

DEOMI NEWS LINKS, April 3, 2020

CULTURE

[Coast Guard Is the Latest Service to Ease Up on Grooming Standards](#) [Patricia Kime, *Military.com*, 2 Apr 2020]

In a Coast Guard-wide message issued Thursday, Rear Adm. Joanna Nunan, assistant commandant for Human Resources, said men and women in the service can now wear their hair longer in response to the pandemic. The measure reduces the close contact required with barbers and hair stylists needed to meet regulations.

[Air Force commanders can now ease up on hair grooming standards to mitigate spread of COVID-19](#) [Diana Stancy Correll, *Air Force Times*, 31 Mar 2020]

Air Force Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services, said flexible grooming standards may be imposed, per the discretion of commanders as they navigate appropriate safety precautions. “Deviation should be done within reason and should in no way inhibit our ability to perform our duties, wear proper uniforms and headgear professionally, or prevent the use of protective or safety equipment,” Kelly said. “Shaving and other standards associated with dress and appearance remain in place.”

[Army Suspends Transition to New Combat Fitness Test Amid Gym Closures](#) [Matthew Cox, *Military.com*, 30 Mar 2020]

*The U.S. Army has suspended its plan to have all soldiers begin taking the new Army Combat Fitness Test in October amid widespread gym closures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Army leaders made the decision late last week to suspend the ACFT start date, as it is unclear when soldiers will have access to the fitness equipment needed to prepare for the more challenging fitness test, Lt. Col. Robin Ochoa told *Military.com*.*

[It’s not the Waffle House index, but a Marine barbershop has closed over COVID-19](#) [Shawn Snow, *Marine Corps Times*, 27 Mar 2020]

*The closure of Waffle Houses has often been used as an informal gauge of how bad a disaster has become, well the Corps just closed a barbershop over COVID-19, so things are probably looking pretty bad. Nat Fahy, a spokesman for Marine Corps Installations East, confirmed to *Marine Corps Times* that a barbershop aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany, Georgia, has been closed because it’s “currently in a higher threat environment with respect to COVID-19 cases.”*

[Black Women Learn to Braid While Social Distancing](#) [Sandra E. Garcia, *The New York Times*, 27 Mar 2020]

For \$5, students can join the class, “A Safe Space for Black Girls That Never Learned How to Braid.” The skill is essential for many Black women trying to keep their hair healthy while they practice social distancing. Braids are the foundation of many protective hairstyles, like wigs and hair extensions.

[Grammy-winning Ranky Tanky is a band with a mission to honor Gullah culture](#) [AUDIO/VIDEO]

[Jeffrey Brown and Anne Azzi Davenport, *PBS News Hour*, 27 Mar 2020]

South Carolina band Ranky Tanky is on a mission to revive and celebrate Gullah music and culture, which originated among descendants of West African slaves in Georgia, Florida and South Carolina. The group earned a Grammy Award this winter, and Jeffrey Brown went to the Lowcountry for a listen as part of our American Creators series and ongoing coverage of arts and culture, Canvas.

[The story of an “iconic statue made from an iconic photograph” taken at Iwo Jima](#) [Matthew M.

Burke, *Stars and Stripes*, 27 Mar 2020]

The flag-raising statue was recreated by Austrian-born sculptor Felix de Weldon, himself a Navy veteran, as the Marine Corps War Memorial. It was unveiled Nov. 10, 1954, by President Dwight Eisenhower and is visited by approximately 1.5 million people annually, according to National Park Service spokesman Aaron LaRocca. The park service completed a five-year, \$5 million rehabilitation project of the statue for the 75th anniversary of the battle on Feb. 23.

DISCRIMINATION

[FDA Loosens Restrictions On Gay Blood Donors Amid “Urgent Need” Caused By Coronavirus](#)

[Bobby Allyn, *NPR*, 2 Apr 2020]

The federal government on Thursday relaxed restrictions on receiving blood donations from gay men and other groups as the country confronts a severe drop in the U.S. blood supply that officials described as urgent and unprecedented. The Food and Drug Administration’s [new rules](#) are intended to spur a wave of donations as the coronavirus outbreak has caused donor centers to be closed and blood drives to be canceled nationwide.

[Parents feel virus shutdowns leave disabled students behind](#) [Collin Binkley, *Associated Press*, 31 Mar 2020]

As they adapt to shutdowns, some schools are turning to video conferencing to provide lessons and therapy sessions, while others are bringing small groups of students back for services or training parents to help. Some, though, have hesitated to move special education online. As virtual instruction began unrolling, the U.S. Education Department issued a reminder that students with disabilities must be granted the same opportunities as other students. It led some districts, including Philadelphia’s public schools, to forgo online instruction entirely, citing concerns about their ability to serve all children.

[School shutdowns raise stakes of digital divide for students](#) [Meg Kinnard and Maryclaire Dale, *Associated Press*, 30 Mar 2020]

The pandemic that launched a massive, unplanned experiment with distance learning has created extraordinary hurdles for schoolchildren left behind by the digital divide. Nationwide, nearly 3 million students make do without home internet because of the high costs of service and gaps in its availability. The disadvantaged students are more likely to be students of color, from low-income families or in households with lower parental education levels.

[In Egypt, transgender activist fights battle on many fronts](#) [Maggie Michael and Mariam Fam, *Associated Press*, 29 Mar 2020]

She has been ostracized by her family and scorned by some who accuse her of tampering with God's creation. She has been attacked by others scandalized by her activism for LGBTQ rights. Legally, she still holds a male's identity card. "When you declare you are different, you should get ready for war. A big war," she said. "The society will stomp on you and treat you like you are the enemy."

HUMAN RELATIONS

[Extroverts \(and introverts, too\) face quarantine challenges](#) [Deepti Hajela, *Associated Press*, 31 Mar 2020]

The quarantines and distancing have upended that. It's a relief for some introverts who now don't need excuses for why they don't want to be out — and, equally, a struggle for extroverts seeking out social connection in a world where that's suddenly a limited commodity.

[They Survived the Spanish Flu, the Depression and the Holocaust](#) [Ginia Bellafante, *The New York Times*, 29 Mar 2020]

Two extraordinary women — one 101, the other 95 — lived through the worst of the 20th century. They have some advice for you. Last weekend, as New Yorkers were absorbing the enormity of the current crisis, Naomi and her 95-year-old wife, Eva Kollisch, were at home in their one-bedroom apartment on the Upper West Side, listening to Marian Anderson on vinyl. The album was "Spirituals," and they were tended to by one of their regular aides.

MISCELLANEOUS

[Zoom under increased scrutiny as popularity soars](#) [BBC News, 1 Apr 2020]

Users have flocked to Zoom as governments around the world ordered large parts of their populations to stay at home to slow the spread of the virus. It is now ranked as the number two and number one app in the UK and US, respectively. Zoom has had security flaws in the past, including a vulnerability which allowed an attacker to remove attendees from meetings, spoof messages from users and hijack shared screens. Another saw Mac users forced into calls without their knowledge.

[Retirees, Active-Duty Families Could Be Barred from Military Pharmacies over Pandemic](#) [Amy Bushatz, *Military.com*, 31 Mar 2020]

Tricare users should brace for temporary military pharmacy closures over the novel coronavirus pandemic, Defense Health Agency officials announced Tuesday. Those measures, officials said, could include ending access for non-active duty family members to on-base pharmacies; temporarily closing on-base pharmacy locations completely; and changing the way prescriptions are delivered, such as staggered or curbside pickups, among other options, the guidance states.

[Joseph Lowery, civil rights leader and MLK aide, dies at 98](#) [Associated Press, 29 Mar 2020]

For more than four decades after the death of his friend and civil rights icon, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the fiery Alabama preacher was on the front line of the battle for equality, with an unforgettable delivery that rivaled King's — and was often more unpredictable. Lowery had a knack

for cutting to the core of the country's conscience with commentary steeped in scripture, refusing to back down whether the audience was a Jim Crow racist or a U.S. president.

[Thank them for their service \[COMMENTARY\]](#) [Jim Golby and Heidi Urben, *Military Times*, 29 Mar 2020]

Last week, a meme circulated among military and veteran circles on social media sites. It was entitled, "In Light of Current Events, Civilians Now Have an Idea What It's Really Like to Be in the Military," and consisted of observations such as "watching others panic; carrying around a mask all the time; and your weekend plans are revoked."

MISCONDUCT

[Wisconsin National Guard Colonel Stripped of Command Duties](#) [Associated Press, 26 Mar 2020]

The Guard announced Thursday that Maj. General Paul Knapp relieved Col. James V. Locke of command of the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee. The Guard is still trying to recover after federal investigators last year revealed they had found multiple problems with how the Guard handles sexual harassment and sexual assault complaints. Most notably the review found commanders had been opening their own internal investigations into complaints rather than referring them to Army or Air Force criminal investigators as required by federal law and Department of Defense policy.

RACISM

[Andrew Yang: We Asian Americans are not the virus, but we can be part of the cure \[OPINION\]](#)

[Andrew Yang, *The Washington Post*, 1 Apr 2020]

Last week I was shopping for groceries and preparing to hole up at home with my wife, Evelyn, and our two boys. There was an eerie, peculiar aura in the parking lot in upstate New York as night fell and shoppers wheeled out essentials and snacks. Three middle-aged men in hoodies and sweatshirts stood outside the entrance of the grocery store. They huddled together talking. One looked up at me and frowned. There was something accusatory in his eyes. And then, for the first time in years, I felt it. I felt self-conscious — even a bit ashamed — of being Asian.

[Democratic lawmakers call for racial data in virus testing](#) [Aaron Morrison, *Associated Press*, 30 Mar 2020]

Democratic lawmakers are calling out an apparent lack of racial data that they say is needed to monitor and address disparities in the national response to the coronavirus outbreak. In a letter sent Friday to Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Rep. Ayanna Pressley, both from Massachusetts, said comprehensive demographic data on people who are tested or treated for the virus that causes COVID-19 does not exist. Over the weekend, cities with large Black and non-White Hispanic populations emerged as new hot spots for the spread of the virus.

[Man, 72, wounded in Hanukkah stabbings dies from injuries](#) [Associated Press, 30 Mar 2020]

A man who was among the five people stabbed during a Hanukkah celebration north of New York City has died three months after the attack, according to an Orthodox Jewish organization and community liaison with a local police department.

[U.S. Supreme Court orders reconsideration of racial bias claim against Charter Communications](#)

[Andrew Chung, *Reuters*, 30 Mar 2020]

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday ordered a lower court to reconsider its decision to let comedian-turned-media executive Byron Allen's \$10 billion lawsuit accusing cable television operator Charter Communications Inc. of discriminating against Black-owned channels move forward. The justices sent the case back to the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to take a second look at it after the Supreme Court ruled on March 23 in a similar lawsuit by Allen against Comcast Corp. that the appeals court assessed the claims of racial bias using the wrong test.

[How Asian-American Leaders Are Grappling With Xenophobia Amid Coronavirus](#) [Matt Stevens,

The New York Times, 29 Mar 2020]

In interviews, a dozen Asian-American politicians, academics and leaders of nonprofit groups denounced the racial animus that has shown itself during the crisis, vowing to speak out against it and to protect their community even as they personally acknowledged feeling angry, fearful and unsettled.

[Member of White supremacist gang in Arkansas sentenced](#) [Associated Press, 27 Mar 2020]

Joseph Pridmore, 34, was sentenced to 150 months in prison and five years of supervised release on Monday by U.S. District Judge Brian Miller. Pridmore pleaded guilty in October to distribution of methamphetamine. Prosecutors said Pridmore is a self-professed member of the White Aryan Resistance, a White supremacist group with similar core beliefs and rank structure as the New Aryan Empire. Dozens of New Aryan Empire members are set to go to trial in August. Pridmore is the third person sentenced in the federal operation targeting the group.

RELIGION

[How NIH chief Francis Collins is trying to get people of faith to wake up to coronavirus realities](#)

[Sarah Pulliam Bailey, *The Washington Post*, 3 Apr 2020]

As one of the most respected scientists in the country, Francis Collins, who leads the National Institutes of Health, has long tried to bridge the perceived gap between science and faith. Collins was behind the effort to create BioLogos, an organization designed to promote the compatibility between science and faith.

[Saudi Arabia asks Muslims to delay Hajj bookings](#) [BBC News (Religion), 1 Apr 2020]

Hajj Minister Mohammed Bantem said the kingdom was concerned about the safety of pilgrims and urged people to "wait before concluding contracts". Some two million people were expected to travel to Mecca and Medina this July and August for the annual gathering. Muslims who are physically able must undertake the Hajj once in a lifetime.

[Hundreds at Louisiana church flout COVID-19 gatherings ban](#) [Stacey Plaisance, *Associated Press*, 29 Mar 2020]

Hundreds of worshippers attended services at a Louisiana church on Sunday, flouting a ban on large gatherings, angering neighbors and seemingly turning a deaf ear to their governor, who once again warned that hospitals could soon be overwhelmed with new cases of the coronavirus. An

estimated 500 people of all ages filed inside the mustard-yellow and beige Life Tabernacle church in Central, a city of nearly 29,000 outside Baton Rouge.

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

SEXISM

[Feisty. Ambitious. Lucky. Female Writers On The Words That Undermine Women](#) [Alisa Chang, NPR, 2 Apr 2020]

What does it mean to call a woman ambitious, disciplined, mature, or feisty?

A new essay collection explores how these words, which may sound complimentary, are loaded with sexist ideas that diminish the women they describe. [Pretty Bitches](#), edited by Lizzie Skurnick, examines how everyday language creates double standards in the workplace, raises unrealistic expectations about how women should behave and look, and punishes them when they step outside the bounds.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARRASSMENT

[West Virginia doctor charged with groping VA patient](#) [John Raby, Associated Press, 2 Apr 2020]

Dr. Jonathan Yates was charged in a criminal complaint unsealed Thursday with one count of deprivation of rights under color of law — language used to describe crimes committed while on duty. The charge carries a maximum penalty of life in prison. The complaint, filed in federal court in West Virginia’s southern district, said Yates deprived the 42-year-old Army veteran at the VA Medical Center in Beckley of his constitutional right to bodily integrity during a February 2019 examination.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Sexual Harassment Protections for Feds a “Byzantine Morass,” Commission Finds in Calling for Widespread Reforms](#) [Eric Katz, GovExec, 1 Apr 2020]

Claims of sexual harassment in the federal workplace have jumped by 36% from fiscal 2015 to 2018, according to a U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report titled “[Federal Me Too](#)” and released on Wednesday. Overall complaints and claims filed per person have both increased, the commission found, which noted the data—already scarce in the federal space—do not account for the vast majority of cases that go unreported. About 80% of sexual harassment claims in that period were filed by women, with Black women at the highest risk for harassment.

SUICIDE

[Air Force Academy Eases Restrictions After 2 Suspected Suicides](#) [Associated Press, 31 Mar 2020]

Social distancing restrictions at the Air Force Academy have been relaxed after it reported two cadet suicides in less than a week following attempts to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Emails obtained from the academy show the Colorado Springs base had received complaints about how the policies made the school prison-like for about 1,000 seniors who remained on the campus, the [Gazette reported](#).

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Seeking the Military Suicide Solution Podcast, Episode 12: Dr. Nick Polizzi](#) [*Military Times*, 31 Mar 2020]

This [podcast](#) from Military Times examines the alarming rate of military and veterans' suicide, offering new insights based on research and effective clinical and peer support practices in suicide prevention. Hosted by Duane France, a retired Army combat veteran, author and mental health counselor, and Shauna Springer, a psychologist, author and nationally recognized expert on initiatives to benefit the military community, the podcast aims to move beyond awareness to identify actionable strategies that can impact the rising suicide rate among service members, veterans, and their families.

VETERANS

[VFW argues abrupt VA change will “erode veterans right to competent representation” in benefits fights](#) [Nikki Wentling, *Stars and Stripes*, 1 Apr 2020]

The Department of Veterans Affairs is ending a decades-old practice of allowing veterans service representatives to review benefits decisions for accuracy before those decisions are finalized and sent to veterans. VFW National Commander William Schmitz argued it was an “inconceivable” change that would erode veterans’ right to competent representation in benefits claims. The group also questioned the timing of the change, which will be implemented as the country — and the Veterans Health Administration — responds to the global coronavirus pandemic.

[Florida veteran stuck in India because of coronavirus pandemic](#) [Billy Cox, *The St. Augustine Record*, 31 Mar 2020]

Arriving in India on March 2, the 36-year-old Army veteran’s destination was the northern city of Rishikesh, the self-proclaimed yoga capital of the world. Kendra Simpkins, founder of a nonprofit dedicated to providing alternative and holistic therapy to fellow veterans also coping with post-traumatic stress, was booked for a two-week immersion into yoga therapy. In 2018, she and partner Ryan Praefke founded [Operation Warrior Resolution](#), which includes rigorous yoga classes in its programs. As a result of OWR, Simpkins was named Female Veteran of the Year by the Sarasota County Veterans Commission.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[A N.J. Man was a Decorated African American in the Marines. His Trunk Ended up in an Estate Sale in Conn.](#) [Melanie Burney, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 27 Mar 2020]

Brooks made history as a member of the Montford Point Marines, the all-Black unit that integrated the Marine Corps after President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the armed forces in 1941 to recruit African Americans. He served in three wars and received a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Edward Bloch, Pearl Harbor survivor who described the bombing in a diary, dies at 97](#) [Bonnie L. Cook, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 27 Mar 2020]

Mr. Bloch, 97, a Philadelphia native and World War II Army Air Corps veteran who later became a television engineer, died Monday, March 9, of cardiac rest at a hospital in Pembroke Pines, Fla. In his diary, Mr. Bloch told of the carnage he saw that morning. As the men fled the barracks, the

Japanese pilots took aim, “strafing everything in sight,” he wrote. He saw six men killed as they tried to repel the invaders with a machine gun.

[\[REPRINT\]](#)

[Beloved Medal of Honor recipient Bennie Adkins critically ill and hospitalized with COVID-19](#)

[Diana Stancy Correll, *Military Times*, 27 Mar 2020]

Medal of Honor recipient Bennie Adkins has been hospitalized due to COVID-19, the Bennie Adkins Foundation announced Thursday evening. Adkins, 86, is critically ill, the foundation reports. Adkins, a retired Command Sergeant Major, earned the Medal of Honor in September 2014 for his service during the Vietnam War. He was first drafted into the Army in 1956 and went on to serve with the Special Forces for 13 years and complete three tours in Vietnam.

[The Army Asked Retirees in Medical Fields to Come Back. The Response Was Overwhelming](#)

[Hope Hodge Seck, *Military.com*, 27 Mar 2020]

“We need to hear from you STAT!” the message from the Army’s head of personnel, Lt. Gen. Thomas Seamands, read. The Army’s retirees took that seriously. “We reached out to more than 800,000 retired Soldiers to gauge their willingness to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic response,” an Army spokesperson told Military.com Friday. To date, more than 14,000 retirees “representing various specialties” have contacted the service for more information, he said.