

## DEOMI NEWS LINKS 1 OCTOBER 2021

### HIGHLIGHTS

[Department of Defense Releases Calendar Year 2020 Annual Suicide Report](#) [*DOD News*, 30 September 2021]

*Today, the Department of Defense (DOD) released the [Calendar Year \(CY\) 2020 Annual Suicide Report \(ASR\)](#). We continue to take action to prevent suicides while supporting our military members and their families. Every death by suicide is a tragedy. The CY 2020 ASR presents recent suicide data for Service members and their families, and describes current and future efforts underway to combat suicide. While suicide rates are not going in the desired direction, the Department did not see a statistical change in suicide rates between CY 2020 and CY 2019 or CY 2018 that would indicate a COVID-19-related increase. We recognize the impact of COVID-19 on the well-being of our force and our Nation. During this time, we continue our efforts to educate and support the force, promote a variety of resources such as mental telehealth resources and financial counseling, and emphasize social connectedness.*

[SEE ALSO]

[Secretary of Defense Statement on DOD Annual Suicide Report \(CY2020\)](#) [*DOD News*, 30 September 2021]

[Suicide spikes 15% among U.S. troops in 2020 from the previous year](#) [Tom Vanden Brook, *USA TODAY*, 29 September 2021]

[A Proclamation on National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 2021](#) [Joseph R. Biden, Jr., *The White House Press Office*, 30 September 2021]

*When we passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 31 years ago, our Nation moved closer to fulfilling its foundational promise of liberty, justice, dignity, and equality for all. I was enormously proud to co-sponsor the ADA as a member of the United States Senate—a truly bipartisan effort that was personal to millions of families. For more than 60 million disabled Americans, the ADA is much more than just a law. It provides a vital source of opportunity and self-sufficiency, allows for increased economic participation, and serves as a powerful shield against discrimination in the workplace. National Disability Employment Awareness Month is a chance for us to celebrate workers with disabilities and recommit ourselves to dismantling barriers to access and inclusion in the workplace. This year, the Office of Disability Employment Policy in the Department of Labor celebrates 20 years of helping advance opportunity for workers with disabilities across the Nation.*

[Watchdog Considers Review of Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Process for Feds](#)

[Courtney Bubl , *Government Executive*, 27 September 2021]

*A watchdog is considering a request from Democratic lawmakers to look at how the Equal Employment Opportunity complaint process and anti-harassment programs for federal employees could possibly be reformed. Unlike the EEO process in other sectors, federal employees must first file complaints in their own agencies 45 days after an incident. If the matter isn't resolved at the formal stage, the complainant can file a formal complaint and then agencies can either deny or*

launch an investigation. If there is an investigation, employees may accept their findings or request a hearing before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. This is “unduly complex for victims,” said an April 2020 report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. They added that the April 2020 report, titled “Federal #MeToo: Examining Sexual Harassment in Government Workplaces,” confirmed many of their concerns as well as “highlighted the importance of agency anti-harassment programs,” many of which are ineffective, according to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

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## CULTURE

[10 years after “don’t ask, don’t tell,” cadets see progress](#) [Dave Collins, *The Associated Press*, 25 September 2021]

*Kelli Normoyle was nervous as she arrived at the Coast Guard Academy campus in Connecticut in 2008. She had come out as a lesbian to a few friends near the end of high school, but she faced a military environment where “don’t ask, don’t tell” was still the policy prohibiting gay people from serving openly. She kept quiet about her sexuality for her freshman year, fearing expulsion and the ruin of her not-yet-begun career. She started testing the waters her second year. “OK, maybe this is somebody that I can trust, maybe this is somebody that identifies the way I do,” said Normoyle, now a lieutenant on the cutter Sanibel, based in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. “But then you always have that moment that was that kind of leap of faith.” Marking the 10th anniversary this week of the end of “don’t ask, don’t tell,” a new generation of military academy students say that their campuses are now tolerant, welcoming and inclusive for the most part—but that more work needs to be done.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Activist, historian, writer among “genius grant” recipients](#) [Don Babwin, *The Associated Press*, 29 September 2021]

*A historian devoted to keeping alive the stories of long-dead victims of racial violence along the Texas-Mexico border and a civil rights activist whose mission is to make sure people who leave prison are free to walk into the voting booth are among this year’s MacArthur fellows and recipients of “genius grants.” The Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation on Tuesday [announced the 25 recipients](#), who will each receive \$625,000. The historian and the activist are part of an eclectic group that includes scientists, economists, poets, and filmmakers. As in previous years, the work of several recipients involves topics that have been dominating the news—from voting rights to how history is taught in schools. Race figures prominently in the work of about half of them, including that of Ibram X. Kendi, author of “How to be an Antiracist” and “Stamped from the Beginning,” which was a National Book Award winner for nonfiction.*

[Army Women Are Being Harangued Over Hair as Superiors Ignore New Rules](#) [Steve Beynon, *Military.com*, 30 September 2021]

*Cpt. Kelsey Boursinos just arrived in Hawaii to serve with the 25th Infantry Division in September, but before she could settle into her new assignment, she quickly found herself at the center of a controversy regarding her hair. Two senior enlisted leaders blasted her for having what they saw as unauthorized French braids. The problem: She was in the right and wearing her hair in accordance with new hair policies set for women five months ago. Military.com spoke with eight women serving in the Army across different units and bases, all of who have similar stories of mostly male senior leaders telling them their hair is out of regulation, or that they disapprove of their hairstyle, despite fresh Army guidance granting women more flexibility with braids, ponytails and highlights. “It sounds silly because it’s hair, right? But having the experience I had, I think about someone’s ability to lead. If we’re stuck on someone’s hair, how are we treating people on bigger issues?” Boursinos said. “The regulation exists for a reason; we don’t get to pick and choose what we follow. I am worried about how more junior female soldiers are treated.”*

[“Believing” Is A Book Only Anita Hill Could Have Written](#) [Danielle Kurtzleben, NPR, 27 September 2021] [REVIEW]

*Anita Hill stares frankly out from the cover of her new book, Believing—which, if you only know her from the 1991 Clarence Thomas Supreme Court hearings, may lead you to expect the book to be something it's not. Believing: Our Thirty-Year Journey to End Gender Violence is not a book about Anita Hill. Yes, it has plenty of her personal stories and, yes, it references her role at the center of the Supreme Court hearing firestorm that first acquainted many Americans with the concept of “sexual harassment.” But Anita Hill has spent the decades since then as a scholar—she is now a professor of social policy, law, and women’s, gender and sexuality studies at Brandeis University. After herself being a high-profile example of harassment, she went on to study it and become a highly respected scholar on women’s rights. The book first attempts to show how massive problems like harassment and assault are affecting everyone from the smallest children to adults, from the lowest-wage workers to the highest-paid celebrities. Then, Hill shows both the effects of the problem—the ways it not only hurts individuals but hampers political change and economic growth—and the myriad barriers to solving it.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Blackness and Latinidad are not mutually exclusive. Here’s what it means to be Afro-Latino in America](#) [Amir Vera and Alexander Pineda, CNN, 26 September 2021]

*In the last decade, the number of people across the U.S. who identify as Black and Hispanic has increased 11.6%, according to a CNN analysis of census data. The national debate around race along with a growing trend of young Black Latinos embracing their roots in a way that older generations may have not are some of the factors behind the uptick, experts say. African roots in Latin America can be traced to the 1500s when the majority of enslaved Africans brought to the Americas landed in the Caribbean. Intermingling between Africans, indigenous people and the European Spaniards over generations occurred as a result of the slave trade. Ultimately, defining what it means to be Afro-Latino is personal and can be subjective, multiple scholars and Afro-Latinos told CNN. Ultimately, defining what it means to be Afro-Latino is personal and can be subjective, multiple scholars and Afro-Latinos told CNN. A [2019 Pew Research survey](#) highlighted how darker skin color is associated with more frequent experiences of discrimination*

*among Latinos, including people questioning their intelligence, being the subject of jokes and unfair treatment from police.*

[Court says city can ban Confederate flag in veterans parade](#) [Kate Brumback, *The Associated Press*, 28 September 2021]

*A Georgia city did not violate the constitutional rights of a Sons of Confederate Veterans group when it banned the Confederate battle flag from its annual parade honoring veterans of American wars, a federal appeals court ruled Tuesday. Richard Leake and Michael Dean sued Alpharetta, an Atlanta suburb, in August 2019 after city officials said the Sons of Confederate Veterans could participate in the annual Old Soldiers Day Parade but could not display the battle flag. The federal civil rights lawsuit accused the city of violating the group's right to free speech under the First and Fourteenth Amendments. U.S. District Judge William Ray in June 2020 ruled in favor of the city, finding that the parade amounted to government speech. Leake and Dean appealed to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. A three-judge panel of the appeals court heard arguments in the case on Friday and on Tuesday issued an opinion upholding the lower court's ruling.*

[An Emancipation Statue Debuts In Virginia Two Weeks After Robert E. Lee Was Removed](#) [Deepa Shivaram, *NPR*, 22 September 2021]

*Two weeks after the 60-foot-tall statue of Robert E. Lee was removed in Richmond, Va., the former Confederate capital city has become home to a new statue, this one commemorating the abolition of slavery. The Emancipation and Freedom Monument—designed by Thomas Jay Warren, a sculptor based in Oregon—was unveiled Wednesday on Brown's Island on the James River in downtown Richmond, about 2 miles from where the Lee statue once stood. [State Sen. Jennifer] McClellan who is head of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, which took the lead on commissioning the statue, has been working to build the monument since 2011. The monument was originally supposed to be revealed in 2019 as part of the 400th anniversary of 1619, when the first enslaved Africans arrived in Virginia. But the fact that the monument will now make its debut after some of the largest Confederate statues in Richmond of Lee and other generals are gone is a moment of "poetic justice," McClellan says.*

[Highlighting heritage: Petty Officer 3rd Class Cassandra Castillo](#) [Petty Officer 3rd Class Diolanda Caballero, *U.S. Coast Guard District 13 Public Affairs*, 24 September 2021]

*Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Cassandra Castillo's dream to work in the medical field began when she was a little girl. Growing up, she was passionate about helping others but did not know how to find opportunities to begin a career where she could serve others. Growing up in Fort Worth, Texas, Castillo's family focused on ensuring Castillo and her siblings assimilated to American culture, school, and keeping a safe home to sleep in at night. When Castillo was young, planning for her future was not a priority as she focused on adjusting to life and fitting in at school as a fourth-generation Mexican-American. Castillo joined the Coast Guard in 2017 and said she has always felt welcome at her Coast Guard units, but admits she struggles with the lack of diversity in her current duty station's community. "My biggest challenge is not being around more people who can relate to my background and heritage," she said. "Texas is incredibly diverse. It's challenging not being around people who look or sound like me, but my shipmates always do their best to make me feel like I'm at home."*

[Hudson Valley's Forge Project supports established, emerging Indigenous leaders](#) [Michelle Falkenstein, *The Journal News (White Plains, N.Y.)*, 29 September 2021]

*Writer and environmental advocate Jasmine Neosh, a member of the Menominee Nation, laments that her people have forgotten centuries of knowledge about native plants. During the pandemic, she says, this lost wisdom was felt even more acutely. "Many tribes were hit hard by economic hardship," says Neosh, a student in the Sustainable Development Institute at the College of Menominee Nation in Wisconsin. "In my panic, I realized that we are going to have to learn how to feed ourselves." And so, Neosh undertook a project to find out about edible flora on the Menominee reservation. In recognition of her efforts to create a more sustainable food system for her people, Neosh was named one of four inaugural winners of a Forge Project Fellowship, a program designed to support established and emerging Indigenous leaders working in land justice, education, food security and culture. This year's winners were chosen by Forge Project Director of Education Heather Bruegl (Oneida/Stockbridge-Munsee). "The land has taken care of us for thousands of years," she says. "I want to get people back to it." Bruegl believes the Forge Project shows the resiliency of indigenous people. "I hope our ancestors can see what we are doing," she says.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Idolatry surrenders to humanity in new Lee biography](#) [Douglass K. Daniel, *The Associated Press*, 27 September 2021] [REVIEW]

*"Robert E. Lee: A Life" by Allen C. Guelzo (Knopf) Controversy over the equestrian memorial to Robert E. Lee on stately Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia, was once limited to the removal of the blue-green oxidation from his bronze statue. In the wake of the banishment of the Confederate capital's last major totem to the "Lost Cause," Allen C. Guelzo's timely biography expertly scrubs off 150 years of political and cultural patina accumulated since the renowned general's passing to reveal a tragic humanity. Guelzo establishes Lee's antebellum character with a series of portraits beginning with his family's prominence in Virginia and the mercurial career of his father, a hero of the Revolutionary War who later spent time in a debtors' prison. The fame and the shame proved to be a dual burden for Robert Edward Lee (1807-1870) even after his appointment to the U.S. Military Academy and a series of infrastructure assignments with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.*

[NASA won't rename James Webb Space Telescope despite controversy](#) [Joseph Choi, *The Hill*, 30 September 2021]

*NASA says it has no plans for renaming the James Webb Space Telescope, which was named after a former administrator who permitted the government to discriminate against lesbian and gay employees. Speaking to NPR, NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said, "We have found no evidence at this time that warrants changing the name of the James Webb Space Telescope." The telescope is regarded as the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope and is expected to launch by the end of this year. However more than a thousand people signed a petition earlier this year calling for the telescope to be renamed due to Webb allegedly being complicit in the purge of LGBT people from government service, known as the "Lavender Scare." The [letter](#) reads that "under Webb's leadership, queer people were persecuted. Those who would excuse Webb's failure of leadership cannot simultaneously award him credit for his management of Apollo."*

*After the letter was made public, NASA opened an investigation to examine the allegation against Webb.*

[Nonbinary characters like “Gonzo-rella” are lighting up children’s TV and encouraging self-acceptance](#) [Scottie Andrew, CNN, 25 September 2021]

*Earlier this summer, a new princess giddily square-danced onto the scene. They’ve got blue fur, a nose shaped like a hook and a thing for chickens. They’re a Muppet—one you’ve probably known for a while. The “Gonzo-rella” episode of “Muppet Babies” is one of the most recent and widely celebrated examples of animated children’s television tackling nonbinary and gender-diverse identity. Earlier this year, “Blue’s Clues & You” shared an animated Pride Parade that featured a nonbinary dolphin that used a wheelchair. Series for older kids, like “She-Ra and the Princesses of Power” and the pioneering “Steven Universe,” center romantic storylines for nonbinary and LGBTQ characters and positive depictions of self-discovery and acceptance. For children whose gender expression may not subscribe to preconceived notions of what a boy or girl should look or act like, it can be hugely significant to see themselves reflected onscreen, even if the characters are puppets or whimsical gem-people who live in a pastel wonderland, said Lindsay Toman, an assistant professor of LGBTQ studies at Colgate University.*

[Oregon school board adopts stricter political symbols ban](#) [The Associated Press, 29 September 2021]

*The move by the Newberg School Board last month to keep staff from displaying BLM or gay pride flags prompted strong criticism and threats to boycott the town of about 25,000 people southwest of Portland and its businesses. Oregon Public Broadcasting reported the board rescinded that rule Tuesday night and enacted a more sweeping policy banning any kind of political symbols, including those that support BLM or LGBTQ issues. Newberg School Board Vice Chair Brian Shannon said after Tuesday’s vote that it was time to move on. “This policy is so innocuous. It just says that teachers can’t display political symbols at work while they’re on school time,” Shannon said. “I don’t want to spend five, six more minutes on this issue, let alone six more weeks.” School Board Director Brandy Penner, who voted against the new, broader policy, said Shannon’s statements were a “ridiculous attempt at pretending this is nothing.” “Maybe it is nothing to you as a White, privileged male,” Penner said. “But, it’s a really big deal to a lot of our community, and a lot of our staff, and a lot of our students.”*

[“Quite intense”: Public offers 27,000 suggestions—including some attacks—on renaming military bases that now honor Confederates](#) [Corey Dickstein, Stars and Stripes, 1 October 2021]

*Among more than 27,000 public submissions of new names for Army bases now honoring Confederate generals were a number of “quite intense” proposals that disparaged the Congress-mandated renaming process, the leader of the commission undertaking the effort said Thursday. “There are some folks who are distinctly opposed [to renaming bases named for Confederates] and the verbiage they used is quite deliberate,” said Michelle Howard, the retired Navy admiral and chairwoman of the Naming Commission. “They make it clear that they do not support the commission.” Howard said the majority of suggestions would be taken into consideration, including 5,000 names proposed multiple times by members of the public. The eight-member commission, which began work in the spring, is charged with providing recommendations to*

*Congress by October 2022. Lawmakers will then instruct the defense secretary to change the names of bases, ships, buildings and other military assets that commemorate the Confederacy. In addition to at least nine Army bases, Howard estimated there were thousands of items across the military that likely qualified to be changed.*

## **DISCRIMINATION**

[Activision Blizzard settles U.S. workplace discrimination suit](#) [Tali Arbel, *The Associated Press*, 28 September 2021]

*Activision Blizzard, the video game maker facing growing legal problems stemming from allegations of a toxic workplace culture, has settled with U.S. workplace discrimination regulators. The company, one of the world's most high-profile gaming companies, reached a deal with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to settle claims, according to court documents filed Monday. The agency had filed suit earlier in the day in federal court in California, the culmination of a nearly three-year investigation. The agency said Activision failed to take effective action after employees complained about sexual harassment, discriminated against employees who were pregnant and retaliated against employees who spoke out, including firing them. Activision said it would create an \$18 million fund to compensate people who were harassed or discriminated against. Money left over would go to charities for women in the video game industry or other gender equity measures. It will also "upgrade" its policies and training on harassment and discrimination and hire an independent consultant to oversee its compliance with the EEOC's conditions.*

[Amazon settles case with former employees who claim they were illegally fired](#) [Nathaniel Meyersohn, *CNN Business*, 30 September 2021]

*Amazon has reached a settlement with two former employees who claimed they were illegally fired after speaking out against the company. Two former Amazon corporate workers, Emily Cunningham and Maren Costa, said that Amazon (AMZN) fired them last year after they organized workers around climate action and warehouse conditions during the pandemic. Amazon said it fired the workers for "repeatedly violating internal policies." A local branch of the United Food and Commercial Workers union in Washington State filed [charges](#) with the National Labor Relations Board last year, alleging that Amazon violated federal labor law by firing the workers. The NLRB in April found merit to the charges, and the agency issued a complaint. An NLRB administrative law judge was set to hold a hearing on the complaint this week. The agreement did not include an admission of liability, according to Amazon and UFCW.*

[Lawsuit: Black base worker faced racism, told to keep quiet](#) [Mead Gruver, *The Associated Press*, 30 September 2021]

*A Black civilian grounds-keeping and kitchen worker at a U.S. Air Force base in Wyoming was retaliated against and ultimately fired for complaining when other workers called him racial epithets, a lawsuit said. A supervisor told Bryan Wheels to keep quiet about the racial harassment, which began soon after he was hired in 2015 and continued through 2017, said the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission lawsuit against Spokane, Washington-based Skils 'kin. At one point, after Wheels complained about a coworker's racist comments, a*

*supervisor put him on a two-man grounds crew with the worker who made the remarks, the lawsuit said. Wheels was the only Black member of the Skils'kin contract crew at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, which oversees 150 Minuteman nuclear missiles in underground silos in Wyoming, Nebraska and Colorado. Skils'kin hires people for contract business and government jobs in Wyoming, Washington and Montana, according to the company's website. The nonprofit subjected Wheels to "severe and persistent racial harassment," the lawsuit said.*

[Title IX probe finds USC Song Girls coach Lori Nelson body shamed, harassed dancers](#) [Ryan Kartje, *The Los Angeles Times*, 24 September 2021]

*The USC Title IX office found "sufficient evidence" longtime Song Girls coach Lori Nelson body shamed, harassed and retaliated against several former spirit squad members from 2016 until her resignation in 2020, creating an environment within the program investigators deemed "hostile and unhealthy." In a letter from USC's Office of Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX dated Wednesday and obtained by The Times, USC vice president and Title IX coordinator Catherine Spear concluded Nelson was responsible for violating university policies regarding harassment and retaliation in her capacity as coach of the Song Girls. Investigators also explored allegations of discrimination within the program based on race and gender, but found insufficient evidence to support the claims.*

## **DIVERSITY**

[First all-female command team set to lead Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, 11th Wing](#) [1st Lt. Kali Gradishar, *11th Wing Public Affairs*, 29 September 2021]

*Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling and the 11th Wing welcomed a new commander in a change of command ceremony Sept. 28 at the ceremonial lawn on base. Col. Mike Zuhlsdorf relinquished command of the joint base and host wing to Col. Cat Logan, now the second commander of the wing since the wing's return to JBAB. Logan's arrival marks a major milestone for JBAB and the continuation of breaking barriers in the Air Force. Standing with Col. Erica Rabe, JBAB and 11th Wing vice commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Christy Peterson, JBAB senior enlisted leader and 11th Wing command chief, the trio represents the first-ever, all-female wing command team for JBAB and the 11th Wing. This is also one of the first all-female command teams in the U.S. Air Force. "I'm extremely humbled and excited to join this incredibly talented team. There's nowhere else I'd rather be," Logan said. "I hope this pioneering moment is one that can inspire future generations of all leaders as they see a professional organization that embodies the spirit of inclusion and opportunity based on merit, attitude and aptitude."*

[First female, person of color ANG director of chaplains applies "Bayanihan" concept to strengthen force](#) [Tech. Sgt. Morgan Whitehouse (ANG), *Air Force News*, 29 September 2021]

*Col. Leah Botona Boling took seat Sept. 12 as the first female and person of color to serve as director of the Air National Guard Chaplain Corps at the Air National Guard Readiness Center at Joint Base Andrews, Md. Boling first felt drawn to serve the faith when she was just a little girl living in the Philippines, growing up in the City of Mati. Once she graduated from the Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary in Baguio, Boling moved to Honolulu to work as a hospital chaplain and soon met her husband, Jeff—an Airman stationed on the island. "My husband*

*actually told me about military chaplaincy and suggested I look into enlisting,” Boling said. “I didn’t think it was for me until I found out my Sunday school teacher was the wing chaplain at the 154th Wing. He introduced me to the Air National Guard.” Boling continued to contemplate if military service was right for her up until the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. “My own viewpoint, my own experience is so unique and that’s the thing about diversity. Everyone has their own story and way of seeing the world,” Boling said. “Whether it’s diversity of thought, gender, ethnicity, religion or even sexual orientation, diversity in leadership is important because it reflects our population and brings so many powerful experiences to the conversation. Diversity is important because it’s the right thing to do.”*

[Gilday outlines goal for Navy to become the most diverse service](#) [Diana Stancy Correll, *Navy Times*, 24 September 2021]

*Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday wants the Navy to become the most diverse military service in order to be competitive in the 21st century. “My goal is to put the Navy in a place over the next 20 years where we’re the most diverse service in the DOD,” Gilday said during a “State of the Navy” event hosted Thursday by Defense One. “I think it’s going to be a long-term effort to get us where we need to be with respect to a diverse force,” Gilday said. “And where, you know, we ultimately have a force where respect is part of everybody’s DNA, right?” The ultimate goal, he said, is for the force to respect diversity—which not only encompasses racial and gender diversity, but experience and varied backgrounds. That will require the Navy to modify how it recruits, retains and manages talent to remain competitive. “I think that if organizations don’t have that mindset, they’re not going to be competitive in this century,” Gilday said. Altogether, more than 41 percent of enlisted sailors are people of color—the highest ratio of all the branches of the military. They comprise nearly 23 percent of officers in the Navy, behind the Army’s nearly 27 percent, according to [Department of Defense figures from 2019](#).*

[GM’s Mary Barra becomes first woman to oversee the Business Roundtable](#) [Matt Egan, *CNN Business*, 29 September 2021]

*General Motors CEO Mary Barra will become the first-ever female chair of the Business Roundtable, a powerful CEO alliance, beginning in January. Barra said her election is an honor, and she pledged to continue to “help advance policies that offer greater economic growth and opportunities for all Americans.” She will replace Walmart CEO Doug McMillon. “Mary has a long track record of success and is a business leader who recognizes the strength of the multi-stakeholder approach to creating value, and I am thrilled to pass the baton to her,” McMillon said in the statement. Barra joined the Business Roundtable in 2017 after becoming CEO of GM (GM) in 2014.*

[Meet The First 2 Black Women To Be Inducted Into The National Inventors Hall Of Fame](#) [Rachel Treisman, *NPR*, 27 September 2021]

*The National Inventors Hall of Fame has been around for nearly five decades but hasn’t included any Black women in its ranks—until now. Engineer Marian Croak and the late ophthalmologist Patricia Bath will make history as part of the next cohort of inductees, the nonprofit announced this past week. They are the first Black female inventors to receive this honor, which has been bestowed on some 600 other innovators both living and dead. Bath, who died in 2019 at age 76,*

*was no stranger to making history. She is recognized as the first Black female physician to receive a medical patent, according to the NIH, the first Black woman to complete a residency in ophthalmology at New York University and the first woman to chair an ophthalmology residency program in the United States (at Drew-UCLA), to name just a few of her accolades. Croak, who currently leads Google's Research Center for Responsible AI and Human Centered Technology, has more than 200 patents to her name. Her work on Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) focuses on converting voice data into digital signals that can be transmitted over the internet rather than through phone lines, her biography explains, and it has advanced the capability of audio- and videoconferencing.*

[More than 25% of Walmart's corporate officers are people of color, new report shows](#) [Chauncey Alcorn, *CNN Business*, 25 September 2021]

*People of color made up more than 55% of new hires at Walmart between February and July of this year and now occupy more than 25% of the retailer's officer positions, according to the company's website and its latest [diversity, equity and inclusion report](#) released Friday. Chief medical officer Dr. John Wigneswaran in July became one of the latest Black senior or executive level manager to be hired by Walmart (WMT). Walmart says it has worked harder in recent years to increase diversity at its highest ranks. The company's president and CEO Doug McMillon took on the issue of racial inequality during one of Walmart's virtual employee meetings in the wake of George Floyd's murder more than a year ago. Walmart (WMT) is America's largest private employer by far, with more than 2 million employees on its global payroll, 1.5 million of them in the United States alone, according to the company's latest diversity, equity and inclusion report. Amazon is a distant second, with 798,000 employees as recently as 2019, according to Fortune.*

[This Tuskegee Airman accomplished a lot. But nothing topped winning the 1st "Top Gun" trophy](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Military Times*, 29 September 2021]

*James Harvey doesn't want to be known as the first Black fighter pilot to fly in Korean airspace. He doesn't want to be known for his Distinguished Flying Cross or the 11 Air Medals he earned in combat. And he doesn't want to be known for his time as a commander, a test pilot or an officer reporting to the head of NORAD. Harvey, one of the few members of the Tuskegee Airmen still living, wants to be remembered for an honor that eluded the public eye for nearly 50 years: winner of the first "Gunsmoke" aerial shooting competition in 1949. The 98-year-old retired lieutenant colonel spoke to Air Force Times ahead of a Sept. 21 ceremony here to honor his legacy as a flying ace, hosted by AARP and Raytheon. He became one of about 1,000 Black men trained in Tuskegee, Alabama, from 1941 to 1946 who were the first African American military pilots in American history. Joining the segregated military gave Harvey his first taste of racism, he said. With no desire to participate in the growing civil rights movement and no television to watch it at home, Harvey waged his own campaign to be seen as equal inside the Army Air Corps.*

## **EXTREMISM**

[The AP Interview: Capitol Police chief sees rising threats](#) [Michael Balsamo and Colleen Long, *The Associated Press*, 29 September 2021]

*The newly installed chief of the U.S. Capitol Police says the force, still struggling six months after an insurrection that left its officers battled, bloodied and bruised, “cannot afford to be complacent.” The risk to lawmakers is higher than ever. And the threat from lone-wolf attackers is only growing. In an interview with The Associated Press, J. Thomas Manger said his force is seeing a historically high number of threats against lawmakers, thousands more than just a few years ago. He predicts authorities will respond to close to 9,000 threats against members of Congress in 2021—more than 4,100 had been reported from January to March. He took over in late July, months after the former chief resigned amid the fallout from the insurrection. The Sept. 18 rally was Manger’s first test—and he was taking no chances. “We just were in a position where we could not allow another January 6th,” he said. “And I really needed to ensure that the men and women of the Capitol Police department understood that we had the resources we need, the training that we needed, the equipment that we needed, and the staffing that we needed to ensure that they could do their job and do it safely.”*

[California man gets life sentence for fatal synagogue attack](#) [Elliot Spagat, *The Associated Press*, 1 October 2021]

*A 22-year-old White supremacist was denied a chance to address a courtroom before a judge sentenced him Thursday to life in prison without the possibility of parole for bursting into a Southern California synagogue on the last day of Passover in 2019 with a semiautomatic rifle, killing one worshipper and wounding three others. An agreement with prosecutors that spared John T. Earnest the death penalty left little suspense about the outcome, but the hearing provided 13 victims and families a chance to address the killer and gave a sense of finality to a case illustrating how online hate speech can lead to extremist violence. Many gave heart-wrenching accounts of how their lives were upended and how determined they were to persevere despite such devastating loss. Earnest’s attorney, John O’Connell, said his client wanted to make a statement but San Diego Superior Court Judge Peter Deddeh refused, saying he did not want to create “a political forum” for White supremacist views. Earnest has not spoken publicly or disavowed earlier statements.*

## **HUMAN RELATIONS**

[How reframing stress can make it work for you](#) [Sandra Knispel, *Futurity*, 15 September 2021]  
*In a [new study in the Journal of Experimental Psychology](#), General, researchers trained adolescents and young adults at a community college to treat their stress response as a tool rather than an obstacle. The team found that in addition to reducing their anxiety, that “good stress” mindset reset helped the students score higher on tests, procrastinate less, stay enrolled in classes, and respond to academic challenges in a healthier way. To reframe their understanding of stress, the students completed a standardized reading and writing exercise that taught them that their stress responses had a function in performance contexts that applied directly to them, such as test taking. “We use a type of ‘saying is believing’ approach whereby participants learn about the adaptive benefits of stress and they are prompted to write about how it can help them achieve,” says lead author Jeremy Jamieson, an associate professor of psychology and the principal investigator at the University of Rochester’s Social Stress Lab. He researches how*

*experiences of stress affect decisions, emotions, and performance. The study builds on his earlier research on optimizing stress responses.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[The pandemic has people stuck in a bad mental/physical loop](#) [Matt Shipman, *Futurity*, 22 September 2021]

*The pandemic has created a cyclical public health problem by harming mental health while also making it more difficult for people to maintain physical activity, report researchers. Their study also reveals that lower-income households struggled more with both mental health challenges and maintaining physical activity levels. “We know that physical activity is important for helping people maintain their mental health, but this [study](#) reveals the unforgiving cycle that the pandemic has imposed on many people,” says Lindsey Haynes-Maslow, coauthor of the study and an associate professor of agricultural and human sciences at North Carolina State University. For this study researchers were focused on two questions: How is the pandemic influencing physical activity and mental health status? And how, if at all, do physical activity and mental health status relate to each other?*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[The Toll of Compassion Fatigue on Government Employees](#) [Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene, *Route Fifty*, 28 September 2021]

*Compassion fatigue is one particularly debilitating way in which public sector workers experience employee burnout, a topic about which we wrote in *Route Fifty* nearly a year ago. Employees who suffer from compassion fatigue may see their relationships with family or friends suffer. It can accompany and potentially amplify other mental health issues, manifesting itself as anxiety or depression. Typically, the malady often results in declines in job performance. Sleep and motivation may be affected, with employees feeling disconnected from the work they do. “There’s a numbness to the work that you’re engaging in—a difficulty in connecting with the people you’re tasked with helping,” says Haller-Abernethy. “All of these things were heightened in the pandemic,” says Brenda Sciepora. A researcher at the People Lab at the University of California, Berkeley. When the demands of clients multiply and caseloads increase, as has been the case ever since Covid-19 first burst into the headlines, so does a worker’s vulnerability to compassion fatigue.*

[We heap more praise on those who have suffered](#) [Eric Stann, *Futurity*, 29 September 2021]

*People tend to give more praise to an adult for their good deeds after discovering that person has had to overcome adversity or suffering earlier in life, such as abuse and neglect as a child, research finds. “Historically, psychology and philosophy have had a stronger focus on the ‘dark’ side of human behavior, such as moral wrongdoing, and less attention has been placed on studying the ‘light’ side of human behavior, such as acts of altruism,” says Philip Robbins, principal investigator of the project and an associate professor and chair of the philosophy department at the University of Missouri. “This [research](#) aims to provide a better understanding of a relatively neglected aspect of human psychology, the human mind, and the human condition, which concerns how people process and react to positive behaviors, such as giving praise.” The research is based on survey results from a total of 974 participants. It builds upon the*

researchers' previous finding that people tend to think of an adult who has committed a crime as less culpable, and less deserving of punishment, when told that the accused had suffered serious harm in childhood.

[Why hard work alone isn't enough to get ahead](#) [Kate Morgan, *BBC News*, 27 September 2021]

*We're constantly taught the recipe for getting ahead is to put our heads down and outwork everyone else. But that's not quite right. Hard work is still very important, says Carol Frohlinger, president of U.S.-based consulting firm Negotiating Women, Inc. But simply waiting for someone to pick up on it is detrimental. Frohlinger calls this tendency the "tiara effect" (a term Sheryl Sandberg also cited in *Lean In*). "People work really hard and deliver fabulous results and hope that the right people notice and come along and place a tiara on their heads. But that usually doesn't happen," she says. "One of the things that can happen to people who do good work and nothing else is that they're under the radar. So, when there's an opportunity for promotion, nobody thinks of them. They're just forgotten, in a benign sort of way." This flies in the face of societal training that begins as early as primary school, when students are taught that the quiet, hard workers are those most likely to prosper. Because teachers reward such qualities in early years, we tend to expect our eventual bosses will, too. It's frustrating, then, to enter the working world only to discover this engrained lesson is often incorrect.*

## INTERNATIONAL

[Italy: Statue of scantily-clad woman sparks sexism row](#) [BBC News, 28 September 2021]

*A bronze statue of a scantily-clad woman to honour a 19th Century poem has sparked a sexism row in Italy, with politicians calling for its removal. The sculpture in the southern town of Sapri is a tribute to *La Spigolatrice di Sapri* (*The Gleaner of Sapri*), written by Luigi Mercantini in 1857. It portrays a woman in a transparent dress with one arm over her breasts. Congresswoman Laura Boldrini said the statue was "an offense to women and to the history it should celebrate", Ms Boldrini, a member of the Chamber of Deputies from the centre-left Democratic Party, said on Twitter. The statue was unveiled on Sunday at a ceremony attended by local and national politicians, including former Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. A group of female politicians from the Democratic Party's Palermo unit called for the statue to be demolished, saying in a statement: "Once again, we have to suffer the humiliation of seeing ourselves represented in the form of a sexualised body, devoid of soul and without any connection with the social and political issues of the story."*

[Man jailed for racially abusing West Bromwich player](#) [Reuters, 30 September 2021]

*A man who racially abused West Bromwich Albion midfielder Romaine Sawyers online received an eight-week prison sentence on Thursday. Simon Silwood, 50, targeted Sawyers after West Bromwich lost 5-0 to Manchester City in an English Premier League match in January. Birmingham Magistrates Court found him guilty of having posted a "grossly offensive message". West Bromwich banned Silwood for life earlier this month. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said that during his police interview, Silwood admitted to posting a message on social media after becoming upset by the 5-0 defeat but blamed an error made by using predictive text. The judge said his message was "motivated by or demonstrated hostility based on race". Several players*

*have been subjected to racial abuse online in recent months, especially in the Premier League, and English soccer has been urging social media firms to do more to tackle the problem.*

[Nazi Stutthof camp secretary flees as German trial starts](#) [BBC News, 30 September 2021]

*A former secretary at a Nazi concentration camp has been captured after trying to flee before her trial in northern Germany. Irmgard Furchner, 96, was due to stand trial for complicity in 11,000 murders, but she failed to turn up and the judge issued a warrant for her arrest. The defendant was detained by police hours after disappearing from a nursing home in the town of Quickborn. She had fled to Hamburg where she was reportedly seen on a local street. Irmgard Furchner had been due to appear at a special juvenile court in Itzehoe, an hour's drive north of Hamburg. Instead she went to an underground station and travelled to the outskirts of Hamburg. A group representing Nazi survivors and relatives of the dead expressed outrage that she had been able to escape. "It shows incredible contempt for the rule of law and survivors," said the International Auschwitz Committee. The case is seen as unprecedented as Irmgard Furchner was a civilian worker at Stutthof.*

[Nigerian artist says British Museum accepts his gift, keeps looted bronzes](#) [Estelle Shirbon, Reuters, 30 September 2021]

*An artist from Benin City in Nigeria said the British Museum had accepted his gift of a bronze plaque in what he felt was a possible first step towards the museum's return of the priceless Benin Bronzes that were looted by British troops in 1897. However, the museum told him an exchange of new for looted artworks was impossible, he said. Osarobo Zeickner-Okoro, a founding member of Ahiamwen, a new guild of Benin City bronze casters and artists, had offered his creation to encourage the museum to give back the sculptures but also to demand acknowledgment of the city's modern-day culture. Created from brass and bronze in the once mighty Kingdom of Benin from at least the 16th century onwards, the Benin Bronzes are among Africa's most culturally significant artefacts. European museums that house them have faced years of criticism because of their status as loot and symbols of colonial greed. "Part of the crime that's been committed is that Benin has been portrayed as this dead civilisation," said Zeickner-Okoro. "The reparation is not just returning the Bronzes. It's also acknowledging us, that we're a living civilisation."*

[So close! Iceland almost gets female-majority parliament](#) [Egill Bjarnason, The Associated Press, 26 September 2021]

*Iceland briefly celebrated electing a female-majority parliament Sunday, before a recount produced a result just short of that landmark for gender parity in the North Atlantic island nation. The initial vote count had female candidates winning 33 seats in Iceland's 63-seat parliament, the Althing, in an election that saw centrist parties make the biggest gains. Hours later, a recount in western Iceland changed the outcome, leaving female candidates with 30 seats, a tally previously reached at Iceland's second most recent election, in 2016. Still, at almost 48% of the total, that is the highest percentage for women lawmakers in Europe. Only a handful of countries, none of them in Europe, have a majority of female lawmakers. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Rwanda leads the world with women making up 61% of its Chamber of*

*Deputies, with Cuba, Nicaragua and Mexico on or just over the 50% mark. Worldwide, the organization says just over a quarter of legislators are women.*

[Switzerland same-sex marriage: Two-thirds of voters back yes](#) [BBC News, 26 September 2021]

*Almost two-thirds of Swiss voters have backed same-sex marriage in a referendum. Some 64% supported the measure, making it one of the last countries in western Europe to legalise same-sex marriage. Campaigners have hailed the vote as a historic moment for LGBT rights in the country. In the build up to the vote, church groups and conservative political parties opposed the idea, saying it would undermine the traditional family. Switzerland has allowed same-sex couples to register partnerships since 2007, but some rights are restricted. The measure will make it possible for same-sex couples to adopt unrelated children and for married lesbian couples to have children through sperm donation. It makes Switzerland the 30th country in the world to adopt same-sex marriage. “It is a historic day for Switzerland, a historic day when it comes to equality for same-sex couples, and it is also an important day for the whole LGBT community,” Jan Muller, of the “yes” campaign committee, told AFP news agency. Justice Minister Karin Keller-Sutter said the first same-sex marriages would take place in July next year.*

[Truth and Reconciliation: Canada marks first national day](#) [BBC News, 30 September 2021]

*Canada is observing its newest federal holiday on Thursday: the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The day honours victims and survivors of Canada’s residential schools, which sought to forcefully assimilate indigenous children. The discovery of hundreds of unmarked burial sites of students earlier this year sparked national outrage. The new holiday will coincide with Orange Shirt Day—an indigenous grassroots-led day of remembrance. All Canadians have been encouraged to mark the occasion by wearing orange, to commemorate the thousands of indigenous children robbed of their culture and freedoms. Orange was the colour worn by First Nations residential school survivor Phyllis Webstad on her first day; later, her clothing would be taken from her and her hair cut off. Delivering remarks to mark the new holiday during a ceremony on Wednesday night, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urged all Canadians to take a moment to listen to the stories of residential school survivors.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Two transgender women win seats in German parliament](#) [Reuters, 27 September 2021]

*Two German politicians from the Greens have made history by becoming the first transgender women to win parliamentary seats in Sunday’s national election. Tessa Ganserer and Nyke Slawik stood for the Greens party, which came third in the election, increasing its share of the vote to 14.8% from 8.9% in 2017 and is set to play a pivotal role in the building of a new three-way coalition government. “It is a historic victory for the Greens, but also for the trans-emancipatory movement and for the entire queer community,” Ganserer, 44, told Reuters, adding that the results were a symbol of an open and tolerant society. Topping the priority list for Ganserer, who was elected to Bavaria’s regional parliament in 2013, is an easier procedure for ratifying a sex change on identity documents.*

[Xianzi: The #MeToo icon China is trying to silence](#) [Zhaoyin Feng and Tessa Wong, BBC News, 27 September 2021]

*In 2018 as #MeToo caught on in China, Xianzi—her real name is Zhou Xiaoxuan, but she is better known by her pen name—was one of many women who began sharing accounts of sexual harassment. In a 3,000-word essay that later went viral, she accused Zhu Jun—a host with state broadcaster CCTV—of sexually harassing her in 2014 when she visited his dressing room hoping to do an interview with him. At the time she was a 21-year-old intern, while Mr Zhu was a household name in China, a familiar face to tens of millions for presenting the annual Spring Festival Gala television event. “I was scared that offending Zhu Jun would affect my studies, so I didn’t dare to fight back,” she wrote at the time. Mr Zhu has consistently denied all the allegations. He has said he is a victim of a smear campaign and he has endured “tremendous humiliation”. The day after her encounter, Xianzi reported the incident to the police. But, according to her, she was told to keep it to herself as Mr Zhu was a national example of “positive energy”—a state campaign aimed at promoting good behavior—and therefore someone whose reputation could not be sullied. So she kept quiet—until the #MeToo movement happened.*

## MISCELLANEOUS

[8 arrested in the death of 19-year-old Virginia Commonwealth University student after what his family said was a fraternity initiation party](#) [Keith Allen and Alaa Elassar, CNN, 27 September 2021]

*Police have arrested eight people on misdemeanor charges in connection with the death of a Virginia Commonwealth University student earlier this year. Three other people are expected to turn themselves in on charges related to the death of Adam Oakes, according to a [news release](#) from the Richmond Police Department. The 19-year-old was found dead at an off-campus residence February 27 after going to a party to begin his initiation into the Delta Chi fraternity, his parents said. In May, the Richmond Medical Examiner’s Office ruled Oakes’ cause of death as ethanol toxicity, or alcohol poisoning, according to the police department. Seven of the eight people—all ages 19 to 22—were taken into custody Friday by the Virginia Commonwealth University Police, RPD said in the news release Friday. All eight were charged with misdemeanor unlawful hazing, and three were also charged with misdemeanor buying or giving alcohol to a minor, Richmond police said.*

[The Census Bureau’s first ever data on LGBTQ+ people indicates deep disparities](#) [Chabeli Carrazana and Orion Rummmler, *The 19th*, 24 September 2021]

*The U.S. Census Bureau in July began asking Americans about their sexual orientation and gender identity—a watershed moment that marks the first time the federal government has tried to capture data on LGBTQ+ Americans in its large real-time national surveys. The results so far are preliminary, but they do indicate that the disparities queer Americans experienced prior to the pandemic have continued to endure 18 months in. For some, those disparities have grown deeper. According to the data, which captures results from July 21 to September 13, LGBTQ+ people often reported being more likely than non-LGBTQ+ people to have lost employment, not have enough to eat, be at elevated risk of eviction or foreclosure, and face difficulty paying for basic household expenses, [according to the census’ Household Pulse Survey](#), a report that measures how Americans are faring on key economic markers during the pandemic.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[How displacement can affect spouses—the perspective of a psych nurse and senior enlisted’s wife](#) [Karen Jowers, *Air Force Times*, 28 September 2021]

*The wife of the senior enlisted adviser to the U.S. Space Force, who is also a psychiatric nurse, said young military spouses can sometimes be overwhelmed when they leave home, family, friends—and perhaps even their own career aspirations—behind. In some cases, that displacement can have an effect on their mental health, said Rachel Rush, wife of Chief Master Sgt. of the Space Force Roger Towberman. “Unfortunately, I’ve seen a lot of spouses come through my unit,” she said. “I tried to focus on and analyze the causes that led them there, because it’s important for us as key spouses and senior spouses to be aware of those things, so we can help.” Towberman, other senior leaders of the Air Force and Space Force, and their spouses talked about the challenges and stressors facing Department of the Air Force families—and what’s being done to increase their resilience—during a town hall at the Air Force Association’s annual Air, Space, Cyber conference Sept. 22.*

[Mayor apologizes for backing mask critics’ Holocaust imagery](#) [The Associated Press, 1 October 2021]

*The mayor of Alaska’s largest city apologized Thursday for his comments supporting some residents’ use of Holocaust imagery to liken a proposed citywide mask mandate to the oppression of Jewish people in Nazi Germany. Anchorage Mayor Dave Bronson has said he staunchly opposes the proposal and initially defended the use of yellow Stars of David worn by other critics this week at heated public hearings. Such imagery has been used by opponents of mask and vaccine mandates across the U.S., drawing condemnation from the Anti-Defamation League and other Jewish organizations. Christine Hill, who twice ran unsuccessfully for the assembly, printed out the stars at home and handed them out for others to wear to draw a comparison to the oppression and genocide of Jewish people in Nazi Germany. Assembly member Forrest Dunbar, who is Jewish and lost to Bronson in the mayoral race, decried the use of the Star of David, reading a letter he received from his rabbi, Abram Goodstein. “It was heart-wrenching for me when I noticed individuals were wearing yellow Stars of David, mimicking my Jewish ancestors who perished during the Holocaust,” Dunbar read, quoting Goodstein. “For myself and most Jews, seeing the yellow Star of David on someone’s chest elicits the same feeling as seeing a swastika on a flag or the SS insignia on a uniform,” the letter said.*

[New White House report seeks employment, quality of life improvements for military families](#) [James R. Webb, *Military Times*, 30 September 2021]

*A report from the White House, scheduled to be released this morning, says that unemployment among military spouses remains at 22 percent, leading 39 percent of military families to discuss leaving active-duty military service. Generated by first lady Jill Biden’s Joining Forces initiative, the [report](#) suggests that unemployment can be reduced by increasing access to childcare and making the federal government an “employer of choice” for military spouses. “Most spouses need or want to work, and they are faced with barriers that don’t allow them to do that. For military spouses, the rate of unemployment has been statistically unchanged for ten years,” Rory Brosius, Executive Director of Joining Forces, herself a military spouse, told *Military Times*. Brosius suggests that the lack of economic opportunity for spouses significantly impacts service member retention, as the report highlights that half of the active-duty force and 44 percent of the*

*National Guard and Reserves are married. Additionally, the report details how during the COVID-19 pandemic, 34 percent of military spouses reported losing their jobs, straining military families even further.*

[NLRB memo: College football players are employees](#) [Jimmy Golden, *The Associated Press*, 30 September 2021]

*College athletes who earn millions for their schools are employees, the National Labor Relations Board's top lawyer said in guidance released Wednesday that would allow players at private universities to unionize and negotiate over their working conditions. NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo also threatened action against schools, conferences and the NCAA if they continue to use the term "student-athlete," saying that it was created to disguise the employment relationship with college athletes and discourage them from pursuing their rights. "The freedom to engage in far-reaching and lucrative business enterprises makes players at academic institutions much more similar to professional athletes who are employed by a team to play a sport," Abruzzo wrote. Although football in the five largest conferences is college sports' biggest money-maker, the memo would extend protections to all athletes who meet the legal definition of an employee: someone who performs services for an institution and is subject to its control.*

## MISCONDUCT

["An absolute slap in the face": Medical group superintendent kept her job after investigation found she created a toxic workplace](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Times*, 30 September 2021]

*Airmen are upset by a decision to keep the former enlisted superintendent of one of the Air Force's largest inpatient medical facilities in her job after an investigation found she abused her authority by playing favorites and undermining other subordinates over two years. Chief Master Sgt. Lisa Williams, who until recently served as the top enlisted leader of the 633rd Medical Group at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, joined the Langley hospital in February 2019, according to her official biography. Through her own Facebook posts about drinking with subordinates, interference with personnel decisions and enlisted performance reports, and off-putting comments about minority airmen, Williams cultivated a culture of secrecy and spite that overshadowed group operations, according to Air Force members and an investigation ordered in November 2020 by Col. Clinton Ross, then-633rd Air Base Wing commander.*

[Career enlisted soldiers accused of misconduct may be retired at lower rank under new Army policy](#) [John Vandiver, *Stars and Stripes*, 1 October 2021]

*Enlisted soldiers with 20 years of service who are under investigation for misconduct can now be considered for voluntary retirement at a reduced grade instead of a more punitive administrative separation, the Army said. "A retirement at a reduced rank, rather than an administrative discharge for misconduct, would allow for the preservation of a 20-year active federal service retirement," it said in a statement Thursday. The decision is aimed at giving Army leaders more options for handling cases of misconduct involving career soldiers, as opposed to "all or nothing determinations," the statement said. Previously, the Army could either separate soldiers with or without suspension for up to 12 months, or retire them their current ranks. The Army has long allowed officers to retire at reduced ranks in instances involving misconduct.*

[“Crapshoot” sentencing by court martial juries likely to end, advocates for new legislation say](#)

[Nancy Montgomery, *Stars and Stripes*, 29 September 2021]

*Court-martial sentencing by juries may go the way of flogging, a change many military justice experts say is long overdue. Military judges instead would hand down sentences based on federal guidelines as part of military justice system reforms proposed in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act. The act isn't expected to be signed into law until sometime after the new fiscal year starts Friday. The proposal is supported by the Pentagon and is included in both the House and Senate versions of the legislation. Military defendants currently may choose whether a judge or a jury, called a “panel,” decides their cases, including sentencing. Earlier this year, the findings of an independent Pentagon board that reviews military sexual assault illustrated the inconsistencies in sentencing between the two formats. Military judges sentenced defendants to confinement in 83.7% of sexual assault convictions, while panels of military members sentenced a defendant to confinement only 63% of the time, the commission determined.*

[Former VA employee sentenced for hiding camera in restroom](#) [James R. Webb, *Military Times*, 27 September 2021]

*A former employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs was sentenced to four months in jail for using a hidden camera to record his co-workers as they used the bathroom at the Pensacola VA Joint Ambulatory Care Center. Friday, the Department of Justice announced that Robert Sampson, 52, of Gulf Breeze, Florida, was sentenced to four months in jail, plus an additional year of supervised release for the charges of video voyeurism and disorderly conduct. Additionally, Sampson is ordered to pay \$1,200 in fines and restitution to his victims. Evidence presented at the sentencing hearing stated that while employed at the VA, Sampson placed a hidden camera disguised as a cellular phone charger power adapter in a restroom at the Pensacola VA Joint Ambulatory Care Center. “The Department of Veterans Affairs Police and the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of the Inspector General are to be commended for their investigation of this crime,” Jason R. Coody, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, said in a release. “The defendant’s actions were a direct affront to his co-workers’ expectation of privacy.”*

[KOLD Investigates: Davis-Monthan investigating Air Force officer for allegedly trying to get vaccine card without getting shot](#) [Valerie Cavazos, *KOLD News (Tucson, Ariz.)*, 22 September 2021]

*Davis-Monthan Air Force Base is investigating after an officer was accused of using force in his attempt to obtain a vaccination card. The Air Force opened an investigation after Tucson Police notified Davis-Monthan. The Air Force officer has not been arrested and KOLD is not releasing his name because he hasn't been charged with any crime. Reports of fake vaccine cards are popping up across the nation and people have been arrested for presenting, creating and selling them. But EMT Mariella Carrasco never thought she would run into a situation like this: a military man she felt assaulted her after he flashed her some cash. According to the police report, Carrasco said “he had not directly offered her money to fill out the paperwork falsely, but he had a wad of hundred dollar bills that he was flipping through in his hands as he asked her to do it.” She estimated it was \$400-500. According to a statement from Davis-Monthan, the incident is under investigation and such actions “are not in line with our service’s core values.”*

## RACISM

[Black farmers accuse the USDA of racism. The USDA appears to agree and vows to address “historical discrimination.”](#) [Mark Dovich, Jeff A. Chamer and Hazel Tang, *USA TODAY*, 27 September 2021]

*The Department of Agriculture launched a commission Friday aimed at addressing “historical discrimination” in agriculture, a sign the USDA is looking to overcome a decades-long history of systemic racism that Black farmers say has shrunk their numbers and kept families from building generational wealth. The Equity Commission will help identify USDA programs and policies that have contributed to, exacerbated or perpetuated discrimination, the department said. “The truth is, the deck has been stacked against Black farmers who for generations have been denied access to land and capital,” Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement to USA TODAY. He vowed a “top to bottom” evaluation of decades-old farm programs to ensure they “more equitably serve” American farmers.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[California city apologizes for 1887 Chinatown destruction](#) [Olga R. Rodriguez, *The Associated Press*, 30 September 2021]

*The city of San Jose was once home to one of the largest Chinatowns in California. In the heart of downtown, it was the center of life for Chinese immigrants who worked on nearby farms and orchards. More than a century after arsonists burned it to the ground in 1887, the San Jose City Council on Tuesday unanimously approved a resolution to apologize to Chinese immigrants and their descendants for the role the city played in “systemic and institutional racism, xenophobia, and discrimination.” San Jose, with a population over 1 million, is the largest city in the country to formally apologize to the Chinese community for its treatment of their ancestors. In May, the city of Antioch apologized for its mistreatment of Chinese immigrants, who built tunnels to get home from work because they were banned from walking the streets after sundown. “It’s important for members of the Chinese American community to know that they are seen and that the difficult conversations around race and historic inequities include the oppression that their ancestors suffered,” San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo said.*

[California moving to return land to Black couple’s heirs](#) [The Associated Press, 30 September 2021]

*California Gov. Gavin Newsom was expected to sign a law Thursday to enable a transfer of ownership of prime beachfront property to heirs of a couple who built a resort for Black people in the early 1900s but were stripped of the land by local officials. The legislation unanimously approved by state lawmakers this month was necessary to allow the start of the complex legal process of transferring ownership of what was once known as Bruce’s Beach in the city of Manhattan Beach and is currently owned by Los Angeles County. County Supervisor Janice Hahn, who pushed for transferring the land, has said the heirs would almost certainly be millionaires now if the property had not been taken. The property along the south shore of Santa Monica Bay encompasses two parcels purchased in 1912 by Willa and Charles Bruce, who built the first West Coast resort for Black people at a time when segregation barred them from many*

*beaches. White neighbors harassed the Bruces and there was an attempt to burn down the resort. Finally, the Manhattan Beach City Council used eminent domain to take the land from the Bruces in the 1920s, purportedly for use as a park.*

[Massachusetts man charged with harassing interracial couple](#) [*The Associated Press*, 29 September 2021]

*A Massachusetts man posted racial epithets, crude language and threats of physical harm in response to an interracial couple who had announced their engagement on Facebook, federal prosecutors said Wednesday. Stephen M. DeBerardinis, 45, of Boston and Dedham, is scheduled to make his first court appearance Wednesday. An email seeking comment was left with his federal public defender. The couple, a 37-year-old Black man and a 34-year-old White woman whose names were not disclosed in court documents, announced their engagement with accompanying photographs on Facebook in late December, prosecutors said. DeBerardinis did not know the couple, but because he was friends with their friends, could see their posts. He reacted to the engagement announcement on Jan. 6 with epithets and profanities, prosecutors said. When the couple told him they were reporting him to law enforcement, authorities allege he sent them a picture of brass knuckles with the phrase “snitches get stitches.” If convicted of all charges, he faces a maximum of 28 years in prison.*

## RELIGION

[Kansas priest considered for sainthood is buried in Wichita](#) [*The Associated Press*, 29 September 2021]

*Mourners filled Hartman Arena for a funeral service for the Rev. Emil Kapaun and later lined streets to watch his body being carried by a horse-drawn caisson from Veterans Memorial Park to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, where he was interred. “We are here today to provide for father what was not provided for him 70 years ago, a mass of Christian burial,” Bishop Carl A. Kemme of the Wichita diocese told the crowd. Speakers extolled Kapaun’s Christian love and his courage during his days as a prisoner of war, which he spent providing comfort to his fellow soldiers. “Uncle Emil, welcome home. Home at last,” said Kapaun’s nephew, Ray Kapaun during the service. He praised his uncle’s fellow POWs who survived the war and the people of Pilsen, where Kapaun was born, who he said helped keep the priest’s story alive in the decades since his death. Kapaun, an Army chaplain, was captured in 1950 near Unsan, North Korea, while tending to fellow soldiers. He died in May 1951 at the POW camp while continuing to minister to fellow prisoners. He was awarded the Medal of Honor in 2013. In 1993, the Catholic church named him a “Servant of God,” the first step of a lengthy process that could lead to canonization.*

[The Marines Reluctantly Let a Sikh Officer Wear a Turban. He Says It’s Not Enough.](#) [Dave Philipps, *The New York Times*, 26 September 2021]

*Almost every morning for five years, First Lt. Sukhbir Toor has pulled on the uniform of the United States Marine Corps. On Thursday, he also got to put on the turban of a faithful Sikh. It was a first for the Marine Corps, which almost never allows deviations from its hallowed image, and it was a long-awaited chance for the officer to combine two of the things he holds most dear.*

*“I finally don’t have to pick which life I want to commit to, my faith or my country,” Lieutenant Toor, 26, said in an interview. “I can be who I am and honor both sides.” His case is the latest in a long-running conflict between two fundamental values in the United States military: the tradition of discipline and uniformity, and the constitutional liberties the armed forces were created to defend. The Marine Corps has made the allowance only to a point. Lieutenant Toor can wear a turban in daily dress at normal duty stations, but he cannot do so while deployed to a conflict zone, or when in dress uniform in a ceremonial unit, where the public could see it.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

## **SEXISM**

[NCAA will use “March Madness” branding for women’s basketball tournament](#) [Paul Myerberg, USA TODAY, 29 September 2021]

*The NCAA will use the “March Madness” phrasing and branding in conjunction with the women’s basketball tournament beginning in 2022, following one of the recommendations issued by a law firm tasked with investigating gender disparities among the governing body’s championship events. Use of the “March Madness” phrase has historically been reserved for the men’s tournament. The move received unanimous support from the Division I Women’s Basketball Oversight Committee, the NCAA said. The NCAA will also use a “zero-based budgeting method” for the women’s and men’s championships, a shift from the traditional approach of adjusting budgets for these championship events from the previous fiscal year. This change is geared “toward increasing opportunities for planning collaboration and cross-promotion, as well as making the two championships more financially equitable,” the NCAA said in a statement.*

[She broke baseball’s glass ceiling. Now she has to fix one of the league’s worst teams](#) [Clare Duffy, CNN Business, 27 September 2021]

*When she was hired by the Marlins in an announcement made last November, [Kim] Ng became the first-ever woman GM—not only in professional baseball, but in the four major American men’s sports—and the second person of Asian descent to become an MLB GM. Ng faces not only trying to turn a team with a long history of struggles into a winning franchise, but also working under a different kind of scrutiny than her male peers. In that first press conference following her hiring, it took 45 minutes for reporters to ask Ng about her strategy for the Marlins. In between queries about her perseverance through her long career, her mentors and her upbringing, she fielded a variety of questions about children, especially young girls. Specifically, she was asked how she feels about inspiring them, how they inspire her, what she would say to them and so on. While Ng—who has spent countless hours advocating for women and working to expand opportunities for girls in baseball—answered all of the questions graciously, it was a reminder that women who reach the top of male-dominated fields don’t get to just be good at their jobs.*

## **SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT**

[Canadian designer Nygard consents to U.S. extradition, may face new Canadian sex charges](#) [Rod Nickel, Reuters, 1 October 2021]

*Canadian fashion designer Peter Nygard has consented to extradition to the United States, where he faces charges of sex trafficking and racketeering, lawyers for the prosecution and defence said at a hearing on Friday. Separately, the Toronto Police Service issued a statement saying it had an arrest warrant for Nygard on six charges of sexual assault and three charges of forcible confinement between 1987 and 2006. U.S. authorities accuse Nygard, 80, of using his businesses to lure women and girls in the United States, Canada and the Bahamas since 1995 to sexually gratify himself and his associates—accusations he denies. Despite his consent to extradition, Nygard “has always unequivocally maintained his innocence of any wrongdoing,” Greenspan said. Agreeing to extradition allows Nygard to mount his defence at trial in the United States, Greenspan said.*

[A former Boston ballerina and her husband have been accused of sexually abusing young dancers, according to a federal lawsuit](#) [Melissa Alonso, CNN, 29 September 2021]

*Former Boston Ballet star Dusty Button and her husband, Mitchell Taylor Button, are accused of sexually abusing several dancers, including a minor, according to a federal lawsuit. Dusty Button was a ballerina for the Boston Ballet from 2012 to 2017, according to the company, and has since then cultivated a large Instagram following by highlighting her coveted international workshops, master classes and dance numbers. A complaint filed in July in the U.S. District Court in Nevada claimed Taylor Button “has exploited his position of power and influence in the dance world to sexually abuse young dancers across the country.” At least five dancers, some of whom were mentored by Taylor Button, and Dusty Button at times, say he sexually abused them, at times with his wife’s participation, court documents show.*

[The Kansas case that could change how rape is charged](#) [Tara McKelvey, BBC News, 30 September 2021]

*She reported the case as a rape. The county prosecutor refused to press rape charges, however, saying Ms Smith had merely experienced an “immature” sexual encounter. Her attacker was convicted of assault. The county attorney’s decision prompted Ms Smith, now 23, to use a state law dating back to 1887 to instead call up a “citizen’s grand jury”. It convened for the first time on Wednesday in what is thought to be the first case of its kind in the U.S. A grand jury is usually set up by the officials investigating the case, and determines if there is enough evidence to pursue a prosecution. This jury, which will meet in secret, will not decide if the accused is guilty or innocent, only if charges should be brought. The outcome of the grand jury in McPherson County, Kansas, will have far-reaching consequences for the accuser and the accused, and perhaps the rest of the country. Experts say Ms Smith’s actions could set a precedent for others to convene a grand jury in cases involving sex crimes. But those who are accused of a sex crime and who have not been charged may find themselves, as this accused does, in legal purgatory, waiting to see if they may still face charges.*

## **SUICIDE**

[How a military jail failed to protect a suicidal sailor from himself](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, Military Times, 30 September 2021]

Editor's Note: If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 1-800-273-8255 or text 838255 for 24/7 assistance. Responders are also available at [veteranscrisisline.net](https://veteranscrisisline.net).

*For reasons that will remain unknown, something set Macoy Hicks off on Feb. 1, 2019. In a passageway outside the legal office aboard the aircraft carrier Nimitz, shipmates startled as the junior sailor screamed and banged his head against the wall. Whatever the cause, the breakdown signaled the grim crescendo to a hard couple of years in uniform for the 20-year-old Albany native. Hicks' first duty assignment working sailor funerals in the Navy Ceremonial Guard had haunted him. A traumatic brain injury, followed by personality changes, insomnia, depression and fruitless visits to Navy mental health providers, left Hicks feeling like nobody in the sea service cared about him. He had tried to drink himself to death six months before that outburst on the Nimitz, and a raft of disciplinary issues had taxed his command's patience. Six days later, he pleaded guilty at a summary court-martial and was sentenced to 25 days at the Army-run military jail aboard Joint Base Lewis-McChord. En route to the jail, his Navy handlers later recalled Hicks saying he belonged in a hospital. And while no staff ordered Hicks to be placed on suicide watch, they allowed him to receive a tan riggers belt and other inmate kit.*

["I do seek help", SECVA says on walk for military suicide awareness](#) [Howard Altman, *Military Times*, 26 September 2021]

*There are probably few jobs as stressful as running the Department of Veterans Affairs. And toward the end of a walk to raise awareness about troop and veteran suicide deaths, VA Secretary Denis McDonough reflected on how he handles his own mental health challenges. "I do seek help," he said during a stop along the Gold Star Mothers Inc. Walk for Military Suicide Awareness on Saturday. "Whether it's through priests, whether it's through mental health professionals, I absolutely do. And this is the kind of outreach that I consider critical to my entire health. I pay great attention to my heart health, to my physical health, my fitness, and that includes my mental health." "What I do is talk to our professionals at VA," he said. "You know, in the hallway. If something is bothering me, I can pull them aside, and seek their counsel. If I'm struggling with something, I often will seek out spiritual advice through a priest or through a nun. The point is that we have to make sure that we're thinking about our mental health as part of our whole health, and making sure that we recognize that doing so is ensuring the best possible outcome.*

[Pace of suspected Air Force suicides has slowed this year, officials say](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Military Times*, 27 September 2021]

*Fewer airmen and guardians are suspected of killing themselves so far in 2021 than at the same point in recent years, a hopeful sign that the Department of the Air Force's efforts to address mental health issues may be working. Fifty-seven people across the Air Force and Space Force, including active-duty, Guard and Reserve airmen and guardians and civilians, had died this year in presumed suicides as of Monday, according to a service spokesperson. In comparison, that number stood at 50 at the beginning of August 2018 and 78 at the beginning of August 2019. Suicide figures remain unofficial until the military investigates each death. The Department of the Air Force recorded 109 total suicides among troops—but not civilians—in both 2019 and 2020. Those two years each had nearly 30 more suicides than in 2018, the highest level of suicides since 2015. The Air Force has noted that it loses more airmen to suicide than any other cause.*

## VETERANS

[Sebastian Junger: Over-valorizing vets does more harm than good](#) [Adam Linehan, *Task & Purpose*, 26 September 2021] [COMMENTARY]

*Few civilians can get away with talking about the military the way Sebastian Junger does. Among mainstream journalists, his commentary on the experience of being an American soldier in the post-9/11 world is unparalleled in its depth and honesty. Over the years, he's amassed a body of award-winning work—articles, books, films—that challenges popular assumptions about what it means to serve, and the psychological impact that service has on those who do. That's a remarkable achievement for someone who's never worn the uniform. The poignancy of Junger's Afghan War coverage draws less from the fact that he embedded with one of the heaviest hit units of that conflict than it does from the fact that he crossed a threshold few journalists are able or willing to cross. He didn't just dip his toe in. He dove, risking life and limb to capture the experience of being an American combat soldier in a distant and largely forgotten war. But more than that: he got to know his subjects—not just who they were as soldiers, but who they were as men who, alive or dead or wounded, would eventually come home.*