



## Charles Brown, first black general to lead a US military service, confirmed in unanimous vote to be next Air Force chief

Jamie McIntyre

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**HISTORY MADE 98-0:** The Senate has confirmed **Gen. Charles Brown Jr.** to be the next Air Force chief of staff, voting 98-0 to make the decorated pilot the first African American to lead a branch of the U.S. military as its highest-ranking officer.

Army **Gen. Colin Powell** became the first African American member of the Joint Chiefs in 1989, but as chairman, he was the principal military adviser to the president, not the head of a service.

Known as “C.Q.,” Brown currently serves as the U.S. Pacific Air Forces commander at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. Brown will replace the current Air Force Chief **Gen. David Goldfein** at a swearing-in ceremony scheduled for Aug. 6.

**TRUMP TWEETS CONGRATS:** “My decision to appoint [@usairforce](#) General Charles Brown as the USA’s first-ever African American military service chief has now been approved by the Senate,” [tweeted](#) Trump. “A historic day for America! Excited to work even more closely with Gen. Brown, who is a Patriot and Great Leader!”

**BROWN’S VIRAL VIDEO:** In the wake of **George Floyd’s** death while under arrest by Minneapolis police, Brown posted [a powerful first-person account](#) of the racism he has experienced and witnessed in uniform. “Here’s what I’m thinking about,” he said, staring into the camera with a deadly serious look on his face.

“I’m thinking about my Air Force career, where I was often the only African American in my squadron — or as a senior officer the only African American in the room. ... I’m thinking about the pressure I felt to perform error-free, especially for supervisors I perceived had expected less from me as an African American. ... I’m thinking about my mentors and how rarely I had a mentor who looked like me.”

**MORE BLACK FOUR-STARS:** In a [discussion](#) at the Center for Strategic and International Studies on Tuesday, former Joint Chiefs Chairman retired **Adm. Mike Mullen** cited “the need to have more black four-stars like Brown in the military.”

“It’s a big deal. I worked that hard ... to get more senior officers into the three- and four-star position,” Mullen said of his time both as head of the Navy and chairman.

“And I can look back on that time and look at the number of individuals who got to that level, which was all about creating an opportunity, and look back positively in terms of what we were able to achieve,” Mullen added. “That said, I left some 8 1/2 years ago, and I worry a great deal that we’ve regressed since that time because the numbers just aren’t there.”

Mullen called Gen. Brown’s confirmation “a big step in the right direction. But it’s one.”

**WE ARE SMART ENOUGH:** In a discussion on *PBS NewsHour* last night, retired **Brig. Gen. Remo Butler**, who spent most of his 29-year career as a Green Beret, described what he saw during his time in uniform.

“The black officers get promoted at about the same rate to the rank of captain. Once they make captain and move to the major, lieutenant colonel, [then] they dramatically drop off,” he said. “So, the weeding-out process starts then. And in the military, by the time you’re a major, you probably have already had a couple of mentors. If you’re a minority officer, many times, you don’t have a mentor.”

“I remember, when I first became a brigadier, they used to have this thing — and I don’t know if they still do it — it was called a peer reading from the general,” Butler recounted. “I didn’t know that many general officers, but I got a lot of comments that said, ‘not smart enough, not smart enough.’ And I went to a Latin general, and I said, ‘What the heck is this?’ He says, ‘Don’t worry about it.’ He said, ‘I don’t even read those things.’ He said, ‘That’s what a lot of people want to say. We aren’t smart enough.’ But we are smart enough.”

**NAVY NEXT TO BAN CONFEDERATE BATTLE FLAG:** When Brown takes over the Air Force in two months, he might want to consider banning the display of the Confederate battle flag — that is, if the current chief hasn’t already done it by then.

On Tuesday, the Navy fell in line with Marines in drawing up a directive to ban displays of the flag, which is widely perceived as an offensive, racist symbol.

“The Chief of Naval Operations, **Adm. Mike Gilday**, has directed his staff to begin crafting an order that would prohibit the Confederate battle flag from all public spaces and work areas aboard Navy installations, ships, aircraft, and submarines,” said Cmdr. Nate Christensen, spokesman for the CNO. “The order is meant to ensure unit cohesion, preserve good order and discipline, and uphold the Navy’s core values of honor, courage, and commitment.”

**DIVIDED WE FAIL:** Former Defense Secretary **William Cohen**, who is married to an African American woman, praised the decision by Marine Corps Commandant **Gen. David Berger**, who was the first to order that all Confederate flags be removed from Marine installation, even as he said he was “mindful that many people believe that flag to be a symbol of heritage or regional pride.”

“He did that in order to say that we are fighting as a unit. We are organizing, training as a unit. We are unified,” Cohen said of Berger’s action. “And if you start having individual political statements being made, such as the flying of a Confederate flag or using it as insignia, that’s going to prove divisive. And if we’re divided, then we are going to be ineffective, and it’s going to be dangerous to our safety and to the nation’s security.”

Good Wednesday morning and welcome to *Jamie McIntyre’s Daily on Defense*, written and compiled by *Washington Examiner* National Security Senior Writer **Jamie McIntyre** (@jamiejmcintyre) and edited by **David Sivak** and **Tyler Van Dyke**. [Email here](#) with tips, suggestions, calendar items, and anything else. Sign up or read current and back issues at [DailyonDefense.com](#). If signing up doesn’t work, shoot us an email and we’ll add you to our list. And be sure to follow us on Twitter: [@dailyondefense](#).

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**HAPPENING TODAY:** Marine Corps **Gen. Frank McKenzie**, commander of U.S. Central Command, speaks at 11 a.m. EDT at a Middle East Institute webinar: "CENTCOM and the Shifting Sands of the Middle East." Register at [mei.edu](#).

**GOP PUSHBACK ON GERMANY DRAWDOWN:** The top Republican on the House Armed Services Committee has written to **President Trump** to urge him not to proceed with a plan to pull 9,500 troops out of Germany and cap U.S. future force levels in that country at 25,000.

“In Europe, the threats posed by Russia have not lessened, and we believe that signs of a weakened U.S. commitment to NATO will encourage further Russian aggression and opportunism, says Texas **Rep. Mac Thornberry** in the [letter](#) co-signed by 21 of his GOP colleagues on the committee.

“In addition, the overall limit on troops would prevent us from conducting the exercises that are necessary for the training and readiness of our forces and those of our allies. The troop limit would also significantly reduce the number of U.S. forces that can flow through Germany for deployment to bases around the world, causing serious logistical challenges.”

“We strongly believe that NATO allies, such as Germany, should do more to contribute to our joint defense efforts. At the same time, we also know that the forward stationing of American troops since the end of World War II has helped to prevent another world war and, most importantly, has helped make America safer.”

**LESSONS LEARNED:** The Navy and the CDC have completed a medical investigation of the outbreak of COVID-19 on the aircraft carrier *USS Theodore Roosevelt* in March.

The [study](#) looked at 382 sailors who volunteered to take part, including subjects who were previously infected, currently infected, or never infected.

Among the findings were that the younger, healthier population typically experiences mild cases of the infection, with the most common symptoms being fever, chills, muscle pain, and loss of taste and smell — not the dry cough and shortness of breath suffered by older people.

The study also found that 60% had reactive antibodies, and 59% of those also had neutralizing antibodies at the time of specimen collection, an indication that exposure to the virus does confer some level of immunity, but how much and for how long is still unknown.

The study also concluded that the most effective preventive measures were wearing a face covering, avoiding common areas where groups of people gather, and maintaining social distancing.

Sailors who wore a face covering had a 56% percent infection rate compared to 81% of those not wearing masks. Avoiding common areas had a similar preventive result, a 54% infection rate versus 68%. Social distancing reduced the infection rate from 70% to 55%.

**SPACE FORCE GROWS:** The fledgling U.S. Space Force has attracted 8,500 active-duty Airmen who would like to switch to the new service, according to an Air Force release.

The Space Force is currently reviewing applications for transfer and plans to accept approximately 6,000 members.

"I am incredibly proud of the men and women who made the bold decision to volunteer to join the U.S. Space Force and defend the ultimate high ground," said **Gen. Jay Raymond**, chief of space operations, U.S. Space Force. "It is a critical time for space, and those Airmen will build the Space Force necessary to compete, deter, and win as required to meet the needs of the National Defense Strategy."

**JOHNSON ON THE INSURRECTION ACT:** At yesterday's CSIS discussion, **Jeh Johnson**, who was Homeland Security secretary under **President Barack Obama**, said the 200-year-old Insurrection Act clearly gives the president the authority to use active-duty troops to quell civil unrest.

"Fairly read, the Insurrection Act of 1807 is an act of last resort. It's when all state government has failed, when state government is refusing to abide by federal court orders, when the whole thing has melted down — it's an act of last resort," Johnson said, noting that in the past, it has been invoked to enforce desegregation orders and in 1992 after the Rodney King demonstrations in California.

"But the most honest explanation that anybody can give you for those prior invocations is: In the hands of a mature, responsible actor, like a **Dwight Eisenhower** or a **George H.W. Bush**, nobody gets really excited about the possibility of invoking the Insurrection Act of 1807. It's only when someone who uses the invocations of these laws as a demonstration of authority that we all become very, very concerned."

**ON A LIGHTER NOTE:** Johnson also told this story about his time at the Pentagon in the late 1990s, when **William Cohen** was defense secretary:

“I was sort of a third-tier political appointee. But I had a fabulous parking spot that was in the front row, right off the river entrance, just a few feet away from the river entrance,” Johnson said.

“The problem with having such a fabulous parking spot is if I went out in the middle of the day to, like, a parent-teacher conference and I came back, somebody would take the spot, and I’d end up having to park out in Rosslyn somewhere. And it happened yet again, one more time. I got really angry. I told my military assistant, ‘Find out who put their car in my parking spot. We’re going to tow them away.’ And so the Mil-A took the license plate down, and he had the presence of mind to run the name first before he had the Pentagon police tow the car away. And he came back to me, and he said, ‘Sir, the car is registered to somebody by the name of Janet Cohen.’ And I said, ‘Uh, Okay, never mind.’ The result of which is that I got to go on to two other presidential appointments.”

**Janet Langhart Cohen** is Cohen’s wife, who at the time was known as the “First Lady of the Pentagon.”

“Janet is deeply grateful for him forbearing for towing her car away,” said Cohen in response. “She worked every day at the Pentagon, and so she was able to get there and get a front-row parking spot. But she remains deeply grateful to this day.”

The Rundown

**Washington Examiner:** Baltic nations brace for US troop withdrawal as Russia waits and watches

**Washington Examiner:** ‘No official confirmation’: If Trump is withdrawing troops, nobody has told Germany

**Washington Examiner:** US Navy moves to ban display of Confederate battle flag

**Washington Examiner:** Retired Adm. Mike Mullen and former Defense Secretary William Cohen warn of politicization of military and 'autocratic' whims of Trump

**Washington Examiner:** Trump almost fired Esper over disagreement about deploying active-duty troops during protests: Report

**Washington Examiner:** Iran appears to construct mock aircraft carrier complete with fake fighter jets

**Just the News:** Iran will execute man accused of telling CIA where to find

**Washington Post:** Trump envoy to begin nuclear talks with Russia as key treaty hangs in the balance

**Wall Street Journal:** Russian Negotiator Doubts China Will Join 3-Way Arms Accord Sought by Trump

**Breaking Defense:** Unanswered Israeli Air Strikes Against Syria Raise S-400 Questions

**Washington Post:** Don't bother calling us, North Korea tells South, as Kim's sister dials up threats

**UPI:** U.S., Chinese Aircraft Fly In Taiwan's Air Zone

**Stars and Stripes:** The Navy's Big Baltic Exercise Is Underway, But COVID-19 Means No Marines Storming The Beach

**Defense One:** The Pentagon Can't Afford All of the Weapons It Wants, New Report Says

**Breaking Defense:** White House Orders New Icebreaker Strategy For Coast Guard

**Air Force Magazine:** KC-46 Full-Rate Production Pushed Back to 2024

**Military.com:** Marine V-22 Osprey Damaged After Being Hit by Civilian Plane on Runway

**Forbes:** Claims Of Aircraft Carrier Vulnerability Are False, But The Versatility Is Real

Calendar

## WEDNESDAY | JUNE 10

10 a.m. — Association of the United States Army “Thought Leaders” livestream on the Army's integration of innovation in partnership with the defense industry, with **Gen. John Murray**, Army Futures Command commanding general. <https://www.bigmarker.com/ausaorg>

10:30 a.m. — Heritage Foundation webinar: “Army Aviation – The Future of Vertical Lift,” with **Brig. Gen. Walter Rugen**, director, Future Vertical Lift Cross Functional Team., U.S. Army Futures Command; **Patrick Mason**, program. executive officer, aviation, U.S. Army; retired Army **Lt. Gen. Thomas Spoehr**, director, Heritage Foundation Center for National Defense. <https://www.heritage.org/defense/event/webinar>

11 a.m. — Middle East Institute webinar: “CENTCOM and the Shifting Sands of the Middle East,” with Marine **Gen. Frank McKenzie**, commander of U.S. Central Command; and **Bilal Saab**, senior fellow at MEI. <https://www.mei.edu/events/centcom>

11 a.m. — Heritage Foundation webinar: “Immigration and Border Security: Where Are We Now and What's Next?” with Acting Homeland Security Deputy Secretary **Ken**

**Cuccinelli; Lora Ries**, senior research fellow for homeland security at Heritage; **Hans von Spakovsky**, senior legal fellow at Heritage; and **James Jay Carafano**, vice president of the Heritage Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute. <https://www.heritage.org/homeland-security/event>

11:30 a.m. — Mitchell Institute Aerospace Nation webcast: “A Conversation with **Lt. Gen. L. Scott Rice**,” who is the director of the Air National Guard. Invitation only. After the event, the recording will be posted at <https://www.mitchellaerospacepower.org/aerospace-nation>.

2 p.m. — House Armed Services Committee hearing: “Department of Defense COVID-19 Response to Defense Industrial Base Challenges,” with **Ellen Lord**, undersecretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment. <https://armedservices.house.gov/hearings>

2 p.m. — Nuclear Threat Initiative webinar: “The Military Case for Extending the New START Agreement,” with former Energy Secretary **Ernest Moniz**, co-chair and CEO of NTI; and retired Air Force **Lt. Gen. Frank Klotz**, former director of the National Nuclear Security Administration. <https://zoom.us/webinar/register>

2 p.m. — Center for Strategic and International Studies webcast: “The Military and Pandemics: Early Lessons and Future Actions,” with retired Army **Lt. Gen. David Barno**, visiting professor of strategic studies at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies; and **Nora Bensahel**, visiting professor of strategic studies at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. <https://www.csis.org/events>

## THURSDAY | JUNE 11

10 a.m. — George Washington University Project for Media and National Security Defense Writers Group conference call conversation with **Thomas McCaffery**, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. <https://nationalsecuritymedia.gwu.edu>

10 a.m. — Mitchell Institute Aerospace Nation Nuclear Deterrence Forum webcast with **Gordon Chang**, author and China expert; and **Rick Fisher**, senior fellow on Asian military affairs at the International Assessment and Strategy Center. Invitation only. A recording will be posted afterward at <https://www.mitchellaerospacepower.org>.

5 p.m. — George Mason University National Security Institute “NatSec Nightcap,” with former **Sen. Saxby Chambliss**, former vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; and **Jamil Jaffer**, founder and executive director, NSI. <https://nationalsecurity.gmu.edu/natsec-nightcap>

## FRIDAY | JUNE 12

10 a.m. — Center for Strategic and International Studies book discussion via webcast, on “The Kill Chain: Defending America in the Future of High-Tech Warfare,” with author **Chris Brose**, senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; and **Jude Blanchette**, chair in China studies at CSIS. <https://www.csis.org/events/online-event>

2 p.m. — Cato Institute webinar: “Terrible Twos? Taking Stock of U.S.-North Korea Relations Two Years After Singapore,” **Victor Cha**, Korea chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies; **Suzanne DiMaggio**, senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; **David Kang**, director of the University of Southern California's Korean Studies Institute; and **Doug Bandow**, senior fellow at Cato. <https://www.cato.org/events>

## **MONDAY | JUNE 15**

10 a.m. — Association of the United States Army “Thought Leaders” livestream, with retired Army **Gen. Martin Dempsey**, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff and author of *No Time for Spectators*. <https://www.bigmarker.com/ausaorg>

## **TUESDAY | JUNE 16**

11 a.m. — Nextgov and Defense One webcast: “Genius Machines: AI on the Frontlines.” <https://govexec.webex.com>