

DEOMI NEWS LINKS 24 SEPTEMBER 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

[Pentagon unveils new sexual assault response plan—with a deadline of up to 8 years](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 22 September 2021]

The Defense Department is rolling out an eight-year plan implement dozens of recommendations from its Independent Review Commission on sexual assault, chief among them standing up an independent organization to prosecute sexual assaults, harassments and related crimes, taking them outside the chain of command. The four-tiered system includes multiple deadlines, starting in 2027 and continuing through 2030 for the more specific of the 82 recommendations the commission handed down. The so-called road map is detailed in a [13-page document](#) released by the Pentagon on Wednesday, with a long list of action items for each tier, as well as deadlines. First on the agenda is establishing offices for special victims prosecutors, who will assume responsibility for filing charges and sending cases to courts martial. Next will be creating a workforce of independent investigators for sexual harassment, a policy that will include initiating involuntary separation for any service member with a substantiated report against them. The road map also eliminates sexual assault response coordinator and victim advocate roles as collateral duty—where someone serves in that role in addition to their regular job—in favor of a professionalized workforce.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[A plan for rooting out extremism in the military: report](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 17 September 2021]

The Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, and the subsequent revelations that many veterans were involved, pushed the Defense Department to start addressing the issue of extremism in the ranks from the top down. In addition to holding an extremism stand-down and tasking a working group to look at the issue, DOD also funded a Rand Corp. effort to create a framework for preventing, detecting and addressing extremism views among troops. “These individuals often draw meaning from the identity that they apply to themselves and others based on their group affiliations (e.g., race, gender, religion, nationality, political beliefs),” according to the [paper, published Thursday](#). “Studies have identified a variety of factors that lead people to join extremist movements, such as having a passion for political change, looking for a sense of belonging, and seeking excitement.” To counter that behavior among service members, and by extension veterans, the paper suggests four focus areas: recognizing the scope of the problem, preventing future views/activities, detecting and intervening and measuring trends to evaluate whether interventions are working.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Racial Division, Troops’ Role in Protests Has Hurt Minority Recruiting, Air Force Says](#) [Tara Copp, *Defense One*, 22 September 2021]

Years of racial tension, and the use of National Guard troops last June after the death of George Floyd, have hurt the military’s ability to recruit minorities, the head of Air Force recruiting said

Wednesday. That drop is part of a worrisome long-term trend that the military is fighting against: that fewer recruitment-age youth show an interest to serve. According to the Defense Department's latest twice-a-year [Futures Survey](#), released in August, the share of eligible youth who reported they have an interest in military service has dropped about two percent overall in the last couple of years, said Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, commander of the Air Force Recruiting Service. Most concerning, Thomas said, was that "the biggest drop in propensity to serve is from Black males, Hispanic males, and females."

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

CULTURE

[The Black cowboys of Chicago's South Side](#) [Amy Bizzarri, *BBC News*, 20 September 2021]

*When the legendary Black Chicago cowboy, Murdock "The Man with No First Name", rides one of his horses through Chicago's Hyde Park and along the South Shore segment of the lakefront path, he often finds himself explaining the rules of the road to questioning police officers. Murdock, who chooses to only go by his surname, adding to his cowboy mystique, grew up in Chicago's predominantly African American South Side. Though the popular narrative and imagery of the American West often ignores African American cowboys, historians estimate that one in four cowboys were Black. Black horsemen weren't only confined to the Wild West either. The American Black Cowboy Association held its first Black rodeo in 1971, in Harlem, New York City. In Philadelphia, the Fletcher Street Urban Riding Club, the inspiration behind the 2020 Netflix movie *Concrete Cowboy* starring Idris Elba, has been promoting Black horsemanship for more than 100 years, raising awareness by simply riding through the city streets and parks and hosting regular races in Fairmount Park.*

[COVID-19 Delayed Quinceañera Celebrations. And Now, 17 Is The New 15](#) [Jasmine Garsd, *NPR*, 4 September 2021]

Citlaly Olvera takes a deep breath as she absorbs the scene in front of her at a rented Jewish temple in Brooklyn: Under the neon blue lights, a sea of family and friends, in gala gowns, suits and tuxes, cowboy hats and boots, are laughing and dancing to ranchera music so loud you can feel your rib cage vibrate. She, herself, looks like a fairytale princess in her cream-colored, hooped dress, her translucent sparkling nails and, of course, her tiara. They are all here for her, to celebrate her quinceañera. It's a traditional Latino ceremony for 15-year-olds to mark their transition from girlhood to womanhood. In all the fanfare surrounding her quinceañera, there's just one little glitch: Citlaly isn't 15. She's 17. And there are plenty of girls just like her across the country. But things never really got back to normal, especially for many Latinos. The community has been hit hard by the pandemic: Nationally, Latinos had more than twice the death toll as Whites. In New York, Latinos also lead in the mortality rates.

[Elvira, "Mistress of the Dark," comes out in new memoir](#) [Jo Yucaba, *NBC News*, 22 September 2021]

Queen of Halloween, Elvira, also known as actor Cassandra Peterson, revealed in her memoir that she's had a secret relationship with a woman for nearly two decades. She described how she

met her now-partner of 19 years, Teresa Wierson—whom she calls “T”—at Gold’s Gym in Hollywood, according to the *Advocate*. She wrote in the book that she kept their relationship a secret due to fears that it would affect her career and the Elvira brand, which is built largely on the character’s sex appeal and attraction to men. “So I worried that if I announced I was no longer living the ‘straight life,’ my fans would feel lied to, call me a hypocrite, and abandon me,” she wrote, according to *Entertainment Weekly*. But she’s glad she no longer feels like she has to hide. “Keeping a secret doesn’t feel good,” Peterson told *The Orange County Register*. Elvira has long been considered a gay icon, and Peterson is also known as an LGBTQ ally. She started her career as a drag queen in a nightclub in Colorado and was also the front-woman of an all-gay male band, the *South Florida Gay News* reported in 2012.

[The epic adventures of the Gilgamesh Dream tablet](#) [BBC News, 22 September 2021]

An ancient clay tablet displaying part of the story of a superhuman god will be returned to Iraq by the U.S. on Thursday. Known as the Gilgamesh Dream Tablet, the 3,600-year-old religious text shows a section of a Sumerian poem from the Epic of Gilgamesh. It is one of the world’s oldest works of literature and was looted from an Iraqi museum during the Gulf War in 1991. Over the past 30 years, it has been smuggled through many countries, accompanied by false documents. Until just two years ago, it was prominently displayed in a museum near the seat of the U.S. government. But later on Thursday, the text will begin a new journey back to its homeland when it is formally handed over at a ceremony in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC.

[Famed cathedral names artist to replace Confederate windows](#) [Peter Smith, *The Associated Press*, 23 September 2021]

Washington National Cathedral announced Thursday it has chosen contemporary artist Kerry James Marshall, renowned for his wide-ranging works depicting African American life, to design new stained-glass windows with themes of racial justice that will replace a set with Confederate imagery that were removed in 2017. The landmark sanctuary said in a statement that the four windows will tell “a new and more complete” story of the nation’s racial history. Poet Elizabeth Alexander will write a poem to be inscribed in stone tablets alongside the windows, overlaying older ones that venerated the lives of Confederate soldiers. The project is expected to be completed by 2023. The windows will replace a set that honored two Confederate generals, Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, with saint-like reverence and had included a Confederate flag. The cathedral removed them in 2017, prompted by a larger national reckoning over Confederate imagery and White supremacy in the wake of deadly right-wing attacks in Charlottesville, Virginia, that year and in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015. The window openings have been covered with plywood since 2017.

[“Forget the Alamo” Depicts A Racist Heritage, Sparking Backlash](#) [David Montgomery, *Stateline Daily*, 14 September 2021] [REVIEW]

Should William Barret Travis, whose name is enshrined on schools, monuments and public buildings across Texas, continue to be honored solely as the valiant commander who led vastly outnumbered defenders of the Alamo in their doomed 13-day siege in the 1836 battle for state independence? Or should he also be seen through another lens—that of a “pompous, racist

agitator” helping lead a revolt by Texas colonists primarily to preserve slavery in what was then an outlying part of northern Mexico? Written by three Anglo men, all former or active journalists, the 386-page [“Forget the Alamo”](#) also reintroduces other legendary figures, depicting the Alamo garrison’s co-commander James Bowie as “a murderer, slaver, and con man” and frontier legend and Alamo combatant Davy Crockett as a “self-promoting old fool.” The authors write that it’s time to dismantle the “Heroic Anglo Narrative” that they say has obscured the importance of Hispanic, Black and Native American people in Texas’ history. Nor, they add, should the Alamo, which draws more than 1.5 million visitors a year, continue to be hailed as the “shrine of Texas liberty.”

[In Japan’s anime universe, “Belle” seeks to rewrite script on female power](#) [Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Julia Mio Inuma, *The Washington Post*, 18 September 2021]

The animated film “Belle”—a hit in Japan that will make its U.S. debut at the New York Film Festival on Sept. 25—also carries a bit of artistic rebellion. The film’s message of female empowerment has gained attention for flipping the script on anime, Japan’s signature style of animated movies and graphic novels that often portrays girls and women as weak, vacuous and hyper-sexualized. The message has resonated in Japan during a time when growing numbers of women are calling for change—most recently laid bare through a string of sexist comments by high-ranking Olympic officials that drew fierce backlash. From Disney princesses to Marvel superheroes, and anime to pop music; creators across genres are rethinking how to portray women and girls with agency and dignity, and show that being imperfect is beautiful, too. Global movements such as #MeToo have also underscored a sense of common purpose.

[\[TRAILER\]](#) [\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Latinos vastly underrepresented in media, new report finds](#) [Astrid Galvan, *The Associated Press*, 21 September 2021]

Latinos are perpetually absent in major newsrooms, Hollywood films and other media industries where their portrayals—or lack thereof—could deeply impact how their fellow Americans view them, according to a [government report released Tuesday](#). The Congressional Hispanic Caucus asked the U.S. Government Accountability Office to investigate last October. U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro, D-Texas, has made the inclusion of Latinos in media a principal issue, imploring Hollywood studio directors, journalism leaders and book publishers to include their perspectives. Castro says the lack of accurate representation, especially in Hollywood, means at the very best that Americans don’t get a full understanding of Latinos and their contributions. At worst—especially when Latinos are solely portrayed as drug dealers or criminals—it invites politicians to exploit negative stereotypes for political gain, Castro said.

[Media Fascination With The Petite Mystery Looks Like Racism To Some Native Americans](#) [Kamila Kudelska, *NPR*, 21 September 2021]

The FBI has confirmed that remains found in Wyoming Sunday are the body of 22-year-old Gabrielle Petite. The mystery around the death of the photogenic young White woman with a carefree social media presence has been headline news across the country. And that’s frustrating to people who say the media ignores an epidemic of missing and murdered Native American women in the state. Since 2000, Indigenous people have made up 21% of homicides in Wyoming,

even though they are only 3% of the population. That's according to a state report released in January. Cara Chambers, chair of the task force that released the report says only 30% of Indigenous homicide victims had any media coverage. That number is closer to 51% for Whites. "The themes and media portrayal of homicide victims that when you had an Indigenous victim, the articles were more likely to have negative character framing," Chambers said, "more violent and graphic language, really focusing more on sort of like where the homicide occurred versus anything about the victim."

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Meet the Nigerian artist illustrating the human experience with a ballpoint pen](#) [Nadia Leigh-Hewitson, CNN, 16 September 2021]

From a distance, Jacqueline Suowari's larger-than-life portraits look like monochromatic photographs overlaid with colorful graphics. Upon closer inspection, you see these dramatic images are the culmination of thousands of tiny lines made using a simple ballpoint pen. This June she launched a touring exhibition of her new body of work entitled "Now I Wear Myself." In her new exhibition, Suowari considers the fetishization and condemnation of aesthetics associated with indigenous Nigerian cultures, and tries to destigmatize subjects that are often taboo in the country, like depression, grief and shame. Suowari's work is as motivational as it is aesthetically pleasing. Her huge creations share a message of hope and empowerment; their intention is to allow Nigerians to embrace vulnerabilities—encouraging them to discuss issues, including mental health, that she says aren't in common discourse in Nigerian society.

[Monuments rise and fall at West Point and VMI amid racial reckoning](#) [Davis Winkie, Military.com, 21 September 2021]

Two of the Army's oldest sources of young officers are going beyond simple removal of Confederate symbols as they rethink the way their landscapes, buildings and statues influence their students. The reckoning comes amid a congressionally mandated review of the Defense Department's Confederate objects and names, in addition to stricter scrutiny from state governments and the broader public. For the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, this means adding new statues and changing a few names. But for the Virginia Military Institute—sometimes called "the West Point of the Confederacy"—the task is much more complicated. Over the past year, the landscape of the Virginia Military Institute has also rapidly transformed as its new leadership looks to different historical figures to inspire its student body after publicly backing away from its former deification of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson.

[South Carolina's Confederate monument protection law upheld](#) [Jeffrey Collins, The Associated Press, 23 September 2021]

The South Carolina Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that a state law preventing anyone from moving a Confederate monument or changing the historical name of a street or building without the Legislature's permission is legal. But in the same ruling, the justices struck down a requirement that two-thirds of the General Assembly must approve a move or name change. The unanimous decision keeps intact South Carolina's Heritage Act, which has stopped colleges and local governments from removing statues honoring Civil War soldiers or segregationists even as other areas of the South took them down after protests sparked by the killing of African American

George Floyd last year by White police officers in Minnesota. One of the people who sued lawmakers over the Heritage Act is the widow of state Sen. Clementa Pinckney, the pastor at Emanuel AME church in Charleston who died in that attack. Her lawyer, state Sen. Gerald Malloy, called the ruling a victory since monuments to racists are no longer protected by a two-thirds vote.

[The Space Force’s new service dress and PT uniforms have landed](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Times*, 21 September 2021]

The Space Force this week unveiled its new designs for service dress and workout uniforms as it continues to forge its own identity in the Pentagon. Two guardians showed off the business uniform for the first time at the Air Force Association’s annual conference here, showcasing a unisex look that the Space Force initially devised for women before adjusting for men’s comfort as well. The Space Force is the first military service created since women were given the opportunity to hold the same roles as men, making this the first uniform designed with women in mind from the start. The uniform is “distinctive, modern, professional, and comfortable to wear,” Space Force spokesperson Col. Catie Hague said. “We designed the female uniform first and then we created the male version.”

[SEE ALSO] [To insignia and beyond: Space Force rolls out new designs for enlisted sleeves](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Times*, 20 September 2021]

[Their car became stuck in flood waters. Then the Marines showed up.](#) [Jeff Schogol, *Task & Purpose*, 20 September 2021]

As a group of Marine Corps Body Bearers headed home from their fifth funeral service of the day, they noticed a man and a woman were in trouble. Their car had stalled out in rising flood waters just outside Arlington National Cemetery as a downpour dumped rain on the nation’s capital last Thursday. “There wasn’t even really a conversation about it,” said Capt. Katie Kochert, a spokeswoman for Marine Barracks Washington, D.C. “They were like: Yeah, we need to stop and help push this car to safety.” The woman inside the car recorded what happened next in a TikTok [video that has since gone viral](#). “Their last funeral, it had rained on them, so they were already wet when they were wading through the waters,” Kochert said. This is far from an isolated story. There have been many instances in which Marines have come to the aid of people in need. In 2018, Marines from the Washington, D.C., barracks sprinted toward a burning housing complex for seniors. Some of those Marines brought stretchers and wheelchairs. In November 2020, Marines in Washington, D.C., helped to free a woman who was pinned under a car. Indeed, Cpl. Mitchell Wojtowicz, said he and the other Marines who helped move the car out of the flood waters were simply doing what Marines are expected to do: Moving toward danger. “Nothing about what we did was exceptional,” Wojtowicz said in a statement. “Helping people is just the standard.”

[SEE ALSO]

[What is the Moon Festival? A scholar of Chinese religions explains](#) [Mario Poceski, *The Conversation*, 16 September 2021]

With the arrival of September and hints of cooler temperatures also comes one of most important traditional festivals in the Chinese calendar, the Mid-Autumn Festival, or Zhongqiu jie (中秋節), also known as the Moon Festival. At this time of the year, the Chinese store down the road from our home in Gainesville, Fla., is stocked with mooncakes, known in Chinese as yuebing (月餅). These traditional delicacies are readied in anticipation of the festival, observed on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month. This is a time for family and friends to gather, watch the full moon and eat mooncakes and other delicacies. Other festivity highlights include public lantern displays, dance parties, traditional performances and worship of the moon goddess and other deities. Because of the central theme of family reunion, sometimes the festival evokes comparison to Thanksgiving in the U.S.

DISCRIMINATION

[10th anniversary of DADT repeal a good time to reflect on victory of facts over fear](#) [Aaron Belkin, *Military Times*, 20 September 2021] [OPINION]

Today marks the 10-year anniversary of the end of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy banning openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans from serving in uniform. With our nation so focused on current social justice and national security crises, including absorbing the impact of our departure from Afghanistan, it can seem of fading relevance that, until just a decade ago, federal law explicitly discriminated against a group of people based on characteristics with no bearing on ability. But while "don't ask, don't tell" is now history, our country is currently in the throes of a consequential battle over the use of information and misinformation, and the anniversary of the "don't ask, don't tell" milestone offers valuable insight into what role hard evidence can play in shaping public policy. Indeed, it offers cause for optimism that facts can still inform policy and successfully contest a culture of deception.

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

[Louisiana state trooper charged in pummeling of Black man](#) [Jake Bleiberg and Jim Mustian, *The Associated Press*, 2021]

A former Louisiana State Police trooper has been charged with a civil rights violation for pummeling a Black motorist 18 times with a flashlight—the first criminal case to emerge from federal investigations into troopers' beatings of at least three Black men. A grand jury on Thursday indicted Jacob Brown for the 2019 beating following a traffic stop that left Aaron Larry Bowman with a broken jaw, broken ribs and a gash to his head. Brown was charged with one count of deprivation of rights under color of law, federal prosecutors said. Brown's indictment comes as the federal prosecutors on the case are scrutinizing other troopers who punched, stunned and dragged another Black motorist, Ronald Greene, before he died in their custody on a rural roadside. The probe of Greene's 2019 death has grown to examine whether police brass obstructed justice to protect the troopers who beat the Black motorist after a high-speed chase.

[A new book examines ways to end unconscious bias](#) [Megan Thompson, *PBS News*, 18 September 2021] [AUDIO WITH TRANSCRIPT]

When freelance journalist Jessica Nordell was first starting out, she sent editors a lot of pitches, but had a hard time getting them accepted. She then began pitching under a gender-neutral name, “J.D. Nordell”—and immediately had more success. The experience set her on a path of researching and writing about unconscious bias for more than a decade and eventually publishing a book. [“The End of Bias: A Beginning”](#) comes out on Tuesday. Nordell recently spoke with News Hour Weekend special correspondent Megan Thompson.

[Texas challenges EEOC guidance on transgender worker protections](#) [Daniel Wiessner, Reuters, 21 September 2021]

*Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has moved to block Biden administration guidance requiring that employers allow transgender workers to use bathrooms and dress in a manner aligned with their gender identity, following a separate challenge by 20 other Republican-led states. Paxton's office, in a [complaint](#) filed in Amarillo, Texas federal court on Monday, said state agencies will not allow workers to use bathrooms designated for the opposite sex or discipline employees over their use of gendered pronouns, placing them at risk of facing legal action in light of [June guidance](#) from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In August, 20 other Republican-led states filed their own challenge to the EEOC memo and a separate U.S. Department of Education directive covering the rights of transgender students. The EEOC guidance was issued in response to the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 2020 ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, which said discrimination against gay and transgender workers is a form of unlawful sex bias under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.*

[Transgender people report years of battles for health insurance coverage](#) [Jo Yurcaba, NBC News, 22 September 2021]

Although many insurance companies and some politicians describe gender-affirming surgery as cosmetic, major medical organizations say it is medically necessary. Surgical intervention is one of many treatments for 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. WPATH, which is considered the governing body on the issue, wrote in a [“medical necessity statement”](#) in 2016 that “medical procedures attendant to gender affirming/confirming surgeries are not ‘cosmetic’ or ‘elective’ or ‘for the mere convenience of the patient.’” Despite the medical necessity of gender-affirming care as stated by physicians, many trans people who have insurance—about one-fifth [have reported](#) that they don't—say they have struggled to get coverage. A [report](#) last year from the Center for American Progress found that 40 percent of transgender respondents—and 56 percent of trans respondents of color—said their health insurance companies denied coverage for gender-affirming care, which includes treatments like hormones and surgery.

[Watchdog: DOD getting better at tracking military justice demographics, but work remains](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, Military Times, 20 September 2021]

The U.S. Defense Department and military services have made progress in tracking demographic data regarding military justice cases, but some work remains to be done, according to a [U.S. Government Accountability Office update](#) issued late last month. Last month's GAO update noted that the Pentagon “had taken some steps to study disparities but had not comprehensively

evaluated the causes of racial or gender disparities in the military justice system.” Still, GAO found that progress has been made, and that the services have implemented eight of the GAO’s 11 recommendations for better reporting and collection of demographic data. Among progress made, the Army, Navy and Coast Guard have started to collect such information when it comes to administrative discipline and all three services have “taken key steps to collect and maintain consistent data for race and ethnicity,” according to the GAO.

DIVERSITY

[DAF Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: The HEAT is on](#) [Maj. Gilberto S. Perez, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs, 17 September 2021]

The DAF Barrier Analysis Working Groups were established in 2008 to address active or potential barriers to equal employment opportunities across the total force. This governing body is a conduit to maximize the team’s diverse talents and create an inclusive culture regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, orientation, religion or disabilities. The Hispanic community has a valiant history of serving in every major conflict in American history and continues to be a source of military strength. As of 2020, 15.6% of the 329,839 active-duty Air Force members are of Hispanic or Latino descent. It is critically important for the DAF to foster an environment where all members feel valued and able to maximize their full potential. That type of environment will enable Hispanics members to leverage their talents to support our Air and Space Forces. The Hispanic Empowerment and Advancement Team, a specialized DAFBAWG, was chartered to review and analyze guidelines, programs, data and other information for barriers to employment, advancement, and retention of Hispanic employees and applicants, and military members.

[“Diverse Teams Outperform:” Space Force Wants to Recruit, Train and Promote Differently](#) [Stephen Losey, Military.com, 21 September 2021]

Now that the Space Force is here, the fledgling service must figure out how to manage, attract and promote its uniformed Guardians. That means less emphasis on deployments and a greater emphasis on diversity and digital skills. And it could mean a greater willingness to accept recruits with pre-existing conditions, such as Type 1 diabetes. “If our objective is that we need to be able to grow and develop leaders and warfighters to secure space ... it’s going to take a special approach for us in managing our talent,” Space Force Chief Human Capital Officer Patricia Mulcahy said at a roundtable discussion with reporters at the Air Force Association’s Air Space & Cyber conference in National Harbor, Maryland. But, Mulcahy said, the Space Force is not where it needs to be. Only 18% of its force is female, she said, and the service wants to do more to attract talented women. “We’re trying to see where we can get in different places where women are, and generate that interest, and let them know that the Space Force is real, and here’s how you can join,” Mulcahy said.

[GovExec Daily: How the Federal Government Can Impact Diversity and Equity](#) [Adam Butler and Ross Gianfortune, Government Executive, 21 September 2021] [PODCAST]

President Joe Biden’s administration has diversity, equity and inclusion as cornerstones of his administration’s policies. Systemic problems lie at the heart of inequality and federal agencies need to address these problems both within and outside their organizations. Shrupti Shah is a

Managing Director with Deloitte Consulting LLP where she leads the Behavioral Insights practice. She is also one of the authors of a new Deloitte report titled “Government’s equity imperative. The path toward systemic change” and currently advises the Biden White House about the federal government’s racial equity initiatives. She joined the show to discuss the report.

[Labor Department Seeks Advice on Increasing Equity in Contracting, Other Programs](#) [Courtney Bubl , *Government Executive*, 21 September 2021]

The Labor Department is seeking public input on advancing equity through its contracting and other programs. On Tuesday, the department announced a new [online dialogue platform](#) that is part of its efforts to act on President Biden’s executive order, “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government,” that was issued on his first day in office. The focus areas on the platform are: unemployment insurance programs; equitable federal contractor workplaces; federal contracting/procurement; enforcement activities; and outreach and education. The Labor Department “is hosting this dialogue to help inform its efforts to foster greater employment and economic opportunities for people from historically underserved communities,” said a press release. “The feedback and ideas gathered will help inform potential policies and programs to advance worker equity, including women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities and other underrepresented communities.” Individuals can view and submit ideas on the website as well as give submissions up or down votes. Each of the focus areas has questions and prompts for discussion and suggestions.

[UGA receives national diversity award for eighth consecutive year](#) [Sam Fahmy, *University of Georgia News (Athens, Ga.)*, 19 September 2021]

A long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusive excellence bolstered by an ambitious new five-year plan has earned the University of Georgia national recognition for the eighth consecutive year. The INSIGHT Into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award recognizes colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion. UGA has earned this national honor each year since 2014. The university’s [Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Plan](#), which was adopted in May, was developed by a 21-member committee that included faculty, staff, student, alumni and community representation. After conducting more than 40 focus groups, the committee identified 11 goals with key performance indicators that will be used to measure the university’s progress over the next five years. Throughout the current academic year, schools, colleges, and other campus units will develop plans that support the diversity and inclusive excellence goals.

EXTREMISM

[4 California Militia Members Plead Guilty to Conspiracy](#) [*The Associated Press*, 23 September 2021]

Four members of an alleged California militia group have pleaded guilty to conspiring to obstruct justice in the case of a federal guard who was fatally shot in Oakland more than a year ago, federal prosecutors said. The men—followers of the “boogaloo” movement, a concept embraced by a loose network of gun enthusiasts and militia-style extremists—are accused of

conspiring to destroy communications and other records about the May 29, 2020, killing of federal security officer David Patrick Underwood and attempted murder of his partner by one of their members. In April, a federal grand jury indicted Jessie Alexander Rush, 29, of Turlock; Robert Jesus Blancas, 33, of Castro Valley; Simon Sage Ybarra, 23, of Los Gatos; and Kenny Matthew Miksch, 21, of San Lorenzo, on charges of conspiracy to obstruct justice. “All four acknowledged in their plea agreements that they engaged in June 2020 discussions with other Grizzly Scouts about “boog” (boogaloo), waging war against the government, and tactics for killing law enforcement personnel, including police officers,” the prosecutors said. Prosecutors have said in court filings that the militia group had about 25 members and had formed a “Quick Reaction Force” that was supposed to carry out attacks during mass demonstrations.

[Huge hack reveals embarrassing details of who’s behind Proud Boys and other far-right websites](#)

[Drew Harwell, Craig Timberg and Hannah Allam, *The Washington Post*, 21 September 2021] *“Epik” long has been the favorite Internet company of the far-right, providing domain services to QAnon theorists, Proud Boys and other instigators of the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol—allowing them to broadcast hateful messages from behind a veil of anonymity. But that veil abruptly vanished last week when a huge breach by the hacker group Anonymous dumped into public view more than 150 gigabytes of previously private data—including user names, passwords and other identifying information of Epik’s customers. Extremism researchers and political opponents have treated the leak as a Rosetta Stone to the far-right, helping them to decode who has been doing what with whom over several years. Initial revelations have spilled out steadily across Twitter since news of the hack broke last week, often under the hashtag #epikfail, but those studying the material say they will need months and perhaps years to dig through all of it.*

HUMAN RELATIONS

[How to improve sleep habits to support emotional wellness, according to a therapist](#) [John Duffy, *CNN*, 17 September 2021]

As it turns out, our sleep patterns correlate very closely with our degree of emotional wellness. Adults should be getting at least seven hours of sleep per night, though 1 in 3 fail to reach that minimum, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Poor sleep also disrupts engagement in activities that support emotional wellness. In fact, teens with irregular sleep patterns over the course of the week can experience “social jet lag” starting Monday morning, putting them behind in terms of both performance and connection with others. This can drive not only a decrease in performance academically, but tardiness, missed days, and a lack of readiness to learn. I find that the development of better sleep habits is among the quickest, most effective ways to improve mental well-being for an individual or a family. Here are a number of manageable ways to improve sleep rapidly in your home.

INTERNATIONAL

[The AP Interview: Hungary committed to contentious LGBT law](#) [Justine Spike, *The Associated Press*, 24 September 2021]

In an interview Thursday with The Associated Press on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly's meeting of world leaders, Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said his country would not cede ground on policies that have caused the European Union to impose financial penalties and start legal proceedings against it over violations of the bloc's values. Topping the list of contentious government policies: a controversial Hungarian law that the EU says violates the fundamental rights of LGBT people. That led the EU's executive commission to delay billions in economic recovery funds earmarked for Hungary—a move Szijjarto called “a purely political decision” and “blackmail.” The law, he says, is meant to protect children from pedophiles and “homosexual propaganda.” The law, passed in June, makes it illegal to promote or portray sex reassignment or homosexuality to minors under 18 in media content. It also contains provisions that provide harsher penalties for pedophilia. Critics say it conflates pedophilia with homosexuality and stigmatizes sexual minorities.

[As Merkel bids farewell, German women wish for more equality](#) [Kirsten Grieshaber, *The Associated Press*, 21 September 2021]

Angela Merkel, Germany's first female chancellor, has been praised by many for her pragmatic leadership in a turbulent world and celebrated by some as a feminist icon. But a look at her track record over her 16 years at Germany's helm reveals missed opportunities for fighting gender inequality at home. Named “The World's Most Powerful Woman” by Forbes magazine for the last 10 years in a row, Merkel has been cast as a powerful defender of liberal values in the West. She has easily stood her ground at male-dominated summits with leaders such as former U.S. President Donald Trump or Russian President Vladimir Putin. Millions of women admire the 67-year-old for breaking through the glass ceiling of male dominance in politics, and she's been lauded as an impressive role model for girls. But when it comes to the situation of women in Germany, Merkel—who said in 2018 that she wouldn't seek reelection in this Sunday's general election—has been criticized for not using her position enough to push for more gender equality.

[Australia's Fraser Island Reclaims K'gari, Its Original Indigenous Name](#) [Deepa Shivaram, *NPR*, 20 September 2021]

A tourist hot spot off the coast of Australia, Fraser Island, will once again be known as K'gari, its original Indigenous name, the Queensland government announced. The island, which is located roughly 200 miles north of Brisbane on the eastern coast of Australia, was inhabited by the Butchulla Aboriginal people for thousands of years. They have been advocating for the island's name to be reverted back to its original name—which translates to paradise—for years, the Queensland government said. The name Fraser comes from Eliza Fraser, a Scottish woman who was shipwrecked on the island in the 1800s and, after she was rescued, claimed the island's native people mistreated her. Jade Gould, the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation Chairperson, said Fraser's narrative “directly lead to the massacre and dispossession of the Butchulla people.” The move to rename the island, which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was celebrated Saturday with a ceremony that included Butchulla representatives and elders, the government said.

[Boxer sparks row in Italy over neo-Nazi tattoos](#) [Lorenzo Tondo, *The Irish Times*, 21 September 2021]

A boxing title match has sparked a row in Italy after it emerged that one of the contenders had several neo-Nazi tattoos. The boxer, Michele Broili, 28, was defeated on Sunday night in Trieste for the super-featherweight title by Hassan Nourdine, 34, in a match that reignited the debate in Italy on the display of Nazi and fascist symbols. Sports authorities are examining how it was possible that a boxer with tattoos including a flag with the inscription SS was allowed to be a member of the professional Italian Boxing Federation (FPI). The match was broadcast live on the Gazzetta dello Sport website, the largest sports newspaper in Italy. It provoked anger in thousands of viewers, who objected to the numerous Nazi symbols tattooed on Broili's body, including the number 88, a White supremacist numerical code for Heil Hitler; the totenkopf, a symbol of the paramilitary unit that helped run concentration camps in Nazi Germany; and the logo of a skinhead organisation from Veneto. Before the bout, Broili also made the fascist salute to his staff.

[Divided Swiss to vote on same-sex marriage](#) [Silke Koltowitz, Brenna Hughes Neghaiwi and Cecile Mantovani, Reuters, 22 September 2021]

Swiss voters decide on Sunday whether to allow same-sex couples to wed and adopt children after a highly charged campaign pitted gay rights activists against conservative opponents in one of the last Western European countries to still ban gay marriage. The federal government and parliament approved opening civil marriage to same-sex couples, but opponents forced a referendum on the issue under Switzerland's system of direct democracy. During the campaign, opponents of the reform used images of crying babies, while supporters waved "Yes, I do" rainbow flags at the Zurich and Geneva pride parades. The share of voters set to approve same-sex marriage fell to 63% in the latest poll by gfs.bern for broadcaster SRG, while the share of those against rose to 35%, versus 69% and 29% a month earlier.

[Dutch king unveils Holocaust name monument in Amsterdam](#) [Mike Corder, The Associated Press, 19 September 2021]

King Willem-Alexander officially unveiled a new memorial in the heart of Amsterdam's historic Jewish Quarter on Sunday honoring more than 102,000 Dutch victims of the Holocaust, and the Dutch prime minister vowed that it would remind citizens today to be vigilant against antisemitism. Designed by Polish-Jewish architect Daniel Libeskind, the memorial is made up of walls shaped to form four Hebrew letters spelling out a word that translates as "In Memory Of." The walls are built using bricks, each of which is inscribed with the name, date of birth and age when they died of one of the more than 102,000 Jews, Roma and Sinti who were murdered in Nazi concentration camps during World War II or who died on their way to the camps. The memorial is built close to a former concert hall where Jews rounded up by Amsterdam's wartime Nazi occupiers were held before being sent to the camps.

[Germany's diversity shows as immigrants run for parliament](#) [Kirsten Grieshaber, The Associated Press, 22 September 2021]

Ana-Maria Trasnea was 13 when she emigrated from Romania because her single, working mother believed she would have a better future in Germany. Now 27, she is running for a seat in parliament. Trasnea, who is running for the center-left Social Democrats in Sunday's election, is one of hundreds of candidates with immigrant roots who are seeking a seat in Germany's lower

house of parliament, or Bundestag. While the number in office still doesn't reflect their overall percentage of the population, the country's growing ethnic diversity is increasingly visible in politics. "A lot has changed in Germany in the last few decades. The population has become much more diverse," says Julius Lagodny, a Cornell University political scientist who has researched migration and political representation in Germany. "Young immigrants are not only striving for political offices across almost all parties in Germany, they are demanding them. There's a whole new sense of assertiveness now."

[India Opens Its Highest Military Ranks to Women After Lengthy Fight](#) [Hari Kumar and Emily Schmall, *The New York Times*, 22 September 2021]

India's Supreme Court on Wednesday opened the door for women to pursue military careers at the highest levels, a major milestone in a country where gender inequality is rife and where women have been leaving the work force in droves. The court ordered the government to allow women in November, for the first time, to take the entrance exam to India's premier defense academy, the pipeline for the country's top army, navy and air force commanders. While the court allowed the government to continue to exclude women from most combat roles, the ruling could encourage more women to pursue careers in the military. Women make up a tiny fraction of the more than 1.3 million people serving in India's armed forces, among the world's largest. They are able to serve as officers, but their upside was limited because they could not attend the elite military academy. Similar schools in the United States, like the Naval Academy and the Air Force Academy, began to admit women in 1976.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

MISCONDUCT

[Civilian boss takes charge of Army CID for first time](#) [Rachel Nostrnat, *Army Times*, 17 September 2021]

Special Agent Gregory Ford became the first civilian director of the Army's Criminal Investigation Command, better known by its older acronym CID. Ford, who has more than 20 years of experience in local and federal law enforcement, is the first civilian special agent serving as director since the establishment of CID as a major command post in 1971. The appointment of a civilian special agent as director comes on the heels of controversy—notably the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee's inquiry that was prompted by the April 2020 murder of Spc. Vanessa Guillen at the Texas installation. The restructuring also increases the ratio of civilian criminal investigators to military special agents. That's intended to address concerns about inexperience noted in the Fort Hood report, as well as to strengthen Army partnerships with civilian law enforcement agencies.

[Former Air Force contractor sentenced for taking classified information](#) [Todd Smith, *Air Force Times*, 22 September 2021]

A former Air Force contractor was sentenced in federal court Tuesday for his role in taking an estimated 2,500 pages of classified information while working for the Air Force between 2016 and 2019. Izaak Vincent Kemp, 36, of Fairborn, Ohio, was charged in January and pleaded guilty in February to unauthorized removal and retention of classified documents or material,

according to a U.S. Attorney's Office release. On May 25, 2019, the 36-year-old awoke to at least 10 agents in tactical gear in his house, with an armored vehicle outside and drones flying overhead, according to court documents. Those agents found more than 100 documents, containing an estimated 2,500 pages of material classified at the secret level, according to the release. "Despite having training on various occasions on how to safeguard classified material, Kemp took 112 classified documents and retained them at his home," acting U.S. Attorney Vipal J. Patel's Office said in a statement.

[Four soldiers arrested after shooting in Louisiana](#) [Leila Barghouthy, *Army Times*, 22 September 2021]

Four Fort Polk soldiers were arrested after a suspected gang-related shooting in Beauregard Parish, Louisiana, late Monday night, according to local law enforcement. The DeRidder Police Department and the Beauregard Parish Sheriff's Office issued a joint statement detailing the alleged Sept. 20 shooting, in which one person was injured while escaping gunfire. Pfc. Quazier T. Watterson, 19; Pfc. Trevian J. Cherry, 23; Spc. Joshua D. Galloway VI, 24; and Pfc. Tavon M. Williams, 19, were arrested for criminal conspiracy to commit attempted armed robbery, aggravated assault with a firearm, illegal use of weapons or other dangerous instrumentalities, and aggravated criminal damage to property. Police are looking into whether the incident may be gang-related, as another shooting took place at the same location on Sept. 11. "Detectives believe last night's shooting is related to the recent activity from the so-called gangs after they arrested two more juveniles in Leesville," the sheriff's office and police said.

[In shift, DHS head says images from border "horrified" him](#) [Alexandra Jaffe and Ben Fox, *The Associated Press*, 21 September 2021]

Photos and video of a Border Patrol agent on horseback using his long leather reins to lash at Haitian migrants along the U.S.-Mexico border prompted expressions of outrage Tuesday from Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, who sought to explain away the action a day earlier during a visit to South Texas. "Any mistreatment or abuse of a migrant is unacceptable," Mayorkas said in an interview with CNN. "The pictures that I've observed troubled me profoundly." Customs and Border Protection's Office of Professional Responsibility is investigating the incident, DHS said in a statement issued late Monday. The announcement came hours after the secretary appeared alongside Border Patrol Chief Raul Ortiz to discuss U.S. efforts to clear an encampment of thousands of Haitian migrants in and around the small city of Del Rio that has emerged suddenly in recent days.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Top Army spokesperson suspended after abysmal climate survey](#) [Davis Winkie and Meghann Myers, *Army Times*, 22 September 2021]

The Army's highest-ranking public affairs officer and top spokesperson has been suspended from her duties after 97 percent of respondents to a command climate survey for her office reported "workplace hostility." Brig. Gen. Amy E. Johnston took over as the service's chief of public affairs in April 2019, according to her [official biography](#). In that role, she is "responsible for all communications activities involving the United States Army" and she serves as the principal public affairs advisor to the Army secretary and chief of staff. *Army Times* obtained slides

detailing a recent command climate survey that revealed massive dissatisfaction within the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs. Johnston's suspension came in the wake of a command climate survey that revealed alarming conditions at OCPA. Of the soldiers and Army civilians who responded to the survey, 97 percent reported "workplace hostility," which is a key indicator of potential toxic leadership issues, according to the slides.

RACISM

[Disturbing, racist petition prompts parents to call for accountability at this KC school](#) [Bill Lutkitch, *The Kansas City Star* (Kansas City, Mo.), 21 September 2021]

Parents in the Park Hill School District are demanding accountability for the student or students behind a racist petition last week that they say was a call to bring back slavery. The school district has shared few specific details about the incident, which originated at Park Hill South High School last week. Nicole Kirby, a district spokeswoman, said Tuesday that the matter is considered a "discipline incident" and therefore the amount of information the district may share is limited, including the number of students involved or the exact details of what transpired. In an email to parents on Friday, LEAD Innovation Studio principal Ryan Staley said the incident involved "unacceptable and racist statements that some students posted online during a school-related activity." He said LEAD Innovation Studio was offering additional resources for students including counseling on Tuesday. Asked directly if the vaguely described racist incident was in fact a petition seeking the reinstatement of slavery, Staley said that was his "understanding."

[Two men charged in anti-Semitic hate crime incident at Los Angeles restaurant](#) [Sarah Moon, CNN, 21 September 2021]

Charges have been filed against two men who allegedly were involved in an anti-Semitic hate crime attack that injured five people at a Los Angeles restaurant in May, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced Tuesday. Xavier Pabon, 30, and Samer Jayylusi, 36, were each charged with two felony counts of assault by means of force likely to cause great bodily injury, the district attorney's office said in a news release. They are accused of attacking two men outside the restaurant because of their religion, according to the release. "The criminal complaint also includes a hate crime allegation," the release said. Witness reports said Jewish people dining at the restaurant were targeted by a group of pro-Palestinian men driving past in vehicles. A woman who said she was dining at the restaurant told CNN that the people in the cars began throwing bottles at them and yelled anti-Semitic slurs, including the words "dirty Jew."

RELIGION

[Harvard's Atheist-Chaplain Controversy](#) [Nick Paumgarten, *The New Yorker*, 11 September 2021]

At the end of August, [the Times](#) ran a story about a Harvard chaplain named Greg Epstein, an avowed atheist and "humanist rabbi," who had been selected by his fellow-chaplains at the university (there are more than thirty of them, of diverse faiths) to serve as their president. Here was an ivory-tower man-bites-dog tale that elicited some context about the ascendancy of secularism, both at a particular institution (one founded, almost four centuries ago, essentially as

a seminary) and in the culture at large. “We don’t look to a god for answers,” Epstein told the paper. “We are each other’s answers.” Other outlets, including the [Boston Globe](#) and [NPR](#), took up the story. Some suggested, erroneously, that Epstein had been tapped to head the divinity school, while the [Daily Mail](#) seemed to imply that Harvard had empowered Epstein to lead the entire university. Religious leaders took offense. Of the Times piece, the Harvard Christian Alumni Society stated, “It seems written in a way to prompt secular triumphalism and to provoke Christian outrage.”

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

[How Will the Religious Exemption to the Federal Employee COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Work?](#)

[George Chuzi, *Government Executive*, 23 September 2021]

What about the religious exemption? Who is eligible to claim it, and under what circumstances is the claim likely to be accepted? The short answer is: almost anyone can claim it, but not many will receive it. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has adopted guidance that prohibits discrimination—treating an employee differently—based upon “his or her religious beliefs.” Specifically, the guidance notes that it protects not only members of “traditional, organized religions,” but also “others who have sincerely held religious, ethical or moral beliefs.” In a decision in Prince v. Massachusetts from 1944, the Supreme Court held that, “The right to practice religion freely does not include liberty to expose the community or the child to communicable disease or the latter to ill health or death.” The EEOC’s guidance similarly provides that accommodating a religious belief may be an “undue hardship” if it “compromises workplace safety [or] infringes on the rights of other employees.” The new Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance cautions that “determining whether an exception is legally required will include consideration of factors such as—the reasonably foreseeable effects on the agency’s operations, including protecting other agency employees and the public from COVID-19.”

[The key to Bhutan’s happiness](#) [Stephanie Zubiri, *BBC News*, 21 September 2021]

“Happiness is the concern of everyone,” said His Eminence Khedrupchen Rinpoche. “Whether or not you acknowledge it, this is the purpose of every human being.” The Fifth Reincarnate and head of the Sangchen Ogyen Tsuklag Monastery in Trongsa, Bhutan, Rinpoche knows all about the pursuit of happiness. Ascending to his position at the age of 19 in 2009, he was one of the youngest ever Rinpoches (spiritual master) in Bhutan at the time. Now 31, he has dedicated the last 12 years of his life to teaching the world about Buddhist principles and how they can be applied to make life happier every day, regardless of one’s culture or religion. Sandwiched between the economic and political powerhouses of China and India, with a population of just more than 760,000, the Kingdom of Bhutan is known around the globe for its unconventional measure of national development: Gross National Happiness (GNH). The concept was implemented in 1972 by the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck. Eschewing traditional economic quantifications, Bhutan assesses its country’s overall wellbeing on the basis of sustainable and equitable socio-economic development; environmental conservation; preservation and promotion of culture; and good governance.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[New SHARP policy grants additional services to Army Civilians](#) [Thomas Brading, *Army News Service*, 17 September 2021]

The safety and well-being of all Department of the Army Civilians, or DACs, is at the forefront of a [policy unveiled Friday](#), which now allows them to receive Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention services. “The Army has worked tirelessly to ensure parity for Army Civilians when it comes to SHARP services,” said Jill Londagin, SHARP program director. In the past, only DACs working overseas or in a deployed environment qualified for limited SHARP services. The only exception was if DACs were also dependents. The latest policy opens the door for DACs to receive SHARP services, whether appropriated or non-appropriated civilians, regardless of where they are in the world. However, despite not including contractors or interns, those individuals can still see a sexual assault response coordinator, or SARC, to ask questions about finding resources without making a report. Although the new policy is intended to assist civilians, they will not be required to use the services and the policy will not change the terms and conditions of their employment, as SHARP services are strictly voluntary.

[Sexual assault linked to later brain damage in women, study finds](#) [Sande LaMotte, *CNN*, 22 September 2021]

*The new study, which will publish soon in the journal *Brain Imaging and Behavior*, looked for signs of white matter hyperintensities in the brain scans of 145 midlife women with no prior history of cardiovascular disease, stroke or dementia. However, 68% of participants had experienced trauma, and for 23% of the women, that trauma was sexual assault. White matter hyperintensities, which show up as small spots of white on MRIs, are markers of disruptions in blood flow that have left damage in the brain. “It could be either childhood sexual abuse or adult sexual assault,” said study author Rebecca Thurston, a professor and director of the Women’s Biobehavioral Health Laboratory at the University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate School of Public Health. In addition, a [2018 study](#) Thurston conducted found women who reported prior sexual assault were three times more likely to experience depression and twice as likely to have elevated anxiety and insomnia than women without a history of sexual trauma. Depression, anxiety and sleep disorders are all linked to poorer health outcomes, including heart disease, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Sexual harassment: San Jose State University to pay \\$1.6 million to athletes inappropriately touched by trainer](#) [Emily Deruy, Julia Prodis Sulek and Michael Nowels, *Marin Independent Journal (Marin County, Calif.)*, 21 September 2021]

San Jose State University will pay \$1.6 million to student athletes sexually harassed by an athletic trainer as part of a settlement with the U.S. Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of California. Under the settlement, announced Tuesday, the university must also improve its process for responding to complaints of sexual harassment, improve its Title IX office, prevent retaliation and other steps. For more than a decade, the Justice Department said, SJSU failed to adequately respond to reports of sexual harassment and sexual assault of female student-athletes, exposing more students to harm in the process. An athletic trainer, multiple student athletes said, touched their breasts, groins and other areas during on-campus treatments. As this news organization previously reported, the

university's athletic program came under fire for allowing former athletic trainer Scott Shaw to work with athletes years after swimmers came forward with the disturbing allegations.

[Suits against Ohio State over sex abuse by doc are dismissed](#) [Kantele Franko, *The Associated Press*, 23 September 2021]

A federal judge dismissed some of the biggest unsettled lawsuits over Ohio State's failure to stop decades-old sexual abuse by now-deceased team doctor Richard Strauss, saying Wednesday it's indisputable Strauss abused hundreds of young men but agreeing with OSU's argument that the legal window for such claims had passed. "For decades, many at Ohio State tasked with protecting and training students and young athletes instead turned a blind eye to Strauss's exploitation," U.S. District Court Judge Michael Watson wrote in one ruling. "From 1979 to 2018, Ohio State utterly failed these victims. Plaintiffs beseech this Court to hold Ohio State accountable, but today, the legal system also fails Plaintiffs." The matter isn't done. Strauss-related lawsuits against OSU filed this year by dozens of other plaintiffs appeared to still be pending, with no dismissal or other new rulings appearing on those dockets as of late Wednesday. And lawyers for the 200-plus plaintiffs whose cases were dismissed immediately vowed to appeal.

SUICIDE

[30,177 Military Members Have Died by Suicide since 9/11. Why?](#) [Kat McAlpine, *Futurity*, 15 September 2021]

In the 20 years since the September 11 terror attacks, four times as many deaths among members of the military have been caused by suicide compared to those killed in action. While these high suicide rates can partially be attributed to the mental health toll of participating in war—exposure to trauma, stress, access to guns, difficulty returning to civilian life after duty—there are additional factors, one of the biggest being traumatic brain injury, unique to the wars stemming from 9/11, that contribute to the rising suicide rates among military members, says Thomas "Ben" Suitt, who earlier this year earned a PhD from Boston University's graduate program in religion, specializing in the sociology of religion in the military and social ethics. In [his findings](#), published in June, he firstly points out that there's been an increase in military sexual trauma, which he says can be complexly traumatizing because victims often have to continue working alongside their attacker. "[Military sexual trauma](#) affects 55% of women and 38% of men," he says. "Seventy-one percent of female veterans are seeking therapy to treat [post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)] from military sexual trauma."

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Fort Drum's command team says soldier suicides were wakeup call](#) [Lexi Bruening, *WWNYTV.com* (Carthage, N.Y.), 22 September 2021]

After losing three 10th Mountain Division soldiers to suicide, Fort Drum's command team says it's a wakeup call for post leaders. "What did we miss? Where did we fail? And how can we prevent this? We're doing, for the lack of better words, mental gymnastics to think, what are we missing?" Those are the big questions that come to mind for Command Sergeant Major Mario Terenas after three 10th Mountain Division soldiers died to suicide last weekend. While the three

soldiers were all stationed at Fort Drum, they didn't serve in the same unit. One did just return from Afghanistan, but officials don't believe that was a main factor. "I can tell you factually, the primary reason was not because of coming from Afghanistan," said Terenas. What he can tell us is that there's going to be more emphasis on making connections moving forward. "Get to know each other. Soldiers get to know their peers. Soldiers get to know their leaders, and vice versa," said Terenas.

[This is how to respond to a veteran contemplating suicide](#) [Duane K. France, *Task & Purpose*, 19 September 2021] [COMMENTARY]

Editor's note: If you or a veteran you know is in crisis, you can call the Veterans Crisis Line, call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

I was coming to the end of my career, and volunteering with a local organization as a veteran peer mentor. I wasn't a mental health counselor yet, just trying help other vets. Someone in the program thought he was thinking of hurting himself. So I called him and asked him. That's the first step: Get them on the phone. It doesn't matter that you're not a medic, or a therapist, or a first responder. It doesn't matter to your friend, and it shouldn't matter to you: The fact is, you are now the one connection to life that they have. Intimidating? You better believe it. That veteran's life is in your hands in a very real and critical way. You have to view suicide like any other kind of danger. You would do literally everything you could to save your friend, whether it's from a burning building, a car accident, or a heart attack. Suicide calls for the same kind of immediate action.

[The three-headed monster we must now defeat: mental illness, stigma, and suicide](#) [Gregg F. Martin, *Air Force Times*, 20 September 2021] [COMMENTARY]

September is National Suicide Prevention Month, a month in which we shine a light on one of the most misunderstood and stigmatized human experiences. I see this month as a call to arms, not in the sense of weapons, but rather in the form of people working together. That said, if we are to leverage the opportunity this month affords us to prevent suicide, we first need to understand suicide. Most all suicides result from a combination of two things: a mental health disorder—depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), morale injury, survivors guilt, etc., and aggravating social factors such as relationship problems, death of a loved one, loss of job and associated purpose, legal issues—or financial difficulties. Unfortunately, the destructive clash of these forces far too often ends in the death of hope for the one who is suffering and ending their lives by their own hand. For me, this hits home on a deeply personal level.

[VA zeroes in on gun safety as a way to reduce veteran suicides](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 22 September 2021]

Veterans Affairs officials want to talk about your guns. Staff working on suicide prevention are planning to increase their focus on the importance of lethal means safety as part of their suicide prevention campaign. On Wednesday, VA officials said that will include more training for staff and more public service announcements for veterans on best practices for gun storage and mental health help. "We are not gearing any campaign or messaging towards restriction," Dr.

Matthew Miller, executive director of VA's Suicide Prevention Program, told members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on Wednesday. "We are gearing our messaging and campaign towards safety, time and space between a person, a firearm and ammunition. "A [pause] of 10 to 20 minutes can be life saving."

VETERANS

[LGBT vets with other than honorable discharges will get VA benefits under new plan](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 17 September 2021]

Tens of thousands of LGBT veterans forced from the military for their sexual orientation and given other-than-honorable discharges will be able to receive full Veterans Affairs benefits despite their dismissal status under a new move set to be announced Monday. The change comes as the country approaches the 10th anniversary of repeal of the controversial "don't ask, don't tell" law which forced nearly 14,000 service members out of the ranks for admitting their sexual orientation. But the impact of the new VA announcement goes further than just those individuals, to potentially include troops who served before and after the law who may have been given bad performance reviews or intimidated into leaving the military because of their LGBT status. Outside advocates estimate as many as 100,000 over the last 70 years may have been involuntarily separated from the military based on their sexual orientation. Data on how many received other-than-honorable discharges is not available.

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[The Only American Female POW in WWII Europe Had to Fight for Her Status](#) [Blake Stilwell, *Military.com*, 21 September 2021]

Reba Whittle was ready to join the Army Nurse Corps long before the United States entered World War II. She had no idea that before the war was over, she would earn a place in World War II history but never be recognized for it in her lifetime. Flight nurses are the champions of medical care in the skies, especially for wounded troops returning from the front. During World War II, flight nursing was still a young concept, but by the end of the war, it was recognized as a must-have. On Sept. 27th 1944, Lt. Whittle's C-47 was headed for a collection point near St. Trond, Belgium. Somehow it had flown some 40 miles off course and entered the outskirts of Aachen, Germany. As it approached Aachen, the skies opened up with German flak fire, riddling the aircraft with shrapnel, killing one pilot and wounding the other. Whittle also was wounded in the attack, and the plane went down. As the wounded crew escaped the burning wreck, they were captured by German soldiers. In 1950, Whittle began the appeals process to get a military retirement. They determined her injuries, which included taking flak above a German city and surviving a plane crash before being held in a POW camp, were not combat related, so she only received back pay to the date she filed her appeal.