

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 21 JUNE 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

[Male soldiers at Baumholder face highest risk among U.S. Army bases of sexual assault, study says](#) [John Vandiver, *Stars and Stripes*, 21 June 2021]

A [Rand Corp. report released Friday](#) examined sexual assault data at U.S. Army bases worldwide and found elevated risks of male sexual assault at Vilseck and Landstuhl in Germany. Among [women](#), for whom the risks were found to be substantially higher, soldiers at Fort Hood and Fort Bliss in Texas faced the highest risks of sexual assault. Less is generally known about harassment and assault of men in the Army. The Rand study found that sexual assault targeting men runs higher at some overseas installations. Overall, sexual assault risk for male soldiers is about 0.64%, according to Rand, compared to 5.8% for women. Total risk for men was highest at H.D. Smith Barracks in Baumholder with an estimated 19 incidents in 2018, the year that was analyzed, the report said. “These findings provide the Army with increased visibility on where exactly risk is consistently high for sexual assault and sexual harassment,” said Jenna Newman, an adviser with the Army Resilience Directorate, in a statement. “It suggests there are location-specific concerns that require targeted interventions into climate and culture and will require additional research to understand.”

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Senate approves bill to make Juneteenth a federal holiday](#) [Kevin Freking, *The Associated Press*, 16 June 2021]

The Senate passed a bill Tuesday that would make Juneteenth, or June 19th, a federal holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. The bill would lead to Juneteenth becoming the 12th federal holiday. It is expected to easily pass the House, which would send it to President Joe Biden for his signature. [Juneteenth commemorates](#) when the last enslaved African Americans learned they were free. Confederate soldiers surrendered in April 1865, but word didn’t reach the last enslaved Black people until June 19, when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to Galveston, Texas. That was also about two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves in the Southern states.

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

[VA moves to offer gender confirmation surgery to vets](#) [Alexandra Jaffe, *The Associated Press*, 20 June 2021]

The Department of Veterans Affairs is moving to offer transgender veterans gender confirmation surgery, Secretary Denis McDonough announced at a Pride Month event in Orlando Saturday. McDonough said in prepared remarks that the move was “the right thing to do,” and that it was part of an effort to overcome a “dark history” of discrimination against LGBTQ service members. The move is just the first step in what’s likely to be a yearslong federal rulemaking process to expand VA health benefits to cover the surgery, but McDonough said the VA will use the time to “develop capacity to meet the surgical needs” of transgender veterans. The decision, he said, will allow “transgender vets to go through the full gender confirmation process with VA by their side.” McDonough also referenced what he said were higher rates of mental illness and suicidal thoughts among LGBTQ veterans, and a fear of discrimination that prevents those veterans from seeking care.

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

CULTURE

[Companies Making Juneteenth A Paid Holiday Say It's The Right Thing To Do](#) [Marisa Peñaloza, *NPR*, 16 June 2021]

A growing number of companies such as Nike, JCPenney and Target are embracing Juneteenth as a holiday. Juneteenth, or June 19, 1865, is the day slaves in Texas learned of their freedom. President Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, freeing those in bondage in the rebellious slave-holding states, but it wasn't until 1865 that Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger of the Union Army landed in Galveston, Texas, and delivered the news that the Civil War had ended "It's a win-win," says Prof. Cynthia Turner, assistant dean of diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer at the Ohio State University Fisher College of Business, "when you are looking at the issues from the lives of your employees and you show that you hear and see them and their concerns, it is just a win for you." Turner says that businesses have to really understand what's important for their employees and in turn companies will see increased success.

[Curlier, thicker ponytails and braids to be allowed under latest Air Force grooming regs](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Times*, 11 June 2021]

The Air Force is again revising its grooming and appearance regulations after finding that big hair poses a problem for some women who want to sport a ponytail at work. In February, the Air Force started allowing female airmen and guardians to wear a single ponytail or a single or double braid in uniform, provided that the hairstyle was not wider than the woman's head. But that hindered women whose hair is too thick or curly to fall straight down behind their heads when pulled up. Starting June 25, the service will allow women's hair to fan out across a 1-foot span—six inches to the left and six inches to the right of the midpoint where the hair is gathered. Women must still make sure their hair does not extend past their shoulder blades, be able to properly wear their headgear with locks that width, and comply with occupational safety, fire and health guidance.

[[SEE ALSO](#)]

["Don't ban us for being Jewish": Jewish TikTok creators say they feel silenced by the platform](#) [Kalhan Rosenblatt, *NBC News*, 13 June 2021]

Several Jewish creators said they feel they've been subjected to a type of censorship, with the app regularly flagging and removing their content. The types of videos that creators said the app flagged for violating its community guidelines include TikToks debunking antisemitic comments, a video discussing a news story about antisemitic violence, a video of a bat mitzvah held for a cat and a repost of a video made by TikTok in honor of the U.K.'s Holocaust Memorial Day The Anti-Defamation League has reported that antisemitism is rising in the U.S., and [preliminary research found](#) an increase in online and in-person incidents of antisemitism in the U.S. following the most recent fighting between Israel and Hamas. A [transparency report](#) TikTok published in February acknowledged that "hate speech remains a challenge to proactively detect" and said "we continue to make investments to improve." Daniel Kelley, associate director of the Center for Technology and Society at the Anti-Defamation League, said some social media platforms'

broad moderation tools to protect marginalized groups have backfired by taking down the content of those they're intended to protect.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Juneteenth is more popular than ever. This year's celebrations come amid a culture war.](#) [Mabinty Quarshie, *USA TODAY*, 14 June 2021]

In the wake of 2020's racial reckoning over the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, the celebration of Juneteenth spread outside the African American community. Juneteenth, a portmanteau of June and 19th, commemorates June 19, 1865—the date when Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger issued General Order No. 3, informing the Galveston, Texas, community that President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation freed enslaved African Americans in rebel states. It's also known as Freedom Day or Emancipation Day. A year later, Juneteenth comes as Congress struggles to pass sweeping legislation that would protect the rights of voters of color and the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, which bolsters police accountability. The day also drops into a culture war, as state legislatures attempt to ban school discussions of the long-lasting effects of slavery, systemic racism and critical race theory.

[Laurel Hubbard: First transgender athlete to compete at Olympics](#) [BBC News, 21 June 2021]

New Zealand's Laurel Hubbard has become the first ever transgender athlete picked to compete at an Olympics, in a controversial decision. Officials have selected her for the women's weightlifting team for Tokyo 2020, after qualifying requirements were recently modified. She had competed in men's events before coming out as transgender in 2013. Critics say Hubbard has an unfair advantage, but others have argued for more inclusion at the Games. Last month, Belgian weightlifter Anna Vanbellinghen, who is competing in the same category, said that if Hubbard were to compete in Tokyo it would be unfair for women and "like a bad joke". She said that while she fully supported the transgender community, the principle of inclusion should not be "at the expense of others".

DISCRIMINATION

[AMA doctors meet amid vocal backlash over racial equity plan](#) [Lindsey Tanner, *The Associated Press*, 12 June 2021]

The nation's largest, most influential doctors' group is holding its annual policymaking meeting amid backlash over its most ambitious plan ever—to help dismantle centuries-old racism and bias in all realms of the medical establishment. The dissenters are a vocal minority of physicians, including some White Southern delegates who accuse the American Medical Association of reverse discrimination. Dr. Gerald Harmon, the group's incoming president, is a 69-year-old White native of rural South Carolina who knows he isn't the most obvious choice to lead the AMA at this pivotal time. But he seems intent on breaking down stereotypes and said pointedly in a phone interview, "This plan is not up for debate." The six-day meeting that began Friday is being held virtually because of the pandemic. It offers a chance for doctors to adopt policies that spell out how the AMA should implement its health equity plan. But some White doctors say the plan goes too far.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Bill seeks U.S. apology for “hundreds of thousands” of fired LGBTQ government workers](#) [Jo Yurcaba, *NBC News*, 18 June 2021]

LGBTQ civil servants and service members were systematically fired or forced to resign due to their sexual orientation or gender identity over the past seven decades, and a proposed bill is seeking to have the federal government issue an official apology acknowledging its past discriminatory policies. The bill, [introduced Thursday](#) by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., says the federal government “discriminated against and terminated hundreds of thousands” of LGBTQ people who served in the armed forces, the foreign Service and the federal civil service for decades, “causing untold harm to those individuals professionally, financially, socially, and medically, among other harms.” Kaine and Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., the country’s first openly gay U.S. senator, led the introduction of the resolution.

[Education Department says Title IX protections apply to LGBTQ students](#) [Chandelis Duster and Devan Cole, *CNN*, 16 June 2021]

The Education Department on Wednesday issued guidance that Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, a reversal of the Trump administration's stance that gay and transgender students are not protected by the law. The department cited in its decision the [Supreme Court’s ruling](#) just a year ago that federal civil rights law protects transgender, gay and lesbian workers—a ruling the Biden administration has been using during its early months to extend anti-discrimination protections to LGBTQ Americans in a number of different areas of life. The move follows a series of actions under President Joe Biden aimed at protecting LGBTQ rights and rolling back controversial moves made under his predecessor.

[For LGBTQ employees of color, sexual orientation is the biggest source of discrimination in the workplace](#) [Charisse Jones, *USA TODAY*, 9 June 2021]

While race and gender remain prime targets for bias, people of color who are also gay, lesbian or bisexual say sexual orientation is the biggest driver of discrimination they face in the workplace, according to a [new study](#) by the IBM Institute for Business Value and Oxford Economics. Among Black LGB employees, 34% said they believed sexual orientation was the main reason for the discrimination they experienced on the job, compared with 36% of Latinos, 42% of Asians and 32% of Native American workers who felt the same. “We found across lines of race that there was agreement ... sexual orientation was the biggest liability in terms of the discrimination experienced,” says Deena Fidas, managing director and chief program and partnerships officer for Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, which collaborated with IBV on the survey.

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

[Justices defer Harvard case on race in college admissions](#) [Mark Sherman, *The Associated Press*, 14 June 2021]

With abortion and guns already on the agenda, the conservative-dominated Supreme Court is considering adding a third blockbuster issue—whether to ban consideration of race in college admissions. The justices on Monday put off a decision about whether they will hear an appeal claiming that Harvard discriminates against Asian American applicants, in a case that could have nationwide repercussions. The court asked the Justice Department to weigh in on the case, a

process that typically takes several months. The challenge to Harvard is led by Edward Blum and his Students for Fair Admissions. Blum has worked for years to rid college admissions of racial considerations. The group claims that Harvard imposes a “racial penalty” on Asian American applicants by systematically scoring them lower in some categories than other applicants and awarding “massive preferences” to Black and Hispanic applicants. Harvard flatly denies that it discriminates against Asian American applicants and says its consideration of race is limited, pointing out that lower courts agreed with the university. The presence of three appointees of former President Donald Trump could prompt the court to take up the case, even though it’s been only five years since its last decision in a case about affirmative action in higher education.

[Lawmakers urge Pentagon to expedite name-change requests from transgender veterans as delays persist](#) [Sarah Cammarata, *Stars and Stripes*, 15 June 2021]

Two congressional lawmakers are urging the Pentagon to approve requests from transgender veterans to change their name on a key discharge document within 90 days, as some wait up to 18 months for approval due to inefficient processes. Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., wrote in a letter Monday to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin that veterans who transition after serving can be especially vulnerable to discrimination if the name on their DD-214—a document that verifies a service member’s proof of service—does not match their current legal name... In general, transgender and gender nonconforming people are at risk of discrimination in schools, workplaces, doctor’s offices and emergency rooms at the hands of police officers, health care providers and landlords, according to a report from the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force that surveyed just less than 6,500 individuals.

DIVERSITY

[Here’s How Much the Pentagon Has Spent So Far to Treat Transgender Troops](#) [Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 18 June 2021]

The Pentagon has spent \$15 million in the past five years to treat 1,892 transgender troops, including \$11.5 million for psychotherapy and \$3.1 million for surgeries, according to Defense Department data provided to Military.com. Of the 243 gender reassignment surgeries performed on military personnel since 2016, 50 took place between Jan. 1, 2016 and Dec. 31, 2017, and 193 occurred from Jan. 1, 2018 to Dec. 31, 2019—the two years after President Donald Trump announced via Twitter that he would bar transgender individuals from serving in the U.S. military. The total number of transgender persons serving in the armed forces across all three components—active-duty, Reserve and National Guard—is not known as not all likely have sought treatment. But as of May, 1,892 military personnel have been diagnosed and treated for gender dysphoria, including 726 Army soldiers, 576 Navy sailors, 449 Air Force airmen and 141 Marines, according to DHA spokesman Peter Graves. The Palm Center, a public policy think tank that focuses on LGBT issues, estimated in 2018 that 14,707 transgender troops serve in the U.S. armed forces, including nearly 9,000 on active duty and 5,727 in the reserves.

[HHS Puts Up \\$80M to Increase Number and Diversity of Health IT Workforce](#) [Aaron Boyd, *NextGov*, 17 June 2021]

The Health and Human Services Department announced Thursday a funding opportunity for the new Public Health Informatics and Technology Workforce Development Program, or PHIT Workforce Program, through the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT, known as ONC. The funding—made available through the American Rescue Plan pandemic stimulus package—will go toward improving public health data collection, especially with regard to race and ethnicity data “around infection, hospitalization, and mortality rates, as well as underlying health and social vulnerabilities, that is disaggregated by race and ethnicity, age, gender, and other key variables,” ONC said Wednesday in a release. A central part of improving data collection will be developing better training for public health IT workers, with a focus on encouraging underrepresented groups to join the field. “Representation is important—particularly when we are deploying technology to tackle our most pressing health care challenges,” HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a statement. “With this funding, we will be able to train and create new opportunities for thousands of minorities long underrepresented in our public health informatics and technology fields.”

[Hundreds of Troops Complain About “Woke” Racism, Extremism Training, Cotton Claims](#)

[Jacqueline Feldscher, *Government Executive*, 14 June 2021]

Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., confronted Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Thursday, saying that he’s received “several hundred” whistleblower complaints since President Joe Biden took office, and claimed that people are leaving the military because of training based on critical race theory. In a memo from Cotton to the Senate Armed Services Committee obtained by Defense One, the senator includes 28 written complaints from troops, which could not be independently verified, about training sessions and regulations that service members argue paint the military as fundamentally racist and support left-leaning groups while labeling conservative movements as extremist. Cotton asked Austin whether he believes the military is fundamentally racist, and whether troops should be treated differently based on their gender or skin color, but repeatedly cut off the Pentagon’s first Black defense secretary when he tried to answer beyond a “yes or no.” “Diversity, equity, and inclusion is important to this military now and it will be important in the future,” Austin said. “We’re going to make sure our military looks like America and our leadership looks like what’s in the ranks of the military.”

[“It’s a waiting game:” Pope airman from Grenada waits 13 years to come to U.S.](#) [Rachael Riley, *The Fayetteville Observer* (Fayetteville, N.C.), 14 June 2021]

Airman 1st Class Mervale Abraham has multiple reasons for why he wants to be an American. “It’s respect for country, family and occupation,” Abraham said. There’s also his 6-year-old son, who he wants to ensure has better opportunities. Abraham, who is in his mid-30s, is originally from the Caribbean island of Grenada and moved to the U.S. when he was 33 years old, about two years ago. He joined the Air Force in May of last year and is currently an air freight technician with the 43rd Air Mobility Squadron responsible for loading and offloading cargo and personnel from aircraft at Pope Army Airfield on Fort Bragg. Abraham said his job with the Air Force is one of the reasons why he decided he wanted to become an American citizen.

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[Meet the Nevada Air National Guard's 1st female flight instructor pilot](#) [Alexis Ford, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 4 June 2021]

Maj. Sarah Spy has wanted to be a pilot since she was a little girl. Now, at 37, she has become the first female flight instructor pilot for the Nevada Air National Guard. "It's pretty exciting," Spy said. "It's kind of mind-blowing that there's still firsts to be had in women in aviation, but I got one." Spy said it took years of training to qualify as an instructor. She has an undergraduate degree from Kent State University, has completed various pilot trainings and over 4,500 flight hours, served multiple deployments, and spent over 750 hours as a co-pilot before upgrading to aircraft commander and now instructor pilot. Spy said she wants people with aspirations of flying to know that it's possible, no matter your background.

[REPRINT]

[Navy's highest-ranking officer confronts Republican critics and stresses importance of combating racism and misinformation](#) [Michael Conte, *CNN*, 15 June 2021]

The U.S. Navy's highest-ranking officer pushed back strongly against what he called efforts by two Republican congressmen to portray the U.S. military as "weak" and "woke" in a hearing on Tuesday. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday's comments came during a House Armed Services budget hearing as Reps. Doug Lamborn and Jim Banks questioned his recommendation of the book "How to be an Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi on a voluntary reading list for Navy sailors, which Gilday tied directly to efforts to combat misinformation by adversaries such as Russia and China. Gilday's comments come as military officials have faced a chorus of GOP voices questioning the Defense Department's efforts to promote diversity and combat extremism in the ranks. He took a similar stance to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin who stressed the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion when he came under a similar attack from Republican Senators at a hearing last week.

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

[NIH Aims to Boost Diversity and Inclusion Within Its Biomedical Workforce](#) [Courtney Bubl , *Government Executive*, 11 June 2021]

*The National Institutes of Health on Thursday outlined a framework for increasing diversity and inclusion among its biomedical research workforce, among other actions to address structural racism in the industry. NIH officials, scientists and staff, including NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins, published a commentary in *Cell*, a scientific journal, outlining what the agency's [UNITE initiative](#), launched in February, has been doing. The initiative brings together the agency's 27 institutes and centers and is focusing on NIH's own workforce, the external biomedical workforce and the research the agency supports.*

[The U.S. military is tearing itself apart over "wokeness" and it's only helping America's enemies](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 12 June 2021] [OPINION]

It started with Fox News personality Tucker Carlson's rant that the Air Force's new maternity uniforms are proof that President Joe Biden is feminizing the military. In May, the Army had to disable the comments on Youtube for recruiting commercials after critics claimed they were too woke. The commercials featured the stories of women who joined the Army including one soldier who grew up with two mothers. Kori Schake, who co-authored a book with retired Marine Gen.

James Mattis on the civil-military divide, said the criticism is unfounded. “Celebrating actual people who choose to put their lives on the line for the country is patriotic,” said Schake, a defense expert with the conservative American Enterprise Institute think tank in Washington, D.C. “And saying, ‘These people are undeserving of our praise,’ is unpatriotic. And I think we should be straightforward about that...” Last year, a Defense Department [report](#) on diversity found that the military’s officer corps “is significantly less racially and ethnically diverse than the enlisted population.” In the active-duty force, 73% of officers are White, 8% are Black, 8% are Latino, 6% are Asian, 4% are classified as “multiracial,” and the remaining 1% are Native American, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, the report found.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[U.S. military’s elite commando forces look to expand diversity](#) [Lolita C. Baldor, *The Associated Press*, 16 June 2021]

The Navy never had to look too hard to fill its elite SEAL force. For years, eager recruits poured in to try out for naval special warfare teams—but they were overwhelmingly White. Now, Naval Special Warfare Command leaders are trying to turn that around, developing programs to seek out recruits from more diverse regions of the country. The effort comes as the military—and the nation—struggles with racism, extremism and hate crimes. Leaders see greater diversity as a way to combat extremism in the ranks, even as they increase other training and education programs. Commando forces—particularly the officers—tend to be far less diverse than the military as a whole. While only a small percentage of those who try out eventually pass the grueling, years-long training for special operations, leaders hope that bringing in a wider array of recruits will lead to a more diverse force.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

EXTREMISM

[Airman identified as a White supremacist is still in the Air Force 2 months later](#) [David Roza, *Task & Purpose*, 18 June 2021]

Airman 1st Class Shawn Michael McCaffrey, 28, has a track record of espousing White supremacist, anti-Semitic, racist and homophobic beliefs on social media, but the Air Force appeared to have missed that when McCaffrey enlisted on Jan. 26. Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif), the chair of the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee, said that she would be speaking to Air Force leadership about McCaffrey. “I will be contacting Air Force leadership to find out why this individual—who has his own author page on a website for far right extremists, describes himself as an ‘activist,’ and co-hosted a weekly podcast in which he attacked Jews, women, LGBTQ+ people, the U.S. armed forces, and many others using unacceptable slurs—remains on active duty and under review given the very public and abundant evidence of his extremist ties,” the congresswoman said in a statement provided to Task & Purpose. Department of Defense regulations prohibit service members from participating in “organizations that advocate supremacist, extremist or criminal gang doctrine, ideology or causes,” including those that discriminate based on race, creed, color, sex, religion ethnicity or national origin, or advocate the use of force, violence or criminal activity to deprive individuals of their civil rights.

[Biden administration pushes plan to combat domestic terror](#) [Michael Balsamo, *The Associated Press*, 15 June 2021]

The Biden administration says it will enhance its analysis of threats from domestic terrorists, including the sharing of intelligence within law enforcement agencies, and will work with tech companies to eliminate terrorist content online as part of a nationwide strategy to combat domestic terrorism. The National Security Council on Tuesday released the strategy, which comes more than six months after a mob of insurgents loyal to President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol as Congress was voting to certify Joe Biden’s presidential win. “Domestic terrorism—driven by hate, bigotry, and other forms of extremism—is a stain on the soul of America,” Biden, who’s traveling in Europe, said in a statement. “It goes against everything our country strives for and it poses a direct challenge to our national security, democracy, and unity.”

- [National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism](#)
- [FACT SHEET: National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism](#) [*The White House*, 15 June 2021]
- [SEE ALSO: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#)]

[Extremism Has Spread Into the Mainstream—It is a public health problem, not a security issue.](#)

[Cynthia Miller-Idriss, *The Atlantic*, 15 June 2021] [COMMENTARY]

In the two decades since September 11, the U.S. has fought terrorism and extremism by concentrating on law-enforcement and intelligence readiness, with experts focused on disrupting fringe groups before they carry out violence. This Band-Aid approach is ill-suited to combatting modern far-right extremism, which has spread well beyond fringe groups and into the mainstream. The extremism we’re now seeing in the U.S. is “post-organizational,” characterized by fluid online boundaries and a breakdown of formal groups and movements. Violence is mostly perpetrated by lone actors who are influenced by ideas online rather than by plots hatched by group leaders in secret gatherings. To fight this amorphous kind of radicalization, the federal government needs to see the problem as a whole-of-society, public-health issue. It needs to, for example, beef up security at the U.S. Capitol, but also put the same kind of effort and money into preventing radicalization years before anyone would ever think to mobilize in Washington, D.C.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[High court rejects 2 Virginia White nationalist rally cases](#) [*The Associated Press*, 14 June 2021]

The Supreme Court is leaving in place the convictions of two men who as members of a White supremacist group participated in a White nationalist rally in Virginia in 2017 that turned violent. The high court said Monday that it would not take the case of Michael Miselis or Benjamin Daley, who participated in the rally as members of the “Rise Above Movement,” or “RAM.” Both pleaded guilty to federal rioting charges in connection with the Virginia rally. Miselis and Daley had challenged their convictions by arguing that the Anti-Riot Act, a law they pleaded guilty to violating, is overbroad under the First Amendment’s free speech clause. A federal appeals court had ruled against them. As is typical, the high court didn’t comment in turning away their cases.

[New Pentagon Watchdog Facing “Significant Challenges” in Internal Anti-Extremism Effort](#) [Jeff Seldin, *Voice of America*, 14 June 2021]

A new effort to track the extent to which extremists have infiltrated the U.S. military may be in trouble even before it has the chance to produce any results. Lawmakers created the all-new deputy inspector general for Diversity and Inclusion and Extremism in the Military (DIEM) as part of the fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which went into effect this past January. But a report Monday from Defense Department Acting Inspector General Sean O'Donnell warns the office is already facing what he describes as "significant challenges," including funding shortfalls and potential conflicts of interest.

[Pentagon's anti-extremism moves now part of a larger national strategy](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 15 June 2021]

The White House on Tuesday announced a national effort for countering [domestic extremism](#), which includes [moves the Defense Department put into action earlier this year](#). Among them are initiatives to [better screen potential recruits](#), monitor extremist activity while in uniform and better educate new veterans about the possibility of being targeted for recruitment into an extremist group. The White House strategy would like to see those measures extended to law enforcement, according to a [Tuesday release](#). "While domestic law enforcement agencies take the lead, the Department of Defense will do our part to support this important strategy," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a statement. "That includes maintaining the Department's robust relationship with federal law enforcement as well as refining our policies to better address this issue within the Department." The strategy builds off of a study released to Congress in March, [a senior administration official told reporters on Monday](#).

MISCELLANEOUS

[Biden's Hair Should Be "On Fire" Over Afghan Translators Being Left Behind, Senator Says](#) [Jacqueline Feldscher, *Defense One*, 15 June 2021]

There's not enough time for Congress to help translators who worked with U.S. troops get out of Afghanistan, so it's up to the administration to take action now, Sen. Angus King said Tuesday. "I want the White House's hair on fire," the Maine Independent told reporters. "I want them to do everything within their power to solve this problem... I'm not being critical of the administration, but I think it's time to step up their game." King also proposed a few solutions of his own, including temporarily moving Afghans to NATO nations while their visas are processed and deploying troops to the State Department to speed up approvals. Though the military is moving plane loads of equipment out of the country, many Afghan translators who risked their lives to work alongside troops are being left behind. Once the withdrawal is complete, advocates worry the 18,000 Afghans already in the processing pipeline will be killed by the Taliban.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Even Feds With Lifetime Tenure Can Be Fired For Cause, Court Rules](#) [Eric Katz, *Government Executive*, June 11, 2021]

Federal employees who earn lifetime job appointments do not receive special treatment when being fired for cause, a federal court affirmed in a recent precedent-setting ruling. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit [finalized](#) that decision when it declined to review an earlier ruling before its full panel on a case related to a former National Institutes of Health

scientist. It involved Allen Braun, a research doctor for more than 30 years at NIH, who won tenure status in 2003. NIH eventually fired Braun, who unsuccessfully argued the agency failed to properly consider his tenure status.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Time running out to evacuate Afghans who helped U.S., advocates say](#) [Dan De Luce and Courtney Kube, *NBC News*, 11 June 2021]

The window for a possible evacuation of Afghans who worked for the U.S. could soon close as a withdrawal of U.S. forces will likely wrap up within weeks, two Defense officials told NBC News. The Pentagon is preparing contingency plans for a potential evacuation of Afghans who worked with American troops but President Joe Biden has yet to give the order to carry them out. U.S. forces are expected to pull out as early as mid-July, the two officials said. Rep. Jason Crow, D.-Colo., an outspoken advocate of evacuating Afghan partners, said, “We don’t have much time to do it. And we’re about 50 percent complete with the withdrawal.” “After that’s completed, our ability to safely evacuate folks will be greatly diminished,” Crow told NBC News.

[SEE ALSO: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#) [5](#)]

MISCONDUCT

[Diversity officer for Special Operations Command allowed back on duty](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 17 June 2021]

U.S. Special Operations Command has restored Richard Torres-Estrada as its chief diversity and inclusion officer after a command investigation into how he was hired that looked into whether he had made social media posts that were reportedly critical of former President Donald Trump determined that he had not violated any laws or Defense Department regulations, said SOCOM spokesman Ken McGraw. SOCOM initially announced on March 25 that Torres-Estrada would be in charge of diversity, but he was quickly placed under investigation for allegedly making Facebook posts that were critical of Trump and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas). “The USSOCOM commander directed the investigation due to allegations that Mr. Torres-Estrada—before his hiring—posted controversial material on social media,” McGraw said on Thursday. “USSOCOM is confident in the hiring process and Mr. Torres-Estrada’s potential to fill this important position.”

[Marine Raider “betrayed” Green Beret, lied with SEALs to cover up his hazing death, prosecutors say](#) [Todd South, *Military Times*, 11 June 2021]

Prosecutors in the murder trial of a Marine Raider charged along with three others in the death of an Army Green Beret told the jury that the Marine betrayed his comrade, helped kill him during a planned hazing incident, and then tried to cover up the incident by lying to investigators. Gunnery Sgt. Mario A. Madera-Rodriguez faces charges of conspiracy, assault, obstruction of justice, burglary, false official statements, involuntary manslaughter and felony murder in the June 4, 2017, strangulation death of Army Staff Sgt. Logan Melgar in Bamako, Mali. Three fellow co-defendants, another Marine Raider and two Navy SEALs, have already pled guilty to their part in the death and have been sentenced. Madera-Rodriguez is the only one of the four to go to

trial. He has pleaded not guilty. If convicted of murder, he faces a possible sentence of life without parole.

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

[U.S. Army has hidden or downplayed loss of firearms for years](#) [Kristin M. Hall, James Laporta and Justin Pritchard, *The Associated Press*, 16 June 2021]

The U.S. Army has hidden or downplayed the extent to which its firearms disappear, significantly understating losses and thefts even as some weapons are used in street crimes. The Army's pattern of secrecy and suppression dates back nearly a decade, when The Associated Press began investigating weapons accountability within the military. Officials fought the release of information for years, then offered misleading answers that contradict internal records. Military guns aren't just disappearing. Stolen guns have been [used in shootings](#), brandished to rob and threaten people and recovered in the hands of felons. Thieves sold assault rifles [to a street gang](#). Army officials cited information that suggests only a couple of hundred firearms vanished during the 2010s. Internal Army memos that AP obtained show losses many times higher.

[SEE ALSO]

RACISM

[American Jews Still Reeling From Rise In Anti-Semitism After Israel-Hamas Conflict, Survey Shows](#) [Jemima McEvoy, *Forbes*, 14 June 2021]

Weeks after the end of the deadly fighting between Israel and Gaza's militant Hamas leaders, American Jews are more concerned about their safety and say they are witnessing anti-Semitism at a dramatically increased rate, according to the results of an anti-Defamation League survey [published](#) Monday. While the ADL typically sees spikes in anti-Semitism amid fighting in Israel, ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt described this recent surge as "particularly dramatic and violent." "This activity has affected more than specific individuals targeted: American Jews broadly are feeling less secure than before, and they believe strongly that our leaders need to do more to prevent further incidents," he said in a statement.

[SEE ALSO]

[Native Americans to Feds: Own Up to America's Indian School History](#) [Cecily Hilleary, *Voice of America*, 16 June 2021]

The recent discovery of the remains of 215 Indigenous students in a mass grave at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada has refocused attention on the fate of thousands of other Native American children who were seized from families and sent to remote boarding schools, never to be heard from again. [Research has shown](#) that many of the health and social problems facing tribal communities today are the result of historic trauma and unresolved grief. In late September 2020, U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren and then-Congresswoman Deb Haaland, a citizen of the Laguna Pueblo, introduced the [Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policy in the United States Act](#), which calls for a national commission to investigate and document the Indian Boarding School Policy and acknowledge the trauma inflicted on generations of Native families.

[SEE ALSO: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#)]

[Racism kept a Black WWII vet from a Purple Heart, he says. At 99, he got the award.](#) [Timothy Bella, *The Washington Post*, 19 June 2021]

Osceola “Ozzie” Fletcher was a 22-year-old Army private delivering supplies to the Allied forces as they arrived on the coast of France on D-Day when his vehicle was struck by a German missile. The vehicle overturned, killing the driver and wounding Fletcher during the Battle of Normandy in June 1944. But for more than three-quarters of a century, Fletcher was never recognized for being wounded in action in World War II. Instead, Fletcher said, he and about 2,000 other Black U.S. soldiers who saw action on D-Day were overlooked or denied awards because of racism and the racial inequalities of the country, including in the U.S. armed forces, which were racially segregated at the time. “Black soldiers didn’t get the Purple Heart. They got injured, damaged, hurt. But they never got wounded,” the Brooklyn native said to local media last year. “Only the White men who were wounded got Purple Hearts.” That changed Friday in New York for Fletcher when the 99-year-old was awarded the Purple Heart, an honor that his family and military and political leaders said should have been conferred decades ago.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

RELIGION

[Religious freedom group wants Bible removed from POW/MIA table at Navy base in Japan](#)

[Erica Earl, *Stars and Stripes*, 14 June 2021]

A religious freedom and diversity group is demanding that a naval air station in Japan remove a Bible from a POW-MIA table on base. The Military Religious Freedom Foundation sent a letter Friday to Naval Air Facility Atsugi’s commander, Capt. John Montagnet, after receiving 15 complaints about the table from personnel at the installation, group founder Michael Weinstein told Stars and Stripes in a phone call Monday. The group also sent the letter to Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Harker. The POW-MIA table is a tradition often found in official military dining facilities that honors missing and captured service members. According to Navy instruction 1710.7A for table settings for all service branches, the table must be round and include a white tablecloth, an empty chair, a black napkin, a single red rose, a yellow candle and ribbon, lemon slices, salt and an overturned wine glass. The regulations says the display includes a Bible to represent “faith in a higher power and the pledge to our country, founded as one nation under God.” Weinstein, an Air Force veteran, said including the Bible violates the core values of the military and damages unity, morale and diversity.

[Responding to a call for chaplains to reconcile and properly support LGBTQI+ soldiers](#) [Chaplain (Capt.) Jordan Henricks, *Army Times*, 15 June 2021] [OPINION]

When I first read the recently published article by Chaplain (Major) David Evans entitled, [“Starting again: A call for chaplains to reconcile and properly support LGBTQI+ soldiers,”](#) my initial response was one of appreciation. I shared the article on Facebook and stated, “The entire First Amendment is brought to bear in this one publication. A sensitive but important discussion.” Chaplain Evans appropriately states, “A chaplain is at the service of all soldiers.” This is absolutely true. The oath I have taken to support and defend the Constitution of the United States means my charge as a chaplain—a religious leader—is to champion the free exercise of

religion that the First Amendment to the Constitution protects. However, each chaplain's interpretation of sacred texts and traditions pertaining to the capability of performing religious rites is a matter of the free exercise of religion.

SEXISM

[Army May Go Back to Job-Specific Scoring After All on the New Fitness Test](#) [Steve Beynon, *Military.com*, 15 June 2021]

The Army is considering returning to job-specific scoring bands for the new Army Combat Fitness Test, the service's top general told lawmakers Tuesday. Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville and Army Secretary Christine Wormuth told lawmakers in the Senate Armed Services Committee that the force is still tweaking the test and balancing the desire for a fitter force while also striving not to harm efforts to fill the less physically demanding jobs that are critical to warfighting. Lawmakers have voiced concerned that the ACFT's events put women at a disadvantage. Last year, Congress passed a law forbidding the Army to move forward with the test until the independent study from Rand Corp. is complete. Even then, the test's future remains largely in limbo.

[Pregnant soldier given pointless duty sitting in armory as unit conducts training](#) [Haley Britzky, *Task & Purpose*, 17 June 2021]

According to an Instagram post on Wednesday night, a soldier with the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team told her leadership she was pregnant before annual training began on Sunday, and when she provided them a letter from her doctor they said "she could hang out in Casa de Armory." By Thursday afternoon the post had gotten the attention of Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston, who commented: "Terrible story—I'm working with the [National Guard Bureau Command Sgt. Maj.] to fix it." The incident comes as the Army continues to build "cohesive teams" and push its "people first" initiative, which boils down to soldiers looking out for one another, and leaders caring for their people. "NCOs own the culture of our units ... so it's time for our senior NCOs to identify the root causes of the problems and take ownership, and then really get to work," Sgt. Maj. Grinston recently told reporters while at Fort Eustis, Virginia. Lt. Col. Pete Wood, commander of the brigade's 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, confirmed some of the details of that post. "I learned while I was there that that was a soldier within the medical platoon, confirmed that the soldier was pregnant, and was living or staying at the armory," Wood said. "I immediately took action" and ordered the soldier sent home. They wanted to be sure the soldier was still able to receive her [annual training] pay, but yeah it was miscommunication on what was authorized as far as being able to stay within the armory."

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Army considers increasing public affairs staff, training in aftermath of Guillen case](#) [Rose L. Thayer, *Stars and Stripes*, 14 June 2021]

As Fort Hood officials investigated the disappearance and death of Spc. Vanessa Guillen last year, millions of social media posts circulated around the globe—some leading to significant reforms within the Army, while others perpetuated misinformation that consumed time and

resources during the more than two-month search for her. Through review of the pitfalls, Gen. John Murray, who was appointed by Army Forces Command to lead the internal investigation, issued several recommendations that specifically target Army public affairs operations, staffing and training. Recommendations included providing senior leaders with media engagement training, holding commanders accountable for the reputation of their unit, designating a spokesperson, and identifying and resolving gaps in social media capabilities and training. He also suggested the Army determine the appropriate media analytics tools and number of public affairs personnel needed to make bases and commands more capable in a crisis.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Fort Carson sergeant major sentenced for inappropriate relationship, indecent language](#) [Adam Morey, *Army Times*, 14 June 2021]

A former command sergeant major at Fort Carson, Colorado, was sentenced last week after he pleaded guilty to an inappropriate relationship with a subordinate and sending indecent text messages. Sgt. Maj. Benito A. Perez, 51, received 179 days of confinement, a reduction in rank to sergeant first class and a written reprimand, said Fort Carson spokesperson Dee McNutt. Perez pleaded guilty to one specification of indecent language in violation of Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and one specification of engaging in a prohibited relationship in violation of Article 92. Perez originally faced four charges of sexual assault, five charges of “indecent” communications and one charge of fraternizing with a junior soldier under his command. He was not sentenced on any of the charges related to an underage victim that were originally included by prosecutors and documented on charge sheets provided to Army Times.

[Here’s why a Navy master chief lost his rank this spring](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Navy Times*, 15 June 2021]

A former Navy master chief was bumped down to E-8 this spring after pleading guilty to “wrongfully engaging in unprofessional conduct” when he kissed another servicemember on the mouth and touched the sailor’s breast in his office in 2019, according to recently released Navy trial result records. Then-Master Chief Corpsman Gregory F. Fall pleaded guilty to the charge on April 12 as part of a plea agreement, and the military judge reduced his rank.

[Sergeant major dropped to E-4, gets confinement over sexual misconduct at Fort Stewart](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 18 June 2021]

The former command sergeant major of Winn Army Community Hospital at Fort Stewart, Georgia, was sentenced to six months of confinement and dropped in rank to specialist after he was convicted of sexual misconduct. Sgt. Maj. Quincy Martin was convicted April 9 by military judge Col. Gregory Batdorff, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of failure to obey a lawful regulation and one specification of extramarital sexual conduct in violation of Articles 92 and 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. In the fall of 2019, Martin grabbed the buttocks of a sergeant without consent and in a sexual manner, according to the charge sheets. He did the same to a sergeant first class in March 2020. During that same timeframe, Martin also made deliberate comments and gestures of a sexual nature toward the sergeant and sergeant first class, which resulted in the maltreatment charges. In one instance, he touched the hand and breast of a

specialist and attempted to kiss her, the charge sheets stated.

[Soldier gets 18 years for sexual assault of Asia Graham and another woman](#) [Kyle Rempfer, *Army Times*, 19 June 2021]

A soldier was found guilty Friday at a Fort Bliss, Texas, court-martial of sexually assaulting two women, including a fellow soldier who died of a drug overdose a year later, a recent autopsy showed. Pfc. Christian G. Alvarado was convicted of one specification of making a false official statement, two specifications of sexual assault and one specification of aggravated assault in violation of Articles 107, 120, and 128 of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. Alvarado was acquitted of five other specifications of sexual assault. He was sentenced to confinement for 18 years and three months, as well as a dishonorable discharge, Fort Bliss officials confirmed. During questioning at trial, Alvarado told prosecutors that he was sexually abused as a child and had an extensive mental health history, but he was also caught lying about a football scholarship he claimed he won to Arizona State University. One of the sexual assault convictions stemmed from Alvarado raping 19-year-old Pfc. Asia Graham while she was unconscious Dec. 30, 2019, at Fort Bliss. Roughly one year later, this New Year's Eve, Graham was found dead in her barracks room.

[Vanessa Guillen's fiancé, closest friends detail upsetting investigation](#) [Allie Yang, Denise Martinez-Ramundo, Natalie Cardenas, Chris Kilmer and Abby Cruz, *ABC News*, 11 June 2021]

Vanessa Guillen will forever be 20 years old, engaged but will never be married. She was murdered, inside one of the Army's largest military installations. Later, the world learned that she had told her mother she was sexually harassed on the base. In the last year, her name has become a rallying cry for women's safety and military reform. Her family is still looking for answers as to why she was killed, and how her murderer escaped justice... The Secretary of the Army at the time of Vanessa Guillen's disappearance, Ryan McCarthy, created an independent review panel, including investigators, lawyers and retired FBI agents, to look at the command climate at Fort Hood. The findings of the committee identified major flaws with the sexual harassment and assault response prevention (SHARP) program at the base, fundamental issues with Fort Hood Criminal Investigation Command field office activities, and a command climate at Fort Hood that was permissive of sexual harassment and sexual assault. The "I Am Vanessa Guillen" bill, would explicitly list sexual harassment as a crime in military law, require the secretary of defense to establish a process for servicemembers to lodge a complaint confidentially and move the decision of whether to prosecute a sexual offense to a special prosecutor outside the chain of command.

SUICIDE

[Service members and police are teaming up to stop suicide](#) [Harm Venhuizen, *Military Times*, 15 June 2021]

When a service member attempts to take one's life off-base, their chain of command may be the last to find out. Local police and first responders often lack the military knowledge and on-base connections to ensure a service member receives the care they need after attempting suicide, according to David Conley, head of suicide prevention organization [One More Day](#). That's why

One More Day created Operation Better Together, which pairs police officers and service members in a suicide prevention course with the goal of combining resources in the fight against military and veteran suicide. “Military personnel don’t commit suicide on bases. It’s just so rare that that happens,” Conley told Military Times. “They commit suicide out in the civilian world, so it makes sense that we get these officers as trained as we can.”

VETERANS

[Homelessness among vets could spike as pandemic protections vanish, advocates warn](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 16 June 2021]

The end of pandemic financial protections coupled with the lingering housing challenges of recent years could lead to “an unprecedented wave of veterans homelessness” in coming months, advocates warned lawmakers on Wednesday. They’re pushing for more resources to help those vulnerable veterans but also intervention from federal and local officials to maintain those protections for a little longer, to prevent a potential tragedy. “We shouldn’t necessarily be ending these eviction moratoriums and foreclosure breaks,” said Kathryn Monet, chief executive officer for the [National Coalition for Homeless Veterans](#). “I don’t think the economy has recovered to a point where people are able to cover all of these expenses. But that idea received pushback from some Republicans on the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, who argued that as communities reopen after months of pandemic restrictions, business practices and regulations must return to normal. And Veterans Affairs officials said that despite the looming challenges, they are optimistic about the opportunities ahead to finally end veterans homelessness in America.

[VA accused of wading into “culture wars” with gender-confirmation surgery for trans vets](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 21 June 2021]

VA Secretary Denis McDonough announced on Saturday that the VA will expand benefits for transgender veterans to allow them to complete the gender confirmation process. “This process will require changing VA’s regulations and establishing policy that will ensure the equitable treatment and safety of transgender veterans,” McDonough said at a Pride event in Orlando. The move was immediately criticized by Rep Mike Bost (R-Ill.), who claimed that covering gender-confirmation surgery for transgender veterans was a political stunt. However, gender-confirmation surgery is important for transgender veterans’ health and wellbeing, said Jennifer Dane, executive director of the Modern Military Association of America and an Air Force veteran. “Rep. Bost is completely correct in that care for veterans who’ve experienced toxic exposure must be a priority, but this shouldn’t be an either-or equation,” Dane said. “Gender affirming care is also a life-saving necessity for some veterans, as supported by leading medical experts. The priority for all of us should be the delivery of quality, equitable and accessible healthcare for all veterans.”

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