

VSC NAACP VETERANS NEWSLETTER Issue 8 June 2021

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DOD Lifts Mask Mandate for Fully Vaccinated Personnel

Fully vaccinated **DOD** personnel are **no** longer required to **wear** a **mask** at Defense Department facilities. Defense Department personnel who are at least two weeks out from a final vaccine dose are **no** longer required to **wear masks** indoor or outdoors at **DOD** facilities, the Pentagon announced May 14. [Read More](#)

Passed Over 3 Times, a Black Marine Colonel Is Being Promoted to General



WASHINGTON — The Marine Corps is promoting Col. Anthony Henderson, a combat-tested Iraq and Afghanistan veteran, to brigadier general, a move that cracks the doorway for the service to potentially promote an African-American to its most senior ranks.

The promotion could set Col. Anthony Henderson on a path to becoming the first Black four-star Marine general. Only 25 African-Americans in the Marines have reached general in any form.

The Marine Corps, which had passed over Colonel Henderson for four years, has placed him on a highly selective list of nine colonels to be granted a coveted one star that denotes general rank status — brigadier general. The list, which was signed by President Biden, arrived on March 3 at the Senate Armed Services Committee, to start the required confirmation process, [according to the committee's website](#).

Normally, such promotions would not garner much attention. But Colonel Henderson is a Black man with combat command experience in a service — the Marines — that has never, in its 245-year history, had a four-star officer who was not a white man. And even the one-, two- and three-star Marine Corps [officer positions are predominantly white and male](#) — particularly the ones in the combat specialties that feed the four-star ranks.

If Colonel Henderson is confirmed by the Senate, he will become the rare Black general with a shot of getting all the way to the top. [Read More](#)

Minority veterans groups hope new leadership promises mean better results for all vets

Multiple times in recent months, Democratic leaders have promised to invite more veterans from minority and underserved groups to the table when it comes to policy discussions.

On March 3, during a joint hearing by the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees, leaders from Minority Veterans of America and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans sat for the first time among organizations invited each year to give their views on current Veterans Affairs policies and shortfalls.

In March, the National Congress of American Indians and National Association for Black Veterans will also make their first appearance at the advocates' legislative presentation panels.

The public recognition is normally reserved for older and more prominent groups. Officials from Disabled American Veterans and Student Veterans of America also testified the same day. Veterans of Foreign Wars leaders will testify at the March 18 event.

But White House officials and new Veterans Affairs leaders in recent weeks have repeatedly vowed to make federal veterans programs “more inclusive” in public comments on their department reform plans. And congressional Democrats said they'll help ensure that happens, with a closer look at the faces and voices they have advising their work to ensure the entire veterans' community is represented. [Read More](#)

Air Force orders new review into racial, ethnic disparities

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Air Force inspector general will do a second investigation into racial and ethnic disparities across the force, service leaders said Friday, expanding the review to include gender and additional racial categories such as Asian and American Indian.

The latest review comes just two months after the IG released a report concluding that Black service members in the Air Force are far more likely to be investigated, arrested, face disciplinary actions and be discharged for misconduct. The December report found that “racial disparity exists” for Black service members but that the data did not explain why it happens.

The new study also reflects broader campaigns within the Defense Department and the Biden administration to root out extremism and racism. President Joe Biden declared domestic extremism an urgent national security threat in the wake of the deadly Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. The crowd that breached the building as lawmakers were preparing to certify the election was overwhelmingly white and included members of far-right groups. [Read More](#)

Calls to Military Law Enforcement Reveal Racial Disparities, Army General Says



Army Maj. Gen. Donna Martin is trying to figure out why military police respond more to alleged criminal offenses involving people of color. As the Provost Marshal General of the Army and head of Criminal Investigation Command, Martin is conducting an assessment of how the service investigates and adjudicates military justice under [Project Inclusion](#), a

sweeping effort to promote diversity in the force. It was unveiled in late June after riots erupted across America to protest the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died while in Minneapolis police custody.

The data collected in the assessment shows "a little bit of disparity as we respond to crime on our installations," Martin told reporters, describing the effort as looking at everything from initial law enforcement response to final adjudication.

"The response shows an overrepresentation of response to ... people of color, but when we go through the adjudication process, or into court-martial or actions that are taken by a commander, race is almost not even a factor," she said. "And so, it's our responsibility now to go and try to find out why that is. Why do we have this huge response at the beginning of the process, but as we look at the adjudication, race is not really a factor?" [Read More](#)

Military needs “honest reckoning” over racism in the ranks, Black Projects founder says

A United States Army veteran says the military has to have an "honest reckoning" with systemic racism that historians say has been pervasive within its ranks since its inception.

The Black Veterans Project recently called on the Department of Veterans Affairs to release racial data after a New York Times opinion piece criticized what the author called the "racist legacy" of the department under former President Trump.

Black service members account for 17% of active duty personnel. More than half of minority service members say they have seen white nationalism or racism among fellow troops, according to the Black Veterans Project. Black members of the military are also between 32% and 71% likelier to face punishment.

Brookshire said the organization, established in 2018, was born out of a recognition that there was a lack of a digital conversation around racial justice and inequity in the military. The group aims to educate not only African Americans, but also Americans nationwide about the heroism and issues facing Black service members, as well as hold the military accountable. [Read More](#)

Lawmakers favor white candidates over minorities in service academy nominations: report

Nominations for admission to military service academies by members of Congress disproportionately favor white students, which in turn may hurt future leadership opportunities in the ranks for minority groups, according to a new analysis out today from the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center and the Veterans Legal Services Clinic at Yale Law School.

From 1994 to 2019, roughly 74 percent of nominations from current members of Congress to the U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Naval Academy and U.S. Military Academy at West Point went to white students, even though they made up just 54 percent of the eligible student pool.

Only about 6 percent of nominations went to Black students, and only about 8 percent to Hispanic students.

The report tracks 81 senators, five House members and five congressional delegates who have made at least 10 nominations in the last 25 years. Of that group, 49 members failed to nominate a single Black student for the academies, and 31 have not nominated a single Hispanic one.

“Black Americans are about 14 percent of the U.S. population and 17 percent of the active-duty enlisted corps, but only 8 percent of the officer corps. As a result, racially diverse enlisted service members often lack mentorship from higher-ranked role models with similar experiences and backgrounds.”

Recent nominations from other sources — including presidential recommendations and ROTC pipelines — have included more minorities than the congressional poll. For the class of 2024, minority students make up 30 percent of the Air Force Academy’s enrollment, 37 percent of West Point’s enrollment, and 40 percent of the Naval Academy’s enrollment. [Read More](#)

Deep-rooted racism, discrimination permeate US military

In interviews with The Associated Press, current and former enlistees and officers in nearly every branch of the armed services described a deep-rooted culture of racism and discrimination that stubbornly festers, despite repeated efforts to eradicate it.

The AP found that the military's judicial system has no explicit category for hate crimes, making it difficult to quantify crimes motivated by prejudice.

The Defense Department also has no way to track the number of troops ousted for extremist views, despite its repeated pledges to root them out. More than 20 people linked to the Jan. 6 siege of the U.S. Capitol were found to have military ties.

The AP also found that the Uniform Code of Military Justice does not adequately address discriminatory incidents and that rank-and-file people of color commonly face courts-martial panels made up of all-white service members, which some experts argue can lead to harsher outcomes.

And racial discrimination doesn't exist just within the military rank-and-file. Every year, civilians working in the financial, technical and support sectors of the Army, Air Force and Navy file hundreds of complaints alleging race and skin color discrimination, according to an AP analysis of U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission data. In the fiscal year 2020 alone, the three services received 900 civilian complaints of racial discrimination and over 350 complaints of discrimination by skin color. [Read More](#)

NCAA leader nominated for VA deputy secretary post



President Joe Biden has tapped the second-ranking official at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to serve as the second-highest official at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Donald Remy, an Army veteran with long ties to

both Biden and former President Barack Obama, was nominated April 23 as VA's deputy secretary.

If confirmed, he will be only the second Black veteran to serve in that leadership role. VA Secretary Denis McDonough in recent weeks has promised that his leadership team will underscore the president's "seriousness about diversity and inclusion" at the department.

Remy is a graduate of Louisiana State University and Howard University School of Law, and spent four years in the Army. During his time in uniform, he served as assistant to the Army General Counsel, handling a host of legal and policy issues. He later worked as deputy assistant attorney general at the Justice Department.

Remy worked for the Federal National Mortgage Association (better known as Fannie Mae) for six years in the early 2000s, before the corporation was taken over by the government following the 2007 recession and mortgage crisis.

In 2009, Remy was selected by Obama to serve as general counsel for the Army, but was forced to withdraw his nomination after failing to include his Fannie Mae experience on official government forms.

Earlier, officials named retired Maj. Gen. Matthew Quinn as the pick to take over as VA's Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

A confirmation hearing for Remy and Quinn is expected later this spring. [Read More](#)

REOPENING - The National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, VA will reopen to the public on June 14th - The 246th birthday of the U. S. Army.



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