

DEOMI News Highlights

DEOMI News Highlights is a weekly compilation of published items and commentary with a focus on equal opportunity, equal employment opportunity, diversity, culture, and human relations issues. DEOMI News Highlights is also a management tool intended to serve the informational needs of equity professionals and senior DOD officials in the continuing assessment of defense policies, programs, and actions. Further reproduction or redistribution for private use or gain is subject to original copyright restrictions.

Poll: 12 percent of Americans support new laws promoting Bible in public schools [Matthew Sheffield, *The Hill*, 24 May 2019]

- A number of states are in the process of passing new laws to require public schools to offer Bible history classes but a new poll finds that the vast majority of Americans would prefer that other religious and atheist books also be included in such courses, or that they not be taught at all.
- In a [Hill-HarrisX survey](#) released Friday, just 12 percent of Americans supported the idea of offering classes in Bible history that do not also teach about other religious books or atheist literature.
- Eleven states currently have bills pending that would teach the Bible in schools but not allow for texts from atheists or other religions to be offered, according to an analysis by Americans United, a group that opposes them.

[Poll: 12 percent of Americans support new laws promoting Bible in public schools](#)

Supreme Court leaves in place Pennsylvania policy supporting transgender students [Robert Barnes and Moriah Balingit, *The Washington Post*, 28 May 2019]

- The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to review a Pennsylvania school district's policy letting transgender students use restrooms and locker rooms that match their gender identities...
- Without comment, the court declined to review an opinion from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit that upheld the Boyertown Area School District policy. A half-dozen current and former students sued the school system in 2017, saying that allowing transgender students to change clothes alongside them in locker rooms and to use the same bathrooms violated the privacy rights of students who are not transgender. The appeals court ruled last year that the students who sued had failed to show how transgender students violated their privacy rights more than non-transgender students did.
- The Supreme Court's decision allows the Boyertown policy to stand. Though it does not set precedent, advocates declared the decision to stay out of the case a win.

[Supreme Court leaves in place Pennsylvania policy supporting transgender students](#)

These brigades are the next to accept women into direct combat units [Meghann Myers, *Army Times*, 28 May 2019]

- More than three years into its efforts to recruit and assign women to every combat military occupational specialty, more than 1,000 women have joined the infantry, armor, and field artillery branches, according to a May 21 release from the Army.
- They are currently spread over brigades at five of the Army's biggest posts, and later this year, Army G-1 Lt. Gen. Thomas Seamands said in the release, five more are due to open this year: Fort Riley, Kansas's 1st Infantry Division; Fort Stewart, Georgia's 3rd Infantry Division; Fort Drum, New York, and Fort Polk, Louisiana's 10th Mountain Division; and Vicenza, Italy's 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.
- "To date, the Army has successfully accessed and transferred more than 1,000 women into the previously closed occupations of infantry, armor, and field artillery," Seamands said. "Currently, 80 female officers are assigned to infantry or armor positions at Forts Hood, Bragg, Carson, Bliss, and Campbell."

[These brigades are the next to accept women into direct combat units](#)

DEOMI News Highlights

Culture

[After receiving threats, man decides not to open Medal of Honor museum](#)
[Normandy tries to keep alive “infinite gratitude” for D-Day](#)
[Rare color footage brings D-Day memories alive, 75 years on](#)
[Veterans of All Services Should Be Included in New Memorial \[OPINION\]](#)

Diversity

[From Amish to Army: The story of one Soldier’s challenging journey](#)
[SMA or bust: The first enlisted female Ranger grad talks ambition and leadership](#)
[These brigades are the next to accept women into direct combat units](#)

Human Relations

[Helping veterans who suffer from substance use or mental health disorders \[OPINION\]](#)
[I’m a Veteran Without PTSD. I Used to Think Something Was Wrong With Me.](#)

Miscellaneous

[Burnout is officially a medical condition, according to the World Health Organization](#)
[Last remaining Akwesasne Mohawk code talker dies](#)
[Mike Pence: West Point grads should expect to see combat](#)
[One candidate’s suicide prevention plan: Annual mental health check-ups for all troops, high schoolers](#)
[States’ increasing restrictions and bans could put abortions “out of reach” for some military women](#)
[Study Aims to Show Why Some Veterans Go Hungry](#)
[Supreme Court leaves in place Pennsylvania policy supporting transgender students](#)
[U.S. Army’s Tweet Prompts Stories of Harmful Effects of Military Service](#)

Misconduct

[Air Force Academy investigating 10 cadets for possible cheating](#)
[Assault, fraternization, harassment: Unit punishment book reveals noncommissioned officer misconduct aboard 13th MEU deployment](#)
[The Leading Narratives on War-Crimes Pardons Are Wrong \[OPINION\]](#)
[Marine Vet Lawmaker Responds to Battlefield Photo Controversy](#)
[Vet Lawmaker Likely to Avoid Charges After Claim of Taking Photo with Enemy Corpse](#)

Religion

[Authorities: Army vet thought Muslims among people in crash](#)
[Foodies, faithful flock to Metro Detroit Ramadan festivals](#)
[Poll: 12 percent of Americans support new laws promoting Bible in public schools](#)
[Why a Florida VA hospital serving WWII veterans has swastika floor tiles](#)

Sexual Assault/Harassment

[The “Harvey Weinstein of the WI National Guard:” Records show WI National Guard rehired unit leader who allegedly sexually assaulted soldiers](#)
[Mediation allowed in Dartmouth College sex misconduct suit](#)
[Mental health questions delay trial for Army prosecutor charged with rape](#)

Culture

After receiving threats, man decides not to open Medal of Honor museum

By Jim Holland

Rapid City Journal (Rapid City, S.D.), May 28, 2019



John L. Johnson

Amid a storm of protest, including threats to his personal well-being, John L. Johnson of Rapid City is scrapping plans to open a museum honoring recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, which had been slated for Aug. 1 at the Rushmore Mall.

Instead, Johnson said Tuesday he plans to open an art gallery for Native American artists on that date in the same space planned for the museum.

Controversy quickly turned into a social media firestorm over Johnson's comments to the Journal for a May 17 story about the proposed museum, specifically referring to efforts to rescind medals given to U.S. cavalry soldiers for the Dec. 28, 1890, massacre at Wounded Knee where an estimated 300 Lakota, mostly women, children and elders, were killed.

The storm erupted after Johnson said in an interview that in spite of the political side of the massacre, many of the soldiers who went on to receive the medal acted heroically.

But Johnson, who also said in the interview that he welcomed discussion of the medal revocation issue, said he has since received hate mail and even death threats and heard of plans for meetings and protests focusing on the museum.

He said both he and mall officials were upset by the backlash and after advice from many people on all sides of the issue, he decided to pull the plug on the museum.

"That's what I've decided to do," Johnson said. "I'm not going to move forward on the museum project."

O.J. Semans of Mission, part of the fight to get all 20 Wounded Knee medals rescinded, said he was glad to hear of Johnson's decision.

"I guess I would say thank you," Semans said. "Those medals were awarded for the mass massacre of women and children."

Johnson said he conceived the museum with the best of intentions, based on a book he has written spotlighting the stories of minority recipients of the medal, first handed out during the American Civil War in the 1860s.

The book, titled "Every Night and Every Morn: Portraits of Asian, Hispanic, Jewish, African-American, and Native-American Recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor," was published in 2007 and updated with a second edition in 2010.

Johnson, who is African-American and had worked for Oglala Lakota College as director of assessment for two years, had planned special displays for minority medal recipients in the museum.

Semans said putting a museum honoring Medal of Honor recipients in Rapid City was a slap in the face to the Native American community amid the effort to strip the medals from the soldiers involved in the massacre.

"As long as those medals exist, the same thought process is going to be held by individuals that don't know," Semans said. "That's why I had an issue with them having those medals in that museum."

https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/after-receiving-threats-man-decides-not-to-open-medal-of/article_ae2e9a56-0331-51c9-81d4-67773f8bdc13.html

Johnson said he understands the strong feelings.

“They did make a point and just to avoid any more divisions in our society, to avoid any more controversy and to pay respect to those people, I have dropped the museum project,” he said.

Semans said he is also pleased to hear of plans for an art gallery in place of the museum.

“That’s a positive,” Semans said. “Something good did come out of it in the end.”

Normandy tries to keep alive ‘infinite gratitude’ for D-Day

By Catherine Gaschka and Sylvie Corbet

The Associated Press, May 28, 2019



In this June 11, 1944, file photo, American paratroopers patrol in the streets of Sainte-Mere-Eglise, France, before pushing on toward Cherbourg. About 15,000 paratroopers landed in and around the village not long after midnight on June 6, 1944, and seized it from the Germans by 4:30 a.m. (AP Photo/File)

SAINTE-MERE-EGLISE, France (AP) — At 10 years old, Henri-Jean Renaud watched U.S. paratroopers landing through the window of his Normandy home in the early hours of D-Day. Like other French who lived through the war, he’s trying to pass on to younger generations the gratitude he feels.

With fewer veterans and witnesses able to share personal memories, the French who owe their freedom to [D-Day’s fighters](#) are more determined than ever to keep alive the memory of the battle and its significance.

President Donald Trump and other world leaders will [gather next week in Normandy](#) to mark the 75th anniversary of the invasion, which still looms large throughout this region. Normandy beaches, cemeteries and World War II memorials embody what French President Macron called “our entire nation’s infinite gratitude.”

Renaud, now 85, recalls the strange atmosphere in Sainte-Mere-Eglise, the first village liberated by the Allies, on the morning of June 6, 1944. He could hear the fighting at a short distance but in the village, everything was calm.

“The civilians came down on the pavement and tried to fraternize with the Americans by making victory signs, waving hello, etc. But there hasn’t been any fraternization from the Americans because — you have to put yourself in their shoes — they were very nervous, very anxious. They had their finger on the trigger,” Renaud said.

Fraternization came later.

All his life, Renaud has taken care of veterans, hosting them and helping them visit the former battlefields, “because nothing touched me more than seeing those guys who were coming back, searching for the place where they were dropped, the place where they lost a friend.”

About 15,000 paratroopers landed in and around Sainte-Mere-Eglise not long after midnight on June 6, 1944, and seized it from the Germans by 4:30 a.m. An American flag was raised in front of the town hall.

“It was making a lot of noise and the planes were flying low,” recalled 97-year-old Albert Guégan, a French civilian survivor living in Carentan, a few kilometers away. “We were in a ditch near our house with the neighbors. We thought we would be hit by bombs. But no, it was not a bombing. It was the paratroopers!”

More than 150,000 troops crossed the English Channel on D-Day, and more than 2 million Allied troops were in France by the end of August.

Among them was Frank Mouqué, who landed on Sword Beach as a 19-year-old corporal with the British Royal Engineers. Now 94, he has returned to Normandy more than 30 times at the invitation of a French family.

“It’s marvelous, the way we’re treated! They’re so pleased to welcome a veteran in that sense. You sit outside in the coffee shop, having early morning cup of coffee and people come up and shake your hand and say: ‘Merci, merci beaucoup. You are our savior!’”

<https://apnews.com/af6e70e2d1594b0c97706177e7e79923>

British veteran Jack Woods has also returned to Normandy many times. As soon as the bus stops, he walks down to the cafe near the cathedral in Bayeux, where the owner tells everyone to clear out to make room for his friends from Britain.

“They go mad,” the 95-year-old said of his reception, adding that they always have “a whale of a time.”

Even amid the warmth, the trip is always a serious matter for him. He feels he has no choice.

Woods fought with the 9th Royal Tank Regiment and got to France at the end of June 1944, a few weeks after D-Day. But fighting was still intense, and many of the soldiers had never seen combat.

“I promised them I would not forget them,” he said of the pact he made with his fellow soldiers when he was just 20. “I can’t not go. We go over there and be with them — all these guys.”

Near Omaha Beach, the beauty of the American cemetery of Colleville-sur-Mer strikes any visitor entering the site, with its immaculate lawns, majestic pines, commanding view of the Atlantic and row upon row of crosses.

The cemetery contains 9,380 graves, most of them for servicemen who lost their lives in the D-Day landings and ensuing operations. Another 1,557 names are inscribed on the Walls of the Missing.

Alain Dupain, 61, is a gardener who has worked at the cemetery for 35 years, maintaining the grounds with a team of 20 people.

“We work for the families. When they come, we want the site to be perfect for them and their tombs ... And I think if one of your loved ones dies and you arrive at a beautiful, well-maintained place like that, it will not erase the pain but might bring a little bit of relief.”

The site receives approximately 1 million visitors each year.

Superintendent Scott Desjardins of the American Battle Monuments Commission said the top priority “is to keep this site at the highest standards possible because it is the promise we made to the families who decided to keep their loved ones with us. It overrides every other priority.”

The memorial of Colleville-sur-Mer also aims to preserve soldiers’ stories, he added. “So we’ll continue to say their names. And continue to tell people what it is that they did.”

Normandy has more than 20 military cemeteries holding mostly Americans, Germans, French, British, Canadians and Polish.

Karen Lancelle, 42, who grew up in Colleville-sur-Mer, has been a guide at the cemetery for 12 years. She said the memory of the battle is still alive among children in the region thanks to [frequent school visits](#) and family stories told by older generations.

The cemetery is a place “where meetings can happen between the veterans and the youngest ones.” Nearly every day brings some kind of touching moment with American families, she said.

While visiting the cemetery, Vietnam veteran Tom Woolbright, 75, from Fort Worth, Texas, insisted on thanking the people of France “for maintaining and for honoring the men who died on that day ... in such a beautiful fashion like this cemetery.”

“This bonds us, and a war like that should never happen again,” Woolbright said.

Corbet reported from Paris. Associated Press writers Raf Casert in Colleville-sur-Mer and Danica Kirka in London contributed to this report.

Rare color footage brings D-Day memories alive, 75 years on

By Jeffrey Schaeffer and Julian Styles

The Associated Press, May 29, 2019



Landing craft on the beach during D-Day on June 6, 1944 in France. Seventy-five years later, surprising color images of the D-Day invasion and aftermath bring an immediacy to wartime memories. They were filmed by Hollywood director George Stevens and rediscovered years after his death. (War Footage From the George Stevens Collection at the Library of Congress via AP)
WASHINGTON (AP) — Seventy-five years ago, Hollywood director George Stevens stood on the deck of the HMS Belfast to film the start of the D-Day invasion.

The resulting black-and-white films — following Allied troops through Normandy, the liberation of Paris, Battle of the Bulge, the horror of the Dachau concentration camp — form the basis of Americans’ historical memory of World War II, and were even used as evidence in Nazi war crimes trials.

But the director was also shooting 16-millimeter color film for himself of the same events, creating a kind of personal video journal of his experiences.

As [veterans and world leaders prepare to mark the 75th anniversary](#) of D-Day next week, Stevens’ surprising color images bring an immediacy to wartime memories, a powerful reminder of the war’s impact and its heroes as those who [witnessed the war are dying out](#).

“You’ve seen it in black and white. And when you see it in color, all of a sudden it feels like today,” his son George Stevens Jr. said in an interview. “It doesn’t seem like yesterday. And it has a much more modern and authentic feeling to it.”

[Next week’s D-Day commemorations](#) are about honoring the thousands killed and wounded on June 6, 1944 — and people like Stevens Jr.’s father.

Then 37, Stevens was already a famous American director who had made Hollywood classics like “Gunga Din” and “Swing Time.”

“My father was beyond draft age. And he had a dependent child. So there was no chance of him being called up,” Stevens Jr., a filmmaker in his own right, told The Associated Press. But his father felt compelled to enlist in the U.S. military after seeing the power of Nazi propaganda films including Leni Riefenstahl’s “Triumph of the Will.”

“The next day he started calling up to find out how he could get into the service. He couldn’t sit on the sidelines in Hollywood, and wanted to make his contribution,” his son said.

General Dwight Eisenhower assigned Stevens to head up the combat motion-picture coverage. From D-Day on, Stevens and his team stormed through France and across Europe following U.S. forces.

George Stevens Jr., now 87, was a child when his dad left to cover the war. Only after his father’s death, decades later, did he discover reels of the color film in storage.

They could have been anything — his father used the same camera during the war that he had used to film his son’s birthday parties.

But what his son found that day in 1980 was no normal home video.

“I was sitting alone, and on the screen came images of a gray day and rough seas and a large ship and barrage balloons up in the sky. And I realized it was D-Day.

<https://apnews.com/242431e76789468baeced9e39e60a5f0>

“And I realized that my eyes were probably the first other than those who were there to see this in color,” he recalled. “I’m watching this footage and seeing the men on the ship ... and around the corner walks into the frame a man with a helmet and a flak jacket. It’s my 37-year-old father on the morning of D-Day.”

Stevens Jr., a writer, director and founder of the American Film Institute, later made a documentary with the footage, “George Stevens: D-Day to Berlin.”

“My father referred to his experience in World War II as having a seat on the 50-yard line. And seeing men at their best and at their worst,” his son said.

Long before social networks and smart phones, the outside world had little visual evidence of the Nazis’ attempted genocide of the Jews.

His father’s unit “went into Dachau, the concentration camp, and nobody had anticipated what they were going to find there,” Stevens Jr. said. “It was this harrowing sight of these emaciated prisoners and typhus and disease and dead bodies stacked like cordwood. ... Rather than just being a recorder of events, he became a gatherer of evidence, and he himself took a camera and went into these boxcars, with snow on the ground, with frozen bodies.”

Stevens documented the scenes both in black and white and in color, and images he shot at Dachau were among those shown at the Nuremberg war crimes trials, according to his son.

He also filmed Allied war generals working together during the war to defeat fascism. Now, 75 years on, the trans-Atlantic alliance is fraying and Europe’s extreme right is resurging, making remembrance of the war especially important.

“I think that common interests and purpose will keep us together,” Stevens Jr. said. He praised the U.S.-led postwar effort “to embrace the defeated and help them, help Germany become a great nation,” calling it a “very American idea ... that will serve us far into the future.”

Schaeffer reported from Paris.

Veterans of All Services Should Be Included in New Memorial

By James Tyson Currie

Military.com, May 30, 2019



Artist rendering of The National Native American Veterans Memorial, Warriors' Circle of Honor, Harvey Pratt. (U.S. Marine Corps/ Petty Officer 2nd Class Anita Ne)

Retired Army Col. James Tyson Currie is executive director of the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service and its affiliate, the Commissioned Officers Foundation for the Advancement of Public Health.

In June 2018, the Smithsonian Institution, one of the most venerable organizations in our government, revealed its design for the National Native American Veterans Memorial, to be built along the National Mall on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian.

It was to be a wonderful memorial that recognized the contributions Native American veterans have made to our great country. The memorial's design is terrific, except that it includes only the seals of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, omitting both the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Officers who served in these two organizations -- which are recognized by law as "uniformed services" of the federal government -- are veterans, entitled to all the rights and privileges thereof. USPHS and NOAA officers serve routinely alongside their brothers and sisters in the Army, Air Force and so on.

USPHS officers were mostly assigned to the Coast Guard during World War II, and some of them lost their lives when their ships were sunk by enemy action. Other USPHS officers were in the Philippines when the war started, providing health care to the troops there. Some of them died in captivity. They were recognized with Purple Hearts and other medals. They served on Gen. Douglas MacArthur's staff and Adm. Chester Nimitz's staff and in the China-Burma-India Theater with Army Gen. Joseph Stilwell. USPHS officers served in Korea and Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The reason given by the Smithsonian for omitting these two groups of Native American veterans is that the 1994 law authorizing the memorial refers to the "armed forces." We have read all of the legislative history of this law, and it is clear from the accompanying committee reports and *Congressional Record* statements that its authors -- primarily then-Rep. Craig Thomas of Wyoming -- wanted to honor all Native American veterans.

Use of the term "armed forces" was simply a drafting error of the kind that occurs every year when legislation is put together on Capitol Hill. There is nothing in the law that suggests an intent to honor some Native American veterans, but not all Native American veterans. There is also nothing in the law that precludes the Smithsonian from including USPHS and NOAA in its memorial to Native American veterans.

We understand that there are some folks who do not consider you to be a veteran unless you have been shot at by the enemy. They are certainly entitled to their opinion, and we would agree to the terms "combat-wounded veteran" or "combat veteran" as qualifiers to distinguish those on the front lines from the myriad support troops without whom wars could not be won. But, the fact is, most veterans have never experienced actual combat. The tooth-to-tail ratio of our armed forces is very small. Most veterans serve in roles where they support the trigger-pullers. Medical personnel, such as the officers in the USPHS, fall into that

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/05/30/veterans-all-services-should-be-included-new-memorial.html>

category. They patch up the men and women who are injured in combat. They save lives, just as do medical personnel who serve in the Army, Navy and Air Force.

But they are as much veterans as anyone else who raised their hand, swore the oath, and put on the uniform of one of the seven uniformed federal services. The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) recognizes these men and women as "veterans," and we think the Smithsonian should do the same when it builds the Native American Veterans Memorial. The Smithsonian has special expertise in identifying dinosaurs and obscure bird species, but it is not the federal government's expert when it comes to determining who is a veteran and entitled to recognition as such. That's the VA's job.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar wrote movingly to the Smithsonian secretary about this issue in April of this year.

"The USPHS has a long history of service to our country," Azar wrote. "During times of militarization of the Corps, officers served alongside military forces in WWI and WWII. Currently, over twenty-five percent of the Corps have prior military service with the Department of Defense."

He went on to tell the Smithsonian Secretary, "Recently, I presided over the 2017 Hurricane Response Joint Services Award ceremony, where the DoD awarded more than 1,400 Corps officers with the Joint Services Humanitarian Services medal."

This past week, a solemn Memorial Day ceremony took place at Arlington National Cemetery, perhaps our country's most recognizable symbol of sacrifice from those in uniform. Many groups presented wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and one of these was the U.S. Public Health Service, represented that day by Adm. Brett Giroir, the highest ranking member of the Commissioned Corps of the USPHS.

It would be very easy for the Smithsonian to include both the USPHS and NOAA in the design of the Native American Veterans Memorial. Groundbreaking has not yet occurred, and modifying the design to include two additional seals would be easy.

Telling Native Americans in these two uniformed services that they are second-class veterans and not entitled to the recognition given those who earned their veteran's status in other services is just plain wrong and would be, in our opinion, quite un-American. Perhaps the new Smithsonian secretary will see the light.

-- The opinions expressed in this op-ed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Military.com. If you would like to submit your own commentary, please send your article to opinions@military.com for consideration.

© Copyright 2019 Military.com. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Diversity

From Amish to Army: The story of one Soldier's challenging journey

By Amanda Sullivan and Leonard Wood

Army.mil, May 23, 2019



Pvt. Malinda Dennison graduates from OSUT May 23 as an MP after leaving her Amish life behind. (Photo Credit: Stephen Standifird (Leonard Wood)) [VIEW ORIGINAL](#)

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. -- The transition from civilian to Soldier can be a culture shock, but for one new Soldier, the challenge of adapting to a new culture is far from a unique experience.

Ten years ago, with only an 8th-grade education, and the drive and motivation to start a new life, Pvt. Malinda Dennison left her small Amish community in Spartansburg, Pennsylvania. With the help of friends, she started on the path that led her to graduate from Fort Leonard Wood May 23 as a military police Soldier with Company E, 795th Military Police Battalion.

Her journey from Amish to Army has been full of challenges, but using skills derived from her upbringing, she has achieved goals she never thought possible.

These goals included obtaining her GED and driver's license, and starting a career.

"I got my Certified Nursing Assistant certification, and I got a new vehicle. After six months I moved into my own apartment. After that everything fell into place," she said. "I didn't want to leave (my community) and not have anything besides being a mom."

While enrolled in college, she met her husband, Sgt. 1st Class, Ross Dennison, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, who she said inspired her to join the Army through his service.

"That's where I got to know about the military. My husband was an inspiration." Malinda said. "I don't think I ever would have joined if it wasn't for being around the Army already."

She wanted to join the Army seven years ago, but the timing wasn't right. She had two more children and continued her career in the medical field. As the age cut-off for enlistment approached, her husband told her it was now or never.

"My husband said if you're going to do it, you've got to do it now," she said.

During the enlistment process, with support and encouragement from her husband, she took the opportunity to prepare herself for the challenges she would face. She hired a personal trainer and studied for the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

Malinda said her Amish upbringing helped make the transition to Army life a smooth one.

"We were taught to get up early in the morning and work, and that is what we do here," she said.

Ross agreed that her Amish background has its advantages when adapting to new situations like initial entry training.

"I think it gives her a mental advantage over the culture shock most experience when they first join. Malinda grew up with a strong work ethic, and a great desire to succeed. She doesn't like the idea of giving up," he said. "Her upbringing gave her the ability to adapt and excel in everything she does."

https://www.army.mil/article/222298/from_amish_to_army_the_story_of_one_soldiers_challenging_journey

According to Capt. Joseph Lonergan, Co. E. 795th MP Bn. Commander, a spectrum of new skills are needed in the Army, and these skills are more likely to be met by recruiting trainees from a diverse representation of America.

"Varied perspectives help Soldiers generate more ideas when working as a team. Looking at solutions from all angles is critical to problem-solving and mission success," Lonergan said.

Malinda hopes to inspire others, especially her children, through her accomplishments. She has advice for those who want to join.

"Anyone can do it. I believe it is all in the mindset and how you look at it. If you say you can't do it, you're not going to be able to do it," she said. "There are some things I felt like I couldn't do in the beginning, I was not as confident as I am now. I learned a lot and did things I never thought I would do."

When asked which Army Values best describe Malinda, Ross cites duty and integrity.

"She loves to learn and constantly seeks out new things to try. She isn't afraid to fail and learn from it," Ross said. "She is very curious. She is honest and isn't afraid to do the right thing. Malinda will do her best to get the job done to the best of her ability."

Malinda said she could not have done this without the help of the drill sergeants in her company.

After graduation, she will be assigned to a Military Police Reserve Unit in Nashville, Tennessee.

She chose the Army Reserves so she can work and continue her education while serving her country, and she plans to go active when her husband retires.

"My plan is to retire from the Army. I'm not going to go through this and get out. In five years, hopefully, I'll be in the Active Guard Reserves," Malinda said.

SMA or bust: The first enlisted female Ranger grad talks ambition and leadership

By Meghann Myers

Army Times, May 24, 2019



Staff Sgt. Amanda F. Kelley, the first enlisted woman to graduate from Army Ranger training, pins her tab on at graduation. (Patrick A. Albright/Army)

Last year [Staff Sgt. Amanda Kelley](#) became the [first enlisted woman to earn a Ranger tab](#), a crucial step on her way to achieving her ultimate goal: to be sergeant major of the Army.

On May 17, she gave the first of what could be many interviews from the [top senior enlisted adviser](#)'s office in the Pentagon.

“You see how it kind of falls together,” she told Army Times of her visit to the highest echelons of the service.



Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Penn., hosted a ceremony honoring Staff Sgt. Amanda Kelley, the Army's first female enlisted Ranger graduate, and other enlisted women. (Office of Madeleine Dean)

Kelley was visiting Washington, D.C., to be recognized by the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, a bipartisan group of lawmakers, and get a feel for what goes on at headquarters.

“On the ground ... in the motor pool, for example, we need this for this part,” she said of the disconnect between the squad level, where she has been, and the top. “But you come up here and they're working it, it's just not as easy as snapping your fingers – as most people make it out to be.”

Now assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was also honored in a ceremony at Arlington Cemetery on May 16, along with female troops from each of the other four armed services, co-hosted by Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Pennsylvania, and Rep. Jennifer Gonzalez-Colon, D-Puerto Rico.

She joined the Army after a tough childhood in Easley, Missouri, she said, one of four siblings raised by her grandparents, along with their own young children.

“I didn't come from a really good background. I didn't have a mom and dad. I don't know who my dad is,” she said. “So I just wanted to be more than what I was raised in.”

Looking back, her biggest motivators were good teachers, she added.

“They saw something that I didn't see,” she said. “Since I was little, they always told me that I had some kind of hunger. I didn't see that.”

She was deployed to Iraq in 2017 when she sat down for a career chat with her battalion commander and told him the one thing she wanted more than anything out of her career is to become the service's top enlisted soldier.

His ears perked up, and together with her chain of command, he put together a list of milestones she needed to hit to get there. First stop was Ranger school, she said, a crucible no other enlisted woman had completed before.

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/05/24/sma-or-bust-the-first-enlisted-female-ranger-grad-talks-ambition-and-leadership/>

“It wasn’t surprising to them,” she said of her ambition, probably because that battalion commander came from a Special Forces background, she added, where “having goals like that, to him, are normal.”

She spent the rest of the deployment training, then redeployed just in time to report to Fort Benning, Georgia, last July.

“But being a PT stud and training for Ranger school – two totally different things,” she said of her preparation, which included tutoring on infantry tactics and operation orders.

As electronic warfare specialist, her background isn’t in combat arms — unusual for most of the soldiers who complete Ranger school, considered an almost essential accomplishment for infantrymen.

“Honestly, I think the hardest things are what’s hard for any soldier – the mental aspect of it,” she said, like coming together with a group of strangers and learning to work as a team in extreme environments and on little sleep.

To date, according to Army data, 30 women have completed Ranger training, which first opened up to both genders in 2015. Twenty-eight of those have been officers. Kelley graduated last August, and in April, Sgt. 1st Class Janina Simmons became the second enlisted woman and the first black woman to earn a Ranger tab.

As long as women have been graduated from Ranger school, criticism has followed, with allegations of special treatment and lowered standards. But Kelley said she didn’t notice any extra scrutiny from her teammates or instructors.

“No, I didn’t feel that,” she said. “But honestly, I don’t pay attention to things like that.”

Going all the way

Kelley first enlisted as a small arms/towed artillery repairer, she said, because a recruiter read off the description — and as someone who grew up hunting — she thought it sounded cool.

The fact that she couldn’t be assigned to a direct combat unit, because those jobs didn’t open to female soldiers until 2016, didn’t immediately occur to her.

“It didn’t really cross my mind, honestly, until after I got into the Army and learned more about the Army,” she said.

- [The Army just completely revamped the way it promotes for senior NCOs](#)

Cpts. Kristen Griest and Shaye Haver, who in 2015 became the first women to earn Ranger tabs, soon transitioned to the infantry branch, taking command of their own companies in the 82nd Airborne Division last year.

But for Kelley, who is getting looked at for E-7 this summer, a military occupational specialty change is not in the plans. She’s on a good track within his MOS so far, she said, and she wouldn’t want to mess with her timeline and her competitiveness by having to learn a new job as a platoon sergeant.

Plus, she said, she’s not worried about which MOS will make her most qualified for SMA, though most of her would-be predecessors have come from combat arms.

“As a whole, we need to work together as noncommissioned officers, and build that backbone how it’s supposed to be, instead of stepping on one another,” she said of her leadership philosophy. “I’m not perfect and I’m not an expert at being a great leader, but I’m trying to be.”

[Meghann Myers](#) is the senior reporter at Army Times. She covers personnel, leadership, fitness and various other lifestyle issues affecting soldiers.

These brigades are the next to accept women into direct combat units

By Meghann Myers

Army Times, May 28, 2019



This year the Army is opening jobs for women in brigade combat teams at five new locations. (Patrick Albright/Army)

More than three years into its efforts to recruit and assign women to [every combat military occupational specialty](#), more than 1,000 women have joined the [infantry, armor and field artillery](#) branches, according to a May 21 release from the Army.

They are currently spread over brigades at five of the Army's biggest posts, and later this year, Army G-1 Lt. Gen. Thomas

Seamands said in the release, five more are due to open this year: Fort Riley, Kansas's 1st Infantry Division; Fort Stewart, Georgia's 3rd Infantry Division; Fort Drum, New York, and Fort Polk, Louisiana's 10th Mountain Division; and Vicenza, Italy's [173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team](#).

"As part of a multi-year effort to open other assignments to female soldiers, as many as 500 women currently serve in every active brigade combat team in the Army down to the company level," Seamands said.

Officers will head to those units first, followed by noncommissioned officers and then junior enlisted soldiers, as part of the "Leaders First" integration plan the service has followed since the Defense Department officially lifted the ban on women serving in combat jobs.

The Army first graduated women from its infantry, armor and artillery basic officer leader courses in late 2016, as female NCOs transferred to those branches, then opened their corresponding basic training programs for new enlisted recruits the following year.

Fort Hood, Texas's 1st Cavalry Division and Fort Bragg, North Carolina's 82nd Airborne Division integrated them first, followed by Fort Campbell, Kentucky's 101st Airborne Division; Fort Bliss, Texas's 1st Armored Division and Fort Carson, Colorado's 4th Infantry Division.

- [Has combat arms gender integration been successful? The Army will let you know in 2020.](#)

That order was determined by the size of those divisions and the variety of armor, infantry and field artillery units to choose from, Seamands told Army Times last year.

"To date, the Army has successfully accessed and transferred more than 1,000 women into the previously closed occupations of infantry, armor, and field artillery," he said. "Currently, 80 female officers are assigned to infantry or armor positions at Forts Hood, Bragg, Carson, Bliss, and Campbell."

[Meghann Myers](#) is the senior reporter at Army Times. She covers personnel, leadership, fitness and various other lifestyle issues affecting soldiers.

Human Relations

Helping veterans who suffer from substance use or mental health disorders

By Rory E. Riley-Topping

The Hill, May 31, 2019



© Getty Images

The views expressed by contributors are their own and not the view of The Hill

If I stated that I was suffering from a serious and debilitating disease, such as cancer, and that I was going to cure that disease with only will power and positive thinking, most people would look at me like I was crazy — and rightfully so. According to the [American Cancer Society](#), “there’s no good evidence to support the idea that these interventions [such as positive thinking] can reduce the risk of cancer, keep cancer from coming back, or help the person with cancer live longer.”

Nonetheless, this is exactly how we, as a society, approach issues related to mental health and substance use disorder, two conditions that often co-exist. We often label these conditions as personal weaknesses rather than diseases. And, nowhere is the harm from such misnomers more pronounced than in the military and veteran’s communities.

According to a [new study](#) released by American Addiction Centers, “alcohol abuse and binge drinking are higher among vets who identify as depressed compared to those don’t. In many cases, addiction can become a coping mechanism for trauma and depression.” The study continues, “only half of returning service members who need treatment for their mental health actually seek care, and substance abuse continues to mark a growing concern among both enlisted and retired members of the armed forces.”

So, how do we help veterans who are suffering with substance use or mental health disorders?

First, we must address the [social stigma](#) attached to asking for help, particularly as it relates to military culture.

“I thought the definition of a man was to beat my chest and say, ‘I got this,’” states [Tommy Rieman](#), an Iraq War veteran and Silver Star recipient who struggled with both depression and substance abuse after separating from service. Rieman, who now works for the Charlotte-based organization, Veterans Bridge Home, a non-profit that seeks to assist veterans transition to civilian life, reflected on his personal challenges overcoming military culture, adding, “if you want to look at yourself in the mirror and be happy, you have to learn how to ask for help.”

Although significant progress has been made since the Vietnam era in acknowledging and treating mental health and substance use disorders, American society as a whole continues to struggle with the stigma around mental health.

As elaborated on in a 2011 [Government Accountability Office Report](#) about VA Mental Health services, veterans often experience “[p]erceptions that as a result of accessing mental health care they will be viewed negatively by others such as peers or employers. For example, veterans may feel that by accessing mental health care they will be perceived as weak or having lost control.”

Unfortunately, little progress has been made since the issuance of this report eight years ago. Feelings of fear of being perceived as weak continue to be enhanced by a culture that centers around rewarding bravery and heroism. “For military veterans . . . there’s a sense that addiction equals weakness, failure or a lack of

<https://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/446281-helping-veterans-who-suffer-from-substance-use-or-mental-health-disorders>

morals, and for years, it's been 'treated' with punishment," adds [Dr. Paul Little](#), an Air Force veteran who once struggled with opioid addiction.

Second, we must also realize that substance abuse and mental health issues are diseases, just like more tangible conditions such as cancer or heart disease, and that these diseases are often intertwined with more complex physical and neurological conditions, as opposed to personality defects such as weakness.

For example, in the case of many veterans, one of the most common causes of substance abuse is one of the least discussed — traumatic brain injury (TBI).

"Many professionals overlook the fact that addiction and mental health disorders stem from TBI," states [Dr. Chrisanne Gordon](#), a physician who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation, and Chairwoman of the Resurrecting Lives Foundation, a non-profit that assists veterans, "with TBI, the neural pathways are disrupted so the thought process becomes chaotic. The injured person tries to normalize the brain by either putting it to sleep with alcohol or opiates, or awakening it with stimulants such as caffeine or amphetamines."

Nonetheless, at VA and elsewhere, a greater emphasis is often placed on treating PTSD or mental health alone, rather than treating the underlying cause such as TBI. Although TBI can be difficult to diagnose, doing so early in a veterans' treatment can alleviate mental health issues such as depression and substance abuse that complicate long-term rehabilitation.

Finally, if we want more veterans who are suffering, including from mental health and substance use disorders, to access care, we must make it easier for them to do so. According to a [recent study](#) by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, many veterans who were eligible for VA health care were unaware of that fact, did not know how to get services, or found the VA's appointment system "burdensome" and "unsatisfying."

Next week, on June 6th, the VA is set to unveil its new community care access standards, which will hopefully help with alleviating this concern. [According to the agency](#), it is ready to implement its new access standards on time and without major mishaps.

Only time will tell if the MISSION Act implementation will truly assist veterans with access to care. However, in the interim, we can continue to help veterans by erasing stigma around mental health and substance use disorders, by treating them as we would any other condition that requires medical treatment.

Rory E. Riley-Topping served as a litigation staff attorney for the [National Veterans Legal Services Program \(NVLSP\)](#), where she represented veterans and their survivors before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. She also served as the staff director and counsel for the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs for former Chairman [Jeff Miller](#) (R-Fla.). You can find her on Twitter: @RileyTopping.

I'm a Veteran Without PTSD. I Used to Think Something Was Wrong With Me.

By Melissa Thomas

The New York Times, May 30, 2019



Melissa Thomas, the author, in Iraq shortly after her Humvee was hit by a roadside bomb in 2006. Credit via Melissa Thomas

A few years ago, my husband, Chris, who survived four deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, was killed by an avalanche in Colorado. I am an Army veteran who was deployed to combat zones twice, in 2005 and 2008, without any serious lingering psychological ramifications. But I thought my husband's death, that New Year's Eve day, would be the final trigger for post-traumatic stress disorder; it would be what sent me over the edge.

The next few months were filled with sleeplessness and drinking, but also exercising and thoughtful introspection as I scoured self-help books and sought therapy. I never had trouble getting out of bed in the morning, and I continued to make it to work on time. I was sad yet functional. I wasn't given a diagnosis of clinical depression or PTSD. There must be something wrong with me for not having something wrong, I thought.

[For more stories about the experiences and costs of war, [sign up for the weekly At War newsletter.](#)]

Many people wrongly assume that PTSD is inevitable for anyone exposed to trauma. Because I endured trauma at home and on the front lines but never suffered from PTSD, three years ago I volunteered to serve as a control for a study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Center for PTSD at the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is common to have flashbacks, nightmares and other symptoms after a traumatic event, but most people recover. This acute stress response is different from PTSD, which is diagnosed only when symptoms linger beyond 30 days and which requires more than time for recovery, with treatment typically consisting of either psychotherapy or medications or both. Although about 60 percent of the general public have experienced one or more traumatic events, only around 8 percent suffer from PTSD at some point in their lives. For veterans deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan the rate of PTSD is higher, ranging from 11 to 20 percent.

Now that I'm in medical school, I've learned there are a number of resiliency factors that might help protect people from developing PTSD. I happen to have a few of them: absence of childhood trauma, the choice to pursue more education and having close friends and family for social support. The study that I volunteered for would use brain-imaging technology to try to get an in-depth look at the neurobiology of PTSD, tracing the way fear and safety responses work in people with PTSD and in others who seemed to be resistant to the condition. If scientists can pinpoint particular brain activities or processes at work in people who've had an easier time processing traumatic events and memories, they might be able to develop better treatments for those who do develop the symptoms of PTSD.

Click, clack. Click, clack. The M.R.I. machine whirred around me, noisy even through earplugs. I lay with my head trapped in a firm pillow, only a few inches of clearance around my entire body. My first thought: I'm glad I've outgrown my claustrophobia.

I looked up at a mirror just above my face, reflecting a series of colors. Click, clack. Zap! My right arm jolted like a dog venturing too close to an invisible fence as a shock of electricity raced from my wrist to my shoulder. I blinked a few times, exhaled and tried to relax. I quickly realized that the shock was delivered just after a yellow square appeared on the mirror, so I knew when to prepare. My body tensed. My teeth clenched. Zap!

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/30/magazine/ptsd-combat-veterans.html>



Melissa and Chris at a friend's wedding in 2009. Credit Courtesy photo

A research assistant sat in the other room monitoring visual images of my brain as the testing went on for an hour. As I saw later, the imaging looked like a storm on a weather map as certain regions were activated and lit up with increased blood flow. The test was measuring the reactions of my brain when I felt safe and when I was being threatened. Before the M.R.I., I filled out a series of questionnaires used by clinicians to diagnose PTSD. One was about combat exposures. Danger of being injured or killed? Check. Firing rounds at the enemy? Check. Seeing someone hit by incoming rounds? Check. The next questionnaire was about potential symptoms associated with traumatic experiences. Disturbing dreams? No. Being super alert or on guard? No. Feeling distant or cut off from other people? Sometimes.

Before Chris died, we would often discuss our wartime experiences and wonder why it was that we didn't have PTSD and others did. We speculated that our mutual support played a role; we had both been in the military, and that probably made it easier to talk to each other about our experiences. In 2006, while I was deployed to Taji, Iraq, an improvised explosive device exploded underneath my Humvee. I was in the passenger seat. The blast blew holes in the tire and hood just inches in front of me and blew open my door. My vision browned out as the air in the truck filled with dirt from the road. The same thing happened to Chris, assigned to the same brigade, just a few weeks later.

[The Day They Came to Tell Me My Husband Died]

On another mission months later, I heard a boom and saw a Humvee turn into a ball of fire — one person, engulfed in flames, was running away from the vehicle. Another I.E.D. attack. I fired my M16 rifle toward an insurgent who was hiding in a building and shooting at us. Then I assisted the other medics in treating the casualties. My gloves smelled of soot from cutting the singed uniform pants off a young, dying Iraqi interpreter. "Keep breathing," I told her. Then I helped load her into a vehicle that would transport her to the medevac helicopter, but by the time it arrived, she was already dead. Another Iraqi interpreter, probably the person I'd seen run from the Humvee in flames, was being treated by my fellow medics. He was evacuated with grave injuries; he, too, later died. When those initial rescue efforts were completed, I helped search the road for pieces of the dead American serviceman whose scorched upper body I saw on the ground next to the destroyed truck.

The images of these traumatic events are seared into my brain. I can conjure them at will. But there remains a sense of control and detachment when I think about them. This is much different from those with PTSD, who try to avoid thinking about their experiences because the memories churn up emotions and a physical response.

On the second day, I slid into the M.R.I. machine; probes were attached to my left hand to measure my pulse and sweat, and a shock device was attached to my right. A drop of sweat trickled down from my armpit despite the coolness in the room, and I waited. Goose bumps formed along my arms. I was shown videos of playful animals. I was nervous, but curious too. The yellow light I saw in the mirror no longer heralded a shock as it had the day before. After a few rounds of seeing multiple colors, I started to realize that I wasn't receiving any shocks at all. The experiment was trying to convey the lesson that the yellow light was not a danger and no longer merited a fear response.

Some studies suggest that the amygdala, a part of the brain associated with the fear response, is smaller in size but more active in those with PTSD. The medical community is still studying whether this is a genetic difference or a response to traumatic events. The dominant theory about PTSD is that a maladaptive fear response is learned during and after traumatic events, so that even minor triggers can cause people with

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/30/magazine/ptsd-combat-veterans.html>

PTSD to suffer severe surges of anxiety, alarm or fear. Because of conditioning, the brain does not register that it is no longer in a threatening environment. For example, driving by trash on the side of the road in the United States typically does not elicit a fear response. It can for veterans with PTSD who served for months in Iraq or Afghanistan scanning the road for roadside bombs. Their brains cannot differentiate the highways in the United States from those in Baghdad. This can make a simple drive to the store a nerve-racking experience, complete with sweating, flashbacks and heightened sensations.

On the final day of my M.R.I. sessions, I was shown scenes from a Vietnam War movie. The research assistant and the M.R.I. technician remained behind the glass across the room, seated in cushy rolling chairs. The M.R.I. scans tested to see if my fear response could change — if my brain could learn to react less to prompts that had previously come with a sense of physical danger. I imagined being stuck in this tube of doom if I was someone for whom the violent images from the war movie, the sounds of shooting guns and yelling soldiers, did trigger a panic response. Why would someone with PTSD put themselves through this? Wouldn't it conjure up their anxiety all over again? My anxiety was tinged with excitement; I guessed theirs would be tinged with despair.

In the end, the whole process forced me to re-examine my relationship to trauma. Before the study, I had questioned whether I deserved health and happiness. I naïvely thought having PTSD would validate my military experience. I didn't know why I was able to suffer and yet still move on. But being part of a control group of people without the diagnosis gave me some relief from that guilt. I started to find purpose in my experiences by giving back as a research-study participant. Perhaps that's why we all had volunteered: to find some meaning in our military service, whether it had left us traumatized or left us wondering why we were not.

Melissa Thomas is attending medical school at Yale University and is a 2016 Pat Tillman Foundation Scholar. She served in the United States Army as a Medical Service Corps officer from 2004 to 2015 and deployed to Iraq twice.

Sign up for [our newsletter](#) to get the best of At War delivered to your inbox every week. For more coverage of conflict, visit [nytimes.com/atwar](https://www.nytimes.com/atwar).

Miscellaneous

Burnout is officially a medical condition, according to the World Health Organization

By Dalvin Brown

USA TODAY, May 28, 2019



The 2019 Global Emotions Report is Gallup's annual snapshot of the world's emotional state. USA TODAY

Ever felt mentally worn out or emotionally [exhausted from work](#)?

You're far from alone, and you may be suffering from "burnout," a condition that's now officially recognized by the professional health community.

The work-related stress, which has been unofficially embedded in the cultural zeitgeist for years, has been officially recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) through a revision of the International Classification of Diseases — a handbook for doctors and health insurers.

The official ailment can be found in [ICD-11](#) under "Problems associated with employment or unemployment."

According to the health agency, burnout isn't just synonymous with being stressed out. It's "a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed."

According to the health guidelines, burnout is categorized by the following symptoms:

1. Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion
2. Increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job
3. Reduced professional efficacy

"Burn-out refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context," said WHO, "and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life."



Not getting enough sleep can be caused by work stress. (Photo: Getty Images)

Americans are working longer and harder than ever before, according to the [American Institute of Stress](#). Several studies show that work stress is the major source of anxiety for American adults and that the mental ailment has escalated progressively over the past few decades.

A recent survey from the [Korn Ferry research organization](#) indicated that overall employee stress levels "have risen nearly 20% in three decades." A 2018 study by the work [management platform Wrike](#) found that 94 percent of workers feel stress in the office and almost a third say their stress level is high to unsustainably high.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has [looked into the effects of workplace stress](#) for years and offers scientific guidance for managing issues and problems related to worksite pressure.

The following factors can help reduce work stress, according to the CDC:

1. Balance between work and family or personal life
2. A support network of friends and coworkers
3. A relaxed and positive outlook

Follow Dalvin Brown on Twitter: [@Dalvin_Brown](#).

Last remaining Akwesasne Mohawk code talker dies

By Tom Graser

Watertown Daily Times (Watertown, N.Y.), May 29, 2019



ST. REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE

Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talker Louis Levi Oakes receiving the Congressional Silver Medal from U.S. Congresswoman Elise Stefanik (NY-21) and American Legion Post 1479 Commander Michael "Goon" Cook on May 28, 2016.

AKWESASNE — The last Mohawk World War II Code Talker has died.

Louis Levi Oakes, an enrolled member of the Saint Regis Mohawk tribe, died Tuesday at the age of 94.

In June of 2016, when Mr. Oakes was the last of surviving Code Talk he, along with his former colleagues, was awarded the Congressional Silver Medal

More than 550 people squeezed into the Travis Solomon Memorial Lacrosse Box in Generations Park, to honor Mr. Oakes and his brother Code Talkers that day.

Mr. Oakes's daughter, Dora Oakes, was one of those people there that day.

Sitting in the front row, next to her father, Ms. Oakes watched as people tried to work her father for insight about his time overseas as a code talker but said he was always silent on the subject.

"I was in the Army,' that was all he would tell us," Dora said. "Confidential information,' he said. 'They'll kill me if I tell ya.'"

Mr. Oakes was swarmed by people looking to both pay homage for his service and seek insight into his time in the military. And though he said it was a surprise and an honor to be recognized, for a code talker, he didn't talk much.

A technician 4th Grade, with Company B, 442nd Signal Battalion, U.S. Army, Mr. Oakes said he enlisted at the age of 18 specifically to be a code talker. He served about 2 1/2 years in the Asiatic Pacific until his honorable discharge on Feb. 15, 1946.

There were only three or four other code talkers in Company B, Mr. Oakes said. He said the idea of becoming a code talker came from listening to Native Americans speaking their native tongue in the field. The Mohawk soldiers attended schools to learn the art of code talking. They learned sets of code in their language so the enemy would not understand their radio communications.

But Mr. Oakes laughed when he was asked if he could remember how many secret messages he relayed in the Mohawk tongue.

"If I can't talk it out I'll give them a smoke signal," Mr. Oakes said. "We talked about field wires in the jungles. They would give you a piece of paper to read and telling you what you were to say."

Mr. Oakes was born on the Mohawk Territory of Akwesasne in 1922 and, following the onset of World War II, registered for the U.S. Army. He received his formal military training as a code talker while stationed in Louisiana, along with other Akwesasne Mohawks. He was assigned as a Technician 4th Grade with Company B's 442nd Signal Battalion in the U.S. Army.

During his six years of military service, TEC 4 Oakes saw action in the South Pacific, New Guinea and Philippines theatres in World War II.

For his exemplary service, he received the third-highest military combat decoration for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States — The Silver Star.

<https://watertowndailytimes.com/news05/last-remaining-akwesasne-mohawk-code-talker-dies-20190529>

Throughout World War II, Mr. Oakes's knowledge and usage of the Mohawk language was used to send communications between U.S. forces.

It was one of 33 native languages used during World War II to code important messages, which became known the world over as the only unbroken military code in history.

To recognize their role in helping the Allied Forces to be victorious, in 2008 the U.S. Congress passed the Code Talkers Recognition Act to honor every Native American Code Talker who served in the U.S. military, including Mr. Oakes.

Along with receiving the Congressional Silver Medal, Mr. Oakes received further recognition for his valor as an Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talker at the 2017 United South and Eastern Tribes Impact Week, Rochester Nighthawks Native American Night Jan. 7, 2017, the 2018 Salamanca Powwow, the 2018 Hopi Code Talkers Recognition Day, 2018 Special Chiefs Assembly of the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian House of Commons, among others.

On June 8, 2018; Mr. Oakes was presented with the New York State Liberty Medal — the highest civilian honor bestowed by New York State upon individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts and achievements. The award follows his induction on May 15, 2018 into the New York State Senate Veteran's Hall of Fame.

[TOM GRASER](#)

TGRASER@WDT.NET

Mike Pence: West Point grads should expect to see combat

The Associated Press, May 26, 2019



West Point cadets hug each other at the end of graduation ceremonies at the United States Military Academy, Saturday, May 25, 2019, in West Point, N.Y. (AP Photo/Julius Constantine Motal)

WEST POINT, N.Y. (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence told the most diverse graduating class in the history of the U.S. Military Academy on Saturday that the world is “a dangerous place” and they should expect to see combat.

“Some of you will join the fight against radical Islamic terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq,” he said.

Pence congratulated the West Point graduates on behalf of President Donald Trump, and told them, “As you accept the mantle of leadership I promise you, your commander in chief will always have your back. President Donald Trump is the best friend the men and women of our armed forces will ever have.”

More than 980 cadets became U.S. Army second lieutenants in the ceremony at West Point’s football stadium.

Pence noted that Trump has proposed a \$750 billion defense budget for 2020 and said the United States “is once again embracing our role as the leader of the free world.”

“It is a virtual certainty that you will fight on a battlefield for America at some point in your life,” Pence said. “You will lead soldiers in combat. It will happen. Some of you may even be called upon to serve in this hemisphere.”

Pence spoke as the U.S. plans to send another 1,500 troops to the Middle East to counter what the Trump administration describes as threats from Iran; as the longest war in U.S. history churns on in Afghanistan; and as Washington considers its options amid political upheaval in Venezuela. The administration is also depending more heavily on the military to deter migrants from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

The class was the most diverse in West Point’s history, and Pence said he wanted to acknowledge “the historic milestones that we’re marking today.”

The 2019 cadets included 223 women, [34 of whom are black](#). Both totals are all-time highs since the first female cadets graduated in 1980. The academy graduated its 5,000th woman Saturday.

The 110 African Americans who graduated were double the number from 2013.

Pence said the graduates also included the academy’s 1,000th Jewish cadet.

Pence did not serve in the military but noted that his late father served with the Army in the Korean War.

“And as I stand before you today here at West Point I can’t help but think that First Lt. Edward J. Pence, looking down from glory, is finally impressed with his third son,” Pence said. “So thank you for the honor.”

The ceremony was Pence’s second visit to West Point and his first as commencement speaker.

One candidate's suicide prevention plan: Annual mental health check-ups for all troops, high schoolers

By Leo Shane III

Military Times, May 28, 2019



Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass., speaks to reporters at the Capitol on Nov. 15, 2018. Moulton, who has announced his candidacy for president, on Tuesday unveiled a new plan for annual mental health check-ups for all service members and high school students, in an effort to combat suicide. (J. Scott Applewhite/AP)

Democratic presidential hopeful and Iraq War veteran [Seth Moulton](#) wants to mandate annual mental health check-ups for all servicemembers and high-schoolers in an effort to better “make sure everyone gets the support they need.”

Moulton, who currently represents Massachusetts' 6th District in Congress, said in a statement that he believes [veterans and the military](#) can serve as an example for the rest of the country in [proactive use of mental health care](#), but only if systems are improved to provide better resources.

“Veterans across the country are opening up about our post-traumatic stress and mental health challenges because it is vital that we tell our stories, end the stigma around these issues, and make sure everyone gets the support they need,” he said. “And it should be a model for everyone else.”

- [The new plan to prevent veteran suicides: new grants, better research, more community focus](#)

Each day, about 20 veterans nationwide and one active-duty service member die by suicide. Veterans Affairs and Defense Department officials have made the issue a major focus in recent years, but seen limited success in reducing those numbers.

Moulton's presidential platform — which has focused on a number of national security and military policies — includes making mental health check-ups “as routine as a physical for active-duty military and veterans.”

That would include an annual mandated visit with mental health specialists for all serving troops and a mandatory counseling session for every service member returning from a combat deployment within two weeks of arriving home.

To extend that idea to the rest of the country, Moulton is calling for making “mental health training” part of high school physical education curriculum nationwide, and establishing 511 as the new National Mental Health Crisis Hotline.

He also wants to fund annual mental health check-ups for those young people, but did not provide any cost-estimates on what such a program may cost.

“Mental health care should be a regular part of American life, and veterans can lead the way in ending the stigma around these issues for good,” he said.

- [Congress wants more answers about VA campus suicides](#)

Moulton served in the Marine Corps for seven years, including a tour in Baghdad, Iraq, in 2003. He received a Bronze Star with V device during his deployment.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/05/28/one-candidates-suicide-prevention-plan-annual-mental-health-check-ups-for-all-troops-high-schoolers/>

Moutlon is one of three Democratic presidential candidates with recent military service: South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg served in Afghanistan with the Navy Reserve and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, D-Hawaii, served in Iraq with the Army National Guard.

Veterans or service members experiencing a mental health emergency can contact the Veteran Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and select option 1 for a VA staffer. They can also text 838255 or visit VeteransCrisisLine.net for assistance.

[Leo Shane III](#) covers Congress, Veterans Affairs and the White House for Military Times. He has covered Washington, D.C. since 2004, focusing on military personnel and veterans policies. His work has earned numerous honors, including a 2009 Polk award, a 2010 National Headliner Award, the IAVA Leadership in Journalism award and the VFW News Media award.

States' increasing restrictions and bans could put abortions 'out of reach' for some military women

By Karen Jowers

Military Times, May 24, 2019



Pending legislation banning nearly all abortions in Alabama could make it difficult for women stationed there to seek out the procedure, one research group says. The U.S. Army Aviation Center at Fort Rucker, Alabama. (Photo credit: U.S. Army)

As more states adopt policies restricting or banning abortion, it could put abortion out of reach for some military women, according to one research group.

By law, abortions are not performed in military medical facilities, nor are they covered under Tricare, unless the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest, or the life of the mother is at risk. Thus military women must seek abortions in the civilian community.

“If a servicewoman now has to travel out of state for abortion care, the financial and logistical demands escalate and can put abortion care out of reach for many, especially more junior military personnel who may not have the financial resources to cover the costs or the perceived ability to request the even longer time off,” said Kate Grindlay Kelly, associate at Ibis Reproductive Health, a global research organization describing itself as dedicated to “advancing sexual and reproductive autonomy, choices, and health worldwide.”

She has conducted research into [military women's access](#) to contraception, and experiences related to abortion.

Efforts to seek comment from officials at National Right to Life were unsuccessful.

This year, 17 bans have been enacted across 10 states. A law passed in Alabama would ban nearly all abortions, including those for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research and policy organization which tracks such legislation. One trend is new laws that would ban abortion at six weeks, once a fetal heartbeat is detected. As the Guttmacher Institute notes, none of the 6-week abortion bans or Alabama's near-total ban, have taken effect yet, either because of litigation, or later effective dates. Abortion is still legal in all states. However, currently 43 states prohibit abortion at some specified point during pregnancy, generally except when necessary to protect the woman's life or health, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

As of March, there are 217,602 active-duty women. According to the results of the 2015 Department of Defense Health Related Behaviors Survey, the latest survey available, 4.8 percent of the military women who responded said they had an unintended pregnancy in the past year, compared to 4.5 percent of women of reproductive age in the civilian population. The survey does not ask questions about the results of unintended pregnancy, or whether there was an abortion.

According to an online-based survey conducted by the Service Women's Action Network, released in late 2018, 13 percent of the active-duty women who responded — 36 women — had experienced an unintended pregnancy, and of those, eight had abortions. They paid between \$300 to \$600 for abortion services off base, and none received follow-up care from military health providers. Overall, 799 active duty, retired and veteran women responded to the online survey, which was not a scientific sampling.

Grindlay Kelly said the research that Ibis Reproductive Health has conducted has found that service women already face many obstacles getting abortions on their own. “These barriers ranged from financial and

<https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/2019/05/24/states-increasing-restrictions-and-bans-could-put-abortion-out-of-reach-for-some-military-women/>

logistical challenges to paying for and accessing care off base, to concerns about maintaining confidentiality owing to the need to disclose their pregnancy to their chain of command in order to get time off for abortion services,” she said.

If states become more restrictive and women have to travel farther, there’s greater likelihood they’d have to let their command know in order to request time off, if mission and duty requirements and timing of the abortion conflict.

DoD officials had no comment on whether they are tracking states’ legislative activity on this issue, or whether there is a DoD policy regarding requests from military women who need to take leave for an abortion.

In one study that Grindlay Kelly co-authored, published in the journal *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* in December 2017, researchers interviewed 21 military women in depth who had had an abortion in the previous two years. Concerns were raised about confidentiality, stigma and possible negative effects on their careers. They described a range of consequences of not disclosing their abortions to their commands, because of their desire for confidentiality, including inability to follow medical guidelines after the abortion, adverse health effects of unsafe care, and negative impacts to their career because of an unexplained work absence.

Because of the restrictions on abortions through the military health care system, 11 of the women stated they thought it could lead more service women to carry unwanted pregnancies. These pregnancies could affect troop readiness and personnel, seven of those interviewed said.

The study was limited, qualitative research, focusing in depth to provide insight into these women’s experiences. Researchers called for more study on abortion in the military, and consequences for women who aren’t able to get an abortion while in the military.

Most traveled about an hour each way to the clinic. Six mentioned the logistical burden of traveling off base, and two said their abortion appointments were delayed because of inflexible work schedules or logistical difficulties.

And many US military bases are located in states that have restrictive abortion policies, Grindlay Kelly said. “In these contexts of additional state restrictions to abortion, servicewomen face even greater hurdles.”

In just one example of a hypothetical soldier stationed at Fort Rucker, in southeastern Alabama: If the new ban on most abortions survives a lawsuit challenging it, and that soldier needs an abortion, the closest states would be Georgia and Florida. Georgia has enacted a ban at six weeks, which is also being challenged in court, and Florida currently bans abortions after 24 weeks. On the other side of Alabama, Mississippi bans abortions after 20 weeks, but a law has been enacted that would ban abortion after six weeks. That law is also being challenged in court.

Aside from the financial issues and logistical challenges, Grindlay Kelly said, “confidentiality also becomes harder to maintain when a woman has to travel long distances and take even more time off from her military responsibilities.

“Together, these barriers can compromise women’s privacy, finances, and health.”

Karen Jowers has covered military families, quality of life and consumer issues for Military Times for more than 30 years, and is co-author of a chapter on media coverage of military families in the book "A Battle Plan for Supporting Military Families." She previously worked for newspapers in Guam, Norfolk, Jacksonville, Fla., and Athens, Ga.

Study Aims to Show Why Some Veterans Go Hungry

By Patricia Kime

Military.com, May 30, 2019



Peaches sit, waiting to be picked up before the start of the first Farmers' Market on Travis Air Force Base, California. (U.S. Air Force/Senior Airman Nicole Leidholm)

A new study seeks to understand why some veterans experience food insecurity, having little access to healthy food, skipping meals or using money budgeted for groceries to pay other bills.

With previous research showing that roughly a quarter of post-9/11 veterans have experienced hunger or food insecurity at some point after their service, Nipa Kamdar, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Houston's Department of Health and Human Performance, sought to determine what barriers keep veterans from obtaining and eating quality food.

Using a unique approach to qualitative research called photo elicitation, she let the veterans explain their challenges through photographs of objects or situations they felt hindered or helped their access to food.

"This is a problem in this community, but it's not being fully recognized," Kamdar said during an interview with Military.com. "I really wanted to understand what was happening in the veteran household and really get the story, rather than just the numbers."

Kamdar gave cameras to 18 low-income veterans who had at least one child between the ages of 5 and 11. Later, she met with them to share pictures and allow them to explain their reasons for choosing their subject matter.

Kamdar said the photographs provide insight into families facing hardships that data or simple interviews don't convey.

"Veterans may have physical or mental health disabilities and limited social support that further restrict their access to food," she said. "There is limited knowledge about the barriers to accessing food within this community."

Study participant Alisha Strife, a former [Army](#) soldier injured in a [Humvee](#) accident in Iraq in 2005, said her barriers included being unable to work while recovering from her injuries and, later, monthly health care premiums that totaled \$1,700 -- more than half her [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) disability compensation.

As part of the research, she took pictures of her gas gauge on empty and her VA prescription bottles.

"A lot of it is ... just making sure those things were taken care of. Then, there is the amount of time it takes to attend medical appointments and take care of kids, along with the high divorce rate, or being single parents that typically veterans may be," Strife said.

Kamdar said another veteran also took photos of his medication. The former service member explained that, [with post-traumatic stress disorder](#), he has bad days when he cannot cook for his family.

"It's on the other members of the family, which includes the kids for that day, to fend for themselves," Kamdar said.

While the results have yet to be analyzed or published, Kamdar said she has learned lessons she is now sharing with community food banks and non-profits in the Houston area, where she did most of the research.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/05/30/study-aims-show-why-some-veterans-go-hungry.html>

For example, she said student veterans with jobs and families who also are studying in college can't get to food banks, which normally are open during the workday.

She went to a central food distribution center this week to discuss this finding, she said.

"They didn't know about how the hours of operation of some of these pantries make it difficult for veterans to make it there," she said.

Kamdar also found that veterans are most at risk for food insecurity in the first three months of their transition from military service, when they are trying to find a job, establish a home and fend for themselves.

She'd like to see legislation to shorten the time period for veterans to qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. It can take 30 days or more to be approved for SNAP but, since an applicant has to show income history to qualify, they must prove they are no longer receiving active-duty pay.

"If we could get them to access it sooner if they qualify ... it would increase access," Kamdar said.

The research was funded by the William T. Grant Foundation, a nonprofit focused on reducing inequality among children and youth. The group was interested in the research, Kamdar said, because food insecurity puts children at increased risk for mental health and physical disorders, impaired learning and decreased productivity in school.

What struck her most, she said, was that the children of these families were rarely affected by the food insecurity because the veterans simply went without eating themselves to ensure that their kids were fed.

"They make do with what they have and make sure the kids get what they need. It is just taken for granted that they would skip a meal, wouldn't eat or eat just once a day," Kamdar said. "They consider this normal."

Kamdar hopes to analyze the information and publish it but also bring the information to organizations that help veterans and those experiencing hunger.

"I don't know when I would do a gallery-type exhibit, but if that opportunity came to get these photos out there, [I'd do it]. Me telling you in words is not as impactful as the photos with their captions," she said.

Strife said she participated to call attention to a little-known problem for some veterans.

"Veterans don't typically ask for help," she said, "and I don't think the VA recognizes this is a major issue. My main reason for participating is to make sure that we get veterans connected to the available resources."

-- *Patricia Kime can be reached at Patricia.Kime@Military.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@patriciakime](https://twitter.com/patriciakime).*

© Copyright 2019 Military.com. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Supreme Court leaves in place Pennsylvania policy supporting transgender students

By Robert Barnes and Moriah Balingit

The Washington Post, May 28, 2019



(Ricky Carioti/The Washington Post)

The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to review a Pennsylvania school district's policy letting transgender students use restrooms and locker rooms that match their gender identities, disappointing conservatives who have opposed similar policies in schools nationwide.

Without comment, the court declined to review an opinion from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit that upheld the Boyertown

Area School District policy. A half-dozen current and former students sued the school system in 2017, saying that allowing transgender students to change clothes alongside them in locker rooms and to use the same bathrooms violated the privacy rights of students who are not transgender. The appeals court [ruled last year](#) that the students who sued had failed to show how transgender students violated their privacy rights more than non-transgender students did.

[\[Federal appeals court upholds school's policy allowing transgender students to use locker rooms\]](#)

The Supreme Court's decision allows the Boyertown policy to stand. Though it does not set precedent, advocates declared the decision to stay out of the case a win.

Ria Tabacco Mar, senior staff attorney with the ACLU LGBT & HIV Project, called it an "enormous victory for transgender students across the country."

"Boyertown's schools chose to be inclusive and welcoming of transgender students in 2016, a decision the courts have affirmed again and again," Mar said.

John Bursch, an attorney with the Alliance Defending Freedom, said he was disappointed the high court decided against taking the case. But he said his organization, which represents the students suing Boyertown, is undeterred in its fight.

"No student's recognized right to bodily privacy should be made contingent on what other students believe about their own gender," Bursch said. "We hope the court will take up a similar case in the future to bring much-needed clarity to how the lower courts should handle violations of well-established student privacy rights."

Schools, statehouses and the courts have wrestled with accommodating transgender students in bathrooms and locker rooms. Transgender students say they should be able to use bathrooms and locker rooms just like their classmates, and argue that pushing them into alternative facilities — such as nurse's restrooms — isolates and stigmatizes them. Opponents of policies such as Boyertown's say they violate privacy and traditional values.

"By the time I graduated high school, I was using the boys' bathroom and participating on the boys' cross-country team. I felt like I belonged and had the confidence I needed to continue with my education," said Aidan DeStefano, a transgender student who recently graduated from a high school in the Pennsylvania school system. "I'm glad the Supreme Court is allowing schools like mine to continue supporting transgender students."

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/supreme-court-leaves-in-place-pennsylvania-policy-supporting-transgender-students/2019/05/28/8f77e7ea-815a-11e9-933d-7501070ee669_story.html

The Obama administration in 2016 directed public schools to allow transgender students into locker rooms and bathrooms that match their gender identity. The administration declared that Title IX, the federal law barring sex discrimination in schools receiving federal funding, protects transgender students' rights. Later, the Supreme Court agreed to hear a case that would have reviewed the guidance.

[Court sides with transgender student in his fight to use the boys' bathroom]

The following year, President Trump's education secretary and then-attorney general — Betsy DeVos and Jeff Sessions — rescinded the Obama-era guidance, and the Supreme Court decided to no longer hear the case.

Because the Supreme Court has never taken up the question, states and school leaders have been left to decide whether transgender students can use facilities that match their gender identities. Some have banned students from using bathrooms that do not correspond with the sex on their birth certificate, and many schools deal with transgender students on a case-by-case basis.

Many school systems — and some states — have policies comparable to Boyertown's. Advocates argue that Title IX protects the right of transgender students to use bathrooms of their choice. And transgender students say they seek to be treated like their classmates, not singled out in a way that calls attention to their being transgender.

Opponents argue the opposite — that permitting transgender students into locker rooms and bathrooms of their choice violates Title IX rights of students who are not transgender. They disagree that Title IX protects transgender students in that context.

“These types of school policies have serious privacy implications. That's why we hope the Supreme Court will eventually weigh in to protect students' constitutional right to bodily privacy,” Christiana Holcomb, an attorney for the Alliance Defending Freedom, said in a statement. “All schools, including Boyertown Area School District, should be providing compassionate support for those dealing with gender dysphoria, but they should do so in ways that protect the privacy of all students.”

The alliance has launched similar legal challenges in a Chicago suburb, a case that parents dropped earlier this year, and in the town of Dallas, Ore., a lawsuit that was dismissed by a federal judge last year. The alliance has appealed that case.

Mar said the argument — that transgender students threaten the privacy of their classmates — has never held water in court. “No court has accepted the notion that transgender people are a threat to others,” Mar said. “In the few challenges that have arisen to transgender-inclusive policies, courts have uniformly allowed those policies to continue.”

The Pennsylvania case is *Doe v. Boyertown Area School District*.

[Robert Barnes](#) Robert Barnes has been a Washington Post reporter and editor since 1987. He joined The Post to cover Maryland politics, and he has served in various editing positions, including metropolitan editor and national political editor. He has covered the Supreme Court since November 2006. [Follow](#)

[Moriah Balingit](#) Moriah Balingit is an education reporter for The Washington Post, where she has worked since 2014. She previously covered crime, city hall and crime in city hall at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. [Follow](#)

U.S. Army's Tweet Prompts Stories of Harmful Effects of Military Service

By Mihir Zaveri

The New York Times, May 26, 2019



Army soldiers who were part of the last American combat units to exit Iraq in 2011 arrive in Fort Hood, Tex. Credit Joe Raedle/Getty Images

It was meant to be part of a social media tribute on Memorial Day weekend. On Saturday afternoon, the United States Army posted a [video on Twitter](#) featuring a scout in fatigues who said his service gave him the opportunity to fight for something greater than himself, making him a better man.

In its next tweet, the Army opened the floor and [asked](#): “How has serving impacted you?”

The post was shared widely and received thousands of responses. But many were probably not what the Army was looking for.

Instead, the call-out provided what some felt was a rare platform to spotlight the darker consequences of military service for soldiers and their families, as tweet after tweet described lifelong health complications, grief over loved ones lost, sexual assaults gone unpunished and struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression.

“The public just doesn’t hear about it,” said Brandon Neely, 38, a former Army specialist who posted about his PTSD. “They don’t hear about the guys, these veterans, that don’t sleep, have night sweats, are irritated. Some guys get really bad anxiety, depression.”

Mr. Neely added, “A lot of those people who have bared their soul on that thread have probably never said anything publicly before.”

In [one tweet](#) replying to the Army, a man who said he was a Navy veteran described how he had suicidal thoughts everyday.

Another [read](#): “I was assaulted by one of my superiors. When I reported him, with witnesses to corroborate my story, nothing happened to him. Nothing. A year later, he stole a laptop and was then demoted. I’m worth less than a laptop.”

The Army said in a statement that it appreciated people sharing their personal stories.

“Your stories are real, they matter, and they may help others in similar situations,” the Army [said](#) in a series of follow-up tweets. “The Army is committed to the health, safety and well-being of our Soldiers. As we honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice this weekend by remembering their service, we are also mindful of the fact that we have to take care of those who came back home with scars we can’t see.”

Briley Kazy, 19, who replied to the Army’s tweet, was disheartened by the response. “They were like, this is very important to us, made it seem like they are doing as much as they can,” she said. “But they’re not.”

Like many, Ms. Kazy posted not about her personal experience, but about someone close to her: a co-worker and friend who has PTSD after serving in the Army in Iraq. She declined to identify her friend.

She said he was working a 12-hour shift at a Tex-Mex restaurant in Cleveland, Tenn., where the two were cooks, on July 4, 2015. The daytime was mostly fine, she said. Then came fireworks from a nearby mall at night.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/26/us/us-army-twitter.html>



Brandon Neely with his wife, Wendy Neely, and their children at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in 2003. Mr. Neely was on leave from his deployment in Iraq. Credit via Brandon Neely

“He was trying his hardest,” Ms. Kazy said. “He would have to leave and sit in the cooler for a while and have a panic attack.”

To Mr. Neely, these types of stories are commonly shared among former service members. He said he served five years in the Army, joining in August 2000, seeking to break out of an irresponsible and party-minded lifestyle.

He said he served in the military police and was deployed to Egypt in 2001, to Guantánamo Bay in 2002 and Iraq in 2003. He said he was discharged in 2005 with the rank of specialist. He has been a [vocal critic](#) of military operations at Guantánamo Bay.

He said he has worked in law enforcement in Houston since he returned, but his life is far from settled.

“I don’t like to go out to places,” Mr. Neely said. “I don’t like to be around a lot of people. When my kids have stuff at school, I’m usually sitting in the back. I don’t want people behind me.”

He said the federal government does not do enough to take care of soldiers who return from their service.

“I know more people that have committed suicide in my unit than have been killed when we were deployed,” he said. “The Army is a good place, the military is a great place. The training, it gets you ready for war, but they don’t get you ready for coming home.”

He said he hopes the attention to the responses to the Army’s tweet prompts reform.

“Hopefully, these politicians can do something to fix the system that’s broken,” he said.

SEE ALSO:

[U.S. Army asked vets how serving had affected them, receive an outpouring of pain](#) [*New York Daily News*, 2019-05-26]

[Video: Army Memorial Day tweet draws unexpected response](#) [*Military Times*, 2019-05-28]

Misconduct

Air Force Academy investigating 10 cadets for possible cheating

By Stephen Losey

Air Force Times, May 24, 2019



The Air Force Academy is investigating 10 cadets for possibly cheating on a math test. (Thomas Peipert/AP)

The [Air Force Academy](#) is looking into 10 cases in which freshmen cadets may have cheated on a final exam as [possible honor code violations](#).

The [Gazette newspaper in Colorado Springs](#) on Thursday reported that some cadets' final exams showed "suspicious results," that [prompted the academy to take a closer look](#) at the tests.

Academy spokeswoman Lt. Col. Tracy Bunko said in a Thursday email to Air Force Times that the faculty was carrying out "clarifications" with some cadets, the first step before a case goes forward with the honor process. The exams in question concluded May 17, Bunko said.

When a faculty member has any concern that a cadet may have cheated or plagiarized, the case is immediately flagged, Bunko said. A "clarification" session is held with the cadet to address concerns of wrongdoing openly and to find out if there is a reasonable explanation, Bunko said.

If there is not a reasonable explanation, the case is forwarded to the honor system, which then determines whether a violation has occurred.

"Academic integrity at the academy is taken extremely seriously," Bunko said.

- [Air Force Academy investigates cheating, misconduct allegations](#)

In a Friday email, Bunko said that after preliminary clarifications, 10 cases would be forwarded to the cadet honor process for further scrutiny.

"It is important to clarify that all or none of these [cadets] could ultimately be found in violation of our academic standards and the cadet honor code," Bunko said. "Any of them who are found in violation will face academic and disciplinary consequences."

The Gazette reported that the case involved the mathematics final exam. Bunko confirmed the cadets under investigation are all freshmen, so the investigations will not affect any graduations next week.

Bunko said that because they are freshmen, if they are found to have cheated, they would most likely face an academic penalty and probation as punishment.

The academy last carried out a major cheating investigation in 2017, after 13 freshmen were accused of cheating on a basic Air Force knowledge test.

[Stephen Losey](#) covers leadership and personnel issues as the senior reporter for Air Force Times. He comes from an Air Force family, and his investigative reports have won awards from the Society of Professional Journalists. He has traveled to the Middle East to cover Air Force operations against the Islamic State.

Assault, fraternization, harassment: Unit punishment book reveals noncommissioned officer misconduct aboard 13th MEU deployment

By Shawn Snow

Marine Corps Times, May 30, 2019



An MV-22B Osprey from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 166 Reinforced, 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, lands aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) during a regularly scheduled deployment of the Essex Amphibious Ready Group and the 13th MEU, July 11, 2018. (Cpl. A. J. Van Fredenberg/Marine Corps)

The [13th Marine Expeditionary Unit](#)'s 2018 deployment achieved historic feats.

The nearly eight month deployment, which saw the MEU dispersed across the Middle East and Indo-Pacific, saw the first combat strikes by F-35Bs in Afghanistan. But it also saw serious discipline issues among its enlisted leaders.

Assault, fraternization, insubordination, destroyed hotel property, disorderly conduct, hazing and sexual harassment were among the charges filed against a number of staff and noncommissioned officers, according to the unit punishment book obtained by Marine Corps Times.

“Although a small minority of our Marines and Sailors did not meet the high standards necessary for our demanding operations, the vast majority of our team excelled, resulting in an overwhelmingly successful deployment,” Capt. Diann Rosenfeld, the [13th MEU](#) spokeswoman, told Marine Corps Times in an emailed statement. “This is evident in not only our accomplishments, but in the more than 100 personal awards earned by our Marines and Sailors in the Command Element alone.”

- [The new MEU: How the Corps is changing missions for grunts](#)

One staff sergeant with the 13th MEU was charged for creating an “abusive” work environment, sexual harassment, assault and forcing Marines within the platoon to play a sexually explicit game called “f*ck, marry, kill,” according to details laid out in the charge sheet.

During the game, the staff sergeant sexually harassed two female Marines, who self-identified as lesbian, by calling them out to choose which male platoon members they would pick for each category.

“What is the straightest thing you would do for the hottest chick in the world?” the staff sergeant asked, according to charge sheets.

The staff sergeant also berated Marines as “b*tches,” “little b*tches,” “fags” and “faggots,” which created a hostile and abusive work environment, according to the charge sheets.

While in Sri Lanka, the staff sergeant also was charged with assaulting a corporal by striking and slapping the Marine’s face. The staff sergeant was placed on 60 days restriction and forfeited \$3,452.



Wasp-class amphibious assault ship Essex transits the Gulf of Aden during a vertical replenishment while on a regularly scheduled deployment of Essex Amphibious Ready Group and 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit in 2018. (Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Matthew Freeman/Navy)

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/05/30/assault-fraternization-harassment-punishment-book-reveals-noncommissioned-officer-misconduct-aboard-13th-meu-deployment/>

While an element of the 13th MEU was in Bahrain, a different staff sergeant was charged for having an improper relationship with a corporal, drunk and disorderly conduct and assaulting a seaman master at arms on the chest and shoulder, according to the charge sheets. That case was referred to a summary-court martial.

Around December 2018 another staff sergeant destroyed “numerous items of hotel property” at the Habtoor Grand Hotel in Dubai and threatened hotel staff members, the charge sheets read. The Marine was confronted by hotel managers and local authorities.

An estimate of the damages were not included in the charge sheet. The Marine was punished with 45 days restriction, 45 days extra duty and forfeited \$3,888.

A hospital corpsman 2nd class assigned to the 13th MEU destroyed Marriott hotel property in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, charge sheets said.

Around Aug. 22, 2018, the sailor, who was drunk and disorderly, damaged the hotel’s elevator panel by kicking and striking it, resulting in roughly \$425 in damages.

In July, a sergeant embarked aboard the Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship Rushmore was charged for hazing for participating in a “birthday beat-down” after “repeatedly” striking a corporal, a charge sheet detailed. The Marine was busted down to corporal and placed on 60 days of restriction.



The 13th MEU was able to experiment with the F-35 in roles that it was not able to with its legacy aircraft. (Petty Officer 2nd Class Chandler Harrell/Marine Corps)

A corporal aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship Essex was charged with using a government computer to look at porn, according to a charge sheet. The Marine lied about the incident to a first sergeant, claiming he went to tumblr.com to look at “blogs and Marvel material,” the charge sheet reads.

The Marine was busted down to lance corporal, forfeited \$2,176, and was placed on 45 days restrictions and extra duty.

A lance corporal aboard the Essex was busted down to private first class and forfeited \$1,836 for sharing an intimate image of another lance corporal without that person’s consent, according to a charge sheet.

“The 13th MEU takes all allegations of misconduct seriously, and the command took swift and appropriate action to ensure Marines or Sailors were held accountable,” Rosenfeld said.

It’s unknown at this time if any of the charges will result in administrative separation from the Corps, as Marines and sailors with the MEU have already chopped back to their subordinate commands.

- [Crackdown at Lejeune: Inside the 2nd Marine Division commander’s controversial call for discipline](#)

Misconduct aboard the 13th MEU among enlisted leaders raises questions about discipline across the force, especially in light of the 2nd Marine Division’s April crackdown.

Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, division commander Maj. Gen. David Furness’ decision to address discipline problems with a mandated stand down set off a series of debates among veterans and active duty Marines.

Stories of a junior Marine saluting a general officer while still sitting on his iPhone to a confirmed report of the commandant approaching a young Marine in pajamas at the chow hall have devolved into finger pointing from veterans and noncommissioned officers about a new Marine generation run amuck.

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/05/30/assault-fraternization-harassment-punishment-book-reveals-noncommissioned-officer-misconduct-aboard-13th-meu-deployment/>

But the 13th MEU's unit punishment diary tells of a number of noncommissioned officers failing to live up to standards and expectations required of their billet — NCOs who are also charged with setting the example for Marines under their watch.

Nearly 20 staff and noncommissioned officers were charged with misconduct during the course of the 13th MEU's deployment cycle compared to roughly 13 junior Marines who were hit for wrongdoing, according to the unit punishment diary.

[Shawn Snow](#) is the senior reporter for Marine Corps Times and a Marine Corps veteran.

The Leading Narratives on War-Crimes Pardons Are Wrong

By C. Anthony Pfaff

Defense One, May 29, 2019



In this Sunday, Sept. 21, 2008, file photo, 1st Lt. Michael C. Behenna, left, and his defense attorney Capt. Tom Clark, right, walk in Camp Speicher, a large U.S. base near Tikrit, north of Baghdad, Iraq. AP Photo/Vanessa Gera, File

The views expressed here are the views of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of the United States government. D

Troops are not merely victims of war, nor do pardons destroy justice. But there's a deeper threat here.

It is easy to understand why President Trump's willingness to pardon troops convicted or accused of war crimes is such a divisive issue. There are two compelling but inconsistent narratives in play. The first is a tale of young people brutalized by war who are only guilty of answering the call to serve. As Andrew Exum [puts it](#), some people see one person's war criminal as "men of righteous violence, forever straining against rules and prohibitions foisted upon them by less noble, more liberal, weaker politicians who can't understand what it takes to win." In this narrative, soldiers who commit war crimes are victims of war's brutality, who at worst have made understandable mistakes given the circumstances in which their leadership places them. Not only are they not responsible for their actions, but we should also admire them for their willingness to accept such hardships and risk on society's behalf.

This narrative certainly applies to the case of First Lt. Michael Behenna, whom the [President pardoned in early May](#) for killing a detainee during an unauthorized and dehumanizing interrogation. This narrative is also pertinent to the case of Chief Edward Gallagher, a Navy SEAL whose fellow SEALs [accused him](#) of, among other things, indiscriminately killing unarmed civilians, including an old man and a teenage girl. As one advocate for these men [reportedly said](#), "These guys make tough calls in moments for [sic] most people have never been a part of in their life... And then folks in suits in Washington, D.C., they throw paper at them and accuse them of things."

The second narrative is that any pardon for convicted war criminals threatens the good order and discipline of the military by undermining accountability as well as discouraging whistleblowers. This view has certainly dominated the negative reaction towards the pardons and is well exemplified by Fred Kaplan, who [observed](#) that these pardons send a message to the troops that "they won't get punished for lashing out, regardless of what their commanding officers have told them." Kaplan argues that these pardons portray the U.S. military as a rogue force whose "ethos and restraint should not be trusted."

The problem with both narratives is that they are simply not true: soldiers are not victims and pardons will not, by themselves, undermine military discipline. Moreover, the truth does not lie somewhere in between, but somewhere else entirely. This point does not suggest that there are not good reasons to take into account the brutality of war when judging war crimes or to review cases where there is suspicion of some irregularity. Charlie Dunlap, a retired Air Force major general, [observes](#) in the Behenna case that there were questions regarding the government's handling of exculpatory evidence as well as the fact it did not allow him an appeal to self-defense since his unauthorized interrogation placed him as the initial aggressor. There may be similar concerns in the Gallagher case. Prosecutors reportedly failed to disclose witness statements that may have [contradicted the government's version](#) of events.

Nor is it wrong to be concerned, as Kaplan is, with the message that ill-considered pardons set for the military. As Waitman Wade Beorn [observes](#), dismissing war crimes as a function of the brutalizing effects on war risks establishing an institutional culture that, even if it does not directly encourage crimes, certainly

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/05/leading-narratives-war-crimes-pardons-are-wrong/157313/> encourages an indifference to them. “This attitude is incredibly dangerous,” Beorn writes. “It doesn’t just undermine the enforcement of military justice; it also sends a message to our armed forces about just what kind of conduct the United States takes seriously.”

It is wrong, however, to interpret the facts about these cases in the context of these competing narratives. The presence of irregularities entails neither innocence nor that prosecutors are foisting unnecessary rules on hapless soldiers. On the other hand, a failure in accountability does not entail its loss. As Dunlap also notes, presidents have provided pardons to civilians, often without clarity, for years, yet somehow civil law endures. Thus, there is no good reason to expect that a few ill-considered pardons will fatally undermine the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Dunlap also notes that pardons are an integral part of the civilian and military justice systems. No system is perfect, and pardons, as well as other forms of clemency, enable us to address matters of injustice or temper justice with mercy when the system on its own did not.

The problem arises when pardons do not serve those functions. When that happens, the most damaging impact is to the military profession itself. Professions provide expert knowledge in service of a social good. When the profession is healthy, professionals are trusted by their clients to exercise discretionary judgment over the profession’s jurisdiction. In the case of the U.S. military, that social good is security, and that client is the U.S. government and, by extension, the people it represents. As with any profession, critical to that trust is adhering to a professional ethic that ensures the resultant good society expects, while maintaining the moral commitments that society has made. For the U.S. Army, that ethic [includes the following](#):

“We serve honorably...under civilian authority while obeying the laws of the Nation and all legal orders; further, we reject and report illegal, unethical, or immoral orders or actions...we take pride in serving the Nation...in war and peace we recognize the intrinsic dignity and worth of all people...we lead by example and demonstrate courage by doing what is right despite risk, uncertainty, and fear...”

One can see from this ethic how both competing narratives described above undermine it and thus the profession.

If the narrative of a soldier as a “brutalized victim” unfairly constrained prevails, it is hard to see how the American people could place trust in professional military judgments. They may admire (and frequently thank) soldiers for their sacrifice, but, in accepting this narrative, simultaneously dishonor it and reduce professional judgment to struggle against trauma. Exum writes that when it came to the demand to “kill the right people,” and by inference, to not kill the wrong people: “The crazy thing is that I felt very well prepared to do just that. The Army had spent years training me for that moment, and it had spent tens of thousands of dollars before that on my university and professional military education...*I knew what I was getting into, and I was well prepared for what came next.*” Acting ethically is part of what it means to act expertly and is thus integral to the profession.

But if the second narrative that soldiers are vulnerable to what is essentially a political act prevails, the effect would be equally damaging. Professions serve the needs of the client, not every demand. One should not expect a lawyer to lie or a doctor to prescribe potentially addicting drugs *no matter how much the client wanted them to do so*. When lawyers and doctors commit such acts, trust in their respective professions suffer. The fact that those lawyers and doctors may escape accountability, however, should not further incentivize more bad acts. Being a professional means placing the needs of the profession first. Excusing future war crimes because of past pardons risks the health of the profession.

Thus, the narrative that should prevail is that the military is comprised of professionals who are capable of exercising good judgment in matters of life-and-death and under extremely difficult and time-constrained conditions. Individuals who fail to appropriately and ethically exercise that judgment will be held accountable. No system is perfect and thus the military, like other professions, should be subject to oversight, which in the military’s case includes the president, Congress, and the courts. However, in

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/05/leading-narratives-war-crimes-pardons-are-wrong/157313/>
exercising that oversight, each of the branches of the U.S. government should keep in mind what is necessary to maintain the trust of the American people – an almost sacred trust upon which the health of the military profession rests.

Regardless of whether Behenna, Gallagher, or any of the individuals under consideration for a pardon should receive one, what should be clear is that pardons should not be rushed and should only be granted in order to correct an injustice to restore the integrity of the system, not undermine it. What threatens that system is not rules of engagement that reflect a respect for human life, nor is it external narratives that infantilize soldiers as either victims of war or victims of politics. What threatens the good order and discipline of the military is the idea that soldiers and their leaders cannot be trusted to exercise professional judgment in the demanding circumstances that war brings. Anything that erodes that trust should be avoided.

Dr. C. Anthony Pfaff is the Research Professor for the Military Profession and Ethic at the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College. A retired colonel, Dr. Pfaff served in Iraq with Joint Special Operations Command, the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, and as the Defense Attaché. He also served as the ethics adviser to the Independent Panel to Review DoD Detention Operations.

Marine Vet Lawmaker Responds to Battlefield Photo Controversy

By Richard Sisk

Military.com, May 30, 2019



In this Aug. 23, 2018, file photo, Republican U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter leaves an arraignment hearing in San Diego after he and his wife, Margaret, pleaded not guilty to charges they illegally used his campaign account for personal expenses. (AP Photo/Gregory Bull)

Rep. Duncan Hunter has no worries that he might be investigated over his claim that [he took a photo with a dead enemy combatant](#) while serving as a Marine officer, a spokesman for the California Republican said Wednesday.

"No, he doesn't have any concerns" that the [Marine Corps](#) or federal authorities will come after him for the photo that Hunter cited in a show of support for [Navy SEAL](#) Edward "Eddie" Gallagher, who is [facing a general court-martial](#) for alleged war crimes, Hunter spokesman Michael Harrison said in an email.

"Congressman Hunter was simply trying to make a point in the Gallagher case that almost everyone has a camera now on the battlefield," Harrison said.

"A lot of pictures are taken. Some have pictures with the enemy involved, some do not," he said. "The larger context here is that the case against Gallagher is weak and the [Navy](#) prosecution has conducted itself shamefully throughout the process."

Related content:

- [Vet Lawmaker Likely to Avoid Charges After Claim of Taking Photo with Enemy Corpse](#)
- [Congressman Vows to Seek Trump Pardon for Accused Navy SEAL](#)
- [Duncan Hunter Denies Fraudulent Wounded Warrior Purchases, Blames Wife](#)
- [Duncan Hunter, Marine Vet in Congress, Indicted on Corruption Charges](#)

One of the counts against Gallagher claims that he had a photo taken of himself with a captured enemy combatant whom he allegedly had just stabbed to death.

At a town hall meeting in his San Diego-area district last weekend, Hunter, who left the Marine Corps Reserve as a major in 2017, said of the alleged Gallagher photo, "A lot of us have done the exact same thing," the Times of San Diego and the San Diego Union-Tribune reported.

"Eddie [Gallagher] did one bad thing that I'm guilty of, too -- taking a picture of the body and saying something stupid," Hunter, who served two tours as a field artillery officer in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, reportedly said.

Hunter, who is [under federal indictment](#) on campaign finance fraud charges, did not produce the photo or say where or when it was taken, but added that he did not post or text the image.

The Gallagher case and Hunter's claim have again raised the issue of personal battlefield photos, and the circumstances under which they are punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice or the War Crimes Act, a federal statute.

The issue is particularly sensitive for the Marine Corps. In 2012, a YouTube video was posted online of Marines [urinating on the corpses of Taliban fighters](#). That incident allegedly took place in July 2011 in Afghanistan's southwestern Helmand province.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/05/30/marine-vet-lawmaker-responds-battlefield-photo-controversy.html>

Several of the Marines eventually faced special courts-martial, and the cases led to allegations that then-Commandant Gen. James Amos sought to exercise undue command influence in an effort to impose harsh punishment.

In regard to Hunter's claim of a photo, a Marine spokesman, Maj. Brian Block, repeated the service's standard warning against taking degrading battlefield images but said no decision is pending on whether to pursue action against him.

"The Marine Corps is aware of Rep. Hunter's remarks," Block said in a statement, but "it would be inappropriate to speculate on any possible future actions at this time."

"Marines are required to comply with the law of war during all military operations, however characterized," he added.

"If mistreatment of the dead were committed intentionally, it could be considered a violation of the law of war," Block said. "U.S. service members have been charged and punished under the Uniform Code of Military Justice for posing for pictures with human casualties."

However, in Hunter's case, he is likely no longer considered to be under military jurisdiction and could not be held accountable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, according to several military law specialists contacted by Military.com. They also said federal authorities probably have no case under the War Crimes Act.

Hunter's claim of having a photo of himself with a dead enemy "by itself is not a war crime," said Rachel VanLandingham, an [Air Force](#) veteran, former Judge Advocate General and now professor at Southwestern Law School.

"Posing next to a dead body is not classically considered a war crime," unless it also shows degrading behavior, she said. "It depends on the context of the picture."

-- Richard Sisk can be reached at Richard.Sisk@Military.com.

© Copyright 2019 Military.com. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Vet Lawmaker Likely to Avoid Charges After Claim of Taking Photo with Enemy Corpse

By Richard Sisk

Military.com, May 28, 2019



Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., speaks to the media Jan. 10, 2017, in Washington, D.C. Joe Raedle/Getty Images

Rep. Duncan Hunter's claim that he posed for a photo with a dead enemy combatant while serving as a Marine Corps officer will probably not expose him to any charges under military or federal criminal law, three military law specialists said Tuesday.

Hunter, a California Republican, left the Marine Corps Reserve in 2017 as a major.

"What he's done is all kinds of stupid, but a criminal act? I think not," said Gary Solis, a former Marine Judge Advocate General and now an adjunct professor of military law at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

"For criminal wrongdoing, you've got to have more" than just posing for a photo with a corpse, such as degrading the body, Solis said. "In this case, [Hunter's] assertion of having done so is not necessarily a crime."

Related content:

- [Congressman Vows to Seek Trump Pardon for Accused Navy SEAL](#)
- [Duncan Hunter Denies Fraudulent Wounded Warrior Purchases, Blames Wife](#)
- [Duncan Hunter, Marine Vet in Congress, Indicted on Corruption Charges](#)

"I don't think he's subject to the [Uniform Code of Military Justice]," agreed Eugene Fidell, who teaches military law at Yale University and served on then-Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl's defense team.

Fidell said it is his opinion that "the conduct [Hunter] has admitted to does not come under" the War Crimes Act, a federal criminal statute, although the behavior described "severely compromised his standing as a commissioned officer."

Geoffrey Corn, a professor at the South Texas College of Law in Houston, took a similar view on Hunter's statement, made last Saturday at a town hall meeting, that he took the photo with a dead enemy combatant while serving as a field artillery officer.

Hunter made the statement to show support for Navy SEAL Edward Gallagher, who is [facing a general court-martial](#) on numerous charges, including that he allegedly stabbed to death a wounded and captured enemy combatant in Iraq in 2017. One of the counts against Gallagher alleges that he took a photo of himself with the corpse.

At the town hall, Hunter referenced the Gallagher photo, saying, "A lot of us have done the exact same thing," according to reports by the Times of San Diego and the San Diego Union-Tribune.

"Eddie [Gallagher] did one bad thing that I'm guilty of too -- taking a picture of the body and saying something stupid," he said.

Hunter, who served two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, said he had taken a photo "just like that when I was overseas," referring to the alleged Gallagher photo. He did not specify whether his photo was taken in Iraq or Afghanistan, but added that he did not text or post the image.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/05/28/vet-lawmaker-likely-avoid-charges-after-claim-taking-photo-enemy-corpse.html>

In commenting on Hunter's statement, Corn said in an email that the War Crimes Act "provides for federal criminal jurisdiction over certain war crimes but, in my opinion, while this [Hunter's photo] may have breached the customary obligation to treat the dead respectfully, I don't think it could be charged as a war crime under this statute for a number of somewhat complicated legal impediments."

A Marine Corps spokesman, Maj. Brian Block, said the service is aware of Hunter's remarks but offered no information on whether there would be a preliminary inquiry.

Hunter's California office did not immediately respond to phone calls or emails asking for comment. The lawmaker is already [under federal criminal indictment](#) on a range of fraud charges for allegedly diverting campaign funding for personal use, such as vacations in Italy. He faces a court hearing in July and possible trial in the fall.

The reactions to Hunter's remarks -- if they can be judged by postings to his Twitter account -- were mostly negative.

"Randomly admitting to war crimes while under indictment for stealing campaign funds. That's a great look my guy," said one. Another said, "Thank you for your service."

According to the Defense Department's Law of War Manual, "The respectful treatment of the dead is one of the oldest rules in the law of war. Enemy military dead must be protected from disrespectful or degrading acts."

It adds, "Posing with bodies for photographs or leaving a 'calling card' on a body are also inconsistent with the respectful treatment of the dead."

In an opinion piece for USA Today last week, Hunter wrote that Gallagher, Army Maj. Matt Golsteyn and others charged with war crimes deserved pardons from President Donald Trump.

He said the cases were "glaring examples of what happens when military prosecutors become more obsessed with career advancement and sensational headlines than executing the rule of law," adding, "A pardon by Trump is fully warranted."

In remarks to reporters at the White House last Friday before leaving on his Japan trip, Trump said, "Some of these soldiers are people that have fought hard and long. We teach them how to be great fighters and then, when they fight, sometimes they get really treated very unfairly."

"So we're going to take a look at it," the president said. "It's very possible that I'll let the trials go on, and I'll make my decision after."

-- Richard Sisk can be reached at Richard.Sisk@Military.com.

© Copyright 2019 Military.com. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

SEE ALSO:

[Navy SEAL wants slaying case tossed or prosecutor removed](#) [AP, 2019-05-30]

[Is SEAL war crimes suspect Eddie Gallagher innocent?](#) [Navy Times, 2019-05-27]

[Trump might wait until after war-crimes trial to consider pardon for accused Navy SEAL](#) [San Diego Tribune, 2019-05-24]

[The Leading Narratives on War-Crimes Pardons Are Wrong](#) [DefenseOne.com, 2019-05-29][OPINION]

Religion

Authorities: Army vet thought Muslims among people in crash

By Olga R. Rodriguez

The Associated Press, May 30, 2019



Isaiah Joel Peoples speaks with defense attorney Richard Weese during an appearance in Santa Clara County Hall of Justice, Thursday, May 30, 2019, in San Jose, Calif., where two hate crime charges were added to his eight counts of attempted murder. The Army veteran did not enter a plea when he appeared in court. Police said he deliberately plowed his car into people at a Sunnyvale crosswalk in April. (Karl Mondon/San Jose Mercury News via AP, Pool)

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — An Army veteran who served in Iraq ran his car into a crowd of pedestrians in California because he believed two of the people looked like they were Muslim, authorities said Thursday.

The disclosure came as prosecutors filed two hate crime allegations against 34-year-old Isaiah Peoples.

He is also facing eight counts of attempted murder after police said he deliberately plowed his car into people on April 24 at the Sunnyvale crosswalk and showed no remorse afterward. The hate crime allegations carry up to six additional years in prison each.

A 13-year-old girl of Indian descent, Dhriti Narayan, remains in a coma with brain trauma.

“Someone’s child is in critical condition today because of someone’s ignorance and hatred,” Santa Clara County District Attorney Jeff Rosen said. “So today, we stand with her and her family, and all of our Muslim and Indian neighbors.”

Outside court later Thursday, Rosen said he was confident that the perceived religion of several of the victims was the “substantial motivating factor” in the April attack.

Peoples’ mother says her son has struggled with PTSD since returning from Iraq.

Peoples did not enter a plea at Thursday’s hearing in San Jose. His attorney, Chuck Smith, did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

Family and friends described Peoples as quiet and polite and expressed shock at his alleged involvement in the crash.

Peoples had no criminal record. He was honorably discharged from the Army, and police were investigating the report of post-traumatic stress disorder.

His mother, Leevell Peoples of Sacramento, has said her son had “a bad episode” with PTSD in 2015, for which he was hospitalized.

She said the Army forced him to retire because of PTSD.

He had been deployed to Iraq from June 2005 to May 2006, according to Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Emanuel Ortiz. He did not answer questions about whether Isaiah Peoples’ departure from the Army was due to PTSD.

Leevell Peoples said her son graduated from Sacramento State University after returning from Iraq and was working as an auditor for the Defense Department in the Silicon Valley suburb of Mountain View.

SEE ALSO: [Police: Army vet drove into people thinking they were Muslim](#) [AP, 2019-04-26]

Foodies, faithful flock to Metro Detroit Ramadan festivals

By Jeff Karoub

The Associated Press, May 31, 2019



In a Saturday, May 18, 2019 photo, thousands attend the Ramadan Suhoor Festival in Dearborn Heights, Mich. The festival has a specific purpose beyond the carnival atmosphere and bountiful buffet; a chance to gather during the Muslim holy month in which worshippers fast daily from dawn through dusk. (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

DEARBORN HEIGHTS, Mich. (AP) — Shortly before midnight, a buzzing crowd stood patiently in a line that bent around the corner of a community center and stretched far back into the night. After a countdown, the throng streamed into the fairway of food trucks and other vendors, then pressed forward to the cadence of a banging bass drum.

It was suhoor time.

The informal gala — in full swing after midnight, illuminated with string lights and resplendent with the scents of Middle Eastern and other cuisine — has been staged on weekends throughout May in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn Heights. But the Ramadan Suhoor Festival has a specific purpose beyond the carnival atmosphere and bountiful buffet: It's a chance to gather during the [Muslim holy month](#) in which worshippers fast daily from dawn through dusk.

Despite its religious underpinnings, and in accordance with Muslim faith, festival organizers also have made one thing clear: Non-Muslims are welcome.

And so they all have come — Muslims and non-Muslims, thousands at a time and collectively in the tens of thousands — to share suhoor, the early morning meal typically consumed before daily fasting resumes and meant to fuel the many hungry hours after sunrise when neither food nor water may pass a faithful Muslim's lips. The ring of food trucks serve up more than just overflowing plates. For many, it's a welcome departure from the standard pre-dawn Ramadan fare that typically includes spiced or seasoned bread with cheese or yogurt.

Here at the festival, visitors may instead indulge their well-earned appetites with plates of pancakes, halal (permitted under Islamic dietary laws) hot dogs, cheesesteaks, fresh miniature doughnuts and shawarma, which consists of slivers of seasoned, spiced marinated meat.

The event itself reflects the area's growing, diverse Muslim population, which goes back more than a century and whose population is estimated by experts to be approaching 300,000. As the community grows, so too does its willingness to practice and more visibly share traditions — with food as the ultimate unifier.

“People are becoming more educated about it ... and it's a beautiful thing,” said Hassan Chami, a pharmacist who started the festival last year. “One of my goals here is to celebrate religious diversity.”

Other U.S. communities have large Muslim populations, including those in and around New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. They also have hosted festivals drawing thousands to mark the Eid al-Fitr, or the end of Ramadan. The Detroit-area's recurring events aim to amp-up such efforts: They serve as homecomings for some Muslims who left the state and missed the atmosphere, and even attracted “a foodie from Houston” who had no connection but just wanted to experience it, Chami said.

Chami said he launched the festival after seeing food trucks and tents popping up in gas station and strip mall parking lots in recent years during Ramadan. He was impressed by the entrepreneurial spirit, but thought it would be good to “centralize it.”

<https://apnews.com/25f31de0fdb24e2397d723cd6bb6fed1>

But it had to be authentic. Signs around the festival grounds offer guidance on fasting, prayers and good deeds, and men sitting in a tent recite verses from the Quran, or Islamic holy book, and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. Their amplified recitations waft along with the aromas from Corn on the Corner, Tornado Potato, Smiley's Halal, Rafic's Felafel and other trucks.

The drum Chami used to welcome attendees gets picked up a couple hours later by a food vendor, who Chami says represents "the old villager walking around the town, banging the drum, calling people to wake up and eat the suhoor."

The traditional and contemporary mix mirrors the Islamic community around Detroit, which traces its roots to the earliest auto plants and the burgeoning industry's hunger for workers. In the past 30 years, the area has gone from having about a dozen mosques to more than 90, reflecting immigration of Muslims from across the Mediterranean, Middle East and South Asia.

Sally Howell said Ramadan's observance has changed significantly in the three decades she has been researching Islam in Detroit. In the early days, most people would celebrate in homes and mosques — and restaurateurs would complain how the holiday was bad for business. Mosques expanded their offerings, with post-prayer lectures and large iftars — the formal meal eaten after breaking the daily fast and recitation of prayers — that welcomed non-Muslims. Within the past decade, eateries started hosting buffets.

Even though Ramadan-related events were never closed-off to non-Muslims, the new festivals provide an opportunity to further extend participation in elements of the sacred monthlong rite, Howell said.

"This is the more social, celebratory side of Ramadan," said Howell, director of the Center for Arab American Studies at University of Michigan-Dearborn. She said the events get a boost because Ramadan, which rotates around the calendar, currently falls in warmer weather months.

Some Muslims have complained on social media about the festival placing a greater emphasis on food over faith. Dana Mohammad, 23, who attended a recent festival, found it "very loud," "crowded" and "hype" — yet spiritually beneficial.

"I think it actually adds to the essence of Ramadan because it brings people together, it binds communities and it builds bridges, which I think is a principle of the holy month," she said.

Donna Bazy invited fellow emergency room nurses — assuring them it would be open to non-Muslims. Among those accepting was Rhonda Hines.

"I'm enjoying myself immensely — it's wonderful," said Hines, hungrily eyeing which truck to tackle first. "I am very Christian but I love my girl Donna so much, I want to celebrate with her."

Howell and Chami see such festivals as an antidote to the hostility Muslims feel in some quarters and the rhetoric and policies of the Trump administration, which has curbed immigration and travel from several Muslim-majority nations. For both, it recalls the increased scrutiny and suspicion directed at Arabs and Muslims after the 9/11 attacks.

The difference now, they said, is Muslims feel more comfortable outwardly celebrating their faith. That was Chami's mission with the Ramadan Suhoor Festival: Create a space where Muslims could celebrate on their terms but with open arms.

"Having that confidence allows us to embrace our culture and allows (other) communities to support us as much as they do," Chami said.

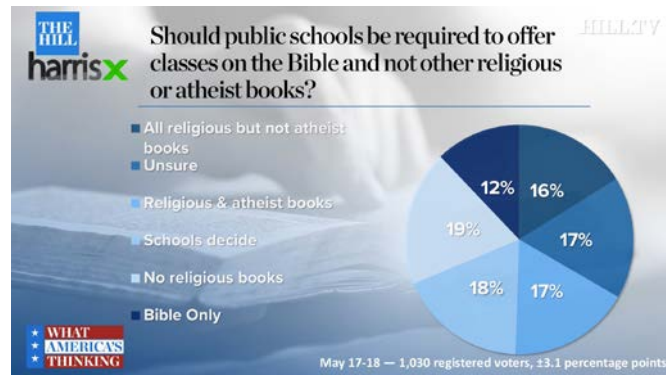
"We went through a point where we were trying to prove ourselves, saying 'Hey, I'm just like you,'" he added. "I'm over that. ... We're great people. We have an unbelievable culture. We do great here."

Follow Jeff Karoub on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/jeffkaroub>

Poll: 12 percent of Americans support new laws promoting Bible in public schools

By Matthew Sheffield

The Hill, May 24, 2019



A number of states are in the process of passing new laws to require public schools to offer Bible history classes but a new poll finds that the vast majority of Americans would prefer that other religious and atheist books also be included in such courses, or that they not be taught at all.

In a [Hill-HarrisX survey](#) released Friday, just 12 percent of Americans supported the idea of offering classes in Bible history that do not also teach about other religious books or atheist literature.

A third of respondents, 33 percent, said states should require schools to offer new history classes on all major religions, with a little over half of that group — 17 percent of the total sample — saying the class topics should also include the history of atheism.

Nineteen percent of survey participants said schools should not be allowed to teach students about any religious books, while 18 percent said that schools should be able to determine what courses to make available about religion or atheism.

Seventeen percent of respondents said they were unsure what their opinion on the matter was.

"Most of the time in polling, we don't see 'unsure' answers close to 20 percent like it was in this particular poll," Natalie Jackson, research director at the Public Religion Research Institute, told Hill.TV on Friday. "I just think there's no real consensus right now on the type of policy."

Legislation mandating that public schools offer optional classes about the Bible have been making their way through several states. In 2017, Kentucky became the first state to make a law requiring the classes.

Eleven states currently have bills pending that would teach the Bible in schools but not allow for texts from atheists or other religions to be offered, according to an analysis by Americans United, a group that opposes them.

Some advocates for the legislation have said they are trying to promote historical awareness while others have said they are trying to promote their own faith viewpoints.

"I'm a Christian person and a religious person," Indiana state Sen. Dennis Kruse (R) told the [Indianapolis Star](#). "I think we need more Christianity and more religion in our society, in our state."

Conservative legislators have been promoting the bills as part of a larger initiative called Project Blitz that is designed to spread Christian messages through public policy. In January, [President Trump](#) said he supported their efforts.

"Numerous states introducing Bible Literacy classes, giving students the option of studying the Bible. Starting to make a turn back? Great!" [he wrote on Twitter](#).

The spate of legislation has been strongly denounced by secular and atheist groups.

"The goal of this campaign is to cement Christian supremacy into the law," Nick Fish, president of American Atheists, told Hill.TV.

<https://thehill.com/hilltv/what-americas-thinking/445477-poll-only-12-percent-of-americans-support-new-laws-promoting>

"Unfortunately, young people are often the targets of these attempts, whether it be in these 'Bible literacy class' laws, requirements that every school plaster 'In God We Trust' on the wall, or laws that exempt religious adoption and foster care providers from rules protecting LGBTQ or non-religious youth," he said.

Jackson noted that most Americans are not aware of the Project Blitz initiative or efforts to promote Bible reading in schools, adding that the national press has not given much coverage to the state-based controversies.

"This is not getting a lot of attention," she said.

While the Bible-only class efforts have been garnering support from high-level Republican policymakers, GOP voters in the Hill-HarrisX poll were not particularly keen on the idea.

Just 22 percent of respondents in the poll who identified as Republican said they wanted the Bible to be taught to the exclusion of texts written by atheists or those from different faiths.

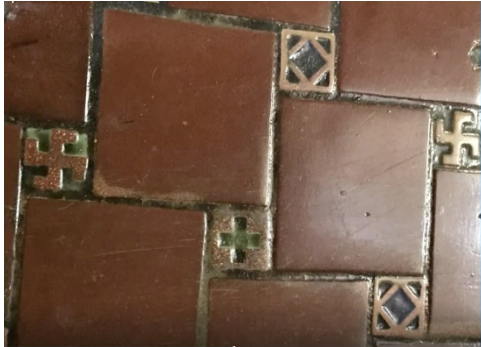
Among Democratic and independent survey participants, just 6 percent of each group said that they approved of the idea of having schools teach the Bible only.

The survey was conducted May 17-18 from a statistically representative online panel of 1,030 voters. It has a 95 percent confidence level and a 3.1 percent sampling margin of error.

Why a Florida VA hospital serving WWII veterans has swastika floor tiles

By Courtney Goodwin

Military Times, May 29, 2019



The floor tiling at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center near St. Petersburg, Florida, contains swastikas in its design. Hospital officials say the tiles were made before the Nazis appropriated the symbols.

Surprised to see a VA hospital's floor decorated with swastikas, a Florida man sent a local news station a photo of the tiles and asked them to investigate.

The swastikas, which became the ultimate symbol of evil under the Nazis, are carved into floor tiles at the [Bay Pines VA Healthcare System](#) as part of a decorative scheme, according to Selina Meiners, the Public Affairs Officer at the hospital.

[Tampa, Florida's WTSP 10News](#), which first reported on the facility's swastika tiles, showed the pictures to Larry Jasper, a Jewish Army veteran, to get his opinion.

"The initial reaction would be shocked as to why is this here," Jasper told 10News.

The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System in St. Petersburg was built before World War II, and its swastikas have been a recurring topic of discussion over the years, according to Selina Meiners, a hospital spokeswoman.

Before its use in World War II, the swastika symbol was used to represent well-being, peace, and continuity in a number of cultures.

Because of the historical significance behind the swastika tiles, the Bay Pines system does not plan to remove them. Instead, officials have presented an historic preservation plan with Florida's State Historical Preservation Office.

"It is considered to be a sacred and auspicious symbol in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism and dates back at least 11,000 years," Meiners said.

The engineering department at Bay Pines is working to install plaques within six to eight weeks that will outline information about them. Until then, signage will be placed in the area, according to Meiners.

The C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center, Bay Pines' main hospital facility, sees over 2,000 veterans per day.

"We never hesitate to provide the historical information about the tiles in response to the minimal amount of queries we've received over the years about them," Meiners said.

Sexual Assault / Harassment

The 'Harvey Weinstein of the WI National Guard:' Records show WI National Guard rehired unit leader who allegedly sexually assaulted soldiers

By Katelyn Ferral

The Capital Times (Madison, Wis.), May 29, 2019



The Wisconsin Army National Guard Armory is located at 1420 Wright St. in Madison.

MICHELLE STOCKER

A high-ranking unit leader in the Wisconsin Army National Guard allegedly sexually assaulted a soldier and was later rehired by the Guard as a private civilian contractor, according to emails between the soldier and former Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch's office, which were obtained by the Cap Times.

The emails were exchanged from October 2017 through June 2018 and were released to the Cap Times through an open records request. The names of the soldier and the alleged perpetrator are redacted. The original email chain between the soldier and Kleefisch's office included "10.28 MBs of substantiating documentation," which was not included in the records provided to the Cap Times, according to the records.

In the emails, a soldier wrote to Kleefisch notifying her about a supervisor and leader in the soldier's unit who sexually assaulted her and other women there. The soldier referred to the alleged perpetrator as the "Harvey Weinstein of the WI National Guard." The soldier asked Kleefisch to provide some oversight to Adjutant General Donald Dunbar, who oversees the Wisconsin National Guard. She also cited concerns about how the Wisconsin Army National Guard investigates sexual assaults and said it was violating federal protocols.

"I have been vacillating about contacting your (office) for approximately 3 years now, but the recent news regarding Harvey Weinstein has me at wits' end. More specifically, I keep hearing the phrase, "everyone knew," the soldier wrote. The soldier said that in January 2014 she told her chain of command about the "Harvey Weinstein" of their unit, "someone who woefully outranked us, and used his rank to touch, demean, and intimidate us."

The soldier said she filed a formal complaint and in March 2015 the National Guard Bureau's Office of Complex Investigations investigated her claim, which it substantiated, according to a separate record of the investigation. That record was provided to the Cap Times by the soldier.

The National Guard Bureau found that the supervisor "inappropriately touched the victim's buttocks, thighs, shoulders and back and subjected the victim to sexually illicit language and that the touching was intentional and that it was done with the intent to abuse, humiliate or degrade the victim."

The soldier said that after she reported the assault, she faced retribution and reprisal and her job was threatened. The Wisconsin National Guard allowed the alleged perpetrator to retire honorably with benefits and then later rehired him as a civilian contractor, working as a case manager for soldiers who have been injured in the line of duty. The position had access to soldiers' health records including his victims, the soldier wrote.

"My perpetrator also has the gall to periodically email me directly — despite once having a Military Protective Order against him," the soldier wrote. "I am a patriot, and a Soldier dedicated to the Army

https://madison.com/ct/news/local/govt-and-politics/the-harvey-weinstein-of-the-wi-national-guard-records-show/article_83f64990-fc64-5d36-8c4d-2d227fad879b.html

Values. I believe in the oath I swore to protect the Constitution from enemies both foreign and domestic. This man is a domestic cancer in the (Wisconsin Army National Guard); a cancer that was allowed to metastasize to a level which I believe threatens the core integrity of the Wisconsin National Guard.”

The emails follow an [investigation by the Cap Times](#) that showed how the Wisconsin Army National Guard responds to allegations of sexual assault. The series showed how four men who called themselves the “[four horsemen](#)” sexually “preyed” upon women in one unit for more than six years. The series also showed how the Guard investigates allegations of assault. One expert said the reports read as if they were “[written by children](#)” and showed bias against the victim.

State and federal lawmakers from both political parties have [called for more accountability](#) in how the Guard responds to sexual misconduct. The National Guard Bureau is now [investigating](#) the Wisconsin Army National Guard's practices, and is expected to produce a report in 2020.

In a statement to the Cap Times Wednesday, Gov. Tony Evers' spokeswoman Melissa Baldauff said he remains committed to ensuring "a safe environment for our service members and expects a thorough, fair, and impartial review from the National Guard Bureau's Office of Complex Investigations."

"Everyone deserves a workplace that is free from sexual assault or harassment, and free from the fear they may face retaliation for reporting assault or harassment," she said.

The Wisconsin Army National Guard has said that it welcomes an investigation, is committed to combating sexual assault and is committed to removing perpetrators from its ranks.

After the initial email sent to Kleefisch's office in October 2017, Daniel Suhr, her chief of staff and legal counsel, responded to the soldier and pledged to follow up with the “appropriate authorities” to ensure a prompt and independent review.

One month later, Suhr wrote to the soldier and said he sent her complaint to the Adjutant General's office at the Department of Military Affairs who reviewed her concerns and said the alleged offender no longer worked there. Suhr said the Department of Military Affairs said it had changed its policies to safeguard future hiring decisions. Suhr added that the soldier was welcome to stay in touch with any concerns.

In a response email sent in December 2017, the soldier thanked Suhr but cautioned that the system of justice in the Wisconsin National Guard was not effective and asked Kleefisch to provide oversight of it. The soldier wrote that the Guard had and continues to violate sexual assault protocols and said she had filed a federal whistleblower complaint through the U.S. Department of Defense outlining the violations and the retribution she faced when she reported her assault.

“I am concerned that even if (the Department of Defense Inspector General) does initiate an investigation, their report will once again go right to (the Adjutant General) and no action will be taken,” she wrote. “I would like the (lieutenant governor's) office to provide some oversight of (the Adjutant General) regarding this matter. ... January (2018) will mark the four year anniversary of my initial complaint to my leadership. Four years with no justice is unacceptable. If this happened to me, it has happened to others, and it will continue to happen until someone steps in to enforce current policy by changing the standard operating procedure of (the Adjutant General) and his subordinates.

“I hope the Lieutenant Governor's office chooses to become that change.”

Later that month she followed up with another email again asking for help.

"The Office of the Lt. Governor is literally my last viable... option to affect positive change in our State's National Guard with regards to sexual assault response procedures," the soldier wrote.

Emails show Suhr continued to have discussions with officials at the National Guard Bureau throughout the spring of 2018. He kept in touch with the soldier and said Kleefisch's office was still working with its

https://madison.com/ct/news/local/govt-and-politics/the-harvey-weinstein-of-the-wi-national-guard-records-show/article_83f64990-fc64-5d36-8c4d-2d227fad879b.html

attorneys on the issue. The soldier asked to meet with Kleefisch, but a meeting never happened, according to the soldier.

Although Kleefisch did not spearhead any structural change or initiate new oversight mechanisms for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, she said in an email to the soldier in June 2018 that she had ongoing policy discussions with the Department of Military Affairs to better understand its policies.

Kleefisch said her office had been discussing protocols for investigating sexual assault allegations with Dunbar's office.

"Since you brought forward your further concerns about the larger policy issues around complex investigations, we have engaged in regular, ongoing discussions between the Governor's office and the Adjutant General's office to learn about policy, the policies in place in other states, and practical operation of these policies," Kleefisch wrote, according to a record of the email which the soldier provided to the *Cap Times*.

Kleefisch said that the Wisconsin National Guard sometimes investigates allegations in house because of a backlog at the National Guard Bureau that "prevents prompt resolution." She wrote that in early 2018, the National Guard Bureau revised its policies, giving states more flexibility to investigate sexual assault allegations through whatever channel they choose: in house or through the National Guard Bureau.

[Katelyn Ferral](#) is The Cap Times' public affairs and investigative reporter. She joined the paper in 2015 and previously covered the energy industry for the Pittsburgh Tribune Review. She's also covered state politics and government in North Carolina.

<https://apnews.com/33603f80495f4a68b3898e150358af80>

<https://apnews.com/7856f30c4be949f59fb19280a4b69414>

Mediation allowed in Dartmouth College sex misconduct suit

The Associated Press, May 29, 2019

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — A federal judge has agreed to allow Dartmouth College and nine women who accuse the school of ignoring years of sexual misconduct by three former professors to try to settle a lawsuit out of court.

The judge in Concord, New Hampshire, issued an order Tuesday granting a stay of all deadlines and rulings until three days after agreed-to mediation or July 31, whichever comes first.

The parties recently selected a mediator and are working on setting a date to meet.

The [lawsuit accuses Dartmouth](#) of failing to take action to address years of sexual harassment, assault and other misconduct suffered by students at the hands of three Department of Psychological and Brain Science professors.

Dartmouth said it was unaware of the allegations until it was alerted by scores of female students.

Dartmouth, women want mediation in sexual misconduct lawsuit

By Kathy McCormack

The Associated Press, May 27, 2019

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Dartmouth College and nine women who accuse the school of ignoring years of sexual misconduct by three professors have agreed to try to settle a lawsuit out of court.

In a joint motion filed Friday in U.S. District Court in Concord, New Hampshire, the school and the women asked a judge for a stay of all deadlines and rulings until three days after agreed-to mediation or July 31, whichever comes first. The judge hasn't responded yet.

“The parties have been in discussion about participating in mediation in an attempt to resolve this matter without further litigation,” the motion said.

The parties said they recently selected a retired state superior court judge who is now a professional mediator and are working on setting a date to meet.

The November lawsuit accuses Dartmouth of failing to take action to address years of sexual harassment, assault and other misconduct suffered by students at the hands of three Department of Psychological and Brain Science professors. It was initially filed by seven women, one of them anonymously. Two more joined anonymously earlier this month. Dartmouth challenged the use of “Jane Doe” pseudonyms for three of the nine plaintiffs, saying the anonymity would prejudice Dartmouth's ability to defend itself.

In its original response to the lawsuit, Dartmouth said it was unaware of the allegations until it was alerted by scores of female students.

The original lawsuit alleges that professors William Kelley, Paul Whalen and Todd Heatherton harassed women and groped them. It also accuses Kelley and Whalen each of raping a student after a night of drinking, attempting to seduce women under their supervision and punishing those who rebuffed their advances. All three have since left Dartmouth.

<https://apnews.com/33603f80495f4a68b3898e150358af80>

<https://apnews.com/7856f30c4be949f59fb19280a4b69414>

Whalen and Kelley have not commented on the allegations, and it is unclear whether they have attorneys to speak for them. Heatherton apologized for acting inappropriately at conferences but said, through a lawyer, that he never socialized or had sexual relations with students.

Dartmouth's original response said there was an "unacceptable environment involving excess alcohol consumption, an inappropriate level of fraternization, and inappropriate personal comments and contact" between the three professors and some students.

It also said it has evidence the professors inappropriately touched students and texted them but said it lacked evidence to support the more serious assault allegations and denied that the behavior affected all women in the department. It also denied that the department as a whole had a "party culture."

Mental health questions delay trial for Army prosecutor charged with rape

By Meghann Myers

Army Times, May 30, 2019



An Army rape court-martial is on hold pending the accused's psychiatric evaluation. (Getty Images)

The rape [court-martial](#) of a former Army special victims prosecutor has been delayed for a second time this year, amid questions about the soldier's mental state.

[Capt. Scott Hockenberry](#), who faces [three counts of forcible intercourse and three of sexual assault consummated by a battery](#),

will be evaluated for "mental readiness" before his case is put back on the trial docket, Military District of Washington spokeswoman Shaunteh Kelly confirmed to Army Times on Wednesday.

Col. Daniel Brookhart, the presiding judge, "ruled that Captain Hockenberry is presently unable to understand the nature of the proceedings and cooperate fully in his defense," Kelly said.

Hockenberry had originally been scheduled for trial in February, but a defense request for a continuance pushed proceedings off until early June.

Brookhart ruled in late April that Hockenberry would undergo an evaluation before the trial begins, Kelly said, adding that details were protected by medical privacy rules.

According to the Manual for Courts-Martial, a board of physicians or clinical psychologists will be convened to consider a defendant's mental fitness for trial.

That includes whether he or she was mentally disabled at the time of the crime, any clinical psychiatric diagnoses, ability to discern right from wrong at the time of the crime or any present mental health issue that would prevent him or her from understanding the trial or cooperating in their defense.

- [Alleged victim testifies in rape case against Army sexual assault prosecutor](#)

Hockenberry's charges stem from a 2016 relationship he had with a fellow Army lawyer, when they were both stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

What began as a consensual, domination-submission sexual dynamic, according to the prosecution, turned violent over a period of weeks. Hockenberry is accused of raping the woman at knife point and punching her across the face.

The defense has argued that the encounters were within the agreed upon parameters of their relationship, and that the woman only brought charges when she discovered that Hockenberry was having sexual relationships other women.

[Meghann Myers](#) is the senior reporter at Army Times. She covers personnel, leadership, fitness and various other lifestyle issues affecting soldiers.