

DEOMI News Highlights

DEOMI News Highlights is a weekly compilation of published items and commentary with focus on equal opportunity, equal employment opportunity, diversity, culture, and human relations issues. The DEOMI News Highlights is 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.

More Army Guard, Reserve soldiers committing suicide

Army officials ‘stunned’ by rate of deaths [Greg Zoroya, *USA Today*, January 20, 2011]

- An increase in suicides among National Guard soldiers largely in states across the Midwest...is responsible for 24% increase in Army suicides last year
- Soldiers, both active duty and on inactive status, died by suicide at the rate of 25 per month in 2010
- Army leaders said that more must be done to monitor and keep tabs on troops
- Gen. Peter Chiarelli, the Army’s chief of staff said we recognize we must be even more aggressive

[More Army Guard, Reserve soldiers committing suicide](#)

Military’s Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Repeal Plan: A Guide for Effective Cultural Change

[Blog: *The Ethical Workplace – Legal Issues, Work Force Management*, January 5, 2011]

- If you’re looking for a blueprint for changing your organization’s culture...spend a few hours reading the Department of Defense’s 87-page support plan for repealing the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy
- Leaders in any business can use the military’s support plan as a model for implementing virtually any cultural change in their organizations—provided they back their plans with the strong will and leadership to make their initiatives successful
- Key points: preparation is critical; value-based messages are tied to organizational success and guiding principles; leadership roles are clearly defined; results are the focus, not just procedures and process; changing behaviors—not attitudes—is the objective; conceptual resistance and operational challenges are anticipated and addressed; leaders are held accountable for results at all levels; and, the plan is integrated with ongoing commitments

[Military’s Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Repeal Plan: A Guide for Effective Cultural Change](#)

Commission to recommend allowing women in combat units [Leo Shane III, *Stars and Stripes*, January 13, 2011]

- The Military Leadership Diversity Commission appears poised to recommend allowing female troops to serve in combat units without any restrictions
- In the draft report, commission members call for a phased approach to open additional career fields with ground combat units to qualified women
- The final report is due to the lawmakers this spring

[Commission to recommend allowing women in combat units](#)

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Culture

<http://workforce.com/wpmu/ethical/category/legal-issues/>

Military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Plan: A Guide for Effective Cultural Change

**Blog: The Ethical Workplace - Legal issues
Workforce Management, 5 January 2011**

If you're looking for a solid blueprint for changing your organization's culture, you could spend a year or more studying all the books and articles on the subject—or just a few hours reading the [U.S. Defense Department's 87-page support plan](#) for repealing the [Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy](#), which banned gays from serving openly in the U.S. military.

President Barack Obama signed the Don't Ask, Don't Tell [repeal legislation](#) into law Dec. 22, [prohibiting discrimination and harassment](#) of gays and lesbians in all branches of the U.S. military. However, it is the little-noticed support plan—released as a supplement to the Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a [Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"](#) will determine how successfully the cultural and policy changes will be implemented throughout the U.S. Armed Forces.

In perhaps the first crucial test of how it handles sexually offensive and homophobic material since the Don't Ask, Don't Tell repeal, the U.S. Navy [removed Capt. Owen Honors from his command](#) after the release of raunchy videos full of sexual innuendo and anti-gay remarks created a public firestorm. Honors may not have violated the law by producing, broadcasting and acting in sexually explicit and demeaning videos shown to 6,000 sailors under his command, but his actions conflicted with current command standards of professionalism and respect.

Regardless of whether you support, oppose or hold a neutral position on the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, leaders in any business can use the military's support plan as a model for implementing virtually any cultural change in their organizations—provided they back their plans with the strong will and leadership to make their initiatives successful.

To be effective, the support plan must reverse entrenched practices that prevented homosexuals from serving openly in the military, while countering deeply held objections, attitudes and resistance to the policy change stemming from personal, religious and cultural beliefs.

Ultimately, the new policy will completely change how gay people will be treated during their military service and interactions with others. This change will occur not only in a large, geographically dispersed workplace, but also on the battlefield where team members must work cohesively to survive day to day.

While this short document is better read than summarized, here are key points that can be applied in any organization seeking to change its culture and long-standing workplace practices:

- **Preparation is critical.** Before Congress passed the Don't Ask, Don't Tell repeal legislation, the [Defense Department polled more than 400,000 members of the armed forces](#) to gather information about experiences individuals had with gays who have served in the military and identified personal fears that many had about what the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell would mean in their daily service lives. The study realistically considered how repeal would affect military effectiveness, anticipated issues that would have to be addressed and set the stage for a continual process of cultural change embedded into military operations. The result is not a short-term training plan but a long-term vision of how to change military culture.

<http://workforce.com/wpmu/ethical/category/legal-issues/>

- **Value-based messages are tied to organizational success and guiding principles.** The initiative's effectiveness is linked to leadership, professionalism and respect, key values of the military. The Don't Ask, Don't Tell repeal plan, integrates the process into the military's continuing commitment at all levels to improve military operations and effectiveness.

- **Leadership roles are clearly defined.** The initiative starts with senior-level commitment and defines unique as well as shared responsibilities for leaders and everyone in the military. By making Don't Ask, Don't Tell's repeal the responsibility of all leaders, not just those in equal employment opportunities, diversity or personnel roles, the military is ensuring that it will be regarded as a professional imperative, not an initiative to be handed off to staff for window dressing.

- **Results are the focus, not just procedures and process.** The Defense Department clearly defines changing behaviors as the ultimate measure of success, not setting up processes and delivering training. Many organizational initiatives fail because they focus on systems and steps that can be rapidly checked off and documented, rather than daily conduct, actions and responsibilities. The recommendations get into such questions about whether there should be separate facilities for lodging and showering for gay people. The answer is no, eliminating the ambiguity that can be a major barrier to daily behavioral change.

- **Changing behaviors—not attitudes—is the objective.** The initiative addresses behavior and minces no words in saying it is not trying to change attitudes. It's an extension of core military principles that service members may personally disagree with a mission but their responsibility is to achieve mission objectives.

- **Conceptual resistance and operational challenges are anticipated and addressed.** Military leaders recognize that change will encounter some conceptual resistance. The plan anticipates potential issues and gives leaders a variety of tools to address such opposition—from linking the policy change to any mission assignment or order that must be followed regardless of personal agreement, to explaining how standards of behavior are to be uniformly enforced. The fact that everyone shares a responsibility for effective implementation is important but is often overlooked in cultural change initiatives. Moreover, the support plan avoids jargon and unending processes, which can result in confusion and ineffectiveness.

- **Leaders are held accountable for results at all levels.** Leaders are responsible for the behavioral changes and effective implementation of the initiative—as with any other mission assignment.

- **The plan is integrated with ongoing commitments.** The overall vision of this initiative is that everyone—regardless of race, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity or sexual orientation—should be treated professionally.

In short, this no-nonsense, results-oriented implementation plan focuses on achieving strategic and tactical objectives, much like any other military action plan. Leaders who want to change their organizations' cultures—from ensuring ethical behavior to creating an inclusive workplace and welcoming concerns to creating a positive workplace environment—should look to the Defense Department's Don't Ask, Don't Tell support plan as a blueprint for their own initiatives.

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Discrimination

<http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0710/072610e1.htm>

Hispanics, white women remain underrepresented in federal offices

By Elizabeth Newell enewell@govexec.com

Government Executive, July 26, 2010

A number of demographic groups remain underrepresented in the federal workforce, but agencies are making slight progress in hiring individuals with targeted disabilities, an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [report](#) released on Monday shows.

According to the report, EEOC has documented subtle changes in the composition of the federal workforce during the last decade. Participation of women, Hispanics or Latinos, and Asians increased slightly between fiscal 1999 and fiscal 2009.

But despite the longer-term trend, the report shows the participation rate for women was slightly down in fiscal 2009 compared to fiscal 2008, falling from 44.13 percent to 44.06 percent. As of 2009, just under 8 percent of federal workers were Hispanic or Latino, 66 percent were white, 18 percent were black or African-American, 6 percent were Asian, 2 percent were American Indian or Alaska native, 0.3 percent were Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 0.7 percent were two or more races.

These numbers show women, Hispanics or Latinos, people of two or more races and white women remain underrepresented in the federal government compared to their overall representation in the national civilian labor force according to data from the 2000 census, the report stated.

EEOC's statistics also indicated some differences in pay and typical seniority across groups. The average grade for permanent and temporary General Schedule employees in fiscal 2009 was 9.9 (\$51,869 in annual pay), according to EEOC. Hispanic or Latino employees, black or African-American employees, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander employees, American Indian or Alaska native employees and employees of two or more races all had average grades lower than the governmentwide average.

The average General Schedule grade for women remained at 9.3 (\$43,679 annually) in fiscal 2009, more than one grade below the average grade level for men of 10.4 (\$49,604 in yearly salary).

The report showed progress in one area. The percentage of federal employees with targeted disabilities held steady in fiscal 2009, halting a 13-year decline. Targeted disabilities include deafness, blindness, missing extremities, partial or complete paralysis, convulsive disorders, mental retardation, mental illness, and distortion of the limb and/or spine. Despite the modest net gain of 236 employees in fiscal 2009 from fiscal 2008, people with targeted disabilities still represented less than 1 percent of the total federal workforce.

Employees with targeted disabilities also had an average General Schedule grade of 8.5 (\$42,019 in annual pay), nearly 1.5 grades below the governmentwide average.

"As the largest employer in the nation, the federal government should lead the way in creating a diverse and just workplace," EEOC Chairwoman Jacqueline A. Berrien said. "Government agencies need to continue to recruit and promote employees who represent the tapestry of America."

EEOC also reported on the number of complaints filed. Federal employees and applicants filed 16,947 complaints alleging employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability and reprisal, up 1.2 percent from fiscal 2008, but down almost 6 percent from fiscal 2005.

<http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0710/072610e1.htm>

Unlike the private sector, federal agencies are responsible for processing and investigating charges of discrimination filed against them. The average processing time for conducting investigations rose from 180 days in fiscal 2008 to 186 days in fiscal 2009. The average processing time for closing complaints also increased, from 336 days in fiscal 2008 to 344 in fiscal 2009.

"[Federal agencies] must also improve the efficiency of the complaint process so that justice delayed is not justice denied," Berrien said.

Of the 6,905 cases closed on the merits in fiscal 2009, 2.98 percent resulted in findings of unlawful discrimination. In addition, the parties entered into settlements in 3,394 complaints, or 21 percent of the total complaint closures.

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/dayton-news/workplace-equality-for-blacks-remains-elusive-1056416.html>

Workplace equality for blacks remains elusive

College-educated blacks are almost twice as likely to be jobless, data show.

By Randy Tucker, Staff Writer

Columbus Dispatch, January 17, 2011

DAYTON — An often overlooked aspect of Martin Luther King Jr.'s fight for racial equality was his push for jobs for African-Americans.

In fact, the King-led march on Washington in 1963 was officially titled the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.”

At the time, Jim Crow laws in the South, inadequate schools in black neighborhoods across the country and widespread workplace discrimination left most blacks without the necessary education and job skills to climb the economic ladder.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 helped open the doors to colleges and universities that previously were off-limits to blacks. But it's been an uphill battle for many blacks to turn that access into jobs — the key to political, economic, and personal independence.

College-educated blacks are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as their white counterparts, according to a recent report from the Washington, D.C.-based Economic Policy Institute. The unemployment rate for whites with bachelor's degrees was 5.5 percent, while the rate for blacks was 9.9 percent.

Derrick Foward, president of the Dayton unit of the NAACP, attributed at least some of the disparity to continued workplace bias. But the bias that hamstring blacks today is far less overt and harder to prove than the outright discrimination that was common in America 40 years ago, he said.

“A lot of employers say they have diversity and inclusion programs, but that doesn't mean the good ol' boy network doesn't exist,” Foward said. “Even if you have your degree, sometimes you're not afforded the opportunity that other people are afforded because you're not in that network.”

Andrew Grant-Thomas, deputy director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University, said he “strongly suspects” that discrimination has played a role in current employments trends.

“The notion that a college degree protects you from racial discrimination is clearly not the case,” he said. “We have so much evidence of continuing discrimination against African-Americans in every arena you could think of.”

As an example, he referred to a 2003 study in which two professors from the University of Chicago and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) sent fake resumes to employers using the names of black and white job candidates to test whether they might discriminate against job applicants with “black-sounding” names.

The resumes with the names of white applicants were 50 percent more likely to be contacted for job interviews than those with black names, the research found.

Concrete evidence of widespread workplace bias remains elusive, however. And, in any case, it's only part of the problem, Grant-Thomas said.

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/dayton-news/workplace-equality-for-blacks-remains-elusive-1056416.html>

“If you’re really trying to explain the employment discrepancies among very educated folks, you have to first look at the human capital all college educated people have,” he said. “African-Americans lag behind whites and Asians in terms of how educated they are, with many only having college degrees as opposed to advanced degrees. And you also have to look at work experience, and the kinds of degrees they have.”

Algernon Austin, a researcher with the Economic Policy Institute, said the reasons for the high rate of black unemployment are open to debate.

But no matter what the reasons are, employment figures compiled by the think tank show a disturbing trend: Unemployment for African-Americans is projected to reach a 25-year high this year, with the national rate climbing to 17.2 percent and the rates in five states, including Ohio, exceeding 20 percent.

“I can’t tell you why the unemployment rate is so high for African-Americans, but the implications are devastating,” Austin said.

Diversity

<http://www.stripes.com/news/commission-to-recommend-allowing-women-in-combat-units-1.131807>

Commission to recommend allowing women in combat units

By Leo Shane III

Stars and Stripes, 13 January 2011

WASHINGTON — A military advisory panel appears poised to recommend allowing female troops to serve in combat units without any restrictions, calling the current prohibition an out-of-date idea that unnecessarily discriminates against women.

If approved by military officials, the move could open front-line posts to military women for the first time. Until now, either U.S. law or Pentagon policy has prohibited female troops from serving in any unit whose primary mission is direct ground combat, although they may serve in combat support roles.

The Military Leadership Diversity Commission, established by Congress two years ago, issued the recommendation as part of a draft report on diversity in the services. The final report is due to lawmakers this spring, and commission members are meeting this week in Virginia to debate final changes.

In the draft, commission members call for a phased approach to open additional career fields with ground combat units to qualified women, saying the current policy limits the ability of commanders to pick the most capable person for their missions.

“To date, there has been little evidence that the integration of women into previously closed units or occupations has had a negative impact on important mission-related performance factors, like unit cohesion,” the draft states.

“Furthermore, a study by the Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services actually found that a majority of focus group participants felt that women serving in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan have had a positive impact on mission accomplishment.”

The draft report notes that the restriction on combat posts prohibits women from serving in about 10 percent of Army and Marine Corps occupations, a “structural barrier” which could hurt their chances of promotion or advancement.

Proponents of women in combat roles have argued that the distinction is obsolete in the new combat environments of Iraq and Afghanistan, where support units have routinely found themselves involved in roadside bomb attacks and insurgent ambushes.

Since 2001, 114 female U.S. servicemembers have been killed in fighting in Iraq and 23 have been killed in fighting in Afghanistan.

But Elaine Donnelly, president of the conservative Center for Military Readiness, said the commission’s recommendation confuses troops in harm’s way with those assigned to front-line, offensive combat missions. Performing heroically in an ambush is not the same as grueling front-line combat.

“Physical differences between men and women do matter,” she said. “If the purpose of the change is to help with career advancement and diversity, it’s fine. But if the purpose is to help better defend the country, then it’s divorced from reality.”

Donnelly said barring women from some military jobs does not diminish their contributions, but instead recognizes that only a small percentage of female troops can meet the strength and endurance requirements mandated in “brutal and uncivilized” front-line fighting.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/commission-to-recommend-allowing-women-in-combat-units-1.131807>

But Genevieve Chase, founder of American Women Veterans, said the restrictions are largely an issue of semantics now. Commanders have gotten around the rules by “attaching” female troops to combat units when needed, allowing them to work in combat roles without having them assigned to combat units.

“But that becomes a records issue, what counts for promotion and experience,” she said. “We’re asking for women to be recognized and acknowledged for that work.”

Chase, an Army reservist who served in Afghanistan, said standards for female combat troops need to be the same as those for men, but also noted that brute strength is not the only qualification. Language skills, leadership experience, and other combat-related specialties can be just as vital to mission success.

The commission, which includes 24 senior retired and active-duty servicemembers, recommended that women already in combat-related roles should be open for assignment to combat units immediately, and the services should look for ways in coming months to open additional combat posts to women.

The report also notes that the recommendation was not unanimous, with several members opposed to opening the front-line posts to women.

Earlier this month, Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey said he expected the commission’s report, along with other ongoing military reviews, would reopen the debate into women’s roles in the military.

Removing the combat restrictions would not require approval from Congress, but defense officials are required to notify lawmakers of any such change at least 30 days before it is put in place.

Human Relations

Department Begins Project for Vietnam War Veterans

By Terri Moon Cronk

American Forces Press Service, 19 January 2011

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19, 2011 – More than three decades after the war’s end, the Defense Department has begun a project to pay tribute to the nation’s Vietnam War veterans.

The 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration was spawned from the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act.

“It was a very important time period for veterans, because most Vietnam veterans as a whole never received the homecoming that our troops receive now,” said Army Lt. Col. Hunter Holliday, public affairs officer for the commemoration.

At the center of the project is a website, “50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration,” at <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com>, which will serve as a clearinghouse for information on the war once it is fully functional, a milestone expected this spring.

Information gleaned from the website is expected to be used for myriad purposes, such as to chronicle facts, provide educational materials, and offer resources for a commemorative partners program, Holliday said.

The partners program will comprise guidance and materials for agencies, veterans groups, local government and nongovernment organizations to conduct their own Vietnam War commemoration activities.

The website is expected to play a major role in the campaign, said Jeff Wilson, who handles marketing for the project, noting it will be highly interactive and will include content on historical events, a timeline, photos, documents, video and audio. A calendar will list major Defense-sponsored events.

The website is slated to offer a prelude of activities and ceremonies to:

- Honor Vietnam War veterans and their families -- including prisoners of war and those listed as missing in action -- for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States.
- Highlight Armed Forces service during the Vietnam War, in addition to contributions made by government and private organizations.
- Pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by U.S. citizens.
- Highlight the advances in technology, science and medicine in military research made during the war.
- Recognize contributions and sacrifices made by U.S. allies during the war.

“Hopefully [the commemoration] will be a healing process for the veterans who were never recognized properly when they came home,” Holliday said, noting the volatile political landscape that surrounded the war.

http://lulac.org/news/pr/LULAC_Statement_on_the_Shooting_of_Congresswoman_Gabrielle_Giffords_in_Tucson/

LULAC Statement on the Shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson

Contact: Lizette Olmos, (202) 833-6130

League of United Latin American Citizens, January 12, 2011

Tucson, Arizona — LULAC National President Margaret Moran expressed sorrow about the appalling shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords where 20 people were struck down, six fatally in Tucson, Arizona. Congresswoman Giffords is a LULAC member of council 1088 since 2006 and has received the presidential medal from LULAC for her work in the community.

“Our hearts and prayers are with Congresswoman Giffords and the victims of the horrific shooting in Tucson, Arizona,” stated Ms. Moran. “Congresswoman Giffords has been a tremendous leader for her district and a strong supporter of LULAC programs in the Tucson area. We hope and pray for her recovery and for those who were injured by the gunman.”

Tucson Vice Mayor, Former LULAC National Vice President for the Farwest and Former LULAC National Vice President for the Elderly, Richard Fimbres, who resides in Tucson said the following, “The entire LULAC community in Tucson is deeply saddened by this terrible shooting in our city. Gabby and her staff have been especially supportive of the Latino community in Tucson and we are stunned by this outrageous violence against a member of Congress and her staff. We are praying for her and all those who have been injured and we mourn the loss of those who have perished today.”

Among those who died are a 9 year old child and Judge John Roll who presided over cases involving vigilante ranchers along our border with Mexico. Congresswoman Giffords narrowly won reelection to Congress last November in a heated campaign in which immigration and health care were among the most contentious issues.

President Barack Obama and First Lady traveled to Tucson today. The president spoke at the University of Arizona, at an event called "Together We Thrive: Tucson and America." President Barack Obama visited Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords at the hospital earlier today and said she opened her eyes for the first time. The President mourned the loss of the people who had been killed and was grateful for the 13 Americans who survived the shooting and recognized Daniel Hernandez for being a hero. Intern Daniel Hernandez will be recognized later this month by LULAC at the Legislative Awards Gala for his courage. Attorney General Eric Holder and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano were also present.

"Did we tell a spouse how desperately we love them, not just once in awhile but every single day," said President Barack Obama in his speech. "Do we show compassion to the people in our lives. Align values to our actions. For those that were killed, they are a part of our family. We may have not known them personally but we see ourselves in them. We are all Americans."

LULAC members have held vigils nationwide. LULAC National Vice President for the Southwest Sylvia Gonzales held a vigil in Houston with Congresswoman Shelia Jackson Lee earlier in the week.

The League of United Latin American Citizens, the largest and oldest Hispanic membership organization in the country, advances the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of Hispanic Americans through community-based programs operating through 880 LULAC councils nationwide.

Monthly Employment Report:

What You Need to Know About the State of Urban Jobs!

National Urban League Highlights of the December 2010 Employment Report:

- The economy gained a net 103,000 jobs in December while private employment increased by 113,000. Over the past year, the economy has added 1.1 million jobs, roughly 94,000 jobs per month. The number of unemployed people in December fell to 14.5 million, while the labor force participation rate fell to 64.3%, representing 260,000 people who have stopped looking for work.
- The unemployment rate fell to 9.4% in December after November's rise to 9.8%. All major worker groups saw some modest declines in their rates of unemployment -- black unemployment rate was 15.8% (from 16%); unemployment rate for black men was 16.5% (from 16.7%); for black women 13.2% (from 13.1%); whites 8.5% (from 8.9%); and Latinos 13.0% (from 13.2%). Rates of teen unemployment were 22.5% for whites (from 20.9%), 44.2% for African-Americans (from 46.3%) and 32.2% for Latinos (from 30%). The rate of underemployment (including the unemployed, marginally attached and those working part-time for economic reasons) was 16.7%.
- The ranks of long-term unemployed (jobless for 27 weeks or more) increased from November to December – now at 6.3 million or 44.3% of all unemployed (from 42.2%)
- Eighty percent of the job growth over the month of December came from only two industries -- health care (+35,700), and Leisure and hospitality (+47,000). Retail trade added 12,000 jobs (mostly through auto dealers) and temporary help services continued to trend up (+16,000), but at a slower pace than previous months. Local government (-20,000) and construction (-16,000) sectors experienced the most, though still modest, losses.

We Twisted King's Dream, So We Live With His Nightmare

by **Tim Wise**

ColorLines, January 17 2011

It's been a rough year for Martin Luther King, Jr., and for his legacy

First, as has become an annual ritual, politicians went to church or some other civic gathering for last year's King Day celebration, even as they continued to support public policies that he found abhorrent. Whether continuing to prosecute a seemingly endless and most definitely murderous war, or by supporting cuts to vital social programs, there is no shortage of hypocrisy when it comes to proclaiming fealty to King's vision in words, while besmirching it in deeds, all at once.

Then of course came the venal cooptation of King's crowning public moment—the 1963 March on Washington—by Glenn Beck, this past August. Insisting that it was time to “reclaim the civil rights movement,” because conservatives were the ones who “did it in the first place”—an inversion of history so grotesque as to confound the imagination—Beck inspired a gathering of tens of thousands of disaffected (mostly white) reactionaries, likely none of whom had been involved with the civil rights movement, but who now would be encouraged to see themselves as the inheritors of King's “dream.” This, even as they clamored for more tax cuts for wealthy folks and the repeal of health care reform, all at the behest of a guy who once said he would like to kill Rep. Charlie Rangel with a shovel. I will leave it to others far more creative than myself to determine how one might square any of that with the teachings or beliefs of Dr. King. Then again, given the recent statement by a Defense Department spokesperson who asserted that King would have supported the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, anything is possible.

And this is especially true in a nation that has so thoroughly sanitized and compartmentalized King's message, and King himself, within the pantheon of national heroes. We have turned King into a milquetoast moderate whose agenda went little beyond the ability to sit next to white people on a bus. We've stripped away from the public remembrance of this man his calls for income redistribution, his insistence that the United States has become the “greatest purveyor of violence in the world today,” and his proclamation that poverty, racism and militarism are the “triple evils” that America's rulers have not the courage to confront.

When conservatives can effectively twist King's singular line about judging people on the “content of their character” rather than the color of their skin into a reason to oppose affirmative action, even though he openly supported such efforts in his writings and interviews in 1961, 1963, 1965 and again in 1967, it ought not surprise us that folks are a bit confused about who King was, and about the principles for which he stood.

The way in which we have forgotten or been misled about King's legacy is never more apparent than when asking children what they know about his message. Sadly, when I have done so, the most typical answer given is that King stood for not “hitting people,” or “not hitting back if they hit you first,” or that his message would be, were he alive today, “don't join a gang.” While all these things are true I suppose, they rather miss the point.

After all, King's commitment to non-violence had a purpose larger than non-violence itself. Non-violence was, for King and the movement, a means to a larger end of social, political and economic justice. Non-violence was a tactic meant to topple racism and economic exploitation, and lead the world away from cataclysmic warfare. That so many young people seem not to get that part, because teachers are apparently loathe to give it to them, renders King's non-violent message no more particularly important than the banal parental reminder that we should “use our words” to

http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/01/tim_wise_kings_legacy_took_a_beating_in_2010.html

resolve conflicts, rather than our fists. Thanks, but if that message were all it took to get a national holiday named for you, my mother would have had her own years ago.

So we compartmentalize the non-violence message, much as we compartmentalize books about King and the movement in that section of the bookstore established for African-American history; much as we have compartmentalized those streets named for the man, locating them only in the blackest and often poorest parts of town.

Were this tendency to render King divisible on multiple levels—abstracting non-violence from justice, colorblindness from racial equity, and public service from radical social transformation—merely an academic matter, it would hardly merit our concern. But its impact is greater than that. Our only hope as a society is to see the connections between the issues King was addressing and our current predicament, to see that what affects part of the whole affects the greater body, to understand that racism and racial inequity must be of concern to us all, because they pose risks to us all.

For instance, were it not for the indifference to black and brown suffering that animated much of the early non-response to the subprime mortgage crisis (which manifested initially in the mid '90s, but received little attention and even less government action), perhaps steps would have been taken to prevent what has become, now, a full-blown housing collapse. But rather than seeing the exploitation of low income folks of color as a national emergency, most politicians and media ignored it, or blamed the victims of predatory lending for being too stupid to read the fine print on their loan documents. As such, the lenders branched out, unregulated for the most part, into whiter and middle-class communities, where they took advantage of folks there, too. Now, millions of middle class white folks find themselves on the verge of economic catastrophe, precisely because the suffering of the other was ignored for so long, and eventually, as suffering is wont to do, metastasized.

Likewise, if double-digit unemployment had been viewed as the emergency it is, when only people of color were experiencing it (as they typically have been, in good times or bad, year after year throughout this century), perhaps lawmakers might have seen fit to address the problem. But it wasn't, and so they didn't. And now whites are experiencing double-digit joblessness as well, for the first time in over three generations.

And if we had not long ago racialized the “have-nots” as undeserving people of color, thereby allowing racial bias to block government actions that might have been taken on their behalf—like universal health care or massive investment in job creation—perhaps we would not today have tens of millions of people, including millions of white folks, lacking access to medical treatment or job security. But we did, and so we do. And now we can witness white folks running around, speaking against health care reforms from which they would personally gain, all because of a fear that some of the benefits might go to “undeserving” immigrants of color, or lazy folks (typically perceived as black and brown) who don't want to pay for their own care.

In short, by not understanding the fundamental truth of King's message that an injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, we have created a society, 43 years since his death, where injustice and suffering are rampant. And one in which the dreams of the civil rights movement appear the fantastical products of some Ambien-induced haze. Only by putting away, forever, the safe and sanitized version of this man and his compatriots, might we ever awaken from the stupor and become worthy of that which we celebrate this week.

Tim Wise is the author of five books on racism, including his latest, *Colorblind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equity* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2010).

<http://www.stripes.com/blogs/stripes-central/stripes-central-1.8040/vets-group-wants-a-fifth-star-for-petraeus-1.131765>

Vets group wants a fifth star for Petraeus

By Leo Shane III, Stripes Central
Strars and Strips, 13 January 2011

WASHINGTON – In an editorial in the [Wall Street Journal](#) this morning (subscription only), the conservative lobbying group Vets for Freedom is looking to restart the discussion into making Gen. David Petraeus the military's first five-star general in more than 60 years, to honor his "exemplary leadership" in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The U.S. war against terrorism is now the longest war in U.S. history, and Gen. Petraeus has clearly distinguished himself as a leader worthy of joining the ranks of Gens. MacArthur, Marshall and Nimitz," the piece states. "A promotion would properly honor his service – and it would also honor the troops he leads and has led. Today's soldiers have fought as valiantly as any in American history, and they deserve recognition of their leaders. Congressional approval of a fifth star would demonstrate the nation's commitment to their mission."



Only nine men have held that rank in U.S. military history (although George Washington was also posthumously given that rank as well). The last was General of the Army Omar Bradley, awarded that status and responsibility in 1950.

Since then, lawmakers haven't seriously considered elevating any other four-star candidates, although rumors bubbled about Colin Powell receiving a fifth star during the first Gulf War.

But Vets for Freedom, like some [letters writers to Stars and Stripes](#), argue that the successful surge strategy in Iraq and Petraeus' critical role in Afghanistan warrant serious consideration.

"David Petraeus is also a soldier-statesmen who works with foreign diplomats and generals in hotspots across the globe," they wrote. "The prestige that would come with a fifth star would also likely help the U.S. in its negotiations with neighboring states—and show the enemies of freedom that we are fully committed to the war against terrorism."

The group has also launched a [Facebook page](#) titled "Let's Get General Petraeus his 5th Star" to help with the effort.

Women In Aviation Announce Pioneer Hall Of Fame Inductees For 2011

By Eddy Metcalf

Aviation Online Magazine, January 14, 2011

Women in Aviation, International has announced the new members of its Pioneer Hall of Fame. These women will be inducted into the Pioneer Hall of Fame during WAI's 22nd Annual International Conference which will be held on February 24-26, 2011, at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nevada. The ceremony will take place at the closing banquet on Saturday, February 26, 2011.



"For our members, these Pioneers represent both their history and inspiration for their own lives," says WAI President Dr. Peggy Chabrian. "To get an opportunity to meet and be photographed with these living legends is the highlight of the Conference for many." The Pioneer Hall of Fame Inductees for 2011 are:

Dr. Peggy Chabrian is President and Founder of Women in Aviation, International. She has grown the organization from its first conference attended by 150 people in 1990 to an organization representing thousands of women in all aspects of aviation today. She is a multi-thousand hour commercial pilot as well as a rotary-rated pilot and flight instructor who has been flying for more than 20 years.

Prior to her founding Women in Aviation, International, she held several top positions in aviation education including Academic Dean and Associate Vice President of Parks College; Dean of Academic Support for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Prescott, Arizona campus; Director of the Center of Excellence for Aviation/Space Education at ERAU's Daytona Beach campus; and Department Chair of the aviation department at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia.

L. Tammy Duckworth serves as the Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. As Assistant Secretary, Duckworth advises the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on matters relating to media and public affairs. Duckworth served as the Director of Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs from 2006-2008. A Major in the Illinois Army National Guard, Duckworth served in Iraq as an Assistant Operations Officer and also flew combat missions as a Black Hawk helicopter pilot.

During a mission north of Baghdad in 2004, a rocket-propelled grenade struck the helicopter she was co-piloting. As a result of the attack, Duckworth lost both of her legs and partial use of one arm. She received many decorations for her actions, including the Purple Heart, the Air Medal, and the Combat Action Badge. In 2008 and 2009, she completed the Chicago Marathon, fulfilling a promise made at Walter Reed. She has also resumed flying as a civilian pilot.

Maj. Gen. Susan J. Helms is Director of Plans and Policy, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb. She is directly responsible to the USSTRATCOM Commander for the development and implementation of national security policy and guidance and responsible for the development of the nation's strategic war plan, strategic support plans for combatant commanders

http://avstop.com/news_january_2011/women_in_aviation_announce_pioneer_hall_of_fame_inductees_for_2011.htm

and contingency planning for the global strike mission. She has served as an F-15 and F-16 weapons separation engineer and a flight test engineer.

Selected by NASA in January 1990, General Helms became an astronaut in July 1991. On Jan. 13, 1993, then an Air Force major and a member of the space shuttle Endeavour crew, she became the first U.S. military woman in space. She flew on STS-54 (1993), STS-64 (1994), STS-78 (1996) and STS-101 (2000), and served aboard the International Space Station as a member of the Expedition-2 crew (2001). A veteran of five space flights, General Helms has logged 211 days in space, including a spacewalk of eight hours and 56 minutes, a world record.

Hazel Ying Lee took her first flight in 1932, at the age of 19, becoming one of the first Chinese-American women to earn a pilot's license. Following the Japanese attack on China, Lee journeyed to China and volunteered to serve in the Chinese Air Force. Rejected because she was a woman, she settled in Canton and took a job in commercial aviation. Fleeing before the Japanese advance to China, Lee returned to the United States in 1938.

Responding to the call of Jacqueline Cochran, Lee joined the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) in 1943. In 1944, she became part of Class 44-18 Flight B, flying P-63s, P-51s (her favorite) and P-39s. She was killed in a P-63 accident on November 25, 1944. Lee was the first Chinese-American woman to fly for the United States military and the first Chinese-American woman to die in service to her country.

Mary Ann Martin Wyall was accepted in the WASP in May 1944 in class 44-W-10 and was part of the last graduating class in December 1944. As a WASP, she flew AT-6s, BF-13s and PT-17s. Post-war, she continued in aviation as a ferry pilot, flight instructor and owner of an aircraft charter business. Wyall has been instrumental in the preservation of WASP history. For 45 years, she personally maintained the WASP history in scrapbooks in her home and sought out the personal stories and memorabilia of other WASP. Wyall served as the unofficial WASP Historian until the WASP documents and artifacts were made part of the Special Collections Department of Texas Woman's University.

The Women in Aviation, International Pioneer Hall of Fame was established in 1992 to honor women who have made significant contributions as record setters, pioneers, or innovators. Special consideration is given to individuals or groups who have helped other women be successful in aviation or opened doors of opportunity for other women. Each year, the organization solicits nominations from throughout the aviation industry for the WAI Pioneer Hall of Fame.

With the theme "Inspire - Enthuse - Innovate," the WAI Conference will include seminars, workshops, networking events, speakers, and a commercial exhibit area. The Conference concludes on Saturday evening, February 26 with WAI's annual banquet where many scholarships are awarded and the 2011 group of Pioneers is inducted into WAI's Aviation Pioneer Hall of Fame.

Secure on line registration is available, and the discounted WAI Conference rate is available at Grand Sierra Resort through January 15, 2011. Discounted registration is available for military personnel and full-time students.

Women in Aviation, International is a nonprofit 501(C)(3) organization dedicated to providing networking, mentoring and scholarship opportunities for women and men who are striving for challenging and fulfilling careers in the aviation and aerospace industries.

Miscellaneous

Face of Defense: Sailors Handle Variety of Tasks

By Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Nathanael Miller, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command
American Forces Press Service, 19 January 2011

ARABIAN GULF, Jan. 19, 2011 – Armed with scissors, clippers, keys to the ship's store and laundry detergent, the sailors who wear the crossed quill and key of the ship's serviceman, or SH, rating badge provide a multitude of services to the crew of amphibious transport dock USS Ponce.

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Harlan Jones, clad in a black barber's smock and awaiting his next customer, said the ship's serviceman rating brings a variety of services to Ponce.

"Ship's servicemen provide services to the crew, generally anything other than what the culinary specialists provide and general parts the logistical specialists provide," he explained. Culinary specialists provide food service for the crew, while logistical specialists are responsible for all supply matters, but a gap still exists, Jones added, and the ship's serviceman rating fills that gap.



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Harlan Jones, a ship's serviceman, trims Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Smith's hair in the barber shop aboard amphibious transport dock USS Ponce in the Arabian Gulf, Dec. 22, 2010. USS Ponce is part of Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group, supporting maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Nathanael Miller

"We run the barber shop, ship's store, and laundry all at once," Jones said. "There's an SH in every one of them," he said.

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Chandler noted that sailors require several skill sets to be successful in handling the rating's diverse responsibilities. Security, laundry, sales, retail management and barber services are some of the skills a sailor must master to qualify, he said.

One example of the daily challenges ship's servicemen face is keeping the ship's store stocked. "You can never know exactly how much you need in the ship's store," Chandler said. "You're constantly going up there to check up on it."

Although the ship's laundry is not as labor-intensive as the ship's store or barber shop, it is just as critical to the crew's readiness. Even though Ponce has a "self service" laundry, a ship's serviceman has to man the space to ensure the machines are functioning and assist shipmates if there is a problem. Noting that clean uniforms are as much a part of daily hygiene and sanitary living conditions at sea as daily showers are, Jones said the ship's laundry affects more than morale. The crew's health can be at stake as well, he explained.

In the ship's barber shop with their clippers buzzing and scissors snipping, ship's servicemen help to keep their shipmates' hair within standards and boost morale at the same time.

"I love being able to help people out," Jones said. "There are little things about your self-esteem that start when you wake up in the morning. You look at yourself in the mirror, and if you have a messed-up haircut that takes a little bit off. Those little things start to turn into bigger things as you go along during the day."

With the broad range of duties required, the ship's servicemen stay busy. Their efforts affect readiness as well as morale. Whether it's keeping the laundry running, selling candy in the ship's store or chatting with shipmates while cutting hair, the ship's servicemen said, they provide a valuable service to the fleet.

Hood, Army suicides hit record mark

At least 22 confirmed last year in and around Fort Hood, doubling the post's total from 2009.

By Sig Christenson

San Antonio Express-News January 20, 2011

KILLEEN — Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Eugene Giger was a “tall quiet Texan” even after his wife filed for divorce while he was in Iraq, his mom says. Still, he was devastated.

“The only thing that I know is when she sued for divorce, she charged him with \$2,000-a-month child support and insisted that he pay half of the house,” said Helen Giger, 71, of Chandler, east of Dallas. “And by the time she got through charging him with various things, he had very little money left over, not even hardly enough to pay for his rent.”

Authorities found Giger, 42, of Houston dead in his apartment near Fort Hood, hanging by necktie. He was one of at least 22 GIs from the post to commit suicide in 2010.

The Fort Hood mark is a new record for the post and contributed to the Army's worst year for suicides. There was, however, a sign of hope in the grim tally. Slightly fewer active-duty soldiers died by their own hand compared with 2009. But there was bad news, too: The number of suicides in the National Guard and Army Reserve rose sharply.

The Army's vice chief of staff, Gen. Peter Chiarelli, told the San Antonio Express-News that suicides at or near Fort Hood have increased as more soldiers have returned from combat.

Fort Hood's 22 confirmed suicides, meanwhile, doubled its 2009 mark and was eight more than Fort Bragg, N.C., which had the second-largest tally.

And the Fort Hood mark could grow since some deaths haven't been resolved. Others will remain mysteries, like that of Sgt. Bradley Dale Penman, 34, of Punxsutawney, Pa. Justice of the Peace Garland Potvin of Killeen said that Penman's body, found last summer, was so decomposed no cause of death could be determined.

The Pentagon has launched mental health and suicide-prevention programs and created an Army task force in hopes of turning the tide. In 2008, the Army began a five-year study with the National Institute of Mental Health. That research effort examines risk and resilience factors associated with suicides. A new military research consortium will test and develop interventions.

So far, however, little has changed. The vast majority of the victims were men, with the bulk of the soldiers coming from lower enlisted ranks.

Eighteen of last year's 301 suicides were women, prompting Chiarelli to tell reporters on Wednesday that resiliency among females in some cases “seems to be higher” than for men. That could explain “why we have a lower suicide rate in women based on the number that we have deployed,” he said.

Time in the war zone is one factor in the deaths. Roughly two in three active-duty soldiers committing suicide have gone to war, while nearly half of all guardsmen have fought. But other issues also are in play, including depression, alcohol and drug abuse, failed or failing relationships, financial woes, and legal or disciplinary troubles.

The Army Reserve's chief, Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, said his troops often are far from their units when not on duty. Leaders now must maintain greater contact with their troops, he said.

“Dwell” time at home is another factor. Chiarelli predicted that “when we put more time between

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/military/article/Hood-Army-suicides-hit-record-mark-966320.php>

deployments, that is going to be a huge factor in helping us get at these problems.”

Giger had spent close to a quarter-century in the Army and been to Iraq three times since 2004, receiving two Bronze Star medals for valor. If he felt stress from the divorce and financial problems, he didn't let on.

“I think he probably had a lot going on that he just stuffed down inside of him,” Helen Giger said.

Chiarelli told reporters that he believes the programs instituted by the Army in recent years have saved lives, but Col. Carl Castro, director of the medicine research program that established the suicide consortium, said no one is sure of their effectiveness.

“We think they're effective,” he told the Express-News, “but we haven't done the research to demonstrate that they may in fact be effective.”

Chiarelli pointed to the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program, which offers screening tests for soldiers, family members and Army civilian workers, as one successful effort. He said research comparing soldiers who committed suicide against a control group showed that, “broadly speaking, resilient soldiers do not complete suicide.”

The Army has pocket guides on suicide awareness, and Fort Hood has started its own stress-reduction programs and a soldier “resiliency campus.”

The post's senior commander, Maj. Gen. Will Grimsley, ordered commanders to inspect soldiers' cars and on- and off-post homes after four GIs committed suicide over three days in September.

A trend of increasingly public suicides last year, one in the restroom of a Killeen sandwich shop and another at the end of a police chase near Waco, was a concern for Grimsley, who sought to identify GIs who might be suicide risks.

“I worry about the trend,” he said in October. “The violent nature of it concerns me only because the potential is that it's bad enough if a soldier chooses to kill himself by violence but the potential impact on others, that that notion of violence could spread to somebody else either by accident or by design.”

More Army Guard, Reserve soldiers committing suicide *Army officials 'stunned' by rate of deaths*

By Gregg Zoroya

USA Today January 20, 2011 Pg. 9

An increase in suicides among National Guard soldiers largely in states across the Midwest — such as Missouri and Wisconsin — is responsible for a 24% increase in Army suicides last year, the service reported Wednesday.

Missouri and Texas each reported seven suicides among their National Guard troops in 2010, Wisconsin had six, and there were five each in the National Guard units of Minnesota, Ohio, Arizona, California and North Carolina.

Soldiers, both active duty and on inactive status, died by suicide at the rate of 25 per month in 2010, Army figures show.

"All of us are stunned by it, and we wished we knew why," says Army Lt. Col. Jackie Guthrie of the Wisconsin National Guard. "It is especially hard when it's suicide, when it's someone hurting in our ranks."

USA TODAY reported in November that suicides had doubled among National Guard soldiers who were on inactive duty in a year when the Army was seeing a slight decline among active-duty soldier suicides.

The Army released final year-end statistics Wednesday. There were 301 confirmed or suspected soldier suicides in 2010, including those on active duty and reservists or National Guard troops on an inactive status, the Army reported Wednesday. This compares with 242 in 2009.

The Marine Corps reported a decline in suicides from 52 in 2009 to 46 confirmed or suspected cases in 2010.

Among active-duty Army soldiers, there were 156 potential suicides in 2010, down slightly from 162 in 2009.

Among National Guard soldiers on inactive status in 2010, there were 101 confirmed or suspected suicides, more than double the 48 deaths among Guard members on inactive duty in 2009.

Suicides among National Guard troops in Missouri and Wisconsin not only outnumbered such deaths in previous years but were also far more than combat deaths for these units during any year since 2001, says Guthrie and Maj. Tammy Spicer of the Missouri National Guard. As an example, the largest number of Missouri National Guard members killed in combat was three in 2006, less than half the seven suicides in 2010.

Members of the National Guard or Army Reserve who are on inactive duty are civilians much of the time, wearing a uniform only to drill one weekend a month and two full weeks a year.

Army leaders said Wednesday that more must be done to monitor and keep tabs on troops, and section leaders should be checking in with them more frequently.

"We recognize we must be even more aggressive," says Gen. Peter Chiarelli, the Army's vice chief of staff.

Chiarelli says programs designed to help soldiers deal better with stress, make it easier for them to seek substance-abuse treatment and obtain marriage and family counseling are helping prevent suicides among active-duty troops.

Study: Proactive counseling stems troops' mental ills

By **Gregg Zoroya**, USA TODAY

Stares and Strips, 18 January 2011

A battlefield study conducted by the Army on 20,000 soldiers during the troop surge in Iraq shows that more aggressive efforts to question and counsel GIs about their mental health reduce by nearly 80% the number who develop behavioral health illnesses during combat.

The results of the study, to be published today in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, also show that 54% fewer soldiers contemplated suicide and that the number who needed to be sent home from Iraq with mental health problems dropped by nearly 70%.

"We're excited about what this study shows," says Maj. Gen. Patricia Horoho, Army deputy surgeon general. "It is the first direct evidence that a program (of more aggressive screening and treatment) is effective in preventing adverse behavioral health outcomes."

The Army will begin using screening and treatment methods from the study within six months, Horoho says.

Battlefield doctors who authored the study tracked six brigades attached to the 3rd Infantry Division fighting in Iraq in 2007 during a surge ordered by President **George W. Bush**. At the core of the experiment was an effort to more thoroughly screen soldiers as they were heading off to war.

Soldiers from three brigades, or 10,678 servicemembers, were asked questions about their mental health — such as whether they had ever received mental health care, ever contemplated suicide, were taking antidepressants or mood-stabilizing medication or abused alcohol or drugs.

The questions raised concerns for 819 soldiers; each immediately met with a psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker for a more thorough mental health examination, the study says.

Doctors were better able to determine who was fit for combat and identify those who needed more attention from battlefield counselors, says Army Maj. Christopher Warner, a psychiatrist and co-author of the study. In Iraq, mental health workers singled out certain soldiers, based on their screening results, to talk with them routinely. "Our teams would go out and locate soldiers on the forward operating bases," Warner says.

After collecting six months of data, researchers compared the three brigades who were more aggressively screened and treated with a control group of three other brigades, made up of 10,353 soldiers, who were screened and treated under existing protocols.

Where one out of eight soldiers in the control group — or 1,365 servicemembers — developed psychiatric disorders during six months of combat, that ratio was one in 35 soldiers — or 307 servicemembers — in the brigades receiving stronger screening.

Ninety-three soldiers in the control group admitted contemplating suicide. Only 44 experienced such thoughts among those aggressively screened. Twenty-eight soldiers were sent home with mental illnesses from the control group, 13 from the screened brigades.

Even for the most common mental health problem that soldiers experience — stress from being deployed and separated from families — the screened group did better: 1,676 soldiers were diagnosed with stress problems in the screened brigades, compared with 2,273 soldiers in the control group.

Researchers said they did not track the soldiers beyond the initial six months and have no data on long-term mental health consequences of combat.

Misconduct

DOJ unit to punish prosecutors' ethical lapses

By Brad Heath and Kevin McCoy

Federal Times, 19 January 2011

The Justice Department created a new internal watchdog office on Tuesday to make sure federal prosecutors face swifter and more consistent punishment if investigators find that they committed misconduct.

The change come after a USA Today investigation that identified 201 criminal cases in which federal courts had found that Justice Department prosecutors had broken laws or ethics rules — violations that put innocent people in jail and set guilty people free. Although each of the cases was so serious that judges overturned convictions or rebuked the prosecutors for misconduct, USA Today found that the department often took years to investigate what went wrong, and that prosecutors faced little risk of being fired.

Attorney General Eric Holder said in a statement Tuesday that while most federal prosecutors meet their ethical obligations, the current procedures for disciplining those found to commit misconduct "consume too much time, and risk inconsistent resolution." He said the new unit "will help change that by providing consistent, fair and timely resolution of these cases."

The unit, called the Professional Misconduct Review Unit, will be responsible for disciplining career prosecutors when the department's ethics investigators conclude that they engaged in intentional or reckless misconduct. Until now, those decisions had been made by the prosecutors' supervisors, most often U.S. attorneys. The department has faced criticism for not doing enough to investigate and punish misconduct.

Holder wrote in a memo that those procedures "have resulted in delays" because the officials in charge of discipline are also busy with other things. The new unit will have to make decisions more quickly, and will also be able to report misconduct to state bar associations. It will review findings of misconduct that occur after it is fully staffed.

"This is serious business. It's a sign of a lack of faith in the behavior of U.S. attorneys around the country," said Joseph diGenova, a former U.S. attorney in Washington. "The message is, 'Manage your office and impose discipline, or we will.'"

Laurie Levenson, a former federal prosecutor who's now a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, applauded the effort to segregate and speed the handling of the most serious misconduct cases. "Not all prosecutorial misconduct cases are alike," she said.

The announcement is the latest step Holder has taken over the past two years to address ethical lapses by the attorneys in charge of enforcing the nation's laws. These efforts came after the government's failed corruption prosecution of former Alaska senator Ted Stevens, which ended in 2009 after the department conceded it had hidden evidence that could have undermined the case against him. The judge who supervised Stevens' trial launched his own investigation of the case, saying he did not trust the department to investigate itself. That review is still ongoing.

Brad Heath and Kevin McCoy report for USA Today.