

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 4 JUNE 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

[Biden signs order establishing White House initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders](#) [Veronica Stracqualursi and Jasmine Wright, CNN, 28 May 2021]

President Joe Biden signed an executive order on Friday renewing a White House initiative charged with advancing “equity, justice, and opportunity” for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, including coordinating a “comprehensive” federal response to the rise in anti-Asian violence and discrimination. “For far too long, systemic barriers to equity, justice, and opportunity have put the American dream out of reach for many AA and NHPI communities, and racism, nativism, and xenophobia against AA and NHPI communities continues to threaten safety and dignity of AA and NHPI families,” the White House said in a [fact sheet](#) released Friday. The new initiative builds on a commitment from Biden to advance racial equity and a memorandum signed early in his presidency stating that his administration’s policy will be to condemn and denounce anti-Asian bias—specifically amid the coronavirus pandemic.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Military leaders wary of changes in sexual assault policy](#) [Lolita C. Baldor and Robert Burns, *The Associated Press*, 3 June 2021]

*Military service leaders are privately expressing reservations about removing sexual assault cases from the chain of command, *The Associated Press* has learned, striking a note of caution as momentum builds toward changing a military justice system that has come under increasing criticism. In memos to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, the service leaders laid out their concerns about the growing push to shift prosecution decisions on sexual assault and possibly other major crimes to independent judge advocates. They said the shift could decrease the number of prosecutions, delay cases and potentially provide less help for victims. While they indicated they are open to changes and improvements in the justice system, most were worried about how that would be done while ensuring no unintended harm is done to unit leadership or readiness. Several said it would create additional burdensome bureaucracy, according to officials familiar with the memos.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[A Proclamation on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Pride Month, 2021](#)

[President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., *The White House Press Corps*, 1 June 2021]

The uprising at the Stonewall Inn in June, 1969, sparked a liberation movement—a call to action that continues to inspire us to live up to our Nation’s promise of equality, liberty, and justice for all. Pride is a time to recall the trials the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) community has endured and to rejoice in the triumphs of trailblazing individuals who have bravely fought—and continue to fight—for full equality. Pride is both a jubilant communal celebration of visibility and a personal celebration of self-worth and dignity. This Pride Month, we recognize the valuable contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals across America, and we reaffirm our commitment to standing in solidarity with LGBTQ+ Americans in their ongoing struggle against discrimination and injustice.

CULTURE

[The descendants of the free Black men and women who founded San Domingo share its history](#)

[Jonathan M. Pitts, *The Baltimore Sun*, 3 June 2021]

It's a sunny late afternoon on Gran' Sarah's Hill, Newell Quinton's 40-acre spread in a wooded corner of northwestern Wicomico County, and the lanky 77-year-old is in his element.

Established as a settlement of free Black men and women in the early 1800s, it's believed to be the first and oldest such community in the state, but that's not all that makes this out-of-the-way place unique. In a place and at a time when the slave trade was at its strongest, and when most Black people classified as free lived on property owned by others, San Domingo's founders owned and tended land, set up businesses, built a church and a school, raised families, and generally created a close-knit, thrifty and self-sufficient community that coexisted peacefully with the White towns around them well into the mid-1900s. No one knows for sure exactly how and why San Domingo first came into being, but U.S. census records from the early 19th century offer tantalizing clues. They suggest, for one thing, that no free Black people lived in the area as of 1810 but that more than 600 had settled there in 109 households by 1820.

[REPRINT]

[“Go for Broke” postage stamps honor Japanese-American soldiers of WWII](#) [Wyatt Olson, *Stars and Stripes*, 4 June 2021]

The U.S. Postal Service on Thursday issued a postage stamp honoring Japanese-American soldiers from World War II that bears the image of a Hawaiian veteran who served in the legendary 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The stamp features an illustrated version of a photo taken of Shiroku “Whitey” Yamamoto as he stood at a railroad station in France in 1944, the Postal Service said in a [news release](#). The text on the stamp—Go for Broke, Japanese American Soldiers of WWII, Forever USA—is printed in vertical columns that evoke the style of traditional Japanese writing. Roughly 33,000 Nisei—Americans whose Japanese parents had immigrated to the United States—served in the U.S. Army during World War II.

[How an Army veteran designed the iconic symbol of the gay rights movement](#) [Lauren Katzenberg, *Task & Purpose*, 3 June 2021]

*Every year in June, cities around the world honor the gay community with events celebrating Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month. While today, the symbol of the gay community—the rainbow flag—is universally recognizable, it would not have existed without one Army veteran, Gilbert Baker, who found himself stationed in San Francisco at the beginning of the gay rights movement in 1970. Baker, a Kansas-native who was drafted to serve as a surgical nurse, was honorably discharged from the Army in 1972 and decided to stay in San Francisco. In a [documentary](#) called “The Gay Betsy Ross,” Baker says he bought his first sewing machine and taught himself how to sew so he could make his own clothes, in the style of his fashion icon, David Bowie. In 1974, Baker met gay civil rights activist and politician, Harvey Milk, and the two developed a close friendship, according to a *San Francisco Travel* article. Milk challenged Baker to come up with a symbol that would represent the gay pride community instead of the pink triangle, which was once a symbol used by Nazis to identify and persecute homosexuals.*

[How the Dutch are facing up to their colonial past](#) [Cath Pound, *BBC News*, 2 June 2021]

Rembrandt's magnificent full-length portraits of Oopjen Coppit and her husband Marten Soolmans are two of the most prized possessions in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam—the Netherlands' prestigious national arts and history museum. Dressed in elaborate finery and painted in a way only the richest could afford, the couple are the embodiment of the era of economic prosperity and artistic flourishing commonly referred to as "the Dutch Golden Age". But delve deeper and these portraits also tell a more complex and disturbing tale, for Soolmans derived his wealth from refining sugar produced by an enslaved workforce on plantations in Brazil. A ground-breaking new [exhibition](#) at the Rijksmuseum explores personal accounts of slavery in the period of art known as the Dutch Golden Age.

[Pentagon reviewing policy that could open door to Pride flags being displayed at bases](#) [Barbara Starr, *CNN*, 1 June 2021]

The Pentagon is reviewing a policy instituted last year that limits which flags can be displayed at military bases. The review comes as Pride Month is being celebrated throughout June. If changes are made to the current policy it could open the door to allowing the rainbow Pride flag to be displayed. But a senior defense official strongly cautioned no decisions have been made because any change could result in any number of cause-related flags and symbols being displayed on military installations. "This goes beyond the issue of the Pride flag," the official said. "The truth is we haven't resolved it yet," the official said about any potential changes. The discussions involve Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's legal staff. Austin is aware of the matter, the official said.

[Scrutiny mounts of legacy of pioneering Northwest missionary](#) [Nicholas K. Geranios, *The Associated Press*, 1 June 2021]

For generations Marcus Whitman has been widely viewed as an iconic figure from early Pacific Northwest history, a venerated Protestant missionary who was among 13 people killed by the Cayuse tribe near modern-day Walla Walla, Washington, in 1847. But this past year has seen a continued reappraisal of Whitman, whose actions have increasingly been viewed as imperialistic and destructive. The Washington Legislature voted to strip his likeness from the U.S. Capitol. Students at Whitman College in Walla Walla demonstrated recently to demand another Whitman statue be removed from campus. Marcus Whitman is known for leading a small group of missionaries in 1836 into what was then Oregon Country, a region about the size of Alaska. The mission was in the territory of the Cayuse Tribe, which was wary of the White settlers. An 1847 measles outbreak killed half the local Cayuse. Some of the Cayuse blamed the devastation on Whitman and his wife. The Cayuse had a tradition of killing failed medicine men and Whitman, a medical doctor, was warned to leave the area. The Cayuse attacked the mission and killed the Whitmans and 11 others.

[Workers begin removing Forrest remains from Tennessee park](#) [Adrian Sainz, *The Associated Press*, 1 June 2021]

Workers arrived at a Tennessee park Tuesday to begin the process of digging up the remains of Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and moving the former slave trader's body from its longtime resting place in Memphis to a museum hundreds of miles away. Crews prepared to

remove the graves of Forrest and his wife from Health Sciences Park in Memphis' busy medical district. The park used to bear the name of the early Ku Klux Klan leader and feature a statue of the cavalryman on a horse, but the name has been changed and the statue removed in recent years. Workers must dismantle the statue's pedestal before they can disinter the Forrests' remains and move them to a Confederate museum in Middle Tennessee. With the approval of Forrest's relatives, the Sons of Confederate Veterans is overseeing the move. A judge approved it late last year, ending a long legal battle.

DISCRIMINATION

[7 GOP Governors Have Signed Transgender Sports Bans](#) [Aallyah Wright, *Stateline*, 2 June 2021]

On the first day of Pride Month, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed legislation banning transgender youth from competing in high school and college women's and girls' sports. He joins a growing list of Republican governors who have approved such bans. Proponents of the bills argue that transgender girls have an unfair athletic advantage over cisgender girls and women, and that allowing them to compete threatens the athletic opportunities that women and girls have enjoyed since the passage of Title IX in 1972, which requires that women and men be granted equitable opportunities to participate in sports. LGBTQ advocates say the bills discriminate against transgender youth, and that barring transgender kids from school sports jeopardizes their mental and physical health and can increase their isolation.

[Corporate Landlord Evicts Black Renters At Far Higher Rates Than Whites, Report Finds](#) [Chris Arnold, *NPR*, 3 June 2021]

Katrina Chism was frightened and confused. She'd been renting the same house in Atlanta for three years. The reason: Her landlord had filed an eviction case against her. Getting evicted can send people into a downward financial spiral. During the pandemic, there has been the added danger of catching or spreading the coronavirus. But that hasn't stopped Chism's landlord, a company owned by the private equity investment firm Pretium Partners, from filing what critics say is a lot of eviction cases against people during the pandemic. "The company has filed to evict more than a thousand residents since last September," says Jim Baker, the executive director of the Private Equity Stakeholder Project. The group has been tracking eviction filings by corporate landlords and, in a [report](#) on Pretium, says it has found a racial disparity. According to the report, since the beginning of the year, "they're filing to evict residents at rates four times as high in majority-Black counties," says Baker.

[A Florida teacher is suing her school district for allegedly retaliating against her after she spoke out about racism](#) [Harmeet Kaur, *CNN*, 3 June 2021]

After the murder of George Floyd and the summer of protests that followed led to greater dialogue among her students, Amy Donofrio decided last fall to hang up a "Black Lives Matter" banner outside her classroom. Most of the students at Robert E. Lee High School in Jacksonville, Florida—where she had taught for nine years—were Black. And Donofrio, who is White, wanted them to feel supported. "I just wanted to make it clear to my students that when they walk into my room, they can feel safe," she told CNN. "They can let out a breath. They can know that they

matter.” But the flag, as well as Donofrio’s outspokenness on racial justice, would come to be a political flash point that reverberated across the state. The situation boiled over in March, leading administrators to have the flag removed. Days later, Donofrio was reassigned to non-teaching duties and the district said it had opened a “human resources matter to review allegations of potential misconduct” against her.

[Muslim woman says Southwest barred her from plane’s exit row because of hijab](#) [Eve Chen, USA TODAY, 2 June 2021]

A Muslim woman from Texas has filed a complaint with the Department of Transportation, saying she was not allowed to sit in an emergency exit row on a Southwest Airlines flight because she was wearing a hijab, but her sister was allowed to sit there without one. Southwest says it’s not what it seems. Fatima Altkrouri and Muna Kowni were traveling from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to Dallas on May 22, when they spotted the last two seats together in the emergency exit row. Altkrouri said that at first, she didn’t think anything of it when she asked a flight attendant if they could sit there and was told no. “As I was walking, I overheard her saying to the passengers in the seats that were around that area, laughing, saying that ‘If we sat her there, she’d bring down the plane in an emergency,’” said Altkrouri, who wears a hijab. “You can imagine the shock I was in at that time.”

[Report: Nearly Half of Popular Federal Websites Fail Accessibility Tests](#) [Frank Konkel, NextGov, 4 June 2021]

Federal websites are not as accessible for those with disabilities as the law mandates they should be, according to a report released Thursday by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation. The report tested the 72 most popular federal websites and used a combination of automated tests and qualitative assessments to assess their compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. The law requires the General Services Administration to ensure federal websites are accessible to people with disabilities, including federal employees and the public. The lowest-ranking sites studied in the report were the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the United States Marine Corps and the Energy Information Administration. The four highest-scoring sites—each earned a perfect score in the report rubric—were the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, and the White House.

DIVERSITY

[Agencies Recognize LGBTQ+ Employees During Pride Month](#) [Courtney Bubl , GovExec, 3 June 2021]

Since Pride Month started on Tuesday, many federal agencies have been taking the opportunity to recognize their LGBTQ+ employees and share how they are advancing equity in their respective missions. Kathleen McGettigan, acting director of the Office of Personnel Management, said in a communication this week to the OPM workforce, shared with Government Executive: “I’m honored to serve at OPM, where we work hard to ensure LGBTQ+ federal employees and retirees receive fair treatment and equal access to benefits. Our LGBTQ+ employees add valuable experiences and unique perspectives to the OPM family, enabling us to better serve the

greater federal workforce and American people.” Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby said during a briefing on Tuesday that Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin is “proud that one of his first actions after being sworn in was to implement President Biden’s directive to ensure that all transgender individuals who wish to serve and who can meet the appropriate standards to be able to do so openly and free from discrimination.

[As “Woke” Criticism Grows, Pentagon Says “No Apologies” for Diversity Programs](#) [Stephen Losey, *Military.com*, 2 June 2021]

The Pentagon’s chief spokesman on Tuesday stood by efforts to improve diversity and inclusion in the military, even as criticism from some conservative lawmakers and commentators has grown. He said the department is focused on defending the nation, adding that doing so means creating an environment where talented people feel comfortable working. “You need good people,” Kirby said. “And if you meet the standards, and you’re qualified to be in the military, and you’re willing to raise your hand and serve this country, we want you to be able to do it—free of hate and fear and discrimination. “That’s the very least we can do,” he continued. “And there’s no apologies for that. No apologies whatsoever for wanting to create that kind of a working environment.”

[House Democrats introduce bill to protect transgender military dependents](#) [Ellen Mitchell, *The Hill*, 1 June 2021]

A group of 39 House Democrats on Tuesday introduced a new bill to ensure that transgender dependents of active duty service members have access to needed health care. Led by Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.), the Armed Forces Transgender Dependent Protection Act would prevent the Defense Department from stationing service members and their transgender dependents “in states or countries that prohibit or otherwise restrict gender affirming healthcare and treatments” for them. “Despite the progress that we have made in our fight for LGBTQ equality, service members and their transgender dependents continue to face hurdles that threaten their development,” Panetta said in a statement announcing the bill.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Legacy of Navy’s first Black admiral continues on his namesake ship](#) [Dave Ress, *The Daily Press* (Newport News, Va.), 2 June 2021]

When Cmdr. Corey Odom talks to new members of his crew on the destroyer USS Gravelly, he likes to highlight something the Navy’s first Black admiral, Samuel Gravelly, always stressed. “He wanted to be best at whatever he was: enlisted sailor, executive officer, commander,” Odom said. “He said the way to do that was education, motivation and perseverance.” Gravelly, a Richmonder who enlisted shortly after Pearl Harbor, was the first Black to command a combatant ship and served as a vice admiral in command of Third Fleet. He’ll be honored Wednesday by Gov. Ralph Northam’s proclamation of June 2 as Admiral Gravelly Day, and group from the destroyer is headed up to the Virginia War Memorial for the ceremony.

[We must push toward protecting LGBTQ service members at home](#) [Retired Maj. Gen. Gale S. Pollock, *Military Times*, 2 June 2021] [COMMENTARY]

I served in the United States Army for more than three decades, including as an Army major general, chief of the Army Nurse Corps, the acting U.S. Surgeon General of the Army, and commander of the U.S. Army Medical Command. And as President Trump pushed his proposed military ban, I spoke out against it, alongside colleagues in my field. The blanket ban on open service for trans people horrified me because at its root, it sent a message of disrespect, exclusion, and dishonor for Americans, many who were already courageously serving our country. But even as we move past that grim chapter, I know that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) service members are still denied equal treatment in key areas of their lives. Because of a lack of comprehensive laws at the federal level and in many states, LGBT people are left vulnerable to discrimination in areas like housing, health care, and public spaces like restaurants and bars. LGBT service members often return home from years of military service and find themselves worrying about being denied service or mistreated just because of who they are or who they love.

[Why Getting More People with Disabilities Developing Technology Is Good for Everyone](#)

[Kristen Shinohara and Garreth Tigwell, *The Conversation*, 3 June 2021]

We are researchers who focus on technology design that is usable for people with all kinds of disabilities. We've found that more needs to be done to make technology accessible and inclusive, such as improving design tools so they are accessible to screen reader users. It's not just a matter of fairness and inclusion. Accessible technology is generally better for everyone. An app or website that causes problems for a screen reader is likely to be more difficult than an accessible app or website for anyone to use because it will take more time or effort. User interface design best practices have long included users in the design process. Including users with disabilities results in more accessible technology. Yet many technologies are still not accessible out of the box to users with disabilities. One way to make apps and websites more accessible is to have people with disabilities designing the technologies. But the design process itself is not very accessible to those very people. Few tools in the user interface designer toolbox are themselves accessible. It's a Catch-22.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

EXTREMISM

[The Pentagon wants a new "reg" for prosecuting extremism](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 28 May 2021]

The Defense Department has been rolling out initiatives to address the threat of domestic extremism serving in uniform since early this year, and now its next budget request hopes to throw some money behind them. The proposal released Friday includes \$30.8 million to enhance technology and manpower for training, screening and policy updates, including a big one: "the development of a punitive regulation on extremist activities." There aren't further details available on the effort yet, DOD spokeswoman Lisa Lawrence told Military Times, but the line in the budget leaves the possibilities open. Those millions in funding will also go to improving "vetting protocols and screening of public available electronic information (aka social media) and develop and deploy an Enterprise Case Management tracking tool for tracking activities of concern."

[Tampa man pleads guilty to felony in Jan. 6 Capitol riot; his recommended prison sentence could set bar for other cases](#) [Spencer S. Hsu, *The Washington Post*, 2 June 2021]

A Tampa man who carried a Trump flag into the well of the Senate on Jan. 6 pleaded guilty Wednesday to one felony count of storming the Capitol to obstruct Congress’s certification of the 2020 presidential election. Paul Allard Hodgkins, 38, did not enter a cooperation deal with prosecutors, and he is not accused of any other wrongdoing or involvement with extremist groups. In admitting to the stiffest felony count charged by prosecutors against individuals not otherwise accused of conspiracy or violence in the Capitol riot, Hodgkins faces a prison sentence of 15 to 21 months under federal guidelines. His sentencing is poised to become a test case watched by other defendants deciding whether to accept pleas, several defense lawyers said. Hodgkins’s attorney, Patrick Leduc, said he would seek a lower sentence at a sentencing hearing as soon as July 19, and he asked the judge to waive a \$7,500 to \$75,000 fine because his client also agreed to pay \$2,000 in restitution for his share of riot damage to the Capitol. Prosecutor Mona Sedky estimated damage to the Capitol at \$1.5 million—the first time prosecutors have given a public cost estimate.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Why Veterans Are Targeted by Radicals Online](#) [Steve Beynon, *Military.com*, 28 May 2021]

*At least 43 of the 357 individuals charged in relation to the insurrection as of March 31 had a military background, according to a [review](#) from the Combating Terrorism Center. Kristofer Goldsmith, an Iraq War veteran who has been studying the issue for years, said there’s no evidence that veterans are more or less susceptible to conspiracy theories or to delving into extremism. But they are uniquely targeted by disinformation campaigns because of their social influence and military training, he added. “Veterans are a force multiplier,” Goldsmith said in an interview with *Military.com*. “There’s no evidence to point to veterans being psychologically more vulnerable to being attracted to these groups. But veterans are economically efficient targets. If you convert them to believe what you want them to believe, [or] vote the way you want them to vote, [or convince them to] have a desire to commit violence against a population—you’re also much more likely to take that person’s family and immediate social network.” Goldsmith on Thursday launched Sparverius, a firm that analyzes domestic extremism.*

HUMAN RELATIONS

[Going Beyond “Back to Normal”—5 Research-based Tips for Emerging from Pandemic Life](#)

[Bethany Teachman, *The Conversation*, 27 May 2021]

For many people in the U.S., it feels like that dim light at the end of the pandemic tunnel is becoming brighter. My 12- and 14-year-old daughters now have their first shot, with the second one soon to follow. I was euphoric when the kids received their vaccinations, choking up under my mask at the relief that my family was now unlikely to get sick or pass the coronavirus on to others more vulnerable than we are. Finally our family could start returning to so-called normal life. But what should those of us fortunate enough to be vaccinated return to? I didn’t exactly feel euphoric each day in my normal life pre-COVID-19. How should you choose what to rebuild, what to leave behind and what new paths to try for the first time? Clinical psychological science provides some helpful clues for how to chart your course out of pandemic life.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Is Workplace Bullying a Genuine Phenomenon?](#) [Elizabeth Englander, *The Atlantic*, 3 June 2021]

[\[COMMENTARY\]](#)

The term bullying is now used so broadly that the phenomenon may seem pervasive well beyond adolescence. In Ben Smith’s recent New York Times [exposé](#) of WNYC, the subhead notes, “In public radio, there’s either an epidemic of bullying or an epidemic of whining, depending on whom you ask.” Left unasked was a key question: Is workplace bullying, writ large, a genuine phenomenon? The term, traditionally applied to the schoolyard, doesn’t always fit the adult world. Whenever powerful people wage a campaign of misery against someone with less agency, it can be harmful. Victims of bullying are typically less productive, less happy, and less likely to be positive contributors to society. They’re more likely to use dangerous drugs, to be violent, and to break laws. Power differentials can also be harder to pin down among adults. Bullies have power that they abuse, and targets lack the power that they need to defend themselves.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[To Stem Suicide and Sexual Assault, the Air Force Dons Headsets](#) [Jennifer Steinhauer, *The New York Times*, 29 May 2021]

The three airmen sat quietly adjusting their headsets, murmuring to their colleague, who was in distinct trouble. “Everyone goes through rough patches sometimes,” each said, a few moments apart, to the same despondent and mildly intoxicated man, whose wife recently left him and who seemed immersed in suicidal thoughts. The airman on the other end of the headsets was virtual, but the conversation was all encompassing, a 30-minute, occasionally harrowing journey among three actual airmen and a virtual actor, whom they each tried to coax into getting help. The three were trying out a new virtual reality program this month that the Air Force is using to target two problems that continue to vex military leaders: suicide and sexual assault within the ranks. Years of prevention training—often in the form of somnolence-inducing PowerPoint presentations—have done little to stem the rates of either problem.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)**MISCELLANEOUS**

[Austin Asks Top General For “Options” to Evacuate Afghans](#) [Tara Copp and Jacqueline Feldscher, *GovExec*, 3 June 2021]

With time running out, the Pentagon is still developing plans to evacuate Afghans whose lives would be in danger from the Taliban after U.S. forces depart—but there’s still no order from the White House to move anyone, yet. To prepare, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has tasked the head of U.S. Central Command, Gen. Frank McKenzie, to develop options for those Afghans that includes the possibility of evacuating them, Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said Wednesday. “The secretary did task Gen. McKenzie to come up with options potentially for the transportation out of Afghanistan of civilians that might need it, at various levels and under various circumstances,” Kirby said in a phone interview with Defense One. However, the White House has not directed the Pentagon to execute those plans yet. “We aren’t at a stage right now

where evacuation is being actively pursued,” Kirby said. White House officials have not yet responded to a request for comment.

[Czech women win MPs’ backing for non-gendered surnames](#) [BBC News, 2 June 2021]

Women in the Czech Republic may soon be able to take non-gendered versions of their surnames after MPs backed a change in the law. In the Czech language, the ending “-ova” is added to the majority of surnames for women, so Mr Novak’s daughter becomes Ms Novakova. Women have only been able to drop the “-ova” ending in limited circumstances, such as if they have foreign nationality or live with a foreigner. The senate will now vote on the change. The proposal was brought forward by former Justice Minister Helena Valkova. She said the current situation was an “unjustified unequal position and can lead to absurd situations”, with a woman holding residency in neighbouring Slovakia - which used to be part of the same country—allowed to change her surname. Women living in the Czech Republic, however, are prevented from making the same decision.

[Japan LGBTQ activists push for equality law before Olympics](#) [Mari Yamaguchi, *The Associated Press*, 4 June 2021]

Japanese sexual minority groups and their supporters, in a last-ditch effort to get long-sought equality legislation passed before the Tokyo Olympics, submitted requests on Friday to the governing Liberal Democratic Party, whose conservative members have stalled the bill. “In order to protect the lives and livelihood of sexual minorities, enacting a LGBT law that states discrimination is not tolerated is an indispensable first step,” said Kane Doi, Japan director for the New York-based group Human Rights Watch. “An enactment of such a law in Japan ahead of the Olympics is also necessary for the international community,” Doi said, adding that Japan needs to demonstrate its commitment to ensuring equality for LGBTQ athletes, journalists and other participants in the Olympics, set to begin July 23.

MISCONDUCT

[After Settling Lawsuit Against Head of Naval Academy, Midshipman who Faced Expulsion over Tweets Graduates and Commissions](#) [Heather Mongilio, *The Capital Gazette (Annapolis, Md.)*, 30 May 2021]

After a midshipman facing expulsion settled a lawsuit against the head of the Naval Academy, he graduated Friday as a member of the Class of 2021 and commissioned as a Navy ensign. Ensign Chase Standage was listed as a member of the 14th company on the graduation program.

Following the settlement in February, Standage’s status at the Naval Academy was unclear. Standage’s ability to attend graduate school, starting in spring 2021, was in jeopardy if he was separated from the Naval Academy, according to his lawsuit against Superintendent Vice Adm. Sean Buck and Kenneth Braithwaite, who was serving as secretary of the Navy at the time of the lawsuit. Standage sued Buck and Braithwaite in order to block his separation in September after the academy moved to expel him for a series of 40 tweets from June that academy leadership criticized as inappropriate and, in some cases, racist. His lawsuit claimed Buck and Braithwaite violated his First and Fifth Amendment rights.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Bus hijacking by Army trainee raises questions about health screenings](#) [Davis Winkie, *Military Times*, 26 May 2021]

In the days after Army trainee Jovan Collazo allegedly fled his Fort Jackson basic training unit and used an unloaded M4 carbine to hijack a school bus in South Carolina, his attorney has indicated his mental health may have played a factor. Army recruiters with whom Army Times spoke say it's not outside of the realm of possibility that Collazo slipped through a medical screening system that operates primarily on the honor of recruiters and their applicants. As two experienced Army recruiters explained to Army Times, the current honor system could enable cunning applicants or unscrupulous recruiters to help problematic candidates slip through the cracks. Military service also lines up neatly with the age range that many mental health disorders, like schizophrenia, emerge in young men—late teenage years to the mid-20s. The former drill sergeant who became a recruiter also described mental health as a “moving target,” because it's hard to predict how even applicants with clean medical histories will do in “a stressful environment” like basic training. “Everybody looks for that one quick fix, and there isn't a quick fix,” he said. “Perhaps doing more mental health stuff during basic training, but you're already cramming 13 weeks of training into nine weeks.” The more senior recruiter had a similar thought. “The system is a little broke,” he concluded.

[“By White Men, for White Men”: Report Blasts VMI for Racial Slurs, Sexual Assault, Confederacy Reverence](#) [Stephen Losey, *Military.com*, 1 June 2021]

A scathing [investigation](#) into the culture of the Virginia Military Institute released Tuesday found severe racial and gender problems, including an “atmosphere of hostility towards minorities;” regular use of racial slurs and jokes; widespread sexual assault; and “outdated [and] idealized” reverence for the Confederacy. The report, which was ordered by Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam and commonwealth lawmakers last October and conducted by the law firm Barnes & Thornburg, found that problems at the nearly 182-year-old public military college run deep. For a long time, the report adds, the school has been unwilling to take a hard look at itself—or even admit it has a problem. VMI has been unwilling to change or even question whether it should do so, which has left it lagging far behind other military schools, the report states.

[Gadsden Flag Patch on Airman's Uniform Wasn't Authorized, Officials Say](#) [Oriana Pawlyk, *Military.com*, 1 June 2021]

An airman from the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, [wore a Gadsden flag](#) patch in place of the American flag on his uniform without authorization, according to a base spokesperson. “The incident has been addressed with the member's chain of command, and regulations regarding the wear of authorized patches—in accordance with Air Force standards—are being reinforced throughout the wing,” a spokesperson from the 341st said Tuesday, adding that the patch in question is not authorized to be worn on Air Force uniforms. The meaning of the Gadsden flag, designed by Christopher Gadsden in 1775, has seen a shift over the years. Once understood to represent limited government, it has been used as a rallying symbol for the right-wing Tea Party movement; by White supremacist groups; and most recently, by individuals who participated in the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

RACISM

[After cotton cleaning project, mom said Washington school suggested Black daughters be “segregated”](#) [Jordan Mendoza, *USA TODAY*, 4 June 2021]

A Washington state family is demanding that a Spokane school administrator be removed after he suggested to “segregate” two Black teenagers who felt uncomfortable with a classroom assignment that involved cleaning cotton. Twins Emzayia and Zyeshauwne Fezell said on May 3, their social studies teacher at Sacajawea Middle School took out a box of raw cotton during a lesson on industrial economics and told the class they were going to do a “fun” activity to see who could clean cotton the fastest, according to the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington. The teens said the activity made them feel embarrassed and angry, and told their mother, Brandi Fezell, about the incident. “We didn’t learn about the slave trade or anything about the history of slavery,” Emzayia said in the ACLU statement. “The lesson made it seem like enslaved people existed just to pick and clean cotton.”

[Google removes its head of diversity after a 2007 blog post surfaced in which he claimed Jews have an “insatiable appetite for war”](#) [Julie Gerstein, *Insider*, 3 June 2021]

Google announced on Wednesday that it was removing its global lead for diversity strategy and research, Kamau Bobb, after a 2007 blog post in which he’d made antisemitic comments surfaced. The company said Bobb would be reassigned to a STEM research role. The Washington Free Beacon this week uncovered a blog post by Bobb titled “If I Were a Jew.” The [report](#), published Tuesday, included excerpts from the post. “If I were a Jew I would be concerned about my insatiable appetite for war and killing in defense of myself,” the post, which has since been deleted, said. The post appeared to have been written following an outbreak of violence between Lebanon and Israel in late 2007. Several leading Jewish groups, including the Simon Wiesenthal Center and Stop Antisemitism, tweeted that Bobb should be fired.

[NFL pledges to halt “race-norming,” review Black claims](#) [Maryclaire Dale, *The Associated Press*, 2 June 2021]

The NFL on Wednesday pledged to halt the use of “race-norming”—which assumed Black players started out with lower cognitive function—in the \$1 billion settlement of brain injury claims and review past scores for any potential race bias. The practice made it harder for Black retirees to show a deficit and qualify for an award. The standards were created in the 1990s in hopes of offering more appropriate treatment to dementia patients, but critics faulted the way they were used to determine payouts in the NFL concussion case. Wednesday’s announcement comes after a pair of Black players filed a civil rights lawsuit over the practice, medical experts raised concerns and a group of NFL families last month dropped 50,000 petitions at the federal courthouse in Philadelphia—where the lawsuit had been thrown out by the judge overseeing the settlement.

[The pervasive problem of “linguistic racism”](#) [Christine Ro, *BBC News*, 3 June 2021]

Last summer, Triangle Investigations, a New York-based HR consultancy, examined allegations of accent discrimination at a global non-profit organisation. An Ethiopian-accented staff member had reported that his colleagues frequently interrupted him during Zoom calls, commented on the unintelligibility of his English and excluded him from meetings. He became self-conscious during the meetings that he was able to attend, and ended up using the chat feature instead of speaking

up, says Kia Roberts, Triangle's founder and principal. When Roberts and her team looked into the matter, they found that the allegations had substance, and that employees of colour had been treated differently; they were being spoken to disrespectfully, as if they weren't competent to hold their positions, and their opinions and suggestions weren't being taken seriously. The investigation ultimately led the non-profit to introduce employee training and periodic HR check-ins to try and remedy the issue. Of course, this case of linguistic discrimination wasn't an isolated episode. Globally, more people are using English than ever, and it's a dominant language in business, science and government.

RELIGION

[Biden sends greetings to Buddhists on Vesak](#) [Lalit K Jha, Yahoo News India, 26 May 2021]

U.S. President Joe Biden [sent greetings](#) on Wednesday to the Buddhist community on the occasion of Vesak, a day honouring the birth, enlightenment and passing of the Buddha. "(First Lady) Jill (Biden) and I extend our warmest wishes to Buddhists in the United States and around the world as they celebrate Vesak, a day honoring the birth, enlightenment, and passing of the Buddha," Biden said in a message. "The ceremonial lighting of a lamp, the symbol of this holiday that has been celebrated for over 2,500 years, reminds people of Buddhism's teachings of compassion, humility and selflessness that endure today," he added. "On this day, we also commemorate the many contributions of Buddhists in America, who enrich our communities and our country as we all work together toward brighter days ahead," Biden said. In a separate [statement](#) U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Samantha Power wished Buddhists in the United States and around the world a joyous Vesak.

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

[Court affirms tuition for students at religious school](#) [Kathy McCormack, The Associated Press, 2 June 2021]

A federal appeals court on Wednesday explained its decision to stop Vermont from excluding tuition funding for students who attend a religious school, saying a lower court ruling from earlier this year did not go far enough to accomplish that. The opinion followed an injunction granted by the 2nd Circuit in February against the state, and in light of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last year that said states can't cut religious schools from programs that send public money to private education. The appeals court had issued its injunction on behalf of four Catholic high school students, their parents, and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington. The case deals with a voucher program that allows students in communities that don't have schools or are not part of supervisory unions to attend schools of their choice, including approved private institutions. The students applied for tuition reimbursement at the Catholic high school, but were denied on the ground that the school is a religiously affiliated school.

[Eight high school football coaches suspended over allegations they made a Hebrew Israelite player eat a pizza that had contained pork](#) [Anna Sturla, CNN, 3 June 2021]

Eight high school football coaches in Canton, Ohio, have been suspended while police investigate allegations that they forced a Hebrew Israelite player to eat a pizza that previously had pork on it, despite knowing his beliefs forbade him from eating it, police and the student's lawyer told

CNN. The 17-year-old student, who hasn't been named, is a rising senior at Canton McKinley High School, where he was an offensive lineman on the football team. After skipping an earlier weightlifting session because of an injury, the team's coaches told him to eat an entire pepperoni pizza as punishment on May 24, while his teammates were forced to carry heavy weight disks as they exercised around him, attorney Edward Gilbert said. The teenager reminded the head coach multiple times that he did not eat pork. The student had previously told coaching staff multiple times that he was a Hebrew Israelite, and did not eat pork because of his religion, the attorney added.

[Starting again: A call for chaplains to reconcile and properly support LGBTQI+ soldiers](#)

[Chaplain (Maj.) David A. Evans, *Army Times*, 1 June 2021] [COMMENTARY]

There are many reasons why an individual chooses to join the Army, but all soldiers commit their lives to defending our Constitution and our country. As chaplains, we swear to provide religious support to everyone, and by doing so, increase the readiness and resilience of the Army. There is no exception in regulations or policy for a quality gradient based on a person's faith, gender or sexual orientation. Every soldier deserves the very best support the Army Chaplain Corps can provide them—they deserve to be affirmed and their needs met as a person and as a soldier, no matter who they are or who they love.

[Virginia teacher put on paid leave after speaking against student pronoun, gender identity policy](#)

[Jordan Mendoza, *USA TODAY*, 2 June 2021]

A Virginia school district placed a teacher on paid administrative leave after he spoke against a proposed policy that would have faculty refer to students using pronouns based on what aligns with the students' gender identity. Tanner Cross, a physical education teacher at Leesburg Elementary School, spoke out against the "Rights of Transgender and Gender-Expansive Students" policy May 25 at a Loudoun County Public Schools board meeting. Cross said the policy would go against his religious beliefs and he was "speaking out of love for those who are suffering from gender dysphoria." Two days after the board meeting, Cross was sent a letter that he was being placed on paid administrative leave for "allegations that you engaged in conduct that has had a disruptive impact on the operations of Leesburg Elementary School." The letter, signed by interim Assistant Superintendent Lucia Sebastian, was released by Cross' attorney, Tyson Langhofer. In a May 28 letter to Sebastian, Langhofer demanded that Cross' suspension be rescinded, that he be reinstated, that his suspension be removed from his file and that Cross would be protected from any retaliation.

SEXISM

[Air Force couple, both sexual assault victims, say disparity in treatment shows gender discrimination](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 2 June 2021]

When Air Force officers Alex Gibson and Josh Dobhailen first met at the service's Intelligence Officer Course in 2017, each was recovering from a sexual assault. They married later that year, believing that their similar trauma allowed them to quickly bond. Both are captains who work in military intelligence for different units on base, and they each decided to self-identify with leadership about their past assaults, which had been formally reported, and seek behavioral

health treatment. While Josh, 26, received support from his leadership, Alex, 29, said her job and her security clearance were taken from her and she now faces a medical board evaluation that could end her military career. “It means a lot to me to wear this uniform,” Alex said. “I’ve seen, I hate to say it, a lot of gender discrimination or a lot of retaliation or reprisal over this last five-year journey since my assault.”

[Men’s group and ACLU urge Supreme Court to hear challenge to male-only military draft](#)

[Ariane de Vogue, CNN, 31 May 2021]

The Supreme Court will decide as early as this week whether to hear a constitutional challenge to the male-only registration requirement for the draft filed by a group called the National Coalition for Men. The group is asking the justices to reconsider a 1981 decision that upheld the Military Selective Service Act under which men—but not women—are required to register for the draft. Key to the court’s ruling, which was decided by a court made up of all men, was its observation that “women as a group...unlike men as a group, are not eligible for combat.” That has changed in the decades since. David Cole of the American Civil Liberties Union, which is representing the National Coalition for Men, has asked the Supreme Court to take up the case—even highlighting what it might have meant to the justices’ late colleague Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Congress implores State Department leadership to tackle sexual harassment](#) [Jessie Bur, *Federal Times*, 27 May 2021]

Efforts in the previous Congress to pass legislation mandating sexual assault and harassment reforms at the Department of State stalled in committee, so representatives have now turned to new State Department leadership to enact reforms at the agency. Reps. Jackie Spier, D-Calif., Gregory Meeks, D-N.Y., Joaquin Castro, D-Texas, and 35 other members of the House sent a [letter](#) to Secretary of State Antony Blinken May 25, calling on the new agency head to enact executive reforms that mirror many of the provisions in their original legislation. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the agency’s inspector general both found last year that the Department of State needed to do more to ensure that sexual assault and harassment cases are treated and tracked appropriately.

[LGB troops are much more likely to be sexually assaulted than their heterosexual peers: study](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 2 June 2021]

Just 12 percent of troops identify as something other than heterosexual, yet they account for roughly half of sexual assault survivors—especially men—according to Defense Department [data analyzed by Rand Corp.](#) The study, released Wednesday, suggests that not only does DOD need to do more to understand the potential dynamics at play when a lesbian, gay or bisexual service member is assaulted, but that training materials need to focus more on these groups, rather than on the presumption that men are perpetrators and women are victims. “In particular, it would be critical to learn if sexual assaults on service members who do not describe themselves as heterosexual are primarily hate crimes or harassment based on sexual orientation rather than crimes with sexual motives,” according to the report. “The Uniform Code of Military Justice does not require that there be a sexual motive to charge an attacker with sexual assault.”

Essentially, the study asks the question of whether some of these assaults are motivated by targeting a person because they are a member of a minority.

SUICIDE

[Behavioral health check-ups could soon be as routine for soldiers as teeth cleanings](#) [David Winkie, *Army Times*, 1 June 2021]

The 18th Airborne Corps plans to implement ideas to curb suicide in the ranks that five soldiers presented last week at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. One soldier whose idea caught the eye of her superiors was Cpt. Kristen Bell, an operations officer then-assigned to the 7th Transportation Brigade. Bell pitched the panel on implementing mandatory behavioral health checkups for troops across the force. The appointments would occur every six months, and she believes that they would help destigmatize the act of seeking mental help. Her idea was one of two chosen for “additional research for implementation,” said Buccino, the 18th Airborne Corps spokesperson. “[Something] that stuck out to me is, [Bell] said... ‘you’re one talk away or one conversation away from potentially impacting someone’s life,’” Watkins recalled. “As a society, we don’t give people their flowers while they’re here. We wait until people are gone before we tell them how much we value them and what they mean to us in our lives.”

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[The Strong Get Mental Health Care in the Navy and Marines](#) [Allison Escalante, *Psychology Today*, 1 June 2021]

Thomas Harker gets an email every time someone in the Marines dies by suicide. “I’ve seen too many people commit suicide,” says Harker, the Secretary of the Navy. “I want to do everything I can to help decrease the number of people committing suicide. I want them to have better access to mental health treatment.” Harker is on a mission to provide better mental health care to those in active service and to veterans. “The number of people who commit suicide, it’s heartbreaking,” he says. “And a lot of that is due to mental health treatment that doesn’t occur, or mental health challenges that aren’t addressed, or conversations that don’t happen.” The Secretary has a three-part strategy: providing better access to care, empowering a culture of peer-to-peer support, and defeating the stigma around mental health care in the Navy and Marines.

[The “trauma” of the pandemic and how reopening is driving adolescent anxiety, suicide](#) [William Brangham, *PBS News*, 2 June 2021]

According to one large hospital system in Colorado, the pandemic’s emotional toll on kids has become a “state of emergency,” with adolescents experiencing high rates of anxiety, depression and self-harm. Suicide is now the leading cause of death for children over the age of 10 in the state. William Brangham talks with Dr. David Brumbaugh, the chief medical officer for Children’s Hospital Colorado.

VETERANS

[At Omaha Beach, V Corps honors WWII vets ahead of D-Day anniversary](#) [John Vandiver, *Stars and Stripes*, 4 June 2021]

U.S. Army V Corps soldiers faced the daunting task of taking Omaha Beach 77 years ago during the D-Day invasion of Normandy, where the unit's current commander paid homage Friday to the troops who carried out one of World War II's most daring missions. The observance, two days ahead of the June 6 anniversary of D-Day, was held in special honor of one of the soldiers who was part of the first wave to hit Omaha Beach: retired Master Sgt. Charles Shay. As a 19-year-old medic, Shay saved more than 20 soldiers under "the most grueling of conditions," Kolasheski said. Shay, 96, who now resides in Normandy, received the Silver Star for his actions. Ceremonies in Normandy surrounding the D-Day anniversary are normally major international events, with thousands of people arriving from around the world to mark the occasion. This year, the events were scaled back again because of the coronavirus pandemic.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Decision to cut veteran's mic during Hudson Memorial Day talk prompts national outcry](#)

[Phil Karen, *The Akron Beacon Journal (Akron, Ohio)*, 3 June 2021]

The state's American Legion organization is investigating why a veteran's microphone was cut during a Hudson Memorial Day ceremony when he discussed the role Black Americans played in establishing the holiday. The incident has prompted national outcry since the Akron Beacon Journal first reported the story Wednesday. A ceremony organizer turned off the mic Monday when the event's keynote speaker, retired Army Lt. Col. Barnard Kemter, began sharing a story about freed Black slaves honoring deceased soldiers shortly after the end of the Civil War. Hudson American Legion Auxiliary President Cindy Suchan, who chairs the Memorial Day parade committee, told the Beacon Journal Kemter's mic was turned down because it "was not relevant to our program for the day," and added the "theme of the day was honoring Hudson veterans."

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

[LGBT Veterans describe VA care, provide advice for others](#) [Adam Stump, *Vantage Point*, 1 June 2021]

This is part one in a two-part series about VA care for Veterans with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) and Related Identities. Part two will run June 8, 2021. Navy Veteran Marilu Fanning and Army Veteran Dylan Liebhart have followed different journeys through life.

Different upbringings, generations and military services. Yet, the two share a passion for helping fellow Veterans receive the care they've earned. They have advice for fellow LGBT and Related Identities Veterans.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Remembering the Service and Sacrifice of Muslim Veterans Among the Crescents and Stars of Arlington National Cemetery](#) [Sadia Ali Heil, *The War Horse*, 2 June 2021] [COMMENTARY]

As Ramadan comes to an end and Memorial Day approaches, I've reflected on the lives of two fallen soldiers, Capt. Humayun Saqib Muazzam Khan and Corp. Kareem Rashad Sultan Khan. Both lost their lives fulfilling their duty. As a Muslim serving in the military and the daughter of Pakistani immigrants, I understand the call that Humayun and Kareem felt to serve. They likely

faced similar challenges to me—the ones my parents feared. But they served with dignity, regardless. I wanted to honor them, so I journeyed to Arlington National Cemetery to pay my respects. After walking more than half a mile, I saw the marker for Section 60 and turned left. I wrapped my scarf around my head and searched for a headstone with a crescent and star on it. In Arabic, I began to recite Sura Al-Fatiha, the opening verse of the Qur'an. Then I saw it. The back of the headstone in front of me read 7986. I walked to the other side and squinted. I recognized the crescent and star. The fading stone read, "Humayun Saqib Muazzam Khan."