

## DEOMI NEWS LINKS 13 JANUARY 2022

### HIGHLIGHTS

[Inspector general investigating whether services are screening recruits for extremism](#) [Meghann Myers, *Military Times*, 11 January 2022]

*The Pentagon's independent inspector general's office wants to know more about how the military services weed out potential extremists or gang members during the recruiting process, according to a Tuesday project announcement. Starting this month, the office will work with the military departments, as well as the defense undersecretary for personnel and readiness, to study whether current recruit screening mirrors what's written down in policy. "We may revise the objective as the audit proceeds, and we will also consider suggestions from management for additional or revised objectives," Richard Vasquez, the assistant inspector general for audit readiness and global operations, wrote in a [memo](#) signed Jan. 3.*

[OPM Issues Guidance on Agency Hiring of Chief Diversity Officers](#) [Erich Wagner, *Government Executive*, 10 January 2022]

*The Office of Personnel Management last week issued guidance to agencies seeking to implement the portion of a 2021 executive order encouraging improved diversity and inclusion efforts across the federal government. Last year, President Biden issued an executive order seeking to revamp the federal government's approach to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, particularly when it comes to recruitment, retention and professional development. The order requires the creation of a government-wide plan to address workplace harassment. It also encourages agencies to establish chief diversity officer positions within their organizations. Last week, OPM Director Kiran Ahuja sent a [memo](#) to agency heads outlining guidance on how agencies "should elevate" diversity and inclusion within their organizations, including by establishing the chief diversity officer or diversity and inclusion officer within their agency.*

[Veterans can now identify as transgender, nonbinary on their VA medical records](#) [Nikki Wentling, *Stars and Stripes*, 12 January 2022]

*Veterans who identify as transgender or nonbinary are now able to indicate their preference in their official medical records with the Department of Veterans Affairs. The department [announced Wednesday](#) that it added the options of transgender male, transgender female, nonbinary and other, when veterans select their gender. The gender identifier, along with a veteran's preferred name, will be displayed on a patient's health record. The information also could help providers identify any stigma or discrimination that a veteran has faced that might be affecting their health. "All veterans, all people, have a basic right to be identified as they define themselves," VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement. "This is essential for their general well-being and overall health. Knowing the gender identity of transgender and gender-diverse veterans helps us better serve them."*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

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## CULTURE

[From virtual to in-person, here are 5 ways to do good for MLK Day](#) [Ryan Bergeron, CNN, 12 January 2022]

*Martin Luther King Jr. Day is officially set for Monday, January 17 this year, but it is never too early to do something good. Dr. King’s holiday celebrates the civil rights leader’s life by encouraging community service. See the article for a few creative ways people of all ages can help the world around them in honor of Dr. King.*

[\[SEE ALSO\]](#)

[Journalist and activist Ida B. Wells will be the next signature Barbie doll](#) [Michelle Shen, USA TODAY, 12 January 2022]

*Ida B. Wells, journalist and activist famous for launching an anti-lynching campaign, will have her legacy honored with a new signature Barbie doll. Born into slavery, Wells would go on to become an international spokesperson for the suffragette and early civil rights movements in America. As a young investigative journalist in Memphis, she wrote about the lynchings of three store owners, one of whom was a close friend of hers, and exposed the economic undercurrents that motivated the lynching. Wells found through her research that the victims had owned a successful grocery store and were direct competitors with a White-owned local grocery store. She would go on to prove that lynchings carried out in the name of justice for the sake of White women were in fact often based on economics, according to Earnestine Jenkins, a professor at the University of Memphis.*

[Michaela Jaé Rodriguez becomes the first trans actress to win a Golden Globe](#) [Scottie Andrew, CNN, 10 January 2022]

*For her heartrending performance in the landmark series “Pose,” Michaela Jaé Rodriguez won her first Golden Globe—and made history. Rodriguez was awarded the Golden Globe for best performance by an actress in a television series-drama for her role as maternal figure Blanca in the third and final season of the FX series. And with her win, she became the first trans actress to win a major acting Golden Globe. “This is the door that is going to open the door for many more young talented individuals,” she wrote on Instagram. “They will see that it is more than possible. They will see that a young Black Latina girl from Newark New Jersey who had a dream, to change the minds others would with love!”*

[Timothy LeDuc is set to become the first openly non-binary athlete to compete at a Winter Olympics](#) [Homero De la Fuente and Alaa Elassar, CNN, 10 January 2022]

*U.S. Figure Skating announced Saturday that 31-year-old Timothy LeDuc has been paired with Ashley Cain-Gribble to compete in Beijing in February. “My hope is that when people see my story, it isn’t focused on me and saying, ‘Oh, Timothy is the first out non-binary person to achieve this level of success in sport,’” LeDuc said during a news conference Saturday, according to NBC Sports. “My hope is that the narrative shifts more to, queer people can be open and successful in sports. We’ve always been here, we’ve always been a part of sports. We just haven’t always been able to be open.” In 2019, LeDuc became the first openly gay athlete to win gold in a U.S. pairs’ event, according to the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee. “I think we*

want to dedicate these performances and this title to all the people that felt like they didn't belong—or were told that they didn't belong—in this sport,” Cain-Gribble said during the news conference.

[Treasury rolls out quarters featuring Maya Angelou, first Black woman on the coin](#) [Joseph Choi, *The Hill*, 10 January 2022]

*The U.S. Mint on Monday announced it has begun shipping out the first coins in its American Women Quarters program, with the late poet and novelist Maya Angelou becoming the first Black woman to be depicted on the quarter. Last year, the Mint announced it would be including several notable figures in its American Women Quarters, including Angelou; Chinese American film star Anna Mae Wong; the first U.S. woman in space Sally Ride; and Wilma Mankiller, the first woman to be elected principal chief of the Cherokee Nation. The program was established through the Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act of 2020, which required that five prominent American women be recognized on quarters every year between 2022 and 2025.*

[Where each military branch stands on pronoun use in signature blocks](#) [Sarah Sicard, *Military Times*, 7 January 2022]

*In late December, the Air Force put out a [memorandum](#) stating that airmen and guardians will now be allowed to include pronouns in their email signature blocks. The Tongue and Quill, the branch's writing guide that provides formatting standards for official documents, including email, letters and memos, will be updated to reflect this change. "An inclusive force is a mission-ready force, and I'm thankful to the LGBTQ Initiatives Team for helping us realize this opportunity to be a more inclusive force," Under Secretary of the Air Force Gina Ortiz Jones said in a statement. But not all the services have or are pursuing a policy regarding pronoun use in email signature blocks. The Army is weighing its options while the Navy and Marine Corps have not at this time determined that a pronoun usage policy is necessary. The Air Force decision was led by its LGBTQ Initiatives Team, which advocated for this policy as a way to create a more inclusive culture for airmen.*

[Yanks' Balkovec to be first female MiLB manager](#) [Jake Seiner, *The Associated Press*, 10 January 2022]

*The New York Yankees are promoting Rachel Balkovec to manager of the Low A Tampa Tarpons, making her the first woman to skipper a team affiliated with Major League Baseball, according to two people familiar with the move. The 34-year-old Balkovec joined the Yankees organization as a hitting coach in 2019, making her the first woman with that job full-time in affiliated baseball. She got her first position in pro ball with the St. Louis Cardinals as a minor league strength and conditioning coach in 2012. "I view my path as an advantage," she told *The Associated Press* in 2019. "I had to do probably much more than maybe a male counterpart, but I like that because I'm so much more prepared for the challenges that I might encounter."*

## DISCRIMINATION

[Appeal by soldier convicted for her role in death of West Point cadet adds to legal groundswell against split guilty verdicts](#) [John Vandiver, *Stars and Stripes*, 7 January 2022]

*A U.S. soldier who is serving prison time for her role in the death of a West Point cadet is appealing her negligent homicide conviction on the grounds that a military panel's nonunanimous guilty verdict violated her constitutional rights. The Army Court of Criminal Appeals on Wednesday granted a request by attorneys for Ladonies P. Strong, a staff sergeant who was demoted to private after her 2020 conviction. The hearing could be the first chance for a military court to weigh in on a growing debate in the legal community over the military's longstanding practice of allowing guilty verdicts with just three-fourths of a panel voting to convict. Attorneys for Strong contend that an April 2020 Supreme Court ruling that deemed split jury verdicts unconstitutional should be grounds for overturning her court-martial conviction. Strong's appeal comes after a separate ruling Monday by a military judge in Kaiserslautern, Germany, who said prosecutors will need a unanimous guilty verdict to convict an officer standing trial on sexual assault charges.*

[Arizona mom slams Delta for lack of gender options for her nonbinary child](#) [Tat Bellamy-Walker, NBC News, 11 January 2022]

*In a Twitter thread Thursday, Dawn Henry, 52, said she was trying to buy a surprise plane ticket for her adult child when she discovered Delta only provides male and female gender options. Henry's 21-year-old child is nonbinary, meaning they identify as neither exclusively male nor female, and they have an "X" gender marker on their birth certificate and Washington state driver's license. This incident comes three years after Delta and other major U.S. airlines announced they would update their booking tools to be inclusive of nonbinary passengers. At least two of those other airlines—American and United—already provide a drop-down menu during the booking process that is inclusive of nonbinary travelers. While Henry said she is still frustrated by the situation, she hopes speaking out will spark changes across the airline industry.*

[Car Dealer to Pay \\$100,000 to Resolve EEOC Lawsuit Alleging Disability Discrimination](#) [U.S. EEO Newsroom, 6 January 2022]

*Hollingsworth Richards, LLC, doing business as Honda of Covington, has agreed to pay a former sales representative \$100,000 to settle a lawsuit brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency announced today. In its lawsuit, the EEOC alleged that Hollingsworth Richards discharged the sales representative after subjecting her to unlawful inquiries and to an unlawful medical examination in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). When Hollingsworth Richards hired her, the sales representative disclosed that she had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and that she was taking medication to treat her ADHD under the supervision of a healthcare provider. The EEOC alleged that an operations manager later told her to stop taking her medication and then ordered her to take a drug test. It alleged that Hollingsworth Richards, LLC then discharged the sales representative before receiving the confirmed results from that test.*

[OPM To Publish Rule Implementing Law Protecting Feds from Discrimination, Whistleblower Retaliation](#) [Erich Wagner, NextGov, 6 January 2022]

*The Office of Personnel Management is set to publish regulations implementing a 2021 law aimed at improving agency accountability for acts of discrimination and whistleblower retaliation against federal workers. The Elijah E. Cummings Federal Employee*

*Antidiscrimination Act, named for the late lawmaker who led the House Oversight and Reform Committee and signed on Jan. 1, 2021, encourages agencies to take action against federal employees who are found to be responsible for “intentional” acts of discrimination or retaliation, and be more transparent with the public when such incidents are adjudicated. In a proposed rule set to be published to the [Federal Register](#) Thursday, OPM said that agencies will be expected to post a notification on their public-facing websites within 90 days of the finalization of any case in which the agency was found to have discriminated or retaliated against a federal employee.*

## DIVERSITY

[How 3 travelers with disabilities or chronic illness navigate the world](#) [Emily Fagan, *Special for the Washington Post*, 12 January 2022] [COMMENTARY]

*One in four American adults live with a disability, and 60% have at least one chronic illness. As travel continues to ramp up, more people like me will have questions about how to navigate it with their circumstances. Through online communities, travelers with disabilities or chronic illnesses share tips and support for making the experience more accessible and alleviate fears that others might have when planning trips. People with disabilities or illness cope with an added layer of worry and logistics - and that's even more complicated during a pandemic for those who are immunocompromised. For me, the main concerns are finding a way to keep my medication refrigerated throughout my stay, dealing with a potential flare-up of my symptoms and keeping my immunocompromised system healthy.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Racial and ethnic diversity is lacking among nonprofit leaders—but there are ways to change that](#) [Atinuke Adediran, *The Conversation*, 13 January 2022]

*About [87% of nonprofit CEOs in the U.S. were White in 2019](#), down from 90% in 2016. Similarly, roughly 78% of nonprofit board members were White in 2019, down from 84% in 2016, according to Board Source, a nonprofit that tracks this information. In a country where Black and Latino individuals and other [people of color make up about 40% of the population](#), this lack of diversity among nonprofit leaders could interfere with both the work that nonprofits do and their influence in the communities they serve, for several reasons. According to [Board Source’s most recent data](#), just 6% of nonprofit board chairs identified as Black, 5% as Latino and 2% as Asian or Pacific Islander. Only 5% of nonprofit CEOs were Black, 3% Hispanic and 2% Asian or Pacific Islander. This lack of diversity is a major concern for nonprofits that provide services or advocacy primarily to communities of color, and among those groups whose mission is aimed at promoting race equity.*

[VA takes action to become federal model for inclusion, diversity, equity, and access for Veterans and employees](#) [VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, 11 January 2022]

*The Department of Veterans Affairs becomes attuned making inclusion, diversity, equity and access a part of its cultural transformation [action plan](#). An 18-member [I-DEA task force](#), created April 1, 2021, developed 20 recommendations and 68 sub-recommendations for the department to consider during the next four years to ensure all VA employees, Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors have equitable treatment and experiences when interacting with VA.*

*“This action plan reflects the Department of Veterans Affairs is working to ensure our customers and employees have equal access to all VA offerings and are treated with respect and dignity when interacting with the department,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “We recognize this work requires a culture shift and will not happen overnight, but the Biden-Harris administration and I will see this through to completion on behalf of the Veterans we serve and the diverse workforce that carries out our mission.”*

## **EXTREMISM**

[Capitol security officials developing program to identify “insider threats” from police](#) [Cristina Marcos, *The Hill*, 11 January 2022]

*Capitol Police Chief Thomas Manger and House Sergeant-at-Arms William Walker on Tuesday told lawmakers they are actively working to root out police officers with extremist views who could pose “insider threats” to Capitol security. Walker said during a hearing before members of the House Appropriations Committee that his office has developed an “insider threat awareness program” to identify “insider threats and employees who do lose their compass” at a time when lawmakers face record levels of security threats. The proposed insider threat detection program will be presented to the Capitol Police Board, which oversees the department, as soon as this month, he said. Walker further called for boosting resources for lawmaker security, including hiring two law enforcement coordinators per House district to help mitigate threats to lawmakers and their families and providing funds to enhance lawmakers' home security with equipment like motion sensors and video doorbells.*

[The Metaverse Offers a Future Full of Potential—for Terrorists and Extremists, Too](#) [Joel S. Elson, Austin C. Doctor and Sam Hunter, *The Conversation*, 7 January 2022]

*The metaverse is an immersive virtual reality version of the internet where people can interact with digital objects and digital representations of themselves and others, and can move more or less freely from one virtual environment to another. It can also involve augmented reality, a blending of virtual and physical realities, both by representing people and objects from the physical world in the virtual and conversely by bringing the virtual into people’s perceptions of physical spaces. By donning virtual reality headsets or augmented reality glasses, people will be able to socialize, worship and work in environments where the boundaries between environments and between the digital and physical are permeable. Therein lies the rub. To put a finer point on it, the things people hold dear become vulnerabilities that can be exploited by those seeking to cause harm. People with malicious intent are already noting that the metaverse is a potential tool in their arsenal.*

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[U.S. Justice Department forming unit to counter domestic terrorism](#) [Sarah N. Lynch, *Reuters*, 11 January 2022]

*The U.S. Justice Department is creating a new unit to counter domestic terrorism following the 2021 U.S. Capitol attack, a senior official said on Tuesday, as it faces a growing threat from White supremacists and anti-government activists. The move reflects a growing realization by U.S. national security officials that domestic extremists represent a threat on par with that posed*

by foreign militant groups such as Islamic State. “We face an elevated threat from domestic violent extremists—that is, individuals in the United States who seek to commit violent criminal acts in furtherance of domestic social or political goals,” Matthew Olsen, the assistant attorney general of the department’s National Security Division, told a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Olsen said the new unit will be part of the National Security Division and will work to “ensure that these cases are properly handled and effectively coordinated” across the department and around the country.

## HUMAN RELATIONS

[Regret can be all-consuming—a neurobehavioral scientist explains how people can overcome it](#) [J. Kim Penberthy, *The Conversation*, 7 January 2022]

*A friend of mine—we will call him “Jay”—was working for IBM in New York City in the early ‘90s. He was a computer programmer and made a good salary. He had an offer from an interesting but small organization in Seattle, but the salary was paltry and most of the offer package was in company shares. After consulting with friends and his parents, Jay declined the offer and stayed with IBM. He has regretted it ever since. That small company was Microsoft. Regret is a very real reaction to a disappointing event in your life, a choice you made that can’t be changed, something you said that you can’t take back. It’s one of those feelings you can’t seem to shake, a heavy and intrusive negative emotion that can last for minutes, days, years [or even a lifetime](#). Imaging studies reveal that feelings of regret show [increased activity](#) in an area of the brain called the medial orbitofrontal cortex. Dealing with regret is even more difficult because of the other negative emotions connected to it: remorse, sorrow and helplessness. Regret can increase our stress, [negatively affect physical health](#) and throw off the balance of hormone and immune systems. Regret is not only unpleasant. It is unhealthy.*

## INTERNATIONAL

[In a landmark case, a German court convicts an ex-Syrian officer of torture](#) [Deborah Amos, *NPR*, 13 January 2022]

*The world’s first criminal trial over torture in Syria’s prisons ended Thursday with a guilty verdict and life sentence for a former Syrian intelligence officer. The ruling came in a German case against Anwar Raslan, who was accused of more than 30 counts of murder, 4,000 counts of torture and charges of sexual assault from when he oversaw a notorious prison in Damascus in 2011 and 2012. The landmark trial marked the first time a high-ranking former Syrian official has faced Syrians in open court in a war crimes case. Witnesses and the lawyers who worked on their behalf deemed it a rare success in prosecuting a war crimes case in which the crimes were committed under a government that remains in power—the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad. “This is the first step in a very long way to achieve justice,” says Wassim Mukdad, a Syrian torture survivor and co-plaintiff who now lives in Germany. “To experience the verdict against a former colonel in the intelligence forces, it’s history being written in front of our eyes.”*

[Italian Catholic, Jewish leaders condemn use of Nazi flag at church funeral](#) [Philip Pulella, *Reuters*, 11 January 2022]

*Italian Catholic and Jewish leaders on Tuesday condemned as outrageous an episode in which right-wing extremists put a flag with a swastika on a coffin outside a church after a religious funeral and gave Nazi salutes. Rome's Catholic archdiocese said in a statement that priests at the parish of St. Lucy in a central Rome neighbourhood, including the one who presided at the funeral rite, had no idea of what would happen outside the church on Monday. Pictures on the internet showed the coffin bearing the body of Alessia Augello, a former member of the right-wing extremist group Forza Nuova, covered by the flag. The diocese statement called the flag "a horrendous symbol that cannot be reconciled with Christianity" and said the episode was an offensive example of "ideological exploitation" of a religious service.*

[Prince Andrew to face civil sex assault case after U.S. ruling](#) [BBC News, 12 January 2022]

*Prince Andrew is to face a civil case in the U.S. over allegations he sexually assaulted a woman when she was 17. Virginia Giuffre is suing the prince, claiming he abused her in 2001. His lawyers said the case should be thrown out, citing a 2009 deal she signed with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. But a New York judge ruled that the case could be heard. The prince has consistently denied the claims. Buckingham Palace said it would not comment on an ongoing legal matter. The motion to dismiss the lawsuit was outlined in a 46-page decision by Judge Lewis A Kaplan of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. It means the case against the Duke of York, 61, could be heard later this year.*

[Saudi court orders first naming of man guilty of sexual harassment](#) [BBC News, 11 January 2022]

*A court in Saudi Arabia has for the first time ordered that a man convicted of sexual harassment be named and shamed in public, local media report. Yasser al-Arawi was found guilty by the Criminal Court in Medina of harassing a woman using obscene remarks. He was sentenced to eight months in prison and fined \$1,330 (£980). The anti-harassment law was amended a year ago to allow for offenders' names and sentences to be published in local newspapers at their own expense. Judges were left to decide whether the "gravity of the crime and its impact on society" warranted such a step. The amendment was welcomed by many in the conservative Gulf kingdom at the time, with one commentator saying it was "long overdue". The law, which took effect in 2018, already stipulated penalties of up to two years in prison and fines of up to \$27,000 for those found guilty of an act of sexual harassment. Repeat offenders face being imprisoned for up to five years and fined up to \$80,000. Despite these legal steps, some Saudi women have complained that authorities are still not doing enough to stop harassment.*

## MISCELLANEOUS

[Biden administration takes new approach to gather data on federal workforce quickly](#) [Jory Heckman, Federal News Network, 10 January 2022]

*The Biden administration is taking a new approach to ask federal employees how they feel about burnout, returning to the office and whether agency leadership makes diversity and inclusion a priority. The President's Management Council, together with the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Personnel Management and the General Services Administration, released the [first data from its Federal Pulse Survey](#). The pulse survey, an experimental way of gathering data that's gaining momentum in the federal government, gives the administration a more real-*

*time data snapshot of how federal employees feel about their workplaces, compared to more established methods such as the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The 10-question survey asked employees questions themed around three broad topics — employee engagement and burnout, the pandemic and plans to return to the office, and equity and inclusion.*

[Senate passes bill to honor Emmett Till and his mother](#) [The Associated Press, 12 January 2022]

*The Senate has passed a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal posthumously to Emmett Till, the Chicago teenager murdered by White supremacists in the 1950s, and his mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, who insisted on an open casket funeral to demonstrate the brutality of his killing. Till was abducted, tortured and killed after witnesses said he whistled at a White woman at a grocery store in rural Mississippi, a violation of the South's racist societal codes at the time. In return, he was rousted from bed and abducted from a great-uncle's home in the predawn hours four days later. Sens. Cory Booker, D-N.J. and Richard Burr, R-N.C., introduced the bill to honor Till and his mother with the highest civilian honor that Congress awards. They described the legislation as a long overdue recognition of what the Till family endured and what they accomplished in their fight against injustice. The House version of the legislation is sponsored by Rep. Bobby Rush, D-Ill. He also has sponsored a bill to issue a commemorative postage stamp in honor of Mamie Till-Mobley.*

[Why a Majority of White Americans Oppose Reparations For Black Citizens](#) [Andre Claudio, Route Fifty, 11 January 2022]

*The U.S. has used reparations as a means of acknowledging and amending its role in egregious injustices, such as for Native Americans whose lands were taken or Japanese Americans put in internment camps during World War II. However, the descendants of Africans enslaved have been notably absent from reparative actions, [according to a report by Brookings](#). While the task of providing reparations seems difficult to many U.S. residents considering the scale of injustice presented by slavery and its aftermath, the report authors—Ashley V. Reichelmann, an assistant professor of sociology at Virginia Tech, and Matthew O. Hunt, a professor of sociology at Northeastern University—believe this is a conversation the country needs to have. Some of the most cited reasoning for White Americans' opposition to reparations includes the hardship of determining the economic value of slavery's impact alongside the fact that no one directly involved in the practice is still living, the report contends. Other reasons revolve around the denial of any ongoing legacy of slavery and related concerns about the undeserving nature of prospective recipients of reparations.*

## MISCONDUCT

[Army Officer Relieved of Command, Facing Discharge over Racist Social Media Posts](#) [Steve Beynon and Konstantin Toropin, *Military.com*, 7 January 2022]

*A lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve was relieved of command in 2020 and is now facing removal from the force after he peddled racist opinions to his troops and peppered his social media accounts with a consistent flow of outlandish posts attacking public officials that his own lawyer described as racist, inflammatory and in poor taste. Lt. Col. Michael Spillane, a medical officer with the 7207th Medical Support Group based out of Webster, New York, wrote a memo to*

*soldiers under his command in June 2020, warning them of the “medical crisis created by China” and that “peaceful assemblies have turned into riots, looting, and shooting.” It was a memo full of typos and half-truths laced with partisan wink and nod warnings about Democrats and minority-led protests amid a reckoning of racial justice, a highly atypical memo from an Army officer to his troops. Spillane’s commander, Col. Jeffery Wood, later described the memo as offensive and inflammatory, in documents reviewed by Military.com.*

## RELIGION

[Can a Christian flag fly at City Hall? The Supreme Court will have to decide](#) [Beth Daley, *The Conversation*, 6 January 2022]

*There are three flagpoles outside Boston City Hall. One flies the United States flag. Another flies the Massachusetts state flag. What can—and can’t—fly from the third is an issue being taken up by the Supreme Court. On Jan. 18, 2022, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in *Shurtleff v. Boston*. The case addresses whether the city violated the First Amendment by denying a request to temporarily raise the Christian flag on a flagpole outside City Hall, where Boston has temporarily displayed many secular organizations’ flags. The case raises important questions about free speech at a time when many members of the Supreme Court seem concerned about restrictions on religion. The court’s decision will likely clarify one or more free speech doctrines, impacting how courts nationwide interpret the First Amendment’s guarantees.*

[The Navy is making chaplains a permanent part of destroyer crews](#) [Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Navy Times*, 12 January 2022]

*In a nod to the mental health needs of guided-missile destroyer crews, the Navy is starting to make chaplains a permanent part of the warship’s force. The effort began last month in the always-busy Japan-based U.S. 7th Fleet. There, Destroyer Squadron 15 assigned one of the uniformed religious leaders for each of the squadron’s eight destroyers, making them a permanent part of the ship’s company. Before that, chaplains were farmed out to destroyers during workups and deployments as visiting “ship riders,” according to Naval Surface Forces. Military chaplains span denominations and work to look after the spiritual and moral well-being of troops and their families, conducting religious services and providing counseling. “We care for everybody,” Lt. Timothy Delaughter, a chaplain for the Japan-based Combined Task Force 71, said in a Navy release announcing the new initiative. “A chaplain can provide confidentiality through conversations, counseling and support.”*

## SEXISM

[Air Force accused of pushing woman through elite commando training after she quit, spurring investigation](#) [Rachel S. Cohen and Kyle Rempfer, *Air Force Times*, 7 January 2022]

*Air Force Special Operations Command boss Lt. Gen. Jim Slife is calling for an inspector general investigation after claims surfaced that his organization is unfairly pushing an unqualified female airman through special tactics officer training. If she completes the program, she would become the first woman to make it into the elite special tactics field—a major win for the Air Force. On Wednesday, however, an anonymous member of the AFSOC community raised*

questions in a letter about whether the airman is receiving preferential treatment to stay in the pipeline, despite allegedly quitting multiple times. A special tactics source provided the full [anonymous letter](#) to Air Force Times on Thursday, as well as course records documenting an instance in which the female candidate self-eliminated during a land navigation event. Elements of the letter were corroborated by a second special tactics source who witnessed a separate instance in which the candidate quit in pool training.

[\[UPDATED\]](#)

[A few good women: Why the Marine Corps must do more to keep its best female Marines in uniform](#) [Richard Protzmann, *Task & Purpose*, 11 January 2022] [OPINION]

*Talent Management 2030*, released by the Commandant of the Marine Corps on Nov. 3, 2021, is an attempt at refining and improving the Marine Corps' recruitment and retention practices to model certain systems and trends after the American private sector. One component that should not just be given lip service is the new emphasis on career flexibility, especially for female Marines who are coming off childbirth and nursing. Former Defense Secretary Mattis touted that he had served alongside men and women in combat, leaving no doubt as to the quality, character, and lethality of women in combat despite his reservations about the integration of women into specific combat arms specialties. The most lethal and capable Marines I have led are women. Among the smartest Marines I know in our command are women. The only officer in my company at The Basic School who received the combat action ribbon was a woman. That fact is, we have phenomenal female Marines who have the same cunning and guile as their male counterparts, but unlike their male counterparts, they bear the brunt of family planning and it has a much more direct and profound impact on their careers.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

[Army to Deploy Virtual Reality Capabilities to Combat Sexual Assault](#) [Brandi Vincent, *NextGov*, 6 January 2022]

While the Pentagon works broadly to confront what lawmakers have deemed a military sexual assault crisis, the U.S. Army is preparing to train some of its staff in prevention and response techniques by placing 18,000 soldiers in uncomfortable situations via virtual reality. A [request for information](#) published on Wednesday details the branch's plans to buy 200 VR headsets and six associated software programs to underpin its envisioned work. "The system needs to be a fully immersive virtual reality training platform in which soldiers will experience real-world scenarios of inappropriate behavior unbecoming of a DOD service member," officials wrote. "Through this training, soldiers will learn the current regulatory guidance and how to intervene, respond, and report [sexual harassment/assault response and prevention, or SHARP-related incidents]."

[Court to decide if Hyten will face trial in civil suit for sexual assault](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Times*, 11 January 2022]

Retired Air Force Gen. John Hyten, formerly the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is awaiting a federal appellate court's verdict on whether a civil suit against him will proceed to a jury trial on claims that he sexually assaulted then-Army Col. Kathryn Spletstoser in December 2017. Spletstoser, who was Hyten's aide during his tenure as head of U.S. Strategic Command,

went public with the allegations in July 2019, shortly before his confirmation hearing to become the military's No. 2 officer. Among multiple allegations, she accused Hyten, who retired in November, of inappropriately touching her in a hotel room during a prominent military affairs conference in California. That claim forms the basis of her civil suit. Lowell Sturgill Jr., a Department of Justice lawyer representing Hyten, on Monday pushed a three-judge panel at the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in California to dismiss the case. The government argued that because the alleged incident occurred on a work trip, and while the general was stopping by to discuss work matters, the situation falls under a legal theory known as the *Feres doctrine*.

[Ellsworth command chief was fired after investigation backed sexual harassment claim](#) [Rachel S. Cohen, *Air Force Times*, 12 January 2022]

Chief Master Sgt. Justin Deisch, a former command chief at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, was recently fired after an investigation found he sexually harassed a female airman at a major Air Force conference in September. The inquiry substantiated three of the four allegations levied against Deisch for his behavior on Sept. 22-23, 2021, at the Air Force Association's annual fall conference at National Harbor, Maryland. Those include sexual harassment of an airman, dereliction of his duties as a senior noncommissioned officer and simple assault. Wing commander Col. Joseph Sheffield called for the inquiry Oct. 1, 2021, about a week after the conference ended. As the top enlisted airman at the wing, Deisch advised Sheffield on the professional and personal well-being of more than 3,000 enlisted airmen at Ellsworth.

[I'm an E4 whose sex assault case was mishandled by civilian police. Here's how we changed state laws for the better](#) [Sheyla Scholl, *Army Times*, 10 January 2022] [OPINION]

I was at the peak of my split option enlistment when I was sexually assaulted by another soldier in the Minnesota National Guard on the night I graduated and returned from Advanced Individual Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. For the year-and-a-half up until that point, the military repeatedly instructed me that sexual assault victims would be taken care of, but what I would find out is that National Guardsmen are not held to the same legal standard as soldiers in the active Army who I trained with.

[Judge orders man convicted of sexual assault to join the military or go to jail](#) [Max Hauptmann, *Task & Purpose*, 12 January 2022]

A Kentucky judge this month gave a man convicted of sexual assault a perplexing choice: join the military or go to jail. Judge Thomas Wingate handed down a 12-month sentence suspended for two years to Brandon Scott Price for second-degree sexual assault, a Class A misdemeanor. If the 28-year-old were to enlist in the military in the next month, however, Wingate would apparently overturn any jail time, according to Frankfort, Kentucky's *State Journal* newspaper. Price was a guard at the Franklin County Regional Jail in 2019 when he assaulted a female inmate of the jail, according to a lawsuit filed by the inmate against Price and several other members of the jail staff. While veterans may have heard stories of squadmates who enlisted to avoid a jail stint, the history behind this is a bit more complicated. A judge's order to a petty criminal to enlist or go to jail carried more weight during the draft lottery of the Vietnam War. But the advent of the all-volunteer military has, over time, sharpened standards for enlistment. And recruiters are under

*no obligation to accept anyone who doesn't meet those standards, so a judge's ruling does not apply beyond the doors of a recruiting office.*

[N.J. high school students charged in hazing investigation involving football players](#) [Minyvonne Burke, *NBC News*, 11 January 2022]

*Charges have been filed against “a number” of New Jersey high school students stemming from an [investigation into allegations of hazing](#), authorities said. The students at Wall Township High School were charged with hazing, attempted criminal sexual contact, criminal sexual contact, false imprisonment and harassment, said Monmouth County’s acting prosecutor, Lori Linskey, who announced Monday that juvenile complaints had been filed. The incidents, some of which were recorded on cellphone video, are alleged to have occurred in the football team's locker room in September and October. A second, unrelated investigation resulted in additional charges of aggravated sexual assault and sexual assault against one juvenile. Linskey alleged in a [statement](#) that the incident occurred outside school.*

[She Asked the Army to Investigate a Rape Trial. They Fired Her](#) [Seth Harp, *Rolling Stone*, 4 January 2022]

*A victim advocate formerly assigned to the Special Forces at Fort Bragg, North Carolina was placed on administrative leave, investigated for two years, and ultimately fired after she raised questions about the military’s handling of a Delta Force soldier accused of rape. The victim advocate, Lindsey Knapp, was a civilian employee of the US Army’s Special Operations Command, known as USASOC, and attended the court martial of the accused Delta Force soldier, Cristobal Lopez Vallejo, in order to support the alleged victim, a young artillery officer named Erin Scanlon, whose harrowing ordeal with the military justice system *Rolling Stone* recounted in a recent investigation, [“Delta Force’s Dirty Secret.”](#) Knapp reached out to *Rolling Stone* shortly after the article was published. In a recent interview, she corroborated Scanlon’s account of the Army’s alleged mishandling of the case and added new, previously unreported details. “My job was to attend the trial,” Knapp says. “There were all kinds of things that went wrong.”*

[Women say Marine’s inappropriate photo revealed a web of lies](#) [Chad Garland, *Stars and Stripes*, 10 January 2022]

*A Marine is under investigation for sending an unwanted photo of his genitals as part of a pattern of misrepresenting himself to exploit vulnerable women, according to several people familiar with the events. The Marine Corps launched an inquiry last week after social media posts about the unsolicited photo grabbed the attention of a two-star deputy commanding general at the Army’s Cyber Center of Excellence. But in addition to that uproar, dozens of women accuse him of lying and manipulating them for months to get pity, emotional gratification, nude photos and, in some cases, sex. “He’s literally lying about his whole life,” said the woman who received the unsolicited photo, a government employee who said she had a security clearance and asked not to be named to protect her privacy and career. The Marine under investigation, who was identified online, did not respond to inquiries on Twitter, and a phone number at which others had reached him was disconnected. One of at least two Twitter accounts believed to be the Marine’s,*

*@USEmCee, was deleted. But not before he admitted there that he was wrong to send pictures and sexual comments without explicit consent.*

## **VETERANS**

[Veterans unemployment drops to lowest level in two years](#) [Leo Shane III, *Military Times*, 7 January 2022]

*The unemployment rate among U.S. veterans in December fell to its lowest level in more than two years, before the start of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic that sidelined hundreds of thousands of jobs nationwide. According to [data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) on Friday, the jobless rate among all American veterans last month was 3.2%, down from 3.9% the month prior. The 3.2% unemployment rate among veterans translates into roughly 270,000 individuals still looking for work last month. About 8.1 million veterans are of working age and employed across America today. BLS officials reported that the jobless rate among Iraq- and Afghanistan-era veterans—which can be more volatile month-to-month, due to smaller sampling sizes—was 4.3% for December, the same mark it hit in November. Roughly 40% of the veterans’ workforce in America today served in the most recent wars.*