

## DEOMI NEWS LINKS 27 AUGUST 2021

### SPECIAL: WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

[A Proclamation on Women's Equality Day, 2021](#) [Joseph R. Biden, Jr., *The White House Press Office*, 26 August 2021]

*Today, we celebrate Women's Equality Day, a reminder not only of the progress women have won through the years, but of the important work that remains to be done. One hundred and one years ago, the ratification of the 19th Amendment moved our Nation one essential step closer to fulfilling its foundational promise—establishing at long last that no American's right to vote could be denied or abridged on the basis of gender. As we reflect on the decades-long effort to win the fight for universal suffrage, we also remember the women of color who helped lead the movement to ratify the 19th Amendment, whose own rights would still be denied for years to come despite their hard-earned victory. We celebrate their extraordinary courage and resolve, and rededicate ourselves to the work we still have ahead of us to protect voting rights across our country.*

[On Women's Equality Day, Michelob Ultra Commits \\$100 Million To Women's Sports](#) [Alana Glass, *Forbes*, 26 August 2021]

*Michelob Ultra is betting on women in sports. Today the beer brand announced it was committing \$100 million over the next five years to increase visibility for women's sports and female athletes. It is among the largest known single financial commitment by any brand to women's sports initiatives. "Coming off the [Olympic] Games where women did exceptionally well and brought home more medals than men, we believe it's the right time to keep people watching women's sports," said Ricardo Marques, Michelob Ultra's marketing vice president who leads creative, media and sponsorships in sports for the company. "Visibility effects sponsorships, which ultimately effects salaries," added Marques. "We are trying to create a chain reaction."*

[USACE Charleston District's deputy district engineer reflects on Women's Equality Day](#) [Russell Toof, *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Charleston District Public Affairs*, 24 August 2021]

*Women's Equality Day is observed on Aug. 26 and commemorates the 1920 passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which granted women the right to vote. The Army celebrates the courage and tenacity of those who challenged the nation to live up to its founding principles and the women who continue to do so today. According to the U.S. Army, 36% of the civilian workforce are women. For the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District, nearly 33% of supervisors in the district are women. "The diversity we have among our leadership is great," said Lisa Metheney, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management. "It's one of the things I'm most proud of about our district. As the senior civilian for the district, when I go out and do speaking engagements, that's always a point of emphasis." In celebrating Women's Equality Day, the Army recognizes not only the significance of women's contributions but also the value of diversity and inclusivity to its fighting force.*

[Women celebrate a rich history of resiliency](#) [Staff Sgt. Savannah Slaughter, 75th Comptroller Squadron Public Affairs, 26 August 2021]

*For 100 years, women and their allies worked to obtain equal rights. They deployed radical campaigns, hunger strikes and picketing at the White House. On Aug. 26, 1920, they achieved a major victory. The 19th Amendment was signed, prohibiting the government from denying the right to vote based on sex, giving women the right to vote. Over eight million women across this nation were able to vote for the first time. Throughout history, women have continued to persevere and speak out for those whose voices have been stifled. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony organized the first women’s rights convention in 1869. Tired of being denied their ability to participate in the American political process, they would spark the fight for a universal suffrage amendment to the U.S. Constitution. One hundred twenty-five years later, President Richard Nixon issued Proclamation 4147 designating August 26, 1972, as Women’s Rights Day. The rapid progression of women’s rights in the 20th century can be attributed to the many brave and dedicated women, who risked it all to guarantee the rights they deserved.*

[Women’s Equality Day: Looking back and moving forward on constitutional equality](#) [Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.), *The Hill*, 26 August 2021] [OPINION]

*In 1971—exactly 50 years ago—the indomitable feminist and fellow New Yorker, Rep. Bella Abzug, introduced a bill to establish Aug. 26 as Women’s Equality Day. The holiday commemorates the Aug. 26, 1920 certification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted women the right to vote. But suffrage was never the final goal of our feminist foremothers. After the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified 101 years ago, suffragist leader Alice Paul, who is a relative of my late husband, immediately went to work to write the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). She believed the ERA was the essential next step towards achieving gender equality in this country. In 1920, she said, “It is incredible to me that any woman should consider the fight for full equality won. It has just begun.” Throughout our history, the United States has been a leader in women’s rights and breaking barriers for women. But to truly live up to that legacy, we need to catch up to where much of the world already is—by adding 24 simple words to our Constitution: “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”*

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## CULTURE

[Air Force major hopes her pageant wins will inspire more women to become pilots](#) [Jonathan Snyder, *Stars and Stripes*, 24 August 2021]

*An Air Force officer with a sideline as a pageant competitor is using her spotlight to promote opportunities for women in aviation. Maj. Raliene Banks won her third title, Mrs. Regency International, last month in Las Vegas. Born and raised on Guam, Banks entered the Air Force in 2008 as a pilot and has flown the C-17 Globemaster, RQ-4 Global Hawk and KC-135 Stratotanker during her career. Now she works at the Pentagon as deputy chief of agile combat employment. Everything changed for her in 2019 when she was diagnosed with Graves’ disease, an autoimmune disorder that affects the thyroid. That has grounded her Air Force flying career, at least temporarily. “I thought to myself, what else can I do with everything that I know and the*

*expertise that I have, with what I'm going through with Graves' disease," she said. "I saw other women on social media who were friends of friends that competed in pageantry, and I thought to myself, that looks like fun." Since then, Banks has used pageantry as an outlet to promote and encourage women in aviation.*

["Arthur", the iconic kids' show, is getting a Sikh character](#) [Harmeet Kaur, CNN, 24 August 2021]

*Arthur, the bespectacled aardvark beloved by generations of viewers, is finally about to start the fourth grade. And in the new school year, he and his pals will befriend some new classmates—including a Sikh boy named Samir. The character of Samir will make his debut in "Arthur's First Day," an upcoming special scheduled to premiere on PBS on September 6. The hour-long episode was created as part of season 25 before it was announced that the series would be ending, according to executive producer Carol Greenwald. Samir's identity is evident in the details—he wears a patka, a head covering worn by Sikh boys, and a kara, a steel bangle and Sikh article of faith. But besides those markers, "Arthur's First Day" doesn't make Samir's faith background central to the story, said Greenwald. "We also hope that kids who do wear a patka or other cultural dress feel seen and represented on our show," Greenwald said. The inclusion of Samir is a part of the series' longstanding mission to ensure that the children watching see their worlds reflected on screen, Greenwald said. The "Arthur" universe has long been diverse—Arthur has a nuclear family while Buster is raised by a single parent, Muffy comes from wealth while Francine lives in a lower-income household. Mr. Ratburn, their third-grade teacher, came out as gay and got married.*

[Biden praises WNBA champs for social justice activism](#) [Aamer Madhani, *The Associated Press*, 23 August 2021]

*President Joe Biden honored the 2020 WNBA champions Seattle Storm on Monday, celebrating their success on the court and hailing the four-time title holders for changing lives with their activism. Biden marveled at the team and its feats on the court. The team includes three players who won gold medals as part of Team USA's women's basketball team at this summer's Olympic games—Sue Bird, Jewell Lloyd and Breanna Stewart. The three presented Biden with a souvenir Storm jersey. Biden also took a moment to note team members' efforts to spotlight the issue of police brutality in Black communities, promote voter registration, speak out about violence against transgendered people and encourage Americans to get vaccinated. "What makes this team remarkable is they don't just win games, they change lives," Biden said. "That's what winners do. They shine the light and lift people up. They're a force for change. That's the Seattle Storm, that's the WNBA."*

[Black men trust their barbers. A Madison barbershop is using that to improve their health](#) [Marisa Wojcik, *PBS News*, 23 August 2021]

*Some problems find solutions in unexpected places. The medical community often faces a challenge of reaching Black men for care. Oftentimes it's due to lack of equal access, poverty, and medical mistrust. Marisa Wojcik of PBS Wisconsin looks at an innovative approach to improve Black men's health using a Madison barbershop.*

[Camp Atwater Offers Black Children A Chance To Make Friends And Make Plans](#) [Quincy Waters, NPR, 24 August 2021]

*The American summer camp wasn't originally intended for Black children. But in the center of Massachusetts, on the shore of Lake Lashaway, there have been generations of Black kids frolicking in the bliss of the season at Camp Atwater. On a Thursday in July, Olivia Auston, 16, and Alaysia Mondon, 14, were having a friendly competition of basketball. When the camp was founded in 1921 by the Reverend Dr. William DeBerry, scholars believe it might have been the first of its kind in America—a summer camp specifically for Black youth. Olivia said it's important that she spend time with kids who look like her. 'There's not much representation of Black people in Massachusetts. When you think of different cities, you think 'Oh, Massachusetts. Full of rich White people,'” she said. “But it's nice to have somewhere you can go and trust people and be around your own people.” Camp Atwater, because of its longevity and purpose, is considered “historically anomalous” said Leslie Paris, an associate professor of history at the University of British Columbia. The camp is on the National Register of Historic Places. Paris said it played an important role in the Great Migration, when Black families moved from the South to metropolitan areas in the North.*

[“The Chair” Is Netflix’s Best Drama in Years](#) [Sophie Gilbert, *The Atlantic*, 21 August 2021]  
[REVIEW]

*Perhaps, like me, you inwardly sigh with the breath of a thousand winds whenever you hear the words cancel culture, as mangled and distorted as the expression has become. If so, know that the people behind Netflix’s “The Chair” are likely sighing too. And yet here they are, presenting a unicorn: a near-perfect television show that clocks in at just three hours, and a comedy-drama that skewers the subject of free speech in academia without taking a side, demonizing a particular group, or descending into tweed-clutching. The Chair, created by the actor Amanda Peet and the academic and screenwriter Annie Wyman, feels like it could have been a play (Peet has written two). Elegantly and briskly, Peet and Wyman skewer all the reasons campuses might be igniting in discontent: professors held to different standards depending on their race and gender. Students made very aware by their mounting debt and limited opportunities that things are harder for their generation than they were for any other. Elder statesmen who suddenly realize how little they matter now.*

[TRAILER]

[“Dancing with the Stars” to feature same-sex dancing pair for the first time](#) [Sandra Gonzalez, CNN, 26 August 2021]

*An Olympic medalist and an internet personality are the first contestants to join the new season of “Dancing with the Stars”—and one of them is going to be making history. Jojo Siwa will be dancing with a female pro, it was announced at a news conference Thursday during the Television Critics Association press tour. This is the first time two women will be paired together in the show’s 30 seasons. Siwa said she’s proud that her choice to dance with a female “breaks a wall that has never been broken down before” and tells younger people you can “dance with who you want to dance with.” Siwa, a singer and social media star, opened up about her sexuality in January, saying she was a member of the LGBTQ+ community and in a relationship. The new season premieres September 20.*

[Demi Lovato on being nonbinary: “This is who I am, take it or leave it.”](#) [Orion Rummier, *The 19th*, 19 August 2021]

*Multi-platinum recording artist Demi Lovato, who publicly shared their nonbinary identity earlier this year, said their gender journey has been an ongoing part of their life since elementary school—and they expect it to be a lifelong journey. “We all are so much more if we allow ourselves the ability to look within ourselves and challenge that binary that we’ve grown up living in,” they told Kate Sosin at The 19th Represents Virtual Summit. Lovato went on to describe the experience as “challenging everything I’ve known, everything I’ve grown to believe I should look, and do, and act a certain way.” They described being nonbinary as being their most authentic self—without needing to be validated by others. Lovato noted that a painful part of the process has been realizing that certain family members don’t accept their identity, although they had expected them to.*

[Half of Americans say they’d avoid an HIV-positive doctor](#) [Dan Avery, *NBC News*, 26 August 2021]

*Just days after Moderna announced it was starting Phase 1 trials of an HIV vaccine, a new report reveals that stigma and misinformation about the virus continue 40 years after the first articles were published about a mysterious cancer killing “active homosexuals.” The [report](#), “The State of HIV Stigma 2021,” found that less than half (48 percent) of American adults say they feel knowledgeable about HIV, down from 51 percent last year. According to the study, which was published by the LGBTQ advocacy group GLAAD and the Southern AIDS Coalition, 64 percent of adults said they’re aware that there are medications that protect against HIV, but only 42 percent knew that someone properly following an antiretroviral drug regimen can’t transmit the virus. Half of respondents (50 percent) said they’d feel uncomfortable with a HIV-positive medical professional, 42 percent were uncomfortable with a hair stylist or a barber living with the virus, and a third (34 percent) said they were uncomfortable with an HIV-positive teacher.*

[Latino lawmakers push for renaming Fort Hood after first Hispanic four-star general](#) [Suzanne Gamboa, *NBC News*, 24 August 2021]

*The Congressional Hispanic Caucus is asking the Biden administration to rename Fort Hood in Texas after Gen. Richard E. Cavazos, the first Mexican American four-star general. Cavazos was the first Hispanic to reach the rank of brigadier general, accomplished in 1976. He also broke barriers when he became the first Hispanic appointed four-star general in 1982. He died in 2017. “He overcame racism and other obstacles through his 33 years of service and eventually led the U.S. Army Forces Command, making him one of the highest-ranked Army officials of his time,” the caucus said in its [letter](#) to the administration sent Monday. Cavazos earned the Silver Star and the Distinguished Service Cross for leading the all-Puerto Rican regiment “The Borinqueneers”, during the Korean War and later in Vietnam.*

[Oklahoma’s Gift to Ballet: The Five Moons Ballerinas](#) [Meryl Cates, *The New York Times*, 19 August 2021]

*At the first Oklahoma Indian Ballerina Festival, in 1957, its founder, Moscelyne Larkin, danced Myrtha in Act Two of “Giselle” and Maria Tallchief performed an excerpt from “Swan Lake.” It was a festival created to honor five Native American ballerinas, all hailing from Oklahoma. But it*

would take 10 years, and the premiere of a ballet, “The Four Moons,” for the festival to really celebrate the dancers’ heritages as well as their artistry. As prima ballerinas in the 1940s through the 1960s in major companies, Yvonne Chouteau, Rosella Hightower, Larkin, and Maria and Marjorie Tallchief were transformative artists. This summer, the Five Moons Dance Festival, presented by the University of Oklahoma’s School of Dance, will celebrate their impact on 20th century ballet, honoring the significance of their Indigenous backgrounds. On a program including works by George Balanchine and Bronislava Nijinska, “The Four Moons” was created to honor the histories of these tribes as they were forced from their land and settled in Oklahoma. The dancers themselves were meant to represent the destinies of the tribes; the original program featured them as four moons in a painting by the artist Jerome Tiger, who was Muscogee-Seminole. They would later become known as Oklahoma’s Five Moons ballerinas. (Marjorie Tallchief is the only one still alive.)

[We Were Soldiers: Effort to Rename Benning “Fort Moore” Gains Steam](#) [Alex Hollings, Sandboxx, 18 August 2021]

An effort to rename Fort Benning after Lieutenant General Harold (“Hal”) Moore and his wife, Julie Moore, has been picking up steam in recent months as the Department of Defense moves to eliminate Confederate names from U.S. military installations. A mandate to change the names of installations and other Defense Department assets (including warships and buildings) that were named after prominent Confederate figures was passed into law last year, with a commission to address these changes stood up on January 1st. Hal Moore was a famed U.S. Army general who served in the Korean and Vietnam wars, and his wife Julie Moore played a vital role in changing the way the U.S. military went about delivering casualty notifications. Now, a website and online petition are helping spread the word on the Fort Moore effort and it’s gained the support of military organizations like Blue Star Families.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

## DISCRIMINATION

[Canyon County settles jail nurse sex discrimination lawsuit](#) [Rebecca Boone, *The Associated Press*, 19 August 2021]

County officials in Idaho have agreed to pay \$350,000 to four former jail nurses to settle a lawsuit alleging they were discriminated against because they are women. The women—Tracy Johnson, Toni Krieter, Rene Whitneck and Linda Ellis—were four of the five nurses working at the Canyon County Jail when they sued in U.S. District Court in 2019. The fifth nurse, a man, was paid more than all of them, according to the lawsuit. In the lawsuit against Canyon County and county officials, the women said they were denied equal compensation based on their sex even though they had similar or more experience than their male counterpart and performed essentially the same jobs. The male nurse had six years of experience and was making more than \$31 an hour, according to the court document. The women were all making around \$23 and \$24 an hour, even though two of them had 15 years of experience and one of them had 20 years of experience.

[Colorado high school volleyball coach says school administrators asked him to denounce being gay or leave his job](#) [Carma Hassan and Kay Jones, CNN, 25 August 2021]

*A volleyball coach says administrators at Valor Christian High School in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, forced him to leave his job because he refused to denounce being gay. Inoke Tonga said in a Facebook post that administrators asked him if he posted about being gay on social media and then told him “they can’t put the kids at risk by having me in front of them.” He told CNN he started at the school last year, coaching the boys’ volleyball team and was approached to coach the girls’ team this season. “The culture document of Valor Christian that was given to me during the interview process didn’t mention anything about their stance on LGBTQ+,” Tonga said in the post. Tonga told CNN, and said in the original post, that in the course of the 90-minute meeting last Thursday, he was told the students’ “parents pay too much money to have their kids be coached and taught by someone like you who identifies as a gay man.” Ultimately, Tonga says, he was given the option to “denounce being gay,” which he refused to do and was told that would lead to him being released from the school as a coach, he wrote on Facebook. He said while he’s not sure of his full status at the school, he said he was told he cannot come back without denouncing being gay.*

[Mother sues TSA over request to strip search her transgender teen](#) [Melissa Alonso and Rebekah Riess, CNN, 26 August 2021]

*A North Carolina mother is suing the Transportation Security Administration and an agency supervisor for a May 2019 incident involving her transgender teenager who was asked to undergo a strip search at an airport. According to a complaint filed Monday, Kimberly Erway and her 15-year-old daughter, Jamii Erway, were flying out of Raleigh-Durham International Airport in May 2019. When Jamii went through the TSA body scanner, it indicated a “false positive,” according to the complaint. TSA’s transgender passenger webpage states “the TSA officer presses a button designating a gender (male/female) based on how you present yourself” when entering the scanner. The teen told the body scanner operator she was transgender and asked for a re-scan with “other button” pressed, but the employee refused and called a supervisor, according to the complaint. The supervisor, identified as Jane Doe in the lawsuit, told Jamii she needed to be strip searched in a nearby private room and wouldn’t be allowed to leave the checkpoint area until she complied, according to the lawsuit.*

[Supreme Court could hear transgender student bathroom case, experts say](#) [Jo Yurcaba, NBC News, 27 August 2021]

*A federal appeals court this week vacated a lower court’s ruling in favor of a transgender student’s right to use the bathroom of his gender identity at school. Experts say the appeals court’s move could lead the Supreme Court to take up the issue sometime soon. Last year, a three-judge panel for the 11th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 in favor of Andrew Adams, a transgender student in Ponte Vedra, Florida, who sued his school district in 2017 over a policy that barred him from using the bathroom of his gender identity. His lawyers argued that the policy violated his rights under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. Judge Beverly Martin, who wrote the majority opinion, agreed.*

[Transgender man sues Virginia Corrections Department over surgery denial](#) [Jo Yurcaba, NBC News, 25 August 2021]

*An incarcerated transgender man filed a complaint Wednesday against the Virginia Department of Corrections, or VADOC, for denying him surgery and other treatment for gender dysphoria, according to court documents shared with NBC News. The lawsuit, brought by Lambda Legal, a legal organization that focuses on LGBTQ rights, is among the first filed by an incarcerated transgender man for denial of treatment for gender dysphoria. A number of lawsuits have been filed—and some won—by trans women inmates in recent years. The plaintiff, Jason Yoakam, was convicted of first-degree murder in 2004 and has since been incarcerated at the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women in Troy, Virginia. In 2017, VADOC medical providers diagnosed Yoakam with [gender dysphoria](#), which refers to the psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one’s sex assigned at birth and one’s gender identity, according to the American Psychiatric Association.*

## DIVERSITY

[9 women now serving as governors in U.S., tying a record](#) [David A. Lieb, *The Associated Press*, 24 August 2021]

*With Kathy Hochul officially taking the reins as New York’s governor, a historic number of women are currently leading U.S. states—a push towards equality and representation that could continue into next year’s midterm elections. There are now nine women serving as governor in the U.S. That ties a record that was set in 2004 and matched in 2007 and 2019, but it’s still well shy of gender proportionality. Taking over on short notice for a scandal-plagued predecessor in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, Hochul began her tenure Tuesday with more than enough challenges for a new administration. She also began with an historic opportunity: Hochul is the first woman to hold one of the most prominent governorships in the U.S. “New York as a whole has been a tough place for women to break into the highest levels, because there is very much a tight set of powerful gatekeepers,” said Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. “And unfortunately—even in 2021—women are still seen, in effect, as newcomers,” she said.*

[How Zoom Messed Up Access for Disabled Users](#) [Matt Shipman, *Futurity*, 18 August 2021]

*In late June, Zoom [unveiled](#) a number of updates to its online meeting platform, one of which was hailed as a significant advance in addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion for disabled individuals. Unfortunately, as a disabled and neurodivergent scholar who focuses on issues related to access, Zoom’s update didn’t so much solve inaccessibility as shine a spotlight on it. Remote access [provides an opportunity](#) for disabled and neurodivergent people to be employed without having to deal with access barriers often present in the physical workplace environment. But while the widespread availability of Zoom had a positive impact on many disabled and neurodivergent users, it was not a panacea. The Zoom update that earned kudos from many observers related to the online meeting platform’s existing Live Transcription feature, which facilitates access to classes, meetings, and webinars for [d/Deaf](#), disabled, and neurodivergent users. Specifically, the update incorporated a function giving users the option of requesting that*



*Live Transcription be turned on. Ultimately, the update served to shift the feature toward accessibility and away from the desired outcome—access.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Local Montford Point Marine joined the Marine Corps in 1943 at 15 years old](#) [Calvin Shoemaker, *The Daily News (Jacksonville, N.C.)*, 25 August 2021]

*At just 15 years old, John L. Spencer, then a young man from Hyde County, North Carolina, signed up to join the U.S. Marine Corps. “If you had to put your life on the line, you wanted to be with the best,” Spencer said. It was 1943, and Spencer was headed to Montford Point Camp—a training site designed for African American recruits adjacent to Camp Lejeune—to become a U.S. Marine. The year prior, the first African American Marine Corps recruits stepped foot on the training ground, which had been established following a 1941 executive order which made the Marines open up their ranks to Black Americans. The Marines who trained at Montford Point, now Camp Johnson, would become known as Montford Point Marines, or Montford Pointers, a group of approximately 20,000 Marines. Every August, these Marines and their families are recognized for the strides they made in overcoming segregation in the Marine Corps from 1942 to 1949. “It makes you proud to see how far you came from that day up to this day,” Spencer said. At 93 years old, Spencer is one of only a few Montford Pointers still alive today.*

[NARA sets workforce diversity goals, aims to put more records online, as part of strategic plan](#) [Jory Heckman, *Federal News Network*, 25 August 2021]

*The National Archives and Records Administration is making the Biden administration’s government-wide focus on diversity, equity and inclusion a strategic focus for the next four years, and is committed to making more of its holdings available to the public online. NARA’s [draft strategic plan](#) released earlier this month sets goals through fiscal 2026, sets performance targets and leadership goals for the agency, and also looks to build on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency has already taken some steps in achieving these goals. A NARA task force on racism released recommendations in June outlining ways the agency can address issues of racial inequality in both our customer-facing operations and internally within the agency. “We are acknowledging that there are many different American experiences and we want to make sure that we acknowledge that and provide that level of attention to the differing perspectives,” Brewer said.*

[A Record Number Of Out LGBTQ Athletes Will Compete In The Tokyo Paralympics](#) [Joe Hernandez, *NPR*, 23 August 2021]

*When the Tokyo Paralympic Games get underway on Tuesday, it will have a record number of out LGBTQ athletes. At least 28 publicly out Paralympians will compete in the summer games in Tokyo, more than double the number that took part in the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, [according to Outsports](#). The athletes on the list come from at least eight countries and are mostly women. The only man on the list is Lee Pearson, an equestrian from Great Britain. There are also at least three nonbinary or neutral athletes participating in the games, according to the site. The Paralympic Games are set to begin just weeks after the Tokyo Summer Olympics wrapped up. That competition broke another record with at least 185 LGBTQ athletes in contention, Outsports said.*

[This Navy captain is now the first woman commanding a nuclear aircraft carrier](#) [Diana Stancy Correll, *Navy Times*, 20 August 2021]

*Capt. Amy Bauernschmidt is now the commanding officer of the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln—becoming the first woman to lead a nuclear carrier in U.S. Navy history. Bauernschmidt, who previously served as the carrier’s executive officer from 2016-2019, relieved Capt. Walt “Sarge” Slaughter of his duties Aug. 19 during a change of command ceremony in San Diego. “There is no more humbling sense of responsibility than to know you are entrusted with the care of the people who have chosen to protect our nation,” Bauernschmidt said, according to a Navy news release. “Thank you, Capt. Slaughter, for turning over the finest ship in the fleet.” After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1994, Bauernschmidt became a helicopter pilot and was assigned to Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron Light 45, the “Wolfpack,” in San Diego. This isn’t Bauernschmidt’s first CO tour. She previously served as the commanding officer of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 70 and the amphibious transport dock San Diego.*

## EXTREMISM

[1st sentence to be handed down in Michigan gov’s kidnap plot](#) [David Eggert and Ed White, *The Associated Press*, 25 August 2021]

*Prosecutors preparing for the first prison sentence in an alleged plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer are loudly signaling to five other defendants that a key insider has shared extraordinary details about the operation. Ty Garbin cooperated within weeks of being arrested, willingly putting a “target on his back to begin his own redemption,” the government said in a court filing. Garbin, a 25-year-old airplane mechanic, is the only federal defendant to plead guilty in the plot; the others are awaiting trial. “He filled in gaps in the government’s knowledge by recounting conversations and actions that did not include any government informant or ability to record,” Assistant U.S. Attorney Nils Kessler said. “Second, he confirmed that the plot was real; not just ‘big talk between crackpots,’ as suggested by co-defendants. Third, he dispelled any suggestion that the conspirators were entrapped by government informants,” the prosecutor said. In his plea agreement, Garbin said the six men trained at his property near Luther, Michigan, constructing a “shoot house” to resemble Whitmer’s vacation home and “assaulting it with firearms.”*

[UPDATE] [Man who plotted to kidnap Michigan governor sentenced to more than 6 years in prison](#) [Mychael Schnell, *The Hill*, 25 August 2021]

[American Antifa: A woman’s journey from Girl Scout to anarchist street warrior](#) [Aram Roston, *Reuters*, 25 August 2021]

*Nicole Armbruster, 37, poised for a run in a park this spring, donned an Ironman hat from her triathlon days, black running shorts and gray Brooks running shoes. She reached over to restrain her dog Azuri, a muscular Catahoula hound with pale eyes, so it wouldn’t chase a squirrel. You wouldn’t know it, but Armbruster, 5’5” and under 130 pounds, is a militant activist in the far-left Antifa movement. She has clashed on the streets with the rightwing Proud Boys extremist group, with the alt-right movement and with police. Her arrest record—in Washington, DC, Arizona, Virginia, Minnesota and Florida—dates to 2003, for charges of unlawful assembly, failure to*

*disperse, violating the Riot Act and assaulting far-right leaders and a police officer. Most of her prior charges were dismissed by judges or prosecutors; she faces three pending cases. “We are prepared to put our bodies on the line in the event of police or fascist or racist violence,” she said. “And it’s really, like, a duty to humanity to do that, right?” Militant Antifa activists rarely speak publicly. Armbruster agreed to talk with Reuters after conferring with family and her lawyer, and said she was willing to discuss anything except her ongoing criminal charges in Washington, DC.*

[Court upholds death sentence for church shooter Dylann Roof](#) [Meg Kinnard and Denise Lavoie, *The Associated Press*, 25 August 2021]

*A federal appeals court Wednesday upheld Dylann Roof’s conviction and death sentence for the 2015 racist slayings of nine members of a Black South Carolina congregation, saying the legal record cannot even capture the “full horror” of what he did. In 2017, Roof became the first person in the U.S. sentenced to death for a federal hate crime. Authorities have said Roof opened fire during the closing prayer of a Bible study at the church, raining down dozens of bullets on those assembled. He was 21 at the time. In his appeal, Roof’s attorneys argued that he was wrongly allowed to represent himself during sentencing, a critical phase of his trial. Roof successfully prevented jurors from hearing evidence about his mental health, “under the delusion,” his attorneys argued, that “he would be rescued from prison by White-nationalists—but only, bizarrely, if he kept his mental-impairments out of the public record.” “Dylann Roof murdered African Americans at their church, during their Bible-study and worship. They had welcomed him. He slaughtered them. He did so with the express intent of terrorizing not just his immediate victims at the historically important Mother Emanuel Church, but as many similar people as would hear of the mass murder,” the panel wrote in its ruling.*

[On TikTok, Misogyny and White Supremacy Slip through “Enforcement Gap”](#) [Amanda Becker, *The 19th*, 24 August 2021]

*Violent extremists, neo-Nazis and other White supremacist groups are able to easily spread racist, misogynistic and anti-LGBTQ+ content on TikTok that runs afoul of the social media platform’s own terms of service, according to [new research](#) by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). The ISD report examines how extremists use profiles, hashtags, music and other effects on TikTok. Researchers identified a sample of 1,030 videos from 491 accounts, or about eight hours of content, that seemingly violated TikTok’s community guidelines. At least 312 of those videos promoted White supremacy and 246 expressed support for organizations or individuals known to be extremists or terrorists. At least 58 videos included misogynist content and 90 had anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments, ISD found. Videos with anti-LGBTQ+ content celebrated the persecution of gay people by authoritarian regimes and the suicides of transgender people.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrío sentenced to jail for burning Black Lives Matter banner](#)

[Alanna Durkin Richer, *The Associated Press*, 23 August 2021]

*The leader of the Proud Boys extremist group was sentenced to more than five months in jail on Monday for burning a Black Lives Matter banner that was torn down from a historic Black church in downtown Washington and bringing two high-capacity firearm magazines into the*

*nation’s capital days shortly before the Jan. 6 riot. Enrique Tarrío told the court he was “profusely” sorry for his actions, calling them a “grave mistake.” “What I did was wrong,” Tarrío said during the hearing held via videoconference. Tarrío, from Miami, was arrested as he arrived in Washington two days before thousands of supporters of then-President Donald Trump—including members of the Proud Boys—descended on the U.S. Capitol and disrupted the certification of the Electoral College vote. Tarrío was ordered to stay away from Washington, and law enforcement later said Tarrío was picked up in part to help quell potential violence.*

## HUMAN RELATIONS

[Leisure Time’s Benefits Depend on Your Beliefs About It](#) [Megan Schumann, *Futurity*, 25 August 2021]

*Happiness depends, at least in part, on believing that leisure activities are not a waste of time, according to a [new study](#). “While work can impart meaning and a sense of purpose in life, leisure, such as time with family and friends, hobbies, and exercise, is what makes our lives happy and healthy,” says lead author Gabriela Tonietto, an assistant professor of marketing at Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick. “But not everyone sees value in time spent on leisure. Many hold a general belief that these activities are an unproductive use of time—at the cost of their own happiness. We find that believing leisure is wasteful causes time spent on leisure to be less enjoyable.” According to the study, thinking of leisure as wasteful prevents us from enjoying our leisure pursuits—especially purely pleasure activities such as hanging out with friends, watching TV, and just relaxing. More goal-oriented leisure activities, like exercise and meditation, tend to feel productive and so are still enjoyed whether or not people see value in their leisure. The results show that those who do not enjoy pleasure-driven activities are more depressed, anxious, and stressed. The findings suggest happiness may be driven not only by whether people engage in leisure, but whether they find value in what they are doing.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[The Opposite of Toxic Positivity](#) [Scott Barry Kaufman, *The Atlantic*, 20 August 2021]

*Countless books have been written on the “power of gratitude” and the importance of counting your blessings, but that sentiment may feel like cold comfort during the coronavirus pandemic, when blessings have often seemed scant. Refusing to look at life’s darkness and avoiding uncomfortable experiences can be detrimental to mental health. This “toxic positivity” is ultimately a denial of reality. Telling someone to “stay positive” in the middle of a global crisis is missing out on an opportunity for growth, not to mention likely to backfire and only make them feel worse. The antidote to toxic positivity is “tragic optimism,” a phrase coined by the existential-humanistic psychologist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl. Tragic optimism involves the search for meaning amid the inevitable tragedies of human existence, something far more practical and realistic during these trying times. Researchers who study [“post-traumatic growth”](#) have found that people can grow in many ways from difficult times—including having a greater appreciation of one’s life and relationships, as well as increased compassion, altruism, purpose, utilization of personal strengths, spiritual development, and creativity.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

## INTERNATIONAL

[Joséphine Baker to be first Black woman to enter France's Panthéon](#) [BBC News, 23 August 2021]

*American-born French performer Joséphine Baker will be entered into Paris' Panthéon mausoleum, making her the first Black woman to receive the honour. The government says Baker will be inducted into the monument in November. The Panthéon is a burial place for celebrated French icons such as scientist Marie Curie and writer Victor Hugo. Baker will be just the sixth woman to join some 80 national heroes. Born in St Louis, Missouri in 1906, Baker rose to international stardom in the 1930s after moving to France to pursue a career in showbusiness. She was also a resistance fighter for her adopted country France during World War Two, and had a role in the civil rights movement in the U.S. Her induction into the Panthéon recognises her contribution to the performing arts and her courage in actively resisting Nazi Germany during the war. Baker died in 1975 and received French military honours at her funeral.*

[Manchester City soccer player Benjamin Mendy charged with rape, sexual assault](#) [Minyvonne Burke and The Associated Press, NBC News, 26 August 2021]

*Manchester City soccer player Benjamin Mendy was charged in England on Thursday with four counts of rape and one count of sexual assault. The charges are related "to three complainants over the age of 16 and are alleged to have taken place between October 2020 and August 2021," the Cheshire Constabulary police department said in a [news release](#). Mendy, who is French and lives in the village of Prestbury in Cheshire, was taken into custody and is scheduled to appear in court on Friday. It's not clear if he has obtained an attorney.*

[Romania's LGBT community sees gains, ongoing rights struggle](#) [Vadim Ghirda and Vanessa Gera, The Associated Press, 22 August 2021]

*The last person jailed for being gay in Romania walked free in 1998. The country decriminalized homosexuality three years after that, in 2001, while reforming its laws to qualify for membership in the European Union. The 20th anniversary of the abolishment of Article 200, which authorized prison sentences of up to five years for same-sex relations, was one cause for celebration during the gay pride parade and festival held in Romania's capital this month. People danced, waved rainbow flags and watched performances at Bucharest Pride 2021, an event that would have been unimaginable a generation earlier. Yet many members of Romania's LGBT community remain frustrated by the Central European nation's failure to go further and pass laws that would legalize same-sex unions or marriages. There are also fears of a conservative backlash to the gains achieved so far. Some Romanians, influenced by the Orthodox church, reject the growing social acceptance of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people, especially among young people.*

[Tokyo Paralympics: The lowdown on being disabled in Japan](#) [Beth Rose, BBC News, 25 August 2021]

*Mizuki Hsu, 35, calls herself a moon rider, a term she coined to represent adventurous wheelchair-users who like to travel and explore. Japan has focused on creating a "barrier-free" country for disabled people since it was awarded the Games in 2013. But Mizuki believes stigma*

is still a problem. “I feel it’s very common that people gaze at me in public and some strangers tell me how pitiful I am. “Inclusion of people within the community still has a long way to go.” Across the world, disability employment tends to be low and many solutions have been tried. A simple quota system is a common solution, which is what Japan uses, but as the UK discovered decades ago, it causes new problems. In Japan, if a company has more than 43.5 employees, 2.3% of them must be disabled. The figures are recorded and fines issued to those who don’t comply and given as bonuses to those who do. Critics of the system say it leads to a focus on disability rather than skills and misses the point about inclusion. “I had so many job interviews with so many companies,” Mizuki remembers of her job search. Often companies would request her disability passport to look at her workplace needs before deciding whether to proceed. She believes the quota is a good opportunity to get into work but adds: “Certain jobs are often carved out for the disabled employees—and that often means low skills and low pay.”

## MISCELLANEOUS

[Air Force mental health leaders discuss future of field](#) [Shireen Bedi, *Air Force Surgeon General Public Affairs*, 23 August 2021]

Mental health leaders across the Air Force met virtually for an annual conference, August 9-13, to discuss military mental health care, telehealth, the impact of COVID-19 and embedded mental health support. Lt. Gen. Robert Miller, U.S. Air Force Surgeon General, presented a welcome message emphasizing the critical role mental health care plays in the readiness of Airmen and Guardians, especially amid the ongoing transition of military treatment facilities to the Defense Health Agency and the current situation in Afghanistan. “Our mental health care is service-focused and has a direct impact on our operational mission,” Miller said. “Even with the Defense Health Agency having authority, direction and control of all military treatment facilities, the way we support our Airmen and Guardians will not change.” Col. Scott Sonnek, psychological health director, also emphasized the important role mental health providers play in support of the Air Force mission. “We have seen an increase in mental health utilization the last few years,” Sonnek said. “So, it is important our Airmen and Guardians have access to the resources they need.”

[Critical Update: When Seeing No Longer Means Believing, What’s a Government to Do?](#) [Brandi Vincent, *Nextgov*, 24 August 2021]

Deepfakes have a range of compelling applications in the modern communication and entertainment realms—but techniques underpinning them can also be repurposed for nefarious uses. “We’re aware in other countries that deepfakes have been used to try to change the result of elections,” the Government Accountability Office’s Director of Science and Technology Assessment Karen Howard explained in this episode of *Nextgov’s Critical Update* podcast. “We do know that they are most commonly used currently to exploit people, particularly women, by placing their faces into non-consensual pornographic videos.” This [form](#) of synthetic media, which often presents people doing and saying things they did not actually do or say, rose in popularity over the last several years. The content is inherently manipulated by technology, and fake, but state actors and others are turning to it as a cheap and quick tool to undermine people’s sense of reality. “A deepfake is a portmanteau of two words: deep learning, which is a branch of

*artificial intelligence, and fake. Essentially, when we talk about a deepfake, we mean a piece of synthetic media—and it can be a text, an image, or a video that is either manipulated or entirely created by artificial intelligence,” Matthew F. Ferraro, an attorney for WilmerHale and former intelligence officer said.*

[A family hid their Bible in an attic as Nazis invaded. Almost 80 years later, it was reunited with the family’s heirs.](#) [Nicole Ashbury, *The Washington Post*, 24 August 2021]

*A father and son in Oberdorf, Bopfingen, Germany, in 1990 were renovating the home they’d just bought when they came across something unusual: a chest hidden behind a double wall in the attic. Tucked inside the chest was a large, gilded Jewish Bible that looked like it had been carefully placed there. It was heavy, about 22 pounds, and almost 30 inches long and three inches high. The words “Die Heilige Schrift der Israeliten”—the Holy Scriptures of the Israelites—were embossed on the front. It seemed valuable and important, and the son held onto it for nearly 30 years. But in April 2017, he decided to sell it on eBay to an art historian for about \$75. The Bible, it turned out, was part of the legacy of Eduard and Ernestine Leiter, a Jewish couple from Stuttgart killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. According to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the Leiters’ story was a common and tragic one: The Nazis forced them to move to Oberdorf, Bopfingen, to live with seven other Jewish families. In August 1942, the Germans sent the couple to Theresienstadt, a ghetto and concentration camp outside Prague.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Lucille Times, Who Inspired the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Dies at 100](#) [Clay Risen, *The New York Times*, 22 August 2021]

*Lucille Times, whose encounter with a bus driver in Montgomery, Ala., in June 1955 led her to begin a one-woman boycott of the city’s public transportation, an act of defiance that inspired a mass boycott six months later after another Black woman, Rosa Parks, was charged with defying the same bus driver, died on Aug. 16 at the home of her nephew Daniel Nichols. She was 100. Mr. Nichols, with whom she had been living for several years, said the cause was complications of Covid-19. Mrs. Times was driving to the dry cleaners on June 15, 1955, when she got into an altercation with James Blake, the bus driver, who tried to push her car off the road three times. She continued on her errand, but he followed her. Parking his bus across the street, he ran over to her and yelled, “You Black son of a bitch!” she recalled in a 2017 interview. She immediately replied, “You White son of a bitch!” and the two started fighting. She called the city bus company to complain, but no one responded. She sent letters to *The Montgomery Advertiser* and *The Atlanta Journal*, but they refused to print them. She decided not to wait. Over the next six months, she operated her own boycott, driving to bus stops and offering free rides to Black passengers waiting to board.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Paralympians, including first female soldier to lose limb in Iraq, launch games in Tokyo](#) [Seth Robson, *Stars and Stripes*, 24 August 2021]

*The first female American soldier to lose a limb in the Iraq War helped carry the U.S. flag into Japan’s National Stadium to launch Team USA’s quest for Paralympic gold on Tuesday evening. The games of the XVI Paralympiad began with fireworks, music, dance, ceremony and a parade*

*of athletes inside a mostly empty arena in the nation's capital. The world's largest competition for disabled athletes was postponed a year due to the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 4 million people, according to the World Health Organization. Athletes, many in wheelchairs, marched past cheerleaders in propellor caps akin to those worn by characters in the Japanese anime "Doraemon." The U.S. team was led by Chuck Aoki, a two-time Paralympic medalist in wheelchair rugby whose great-grandparents emigrated to the United States from Japan, and Melissa Stockwell, a former Army lieutenant and 2016 Paralympic triathlon bronze medalist. The Colorado native deployed to Iraq in March 2004 with the 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas, and lost a leg about a month later to a roadside bomb in Baghdad.*

### [Secretary of Defense Austin Issues Guidance for Mandatory Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

[Vaccination of Department of Defense Service Members](#) [DOD News Release, 25 August 2021]

*Today, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III issued a [memorandum](#) for Mandatory Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination of Department of Defense Service Members. The memo directs the Secretaries of the Military Departments to immediately begin full vaccination of all members of the Armed Forces under DOD authority on active duty or in the Ready Reserve, including the National Guard, who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Mandatory vaccination against COVID-19 will only use COVID-19 vaccines that receive full licensure from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in accordance with FDA-approved labeling and guidance. Service members voluntarily immunized with a COVID-19 vaccine under FDA Emergency Use Authorization or World Health Organization Emergency Use Listing in accordance with applicable dose requirements prior to, or after, the establishment of this policy are considered fully vaccinated. Service members who are actively participating in COVID-19 clinical trials are exempted from mandatory vaccination against COVID-19 until the trial is complete in order to avoid invalidating such clinical trial results. The Secretaries of the Military Departments were also directed to impose ambitious timelines for implementation and to report regularly on vaccination completion using established systems for other mandatory vaccine reporting.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

### [Some "Most Impressive" Law School Applicants Are Convicted of Serious Crimes](#) [Allen Arthur, Route Fifty, 18 August 2021]

*James Binnall and Frankie Guzman know the fortitude it takes to practice law after having been incarcerated. Dissuaded by the bar exam's moral character determination, many formerly incarcerated people with law school ambition never pursue it, assuming convictions prohibit them from practicing law. Yet Binnall and Guzman succeeded, mentored dozens of others, and co-founded the California System-Involved Bar Association, a network for current and prospective lawyers with criminal records. California's changes began in 2017 when an SBC task force [released a report](#) recommending updates to the moral character system, including increased public transparency for decision-making guidelines and consistency of application. [Unlocking the Bar](#) further moved the needle. The 2019 report from Stanford Law School found copious barriers for people with convictions, including insufficient training and guidance at SBC and widespread fear among prospective lawyers with past legal issues. These barriers disproportionately impacted current and potential students of color.*



[Storied “Harlem Hellfighter” Regiment to Receive Congressional Gold Medal](#) [Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 24 August 2021]

*It took Pvt. Henry Johnson 97 years to be awarded the Medal of Honor for his tenacity and grit in defending his fellow soldiers from German troops in a dugout in France’s Argonne Forest, killing four at close range and in hand-to-hand combat, while suffering a head wound. Now, 103 years after Johnson’s regiment served in World War I—for 191 days, the longest of any unit, according to historians—the storied 369th Infantry, also known as the Harlem Hellfighters, will receive Congress’ highest award, the Congressional Gold Medal. On Aug. 10, the Senate passed legislation to award the medal to the Hellfighters, the third Gold Medal to go to an African American unit, after the Tuskegee Airmen in 2007 and the Montford Point, North Carolina, Marines in 2011. “It’s unfortunate that it’s taken so long for this country to recognize their bravery because so many of our soldiers of color were not recognized for their service,” Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in a press release following the vote. “The Harlem Hellfighters are an example of bravery and courage under fire. And even though this regiment was consigned to racial segregation, they still loved America, and fought hard for America, and died for America.”*

[Unvaccinated federal employees who refuse testing could also face disciplinary action](#) [Nicole Ogrysko, *Federal News Network*, 18 August 2021]

*Agencies may take disciplinary action against unvaccinated employees who refuse COVID-19 testing in accordance with the new federal vaccine policy, the Biden administration said in a new round of [frequently asked questions](#) released Wednesday. Testing is mandatory for all federal employees and contractors who are unvaccinated or decline to provide their vaccination status at least once a week, though agencies may consider a twice-weekly regime for others depending on their job responsibilities. “In addition to pursuing any disciplinary action, an agency may separately elect to bar the employee from the agency workplace for the safety of others pending resolution of any disciplinary or other action the agency may pursue,” FAQs from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force read. “Any decision to bar the employee should occur in consultation with the agency’s onsite security authority, agency’s human resources office and agency’s legal counsel.”*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

## MISCONDUCT

[Suspended Fort Jackson drill sergeant found guilty of assault on Black man](#) [David Travis Bland and Lucas Daprile, *The State (Columbia, S.C.)*, 23 August 2021]

*A judge found suspended Fort Jackson Army Sgt. Jonathan Pentland guilty Monday of assaulting a Black man in a northeast Columbia neighborhood in an incident that spawned protests, riled emotions and captured national attention. After a two-day bench trial at Richland County magistrate court on Decker Boulevard, Judge Diedra Hightower gave the guilty verdict for third-degree assault and battery, a misdemeanor. Pentland was sentenced to either 30 days in prison or a fine of \$1,087. The Richland County Sheriff’s Department charged Pentland days after video hit social media showing the Army sergeant yelling at the man and telling him to get out of the Barony Place neighborhood in the Summit. Sheriff Leon Lott said Pentland became physical with the man, warranting a third degree assault and battery charge. Witnesses testified that they saw*

*Pentland shove and hit the person on the arm. The incident was seen by some as another moment of racism against a Black man. Black community groups gathered outside Pentland's house to express their anger after the video was publicized.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

## **RACISM**

[California High School Cheer Squad Targeted With Racist Abuse at Football Game](#) [Jack Beresford, *Newsweek*, 24 August 2021]

*An investigation has been launched after a high school cheer squad was subjected to racial abuse during a football game on Friday. Cheerleaders from Valley View High School in Moreno Valley, California, were allegedly targeted by Temecula Valley High School fans during last week's game. Sabria Rose, a junior on the varsity cheerleading squad for Valley View, told KTLA5 that she and her teammates had racial slurs directed at them and were told they were "on the wrong side of town." "This boy stopped me and said that he liked my hair and kind of played with the ends," she told the news outlet. "And then the boys on the fence. We went past them, and they started making monkey noises." In the wake of the incident, Moreno Valley Unified School District Superintendent Martinrex Kedziora issued a statement branding the abuse "unacceptable" and confirming an investigation would take place. "We are working closely with the Temecula Valley Unified School District to conduct an investigation regarding this unfortunate incident to ensure this situation is addressed appropriately and in a timely manner," Kedziora said.*

[Life sentence for White Louisianan who killed Black man](#) [*The Associated Press*, 24 August 2021]

*A White Louisiana man has received a life sentence for the apparently random killing of a Black man in a park. He also is accused of killing another Black man at a bus stop and firing into the home of a Black family as part of a string of attacks that police said may have been racially motivated. Kenneth Gleason was found guilty of first-degree murder in April for the killing of Donald Smart, *The Advocate* reported. Smart, 49, was shot in a park near Louisiana State University as he was walking to his overnight shift as a restaurant dishwasher in September 2017. The 27-year-old was also charged in the fatal shooting of Bruce Cofield, 59, a homeless man who was sitting at a bus stop on a busy street in Baton Rouge two days before Smart was killed. Evidence was presented during the trial that Gleason fired gunshots through the front door of the only Black family that lived on the same suburban street as him and his parents. He wasn't charged with a hate crime, but an FBI agent testified that Gleason searched the internet around the time of the crimes for topics including Nazi propaganda and White nationalism. Law enforcement told *The Associated Press* that officers who searched his home found a handwritten copy of an Adolf Hitler speech.*

## **RELIGION**

[Indian-American gay couples find new forms of union amid stigma](#) [Savita Patel, *BBC News*, 26 August 2021]

*When Sameer Samudra and Amit Gokhale decided to marry according to Hindu custom, the couple faced an unexpected hiccup: they couldn't find a priest to do the ceremony. "We wanted a Hindu wedding, but so many pandits [priests] said no. I was agonised when one of them quoted an exorbitant amount just because I am gay!" said Sameer, who lives in North Carolina. Unwilling to have "the energy of a reluctant priest" at their wedding, the couple improvised. "One of our friends learnt the basics of being a priest and we chose Hindu rituals that made sense for a same-sex wedding," Sameer said. So many Indian-American couples dream of a big fat Bollywood-style wedding, complete with traditional rituals. But that's easier said than done for gay couples—even in the U.S. where same-sex unions were legalised in 2015. Temples refusing to host same-sex weddings, priests hanging up on their phone calls or unwilling to tweak the ceremony to suit them and, in some cases, not even showing up on the day of the wedding - these experiences have driven Indian-American gay couples to fall back on friends and well-wishers to create unique ceremonies rooted in their culture. Sapna Pandya, for instance, became a priest herself although female priests are virtually unheard of in Hinduism.*

[Muslim Airmen Reflect on Challenges, Rewards of Serving in Air Force](#) [Greg Hadley, *Air Force Magazine*, 23 August 2021]

*In the latest edition of Air Education and Training Command's "Real Talk" series, three Muslim Airmen gathered Aug. 19 to share their personal experiences of how their faith informs their service. The discussion, moderated by AETC Commander Lt. Gen. Marshall B. "Brad" Webb, also touched on the Airmen's positive and negative interactions with other Airmen about their religion, and how they hope the Air Force will progress on the issue in the future. Chief Master Sgt. Gloria L. Weatherspoon, senior enlisted advisor at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, enlisted in the Air Force in 1996. Since then, she said, she has seen a full range of reactions to her faith. The importance of commanders establishing a positive, respectful culture is key, the panelists agreed. Capt. Abdulaziz H. Ali, theater engagement division chief at the Air Force Special Operations Schoolhouse, recounted a time when his commander came up to him unsolicited during Ramadan and asked how he could help Ali during that time, which typically includes a month of fasting. "When it comes to a culture of inclusion, that does fall squarely on commanders," Ali said. "So it's good that you see me, but what are you doing to make sure that everybody in the unit feels like they can be themselves at the unit?"*

## **SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT**

["GMA" producer said she was sexually assaulted by executive producer and that ABC "looked the other way"](#) [Lindsey Pipia and Corky Siemaszko, *NBC News*, 25 August 2021]

*The former head producer of ABC's "Good Morning America" was accused in a lawsuit Wednesday of sexually assaulting two female employees and fostering a toxic work environment on the show while the network "looked the other way." Kirstyn Crawford, a producer on the morning show, alleged that Michael Corn assaulted her in 2015 during a business trip to cover the Academy Awards in Los Angeles, according to the lawsuit filed in New York state court and obtained by NBC News. The lawsuit also alleges that Corn assaulted former ABC News producer Jill McClain in 2010 and 2011 on two separate business trips. ABC is also named as a defendant*

*in the lawsuit, which alleges that the network had received complaints from women about Corn's alleged abuses going back at least a decade but did nothing to stop him.*

[Here's what led to the Navy national chief recruiter's firing last year](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Military.com*, 24 August 2021]

*A Navy investigation into the service's former top enlisted recruiter found "sufficient evidence" that Navy Counselor Master Chief Franklin Tiongco sexually harassed a female chief during a drunken 2019 house party, according to a Navy Recruiting Command investigation obtained by Navy Times. Tiongco was relieved as national chief recruiter in May 2020, and NRC completed its preliminary inquiry that same month. The names of those who spoke with the investigating officer are redacted in the investigation copy provided to Navy Times, so it remains unclear how many people were interviewed. But the document details a June 2019 house party at a retired chief's house and "sufficient evidence" that Tiongco sexually harassed a female chief there. A witness to Tiongco's comments told the investigator he believed the female chief suffered professional consequences following the interaction. "He stated from all his interaction ...with her that she was a strong performer and subject matter expert," the investigator wrote. "He stated [that] after the incident her EVALS suffered, and she was ranked below a more junior and less experienced Chief during the September ranking cycle."*

[How Rape Affects Memory And The Brain, And Why More Police Need To Know About This](#) [Sammy Caiola, *NPR*, 22 August 2021]

*Sexual assault survivors say interactions with law enforcement can be so intense, and so unsympathetic, that they add a secondary trauma on top of the rape. Reporting a rape can be especially traumatic when officers cast doubt on victims' stories, if they don't immediately remember all the details of an assault right away. But it doesn't have to be that way, according to scientists and scholars of criminal justice. If police gain a deeper understanding of what's going on in the brain during and after a rape, they can change the way they approach rape cases and avoid making survivors feel blamed or disbelieved. Scientists who study trauma and memory say it's common for sexual assault survivors—as well as survivors of other serious traumas—to be unable to recall an attack fully. They might remember certain facts but not others, or struggle to recall events in the correct sequence.*

[Montana National Guardsman charged with raping, strangling woman at Fort Harrison](#) [Tyler Manning, *Stars and Stripes*, 26 August 2021]

*A Montana Army National Guardsman was arrested on suspicion of raping and strangling a woman at Fort Harrison, a National Guard base located outside Helena, according to authorities. John Clements Newell, 31, is charged with felony aggravated sexual intercourse without consent and felony strangulation. On Aug. 19, a Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office deputy responded to Fort Harrison for reports of a sexual assault. The deputy made contact with the victim, who alleged that the previous night Newell had entered her room without permission raped and strangled her. The victim told the deputy that the defendant asked her later if the intercourse was consensual, and she told him "yes" out of fear of reprisal. Court documents state the deputy observed bruises on the victim's neck consistent with her story. The victim said she is not in any relationship with the defendant.*

[Senior Army NCO, world-class athlete, charged with two sexual assaults](#) [Davis Winkie, *Army Times*, 24 August 2021]

*A senior Army NCO and elite athlete stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado, will face a general court-martial in December on charges that he sexually assaulted two women, according to charging documents. The accused soldier, Master Sgt. Allan Armstrong, is an electromagnetic spectrum manager assigned to the Army's World Class Athlete Program at Fort Carson. Armstrong, who is currently ranked as the No. 10 paratriathlete in the world for his division, won three consecutive paratriathlon national titles from 2017 to 2019. He was considered a favorite to make the Olympic team before his disability level was not included in the 2020 Tokyo Games. Armstrong is charged with two specifications of penetrative sexual assault against two women, as well as one specification of abusive sexual contact, according to a charge sheet released by the 4th Infantry Division. "Allegations of this nature are taken very seriously. It is important to remember that individuals who are charged with offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice are considered innocent until proven guilty," said Brandy Gill, a Fort Carson spokesperson.*

## SUICIDE

[A program tried to cut opioid addiction among veterans. Did it cause suicides?](#) [Benjamin Cowan and Joshua Tibbitts, *The Washington Post*, 24 August 2021]

*In 2012, at the height of the prescription opioid trend in the United States, roughly 1 in 3 U.S. veterans was prescribed opioids. That statistic helped inspire the Department of Veterans Affairs to begin in 2013 an ambitious program to curb opioid prescriptions called the Opioid Safety Initiative. Treatment centers began to track veterans' medication histories very closely, and doctors were strongly urged to try alternative pain-relief regimens. The [program focused on high-risk groups](#): veterans taking high doses, those with long-term prescriptions and those taking other potent medications (such as benzodiazepines). It had a dramatic effect on treatment: By 2020, the number of VA patients prescribed an opioid had [fallen by 64 percent](#) from the peak. Recent research we conducted, however, suggests that the program may have had unintended negative effects. There have long been concerns within and outside VA that the Opioid Safety Initiative, by curtailing access to painkillers, may have [increased the vulnerability](#) of some patients who suffer from severe chronic pain (or the effects of opioid withdrawal) even as it reduced opioid-related risks for others. Looking at trends in violent deaths from 2013 to 2018, we found evidence in favor of this hypothesis: namely, a significant increase in veteran suicides after the implementation of the safety initiative.*

[Study finds link between coronavirus infection and suicidal thoughts in veterans](#) [Karin Zeitvogel, *Stars and Stripes*, 25 August 2021]

*Veterans who have had COVID-19 were more than twice as likely to contemplate suicide during the coronavirus pandemic as those who never had the illness, a study published Wednesday found. Overall, however, veterans were less likely to have suicidal thoughts during the pandemic than they were before it, said the study, which was published in [JAMA Psychiatry](#). The study was "one of the first ... to find an independent link between COVID-19 infection and suicidal ideation," said lead author Brandon Nichter, a Defense Department clinical psychologist.*

*Suicidal thoughts after COVID-19 infection could be driven by physical issues, such as inflammation of the brain or changes to the body's immune response, which scientists believe may be caused by the virus, the study said. Social factors, including increased feelings of isolation and loneliness, or financial stress felt during the pandemic could also be factors. Veterans whose primary health care source was a Veterans Affairs hospital were more likely to say they had thought about suicide.*