



## DACOWITS: Articles of Interest

### WELLNESS

#### [Military Sex-Assault Victims See Retaliation As Reports Rise](#)

*(4 Dec.) Bloomberg News, By Terry Atlas*

“A majority of servicewomen who reported they were victims of sexual assault believe they have suffered professional or social retaliation, according to a U.S. Defense Department report released today.”

#### [Navy's Fired Skippers Often Maintain Their Rank](#)

*(8 Dec.) Stars and Stripes, By Matthew M. Burke*

“Based on information provided by the Navy, Stars and Stripes has found that 53 percent of all officers relieved of command since 2010 still put on the uniform each day, most without loss of rank. Navy Cmdr. Larry Gonzales was relieved of leadership duties aboard the USS Chafee in 2009 after he was investigated for groping a subordinate...”

#### [Military Sexual Assault Unresolved](#)

*(8 Dec.) New York Times Editorial*

“The surest measure of the scale of the problem of sexual assault in the military – and the failure of the Pentagon and Congress to deal with it – is that the Defense Department thinks it has really achieved something because the total number of rapes and other sexual assaults decreased to 19,000 in 2014 from about 26,000 in 2012.”

#### [Pentagon: Our Efforts Are Making Progress](#)

*(8 Dec.) USA Today, By Jeffrey Snow*

“Your military is on the front lines of this battle, using sustained senior leadership focus to improve sexual assault prevention, response and adjudication. Evidence indicates our efforts are driving progress – while commanders remain accountable for justice decisions.”

#### [Report: NCIS Bungled Rape, Suicide Investigations](#)

*(15 Dec.) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers*

Perjury investigation, tied to incident at NS Great Lakes, also mishandled, IG found.

#### [Tricare to Cover Breastfeeding Supplies](#)

*(10 Dec.) Health & Fitness, Spouse & Family News, By Amy Bushatz*

“Thanks to a measure in the new 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)...Tricare will soon be required to provide breastfeeding supplies and support to new moms. Currently the law governing Tricare is silent on breastfeeding and lactation support issues. And while a provision in the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which governs healthcare for most Americans, requires that breastfeeding supplies such as pumps and support such as lactation consultants be covered, Tricare is exempt from that law.”

#### [12 sailors implicated in submarine shower scandal](#)

*(11 Dec.) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers*

Up to a dozen sailors are suspected of viewing secretly recorded videos of their female shipmates undressing in a submarine shower over a period of 10 months, according to a new investigative report obtained by Navy Times. The scandal has marred the Navy's gender integration effort begun four years ago.

#### [Senators Shoot Down Gillibrand's Military Sexual Assault Reform Bill](#)

*(11 Dec.) Huffington Post, By Laura Bassett*

Nearly a year after Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand's (D-N.Y.) military sexual assault reform legislation fell five votes short of passing the Senate, she asked for unanimous consent on Thursday to bring her bill to the floor for another vote. But a group of senators blocked Gillibrand's effort, accusing her of taking her cause too far.

## ASSIGNMENTS

### [Interview: U.S. Navy Personnel Chief Worries Over Potential Service Retention Problems](#)

(2 Dec.) *U.S. Naval Institute News*, By Sam LaGrone

“Vice Adm. Bill Moran – Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education (N1) – in his 15 months on the job has seen signs of a looming sailor exodus that could be on par to retention woes following the Cold War and just before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.”

### [3D Body Modeling Company Improves Armor For Female Soldiers](#)

(8 Dec.) *Forbes*, By Chanelle Bessette

When an item of clothing doesn't fit, the wearer might get frustrated, but that's usually the extent of the problem. When a Kevlar vest worn by a U.S. soldier doesn't fit, the results can be lethal. 3D body modeling company Body Labs is looking to change how soldiers wear body armor, starting with women in the U.S. Army.

### [Navy expands female hair regs, includes two-strand braids](#)

(9 Dec.) *Navy Times*, By Meghann Myers

The Navy has expanded the service's hair rules for women, adding two-strand twists, relaxing size rules for hair buns and opening the possibility that future female recruits won't have to cut their hair at boot camp.

**Flag Officer Assignment (12 Dec.):** The Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert announced today the following assignment: Rear Adm. (lower half) Linnea J. Sommer-Weddington will be assigned as deputy director, Warfare Integration, Chief of Naval Operations, N2/N6A, Washington, District of Columbia. Sommer-Weddington previously served as commander, Information Dominance Corps Region Southwest, San Diego, California.

## EXTRA

### [Maine Woman To Work With VA As It Expands Services To More Victims Of Military Sexual Assault](#)

(3 Dec.) *Bangor Daily News*, By Abigail Curtis

“...the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' [will] expand mental health services to reservists and National Guard members who were sexually assaulted while on inactive duty.”

### [Navy Revokes Cosby's Honorary Title](#)

(4 Dec.) *USA Today*, By Maria Puente

The Navy announced Thursday it is revoking Cosby's title of honorary chief petty officer because of multiplying allegations of sexual abuse going back decades that were recently reignited.

### [Why It Was Right to Question Rolling Stone's U-VA Rape Story](#)

(5 Dec.) *The Daily Beast*, By Michael Moynihan

“...if Jackie's story proves to be false...prepare to see an increase in those who believe that *all* accusations are untrustworthy.”

### [Face of Defense: Officer Competes for Mars Arctic 365 Program](#)

(10 Dec.) *DoD News*, By Walter T. Ham IV

First Lt. Heidi Beemer is taking part in a Mars simulation this month. "Lieutenant Beemer seeks to boldly go where no one has gone before," said [Brig. Gen.] Burton, who has a Beemer2Mars sticker on his jeep. "We are proud that she is a part of this command."

### [Fourteen Honored with 'Spirit of Hope' Award](#)

(11 Dec.) *DoD News*, By Nick Simeone

“It's the academy awards for those who have excelled in giving,” said Air Force Secretary and former DACOWITS member, Deborah Lee James. Jaspn Boothe, President, Final Salute Incorporated, nominated by the Navy: Awarded for providing housing and other services to homeless women and veterans.

**Report: NCIS Bungled Rape, Suicide Investigations**

*(15 Dec.) Navy Times, By Meghann Myers*

When Seaman Kyle Antonacci was found dead in his barracks room in early 2010, it looked like a suicide. His family, however, suspected foul play. Antonacci, a 22-year-old explosive ordnance disposal trainee then assigned to Naval Station Great Lakes, Illinois, had been embroiled in a perjury investigation at the time of his death. It stemmed from a rape case in which he had been a key prosecution witness. He later admitted he had failed to disclose that he, too, had sex with the woman that night, information that could have affected the outcome of the case.

Although the Naval Criminal Investigative Service did not properly conduct its investigation into his death, according to a report from the Defense Department Inspector General's Office released Oct. 28, there was no evidence that those mistakes led investigators to a wrong conclusion about how he died or that there was a conspiracy to rule his death a suicide.

The report also called out NCIS' poor handling of the rape case and subsequent perjury investigation.

In October 2011, friends and family of Antonacci told the Deerfield (Illinois) Patch that they believed NCIS' handling of the case contributed to Antonacci's death. They believed – in part because officials gave them multiple explanations of how the seaman died – that he was killed because of his involvement in the rape case.

The DoD IG report, however, stood by the medical examiner's conclusion that Antonacci's death was a suicide, asphyxia by hanging.

Antonacci's family did not respond to multiple phone calls seeking comment over a month. An independent forensic pathologist who autopsied Antonacci declined to comment without the family's permission.

The report is the latest in a series of black eyes for NCIS, which in the past has been accused of mishandling multiple sexual assault cases and has taken steps to improve its investigative procedures.

"NCIS cooperated with the DoD IG during its review of this matter and we are taking steps to address the recommendations made," NCIS spokesman Ed Buice told Navy Times.

The IG opened an investigation after an anonymous tip to find out whether the three investigations had been properly carried out.

On the day he died, Feb. 1, 2010, NCIS interviewed Antonacci as part of its perjury case after he came forward to say he had lied about what happened the night of the alleged rape. According to NCIS procedure, he should have been released to his command, but instead he went back to his room alone.

The NCIS agent let Antonacci go because he or she considered him a "cooperating defendant" in the case, rather than a "confessed military suspect," which requires release to the chain of command, according to the report.

Antonacci was found dead there three hours later, the report said.

**The First Investigation**

The story began in May 2009, when a female Marine lance corporal reported she had been raped by a Navy E-3 in Antonacci's room at the naval station.

Antonacci knew both the victim and the alleged perpetrator, Seaman Michael Pineda, according to a 2013 Los Angeles Times report; he'd been casually dating the Marine, and Pineda was a good friend.

The three had been partying that night, and the drunk, 21-year-old Marine had gone looking for Antonacci, who called Pineda to "help him deal with her," the story said.

Both men had sex with her the night of May 8, and the Marine later accused Pineda of rape. He was convicted of having sex with someone too drunk to consent, sentenced to three months in jail and dishonorably discharged from the Navy, the LA Times reported.

He won an appeal in 2011, upgrading his discharge to honorable and awarding back pay for the remainder of his service obligation, the LA Times reported.

The IG found that the initial rape investigation hadn't met NCIS standards, starting with the case reviews.

Its procedure is to review cases every 30 days, but at the time of the November 2009 court-martial, the case had only been reviewed three times, rather than the five required since it was opened in May.

The IG also found that the interviews weren't thorough. NCIS only interviewed two witnesses who knew what the victim had been doing the night of the reported rape, though she provided the names of several potential witnesses. One of them was Antonacci.

The alleged assault took place in his room and Antonacci was the first person to talk to the woman afterward, but NCIS waited 20 days to interview him, the report said. The questions were also inadequate.

"More thorough questioning may have developed information that SN Antonacci's last sexual encounter with the victim occurred on May 9, 2009, the same evening as the rape," according to the report.

The only other witness interviewed spoke to NCIS 70 days after the initial report, according to the IG.

### **More Botched Investigations**

In September 2009, Antonacci reported he'd been threatened by a male Marine – a friend of the victim's – after the victim accused him of "switching sides" in the case because he had told an acquaintance that he didn't think Pineda was guilty of rape.

NCIS did not open an investigation, the IG report said, though the male Marine later admitted to confronting Antonacci and carving an "X" into his barracks room door a week before the seaman was found dead.

It took three years for NCIS to investigate the threat, presenting the male Marine's testimony and photographic evidence of the carving to Navy and Marine Corps officials in November 2013.

The IG found fault with the perjury investigation initiated after Pineda had been found guilty.

In December 2009, an unidentified witness accused Antonacci of lying by not disclosing his sexual relationship with the victim. According to the witness, Antonacci admitted to having sex with the woman that night, before the rape took place.

On Jan. 19, 2010, NCIS brought Antonacci in for interrogation.

"Antonacci stated he was not truthful in his testimony because he thought, based on a conversation between him and the victim, she would accuse him of rape if he did not testify on her behalf during the court-martial," the report said.

Over the next week, he came in multiple times for questioning, an NCIS-monitored call to the victim and a polygraph test. On Jan. 28, the case agent called Antonacci's command to discuss the seaman's alleged "suicidal ideations," suggesting he may have needed a suicide watch.

When interviewed, the officer-in-charge at the time said he didn't recall that discussion.

On Feb. 1, Antonacci called the victim a second time, again with NCIS agents listening in. The victim said she didn't remember having sex with him on the night of the reported rape.

Following the call, according to the report, Antonacci went back to his room and "informed a close friend that his life was over and he was going to jail."

The friend went to check on him soon after, finding Antonacci hanging by a belt around his neck in his closet.

The case agent working with Antonacci told the IG that he arranged for a command escort following each of his meetings with the seaman, but there was only documentation for one of them, on Jan. 29. He couldn't explain why he hadn't written anything down about the others, he told investigators.

There was some disagreement among NCIS agents over whether Antonacci was considered a "confessed military suspect," as the case agent deemed him to be, and whether he needed an escort. The supervisory special agent thought he was a "cooperating defendant," according to the report.

Finally, NCIS mishandled the investigation into Antonacci's death as well, the IG found.

First, NCIS didn't interview the two agents overseeing the perjury investigation, though they were two of last people to speak to the seaman before his death.

They also didn't follow up with a witness with whom Antonacci's had chatted online before his death, in which he referred to serving in the Navy as "suicidal bad," the report stated.

After the Lake County, Illinois, coroner ruled the death a suicide, Antonacci's family hired a private forensic pathologist to look at the body again.

According to the LA Times, the pathologist found that Antonacci's body was bruised and his nose bloody, which weren't consistent with someone who had hanged himself. The Lake County coroner said his nose made a grating sound when moved, like it might have been broken, but the private pathologist described it as intact.

Further, the coroner said a bone in Antonacci's throat was intact during the first autopsy, but the pathologist said the bone wasn't present at all.

NCIS did not re-interview the coroner and private pathologist to clarify the discrepancies, the IG found.

However, the report stated, those differences didn't matter in the larger scheme of things, because the Office of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner still ruled the death a suicide.

The IG recommended NCIS beef up training for supervisors and agents, and clarify the meaning of "confessed military suspect."