or are being referred for further disciplinary action as a result of both the Fort Hood report released in December, and a new report following an internal Army investigation carried out by Gen. John "Mike" Murray. Murray's report clarified many important details about the Army's response to Guillén's disappearance, and identified several points made in last year's Fort Hood report, including the toxic climate of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment where Guillén was assigned. The regiment is the "most undisciplined organization I have work[ed] in in my entire career," one soldier said in Murray's report. Others lamented a loss of "all faith" in unit leaders and criticized the regiment's sexual harassment prevention program as "a joke."

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Supreme Court justice castigates Feres Doctrine over cadet's rape lawsuit](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 3 May 2021]

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas strongly dissented to a decision filed Monday not to hear the case of a former United States Military Academy cadet who alleges the government failed to adequately prevent and respond to her rape on campus. As the lower courts did, the majority deferred to the Feres Doctrine, a 1950 decision that ruled service members cannot sue the federal government for injuries sustained while serving. That includes not only combat or training injuries, but preventable damage caused by fellow troops or government employees—to include, until last year, medical malpractice. Legal experts have debated for decades whether the original Feres decision was meant to cover only injuries incidental to combat, and perhaps inherently dangerous military training, or whether it should apply to any accident or assault endured while in uniform. The anonymous woman, identified as Jane Doe, was raped by a fellow cadet while walking on campus one evening, according to court documents, and later dropped out of West Point altogether.

[Unwanted touching, late-night texts: Women at Texas Capitol describe culture of harassment](#)

[Nicole Cobler, Madlin Mekelburg and John C. Moritz, *The Austin American-Statesman* (Austin, Texas), 3 May 2021]

A forced kiss by a male colleague. A catcall by a state trooper assigned to guard the Capitol. Late-night texts. A work meeting hijacked by a male legislative staffer: You are my ideal woman, he told his female interlocutor. The episodes illustrate what many women say is the biggest open secret at the Texas Capitol: That a culture of harassment persists despite repeated efforts to stamp it out. In interviews with the American-Statesman, multiple women described a work environment in which they are objectified and made to feel uncomfortable in their daily interactions with male counterparts. “Being a female staffer in the Capitol is uniquely and distinctly different than being a male staffer,” said one woman who works for a House member. “Women are treated differently. It is just a question of in what way we’ll be treated differently by our male colleagues, male members or male lobbyists.”

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Vanessa Guillén was sexually harassed by a supervisor, and she informally reported it](#)

[Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 1 May 2021]

Spc. Vanessa Guillén was sexually harassed by a supervisor in her unit prior to her murder and she informally reported—twice—but unit leadership failed to take appropriate action, an Army investigation has determined. Guillén’s family made those allegations last summer, but at the time Army investigators said there was no evidence to support them. The results of the Army Forces Command investigation into Guillén’s chain of command at 3rd Cavalry Regiment were discussed with reporters Friday afternoon. “The findings indicated that [Guillén] was indeed [sexually harassed] on two separate occasions by the same individual soldier,” said FORSCOM chief of staff Maj. Gen. Gene LeBoeuf. “The findings of the investigation were that inappropriate actions were taken by leaders of the unit when they learned of these allegations.” LeBoeuf declined to identify the person who sexually harassed Guillén. The Army said in a statement that it was a “superior noncommissioned officer” in her unit.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

SUICIDE

[Young vets in Missouri die by suicide at exceptionally high rate. Experts blame guns.](#)

[Kaitlin Washburn and Lisa Gutiérrez, *The Kansas City Star*, (Kansas City, Mo.), 3 May 2021]

Missouri outpaces other states in firearm suicides overall, and with veterans of all ages, but the number of younger veterans taking their own lives with guns stands apart, researchers said. One of the major reasons why, experts say, is higher rates of gun ownership among veterans. In Missouri, even more than elsewhere in the U.S., guns are used in most suicides, and that’s even more true for veterans. “There’s a lot of factors leading to this epidemic, but the most important one is guns,” said Chris Marvin, who served for seven years as a U.S. Army officer and Black Hawk helicopter pilot in Afghanistan. He currently sits on the Everytown Veterans Advisory Council. “It’s so clear that the gun is a leading reason why we have a suicide crisis.” The trend in Missouri [reflects a nationwide increase](#). In 2018, the state had the 12th highest rate compared

to other states. Nearly half of all veterans in the U.S. report owning guns, compared to only 20% of non-veterans, according to a [study from Everytown for Gun Safety](#).

VETERANS

[He mentored decades of Army Rangers. At 94, he'll receive the Medal of Honor.](#) [Dan Lamothe, *Stars and Stripes*, 30 April 2021]

Shivering in freezing temperatures, about 50 U.S. soldiers braced for the worst. Hundreds of Chinese soldiers were about to launch a series of bloody attacks on the hill the Americans had just taken under fire, and no reinforcements were within a mile. The clash that then-1st Lt. Ralph Puckett and his soldiers experienced that night on "Hill 205" came at the outset of the Battle of the Chongchon River, a pivotal moment in which senior U.S. commanders were surprised by China's full-scale entry into the Korean War. More than 70 years later, Puckett, 94, will receive the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for valor in combat, for his actions. President Joe Biden called Puckett at home in Columbus, Ga., on Friday to inform him of his decision to approve the award, said John Lock, a retired Army officer who began petitioning the Army for reconsideration of Puckett's actions in 2003.

[Skeptics question VA promise to increase diversity in senior management](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 6 May 2021]

Veterans Affairs officials are promising more focused initiatives to improve minority representation in department leadership positions, but outside advocates remain skeptical that the efforts can work. "To be honest, it's rather difficult to fully invest in processes that have existed for some time and expect them to yield different results," said Victor LaGroon, director of the Black Veterans Empowerment Council, said during a congressional hearing Thursday. "I think we're absolutely right when we say that we need to put our foot on the gas and expect more and push further." About 43 percent of VA employees are non-White, and about 61 percent are women, figures that lawmakers on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee said show a commitment to diversity within the department. However, that same mix does not hold true for senior VA posts.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[VA's 1 Step Today campaign promotes Veteran mental wellness](#) [VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, 4 May 2021]

As part of Mental Health Month, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs launched [1 Step Today](#) to provide guidance curated by Veterans to inspire them to start on a path toward recovery, well-being and a healthier tomorrow, by taking one step at a time. The new endeavor features mental health tips and advice from Veterans and for Veterans. "Connecting with others, finding a new passion, picking up a new hobby, rediscovering joy, learning to forgive or reaching out for support and resources are integral to having positive mental health," said Veteran Health Administration's Acting Under Secretary for Health Richard Stone, M.D. "These and other activities can boost a Veteran's mood, enhance their self-esteem and help them to overcome their challenges, either on their own or with support from VA."