



Flags were planted outside the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home, which has one of the highest death tolls of any end-of-life facility in the U.S.

BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS

Black Troops Fight at the Front, But Rarely Get Jobs at the Top

By HELENE COOPER

WASHINGTON — A photograph of President Trump and his top four-star generals and admirals, tweeted in October by Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper, was meant as a thank-you to the commander in chief. But it angered a lot of others, and not just those who erupted on Twitter. “You would have thought it was 1950,” said Lt. Col. Walter J. Smiley Jr., who is African-American and fought in Iraq and Afghanistan before retiring last year after 25 years in the Army. Dana Pittard, a retired major general, also



NATE PALMER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
Walter J. Smiley Jr. retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel after a 25-year career.

African-American, was equally frustrated. “It’s America’s military,” he said. “Why doesn’t this photo look like America?” Yet the picture of the president surrounded by a sea of white faces in full military dress is an accurate portrait of the top commanders who lead an otherwise diverse institution. Some 43 percent of the 1.3 million men and women on active duty in the United States military are people of color. But the people making crucial decisions, such as how to respond to the coronavirus crisis and how many troops to send to Afghanistan or Syria, are almost entirely white and male. Of the 41 most senior commanders in the military — those with four-star rank in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard — only two are black: Gen. Michael X. Garrett, who leads the Army’s Forces Command, and Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr, the commander of Pacific Air Forces. Gen. Paul M. Nakasone, whose father is second-generation Japanese-American, leads the United States Cyber Command. The Army has sometimes counted Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, the head of Africa Command and the son of a German mother and an Afghan father, as a minority commander. There is only one woman in the group: Gen. Maryanne

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Finding Bliss in New Schedule When Family Time Is All Day

By MICHAEL WILSON

The coronavirus has smothered New York City’s economy and sealed off its museums and concert halls like crime scenes. Many people have filled the void with something that has always been there, close at hand but often crowded out of reach: their families. What is known as “quality time,” until recently carved out here and there, starts early now in the Milioto house in Brooklyn’s Bath Beach section, right after Mom and Dad have their coffee. In Park Slope, a quarantined actress becomes an audience member as her two young children perform plays on the big coffee table. A high school freshman in Rego Park, Queens, pauses during his workout — he wants to join the

military someday — to change his niece’s diaper. Mother-daughter days for the Cedeños of Queens are now any day, each one tending to the other: hair, makeup, nails. In Windsor Terrace in Brooklyn, the shriek of a kitchen smoke alarm is the new dinner bell. And all over the city, there is dancing, every night — for the Pincays in Maspeth, it’s Megan Thee Stallion; for the Ragusos in Bay Ridge, “Uptown Funk.” Apartments are crowded, with cranky kindergartners, sullen teenagers who would normally be off at college, graduates stalled on the shoulder of the road to independence. But alongside the annoyances,

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Veterans Were Left to Languish In a Home Ravaged by Illness

By ELLEN BARRY

HOLYOKE, Mass. — In 1945, James Leach Miller returned from the war and said nothing. He said nothing about it to his wife, not for 64 years of marriage. He folded up his Army uniform, with the medals still pinned to it, and put it in the basement, where his older boy would sometimes take it out to play soldiers. He joined the fire department. He went to church on Sundays. He never complained. “That generation, they didn’t air their problems,” said his younger son, Michael. “He would say, ‘It was not a good time. I’ve had better times.’ He would not embellish.” Mr. Miller was already in his 70s when he began to tell Michael, an Air Force flight engineer, little bits about landing on Omaha Beach on D-Day. “Fragments would come out,” his son said. The deafening roar as they waited for the beach to clear, crowded into a landing ship with other 21-year-olds. A blur that lasted 24 hours. The buzz-drone of Messerschmitts.

Dust clouds. Mud.

Michael once offered to take him back to Normandy — World War II veterans were making the journey — but his father shook his head and said, “I’ve been there once.” This story comes up for a reason. Mr. Miller, 96, who survived what was for Americans the bloodiest battle of World War II, died of complications from the coronavirus on March 30 inside the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home. The virus has spread in more than 40 veterans’ homes in more than 20 states, leading to the deaths of at least 300 people. The conditions inside the 247-bed, state-run home, where Mr. Miller had lived for five years, were so chaotic that his children cannot recount them without breaking down. When Mr. Miller lay weak and gasping that weekend, his two daughters, in a car in the parking lot, pleaded with a nurse on duty

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For an Ascendant China, Reining In Hong Kong Is Just the Start

By STEVEN LEE MYERS

China’s move to strip away another layer of Hong Kong’s autonomy was not a rash impulse. It was a deliberate act, months in the making. It took into account the risks of international umbrage and reached the reasonable assumption that there would not be a significant geopolitical price to pay. As a provocative move, it is just the latest. With the world distracted by the pandemic’s devastating toll, China has taken a series of aggressive actions in recent weeks to flex its economic, diplomatic and military muscle across the region. China’s Coast Guard rammed and sank a fishing boat in disputed waters off Vietnam, and its ships swarmed an offshore oil rig operated by Malaysia. Beijing denounced the second inauguration of Taiwan’s president, Tsai Ing-wen, and pointedly dropped the word peaceful from its annual call for unification with the island democracy. Chinese troops squared off again last week with India along their contentious border in the



LAM YIK FEI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

STREET ACTION Thousands gathered in Hong Kong Sunday to reject Beijing’s influence. Page A15.

Himalayas.

All are longstanding tensions, but the decision to impose new national security laws on Hong Kong, bypassing the semiautonomous region’s own legislative

process, shows what can happen with an unbridled China, no longer restrained by the fear of international rebuke. “There was this idea before about China being cautious and

trying to cultivate its soft power around the world,” said Jean-Pierre Cabestan, a professor at Hong Kong Baptist University and the author of “China Tomorrow.”

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Netanyahu Trial Begins

The Israeli prime minister has long maintained his innocence, and the first witnesses are not expected to testify for months.

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President’s Office or Prison?

The leader of Suriname was convicted of murder in January, but is still standing for re-election on Monday.

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Indispensable Bass 1,001 Times

John Macurdy was admired for his rich, firm voice and poised, dignified stage presence. He was 91.

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Bracing for Hurricane Season

Emergency managers are revising evacuation plans as they consider the risks of contagion in shelters.

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Back to the Land

As society and economies shift, more Italians are returning to the agricultural work of their grandparents.

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Gaming Out an Electoral Crisis

How far would the president go to keep his job? Trump opponents in both parties try to plan for the worst.

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Hey, Can You Give Me a Lift?

A Virgin Orbit rocket system that is undergoing tests is designed to hitch rides on a jumbo jet and send small payloads into orbit.

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‘He Had Victimized So Many’

A 1970s Michigan football player sees a link between a university doctor’s assaults and a dire prognosis.

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Cutting Pay, Not People

Companies are turning to salary reduction as a way to survive the crisis, and employees don’t seem to mind.

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Cargo Enters Passenger Cabin

To offset lost revenue, airlines are hauling more supplies, stacking boxes where passengers used to sit.

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Give My Regards to 2020

Broadway and other live performances may not return until next year, many producers are saying.

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Hip-Hop’s Country Side

Breland’s single “My Truck” is the most viable fusion of rural and urban music since “Old Town Road.”

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Jennifer Senior

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