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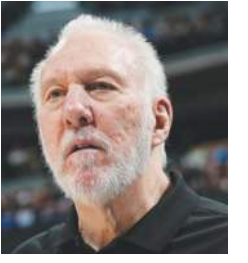
'The Righteous Gemstones,' despite depravity, appeals to Christians in its final season
Page 15

MILITARY

Army to celebrate its 250 years; parade set on Trump's birthday
Page 3

ON BASKETBALL

Popovich's eye for international talent helped change NBA
Page 24



Hegseth orders USS Truman to stay in Mideast another week » Page 4

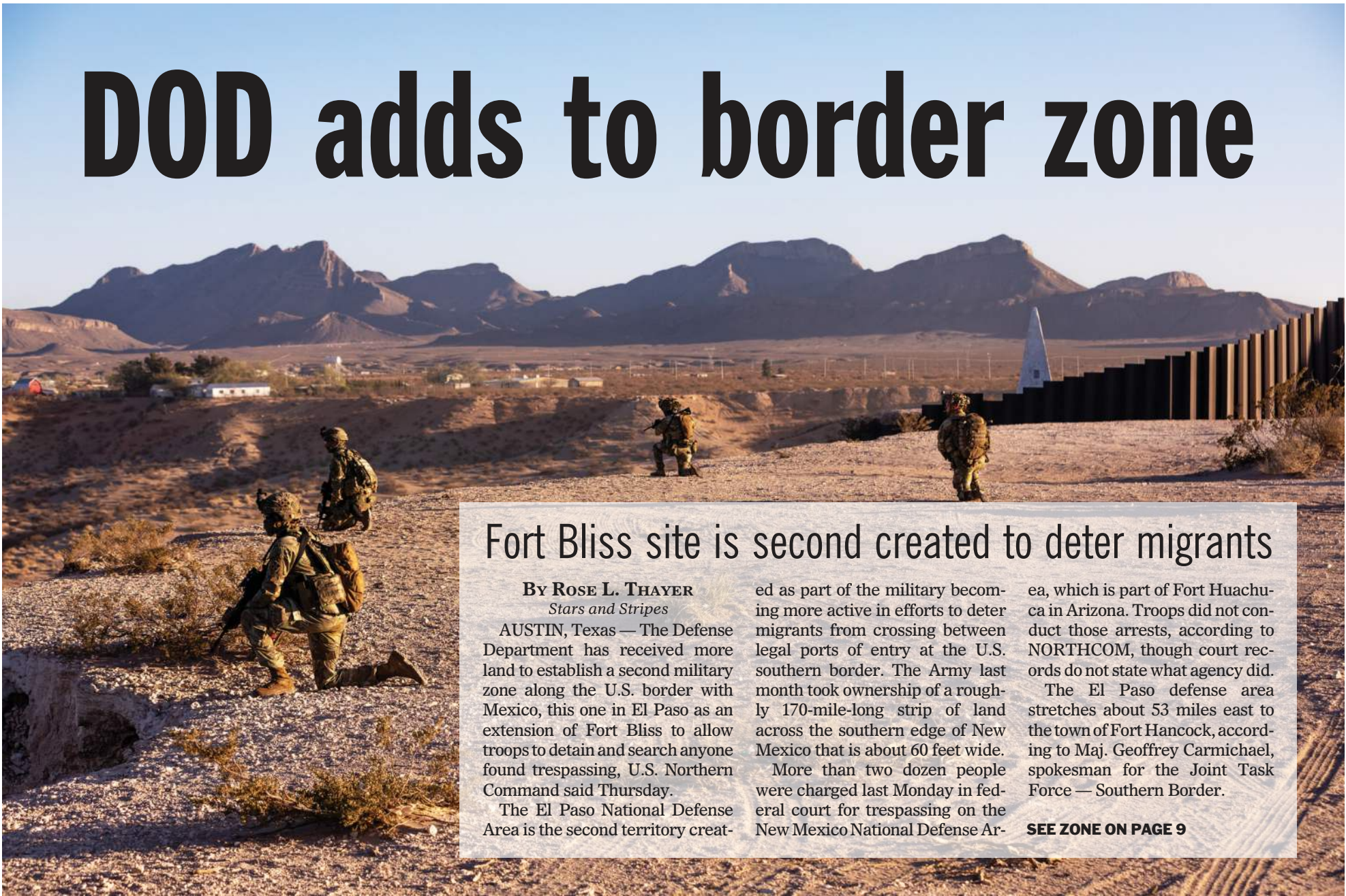
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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas



DOD adds to border zone

Fort Bliss site is second created to deter migrants

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — The Defense Department has received more land to establish a second military zone along the U.S. border with Mexico, this one in El Paso as an extension of Fort Bliss to allow troops to detain and search anyone found trespassing, U.S. Northern Command said Thursday.

The El Paso National Defense Area is the second territory creat-

ed as part of the military becoming more active in efforts to deter migrants from crossing between legal ports of entry at the U.S. southern border. The Army last month took ownership of a roughly 170-mile-long strip of land across the southern edge of New Mexico that is about 60 feet wide.

More than two dozen people were charged last Monday in federal court for trespassing on the New Mexico National Defense Ar-

ea, which is part of Fort Huachuca in Arizona. Troops did not conduct those arrests, according to NORTHCOM, though court records do not state what agency did.

The El Paso defense area stretches about 53 miles east to the town of Fort Hancock, according to Maj. Geoffrey Carmichael, spokesman for the Joint Task Force — Southern Border.

SEE ZONE ON PAGE 9

CRIST JOSEPH/U.S. Army

U.S. soldiers assigned to Joint Task Force — Southern Border patrol along the southern border, at Fort Bliss, Texas. U.S. Northern Command said Thursday the Defense Department has received more land to establish a second military zone. The El Paso National Defense Area in El Paso was created as an extension of Fort Bliss.

GOP: Trump's proposed defense budget shortchanges military

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Republican leaders of the Senate and House Armed Services committees were critical of topline defense spending proposals outlined by President Donald Trump's administration on Friday, describing the spending plan as too small of an

investment in the military.

The fiscal 2026 budget outline — known as a skinny budget — released by the White House's Office of Management and Budget touts a \$1 trillion defense budget, which has been foreshadowed recently in comments by Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth. But top Republicans on Friday

said the actual budget documents only indicate a plan to fund national defense at \$892.6 billion, roughly in line with recent defense budgets under former President Joe Biden.

"President Trump successfully campaigned on a peace through strength agenda, but his advisers at the Office of Management and

Budget were apparently not listening," Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in a statement. "For the defense budget, OMB has requested a fifth year straight of Biden administration funding, leaving military spending flat, which is a cut in real terms."

The White House proposal did not outline specifically how much of the budget was slated for the Pentagon. National defense spending proposals typically include the Pentagon's funding requests as well as money requested by other national security agen-

SEE BUDGET ON PAGE 9

BUSINESS/WEATHER

United Airlines cuts 35 daily flights at Newark airport

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Passengers with flights to or from Newark Liberty International Airport encountered long delays and cancellations Saturday due to an air traffic controller shortage, a nationwide problem the Trump administration has pledged to fix.

The busy airport outside New York City experienced disruptions all week. Faulting the Federal Aviation Administration's alleged failure to address "long-simmering" challenges related to

the air-traffic control system, United Airlines cut 35 daily flights from its Newark schedule starting Saturday.

United CEO Scott Kirby said the technology used to manage planes at the New Jersey airport failed more than once in recent days. The flight delays, cancellations and diversions the equipment problems caused were compounded when more than one-fifth of Newark's traffic controllers "walked off the job," he said.

"This particular air traffic con-

trol facility has been chronically understaffed for years and without these controllers, it's now clear — and the FAA tells us — that Newark airport cannot handle the number of planes that are scheduled to operate there in the weeks and months ahead," Kirby wrote in a letter to customers.

Airport status reports from the FAA said staffing issues were causing average delays of nearly two hours and ones as long as five hours for flights scheduled to arrive on Saturday morning.

EXCHANGE RATES

| Military rates | | Commercial rates | |
|--------------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| Euro costs (May 5) | 0.86 | Bahrain (Dinar) | 0.3769 |
| British pound (May 5) | \$1.30 | Britain (Pound) | 1.3275 |
| Japanese yen (May 5) | 139.00 | Canada (Dollar) | 1.3812 |
| South Korean won (May 5) | 1399.00 | China (Yuan) | 7.2716 |
| | | Denmark (Krone) | 6.6040 |
| | | Egypt (Pound) | 50.7704 |
| | | Euro | 0.8849 |
| | | Hong Kong (Dollar) | 7.7501 |
| | | Hungary (Forint) | 357.91 |
| | | Israel (Shekel) | 3.5877 |
| | | Japan (Yen) | 145.04 |
| | | Kuwait (Dinar) | 0.3066 |
| | | Norway (Krone) | 10.4116 |
| | | Philippines (Peso) | 55.67 |
| | | Poland (Zloty) | 3.78 |
| | | Saudi Arabia (Riyal) | 3.7502 |
| | | Singapore (Dollar) | 1.2983 |
| | | South Korea (Won) | 1401.54 |
| Switzerland (Franc) | 0.8271 | | |
| Thailand (Baht) | 33.13 | | |
| Turkey (NewLira) | 38.5661 | | |

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

| INTEREST RATES | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Prime rate | 7.50 |
| Interest Rates Discount rate | 4.50 |
| Federal funds market rate | 4.38 |
| 3-month bill | 4.32 |
| 30-year bond | 4.79 |

WEATHER OUTLOOK

MONDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



MONDAY IN EUROPE



TUESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



TODAY IN STRIPES

- American Roundup 18
- Classified 13
- Comics 17
- Crossword 17
- Faces 15
- Opinion 16
- Sports 19-24

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MILITARY

Army planning parade on Trump's birthday

DC celebration to mark 250 years for the service

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Army on Friday confirmed there will be a military parade on President Donald Trump's birthday in June, as part of the celebrations around the service's 250th birthday.

Plans for the parade, as first detailed by The Associated Press on Thursday, call for about 6,600 soldiers, 150 vehicles and 50 helicopters to follow a route from Arlington, Va., to the National Mall. Until recently, the Army's birthday festival plans did not include a massive parade, which officials say will cost tens of millions of dollars.

But Trump has long wanted a military parade, and discussions with the Pentagon about having one in conjunction with the birthday festival began less than two months ago.

The Army 250th birthday happens to coincide with Trump's 79th birthday on June 14. In a statement Friday, Army spokesman Steve Warren said the Army's birthday celebration will include "a spectacular fireworks display, a parade, and a daylong festival on the National Mall."

The pricey parade comes as Trump and his Department of Government Efficiency, run by Elon Musk, have slashed federal government departments, personnel and programs, with thousands of workers losing their jobs, including civilians in the Defense Department.

In comments to Fox News Dig-



CAROLYN KASTER/AP

President Donald Trump, pictured on screen with, from left, French President Emmanuel Macron and White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, watch a Bastille Day parade on the Champs Elysees avenue in Paris, on July 14, 2017.

ital, White House officials confirmed a commemorative parade would take place and said it would be one of the first events to kick off a yearlong celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary.

When asked about the parade Thursday, the White House did not respond, and Army officials said no decision had been made. While officials said there has now been a formal decision to proceed with the parade, there is still no specific cost estimate.

Warren said that given the significance of the Army birthday, they are looking at options "to

make the celebration even bigger, with more capability demonstrations, additional displays of equipment, and more engagement with the community."

Army planning documents, obtained last week by the AP and dated April 29 and 30, said the parade will include soldiers from at least 11 corps and divisions nationwide. They said it would involve a Stryker battalion with two companies of Stryker vehicles, a tank battalion and two companies of tanks, an infantry battalion with Bradley vehicles, Paladin artillery vehicles, Howitzers and in-

fantry vehicles.

The plans note that while the parade will begin near the Pentagon, the heavy, tracked vehicles — which would include the Strykers — would be stationed near the Lincoln Memorial and join the procession there, so they will not go over the bridge from Virginia

City officials, including D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, acknowledged in April that the administration reached out to the city about holding a parade on June 14. At the time, she said that tanks rolling through the city's streets "would not be good."

"If military tanks were used, they should be accompanied with many millions of dollars to repair the roads," she said.

The Army birthday festival has been planned for more than a year and is slated to include displays of Army equipment, military demonstrations, musical performances and a fitness competition on the National Mall.

The late afternoon parade would be followed by a parachute jump by the Golden Knights, a concert and the fireworks. The planning documents also suggest that civilian participants would include historical vehicles and aircraft and two bands, along with people from veterans groups, military colleges and reenactor organizations.

According to the plans, the parade would be classified as a national special security event, and that request has been submitted by the National Park Service and is under review.

During his first term, Trump proposed having a parade after seeing one in France on Bastille Day in 2017. Trump said that after watching the two-hour procession along the famed Champs-Elysees he wanted an even grander one on Pennsylvania Avenue.

That plan was ultimately dumped due to the huge costs — with one estimate of a \$92 million price tag — and other logistical issues. Among those were objections from city officials who said including tanks and other heavy armored vehicles would tear up the roads.

Trump said in a social media post in 2018 that he was canceling the event over the costs and accused local politicians of price gouging.

Airliners abort landings as Army helo takes 'scenic route' in DC

By **IAN DUNCAN**
AND **RACHEL WEINER**
The Washington Post

Two airliners abandoned landing attempts at Washington's Reagan National Airport on Thursday afternoon when an Army Black Hawk took a "scenic route" near the flight path and circled the Pentagon before landing at a military heliport, according to the Federal Aviation Administra-

tion.

The National Transportation Safety Board said it would investigate the incident.

The helicopter was part of the same brigade that was involved in the deadly Jan. 29 crash with an American Airlines jet. The unit had only resumed flights in the Washington region a little over week ago, according to Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash. Since the midair crash, the FAA has taken several steps designed to keep airliners and helicopters separate in the busy skies around National.

An FAA summary of Thursday's incident obtained by The Washington Post says the helicopter was not within newly restricted airspace and was following new rules requiring it to broadcast its location using a satellite-based system.

But Cantwell, the top Democrat

on the committee that oversees aviation, said the incident raises new questions about safety at the airport.

"It is outrageous that only three months after an Army Black Hawk helicopter tragically collided with a passenger jet, the same Army brigade again flew a helicopter too close to passenger jets on final approach at DCA," Cantwell said in a statement. "It is far past time for [Defense] Secretary [Pete] Hegseth and the FAA to give our airspace the security and safety attention it deserves."

Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., who chairs an aviation subcommittee, said officials needed to explain to lawmakers how they could ensure safety at the airport.

"We already had a tragedy that should not have happened," Moran said in a post on X.

The Army did not respond to a

request for comment on the incident.

The Black Hawk was heading to the Pentagon from Fort Belvoir in Virginia, according to flight tracking data. The FAA summary said that the helicopter appeared not to take the direct route from the west to the heliport at the Pentagon. Instead, it went around the Pentagon's south and east sides, potentially bringing it closer to the busy airport flight path, according to tracking data. The FAA said it would investigate whether that maneuver broke an agreement it had with the Army.

The first jet to abort its landing was a Delta Air Lines flight carrying 97 passengers and five crew from Orlando.

As it headed south down the Potomac River, the Army helicopter was inbound to the Pentagon's landing spot, tracking data from

Flightradar24 shows. An air traffic controller noticed that two aircraft were getting close and instructed the airliner to cancel its landing attempt, according to the FAA summary.

Then, as a Republic Airways flight was approaching, the helicopter's radar track jumped to a new location after being unresponsive for a couple of seconds, according to the summary. The Republic flight came within half a mile of the helicopter, which was 200 feet below. That jet was also told to abandon its landing attempt. The summary says the FAA is investigating the issue with the radar.

Republic and Delta said they would cooperate with the investigations. "Nothing is more important at Delta than the safety of our customers and people," the airline said in a statement.

Correction

A story in Friday's edition about F-16s in South Korea should have said the 80th and 35th Fighter Squadrons will remain active, though no airmen will be assigned to them in the future.

MIDEAST

USS Truman ordered to stay another week

BY CAITLYN BURCHETT

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The USS Harry S. Truman was ordered to stay in the Red Sea for another week, extending its deployment to continue fighting Houthi attacks, a U.S. defense official confirmed Friday.

The order for the aircraft carrier strike group to remain in the Middle East was handed down Thursday by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, according to the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The one-week extension will keep two carriers in the region for now. The San Diego-based USS Carl Vinson, which was operating in the Pacific, was ordered to sail to the Middle East, extending its deployment by three months.

The Truman has been deployed for more than seven months, departing Sept. 23 from Naval Station Norfolk, Va. The ship entered the Red Sea on Dec. 14 to defend against Houthi militant threats to shipping in the strategic waterway.

The Truman and its strike group have been part of American forces

striking more than 1,000 Houthi targets in Yemen as part of a campaign that began in March to stop attacks by the militants on the shipping lanes of the Red Sea. Since March 15, strikes conducted by U.S. Central Command, which oversees military operations in the Middle East, have killed Houthi fighters and leaders and degraded their capabilities, Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said Tuesday in a statement to mark the first 100 days of the Defense Department during President Donald Trump's second administration.

Adm. Jim Kilby, the acting chief of naval operations, briefly touted the Truman's success in the Red Sea during a keynote speech last week at the Modern Day Marine expo in Washington.

"The Harry S. Truman strike group has been crushing it — crushing it. I want to make sure when they come back, they feel that pride in their work," Kilby said as he appeared to struggle to withhold tears.

The aircraft carrier has made other headlines in recent months for its involvement in three inci-

dents — the loss of two fighter jets and a collision with a merchant ship.

A sailor was injured last week when a fighter jet and a towing tractor on the Truman fell overboard. Officials have said the crew lost control of the F/A-18E Super Hornet as the aircraft carrier made a "hard turn" while the jet was being towed in the hangar bay.

Additionally, two Navy aviators had to be rescued in December after the fighter jet that they were flying was shot down in an apparent "friendly fire" incident. The guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg, part of the Truman strike group, mistakenly fired on and hit the F/A-18 Super Hornet as it was flying off the carrier. The jet was responding to incoming one-way aerial attack drones and anti-ship cruise missiles threatening U.S. forces in the Red Sea.

The Truman and a merchant ship collided Feb. 12 while operating near Egypt's Port Said. The carrier sustained damage to a line handling space, its fantail and a platform above a storage space. The exterior walls of two storage rooms and a maintenance space al-



U.S. Navy

The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman sails in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility on April 4.

so were included in initial damage assessments.

Repairs and a thorough evaluation of Truman's hull, which was penetrated well above the waterline on its right back end, required a week stay at Souda Bay in Greece. Those repairs included removing damaged pieces of metal

and installing weatherproofing bulkheads, which are interior vertical walls that form compartments in a ship.

The incidents are being investigated, and the ship's commanding officer, Capt. Dave Snowden, was fired a little more than one week after the cargo ship collision.



OHAD ZWIGENBERG/AP

Israeli security forces inspect the site where the Israeli military said a projectile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels landed in the area of Ben-Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv, Israel, on Sunday.

Missile from Yemen halts flights in Israel

Associated Press

BEN-GURION INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Israel — A missile launched by Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen on Sunday briefly halted flights and commuter traffic at Israel's main international airport after an impact left a plume of smoke and caused panic among passengers.

The Houthi rebels have been striking Israel throughout the war in Gaza in solidarity with Palestinians. The attack on Ben-Gurion International Airport came hours

before top Israeli Cabinet ministers were set to vote on whether to intensify the country's military operations in the Gaza Strip. The army meanwhile began calling up thousands of reserves in anticipation of a wider operation in Gaza, officials said.

It was not immediately clear whether the projectile, which landed in a field near an access road leading to airport parking lots, was the missile or its fragments or an interceptor from Israel's air defense systems. It left a

deep crater in the ground and a nearby road was littered with dirt.

Police said that air, road and rail traffic were halted following the attack. The traffic resumed after about an hour, Israel Airports Authority said.

Israel's paramedic service Magen David Adom said four people were lightly wounded.

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said in a video statement that the group fired a hypersonic ballistic missile at the airport.

US airstrike in Yemen appears to have killed dozens at compound

The Washington Post

A U.S. airstrike in Yemen on April 28 appears to have killed at least three dozen people in a Houthi-run compound that human rights researchers say has been used for years as a detention center and at times for military purposes, according to images of the aftermath reviewed by The Washington Post.

Houthi rebels say at least 68 people were killed and dozens more were injured in what they said was a U.S. strike on a prison holding African migrants. The Post's analysis of visuals found at least 38 people who appeared to be dead and 32 injured, numbers that are almost certainly an undercount given the limited available imagery.

It is not clear from the videos who among the dead are civilians; no military equipment or garb is visible in any visuals reviewed by The Post. Visuals could be located from only one of the two buildings that were destroyed in the attack.

The Houthis have targeted American military forces in the Red Sea, as well as commercial vessels and Israeli military sites to protest the ongoing war in Gaza, which has killed many thousands of civilians. In mid-March, the

Trump campaign launched "Operation Rough Rider," targeting Houthi rebel leadership and infrastructure.

U.S. Central Command, which oversees U.S. operations in the Middle East, has not said what it was targeting in the recent strike but is "aware of the claims of civilian casualties" and is assessing them, a defense official has said.

The current functions of the compound in northwest Yemen could not be independently determined.

After Monday's strike, video released by the Houthi-owned al-Masirah television channel showed remnants of munitions and what appeared to be at least two craters where the building once stood. The visual evidence indicates multiple U.S.-manufactured GBU-39s were dropped, said Trevor Ball, a former Army explosive ordnance disposal technician. The guided munitions are designed to be capable of reducing risk to civilians with precision targeting and a relatively small size.

There are no clear signs in the images that the damaged building had any military use, Ball said. The foundation is basic concrete, and the inside appeared to be sleeping quarters.

MILITARY

Army to revamp force following Hegseth order

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The Army will cut 1,000 jobs from its main headquarters, shrink attack helicopter formations and lighten the load for infantry brigades, the service's top leaders said in a message to the force last week.

A letter sent to Army commands Thursday details a series of changes to force structure in line with a directive issued the day before by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

"This initiative will reexamine all requirements and eliminate unnecessary ones, ruthlessly prioritize fighting formations to directly contribute to lethality, and empower leaders at echelon to make hard calls to ensure resources align with strategic objectives," Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George and Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll wrote in the joint letter.

A second round of initiatives will be announced in the coming months, the two Army leaders said.

Called the Army Transforma-

tion Initiative, the effort is part of a plan to prepare soldiers for a battlefield where drones and emerging technologies are expected to dominate.

"Sensors and decoys are everywhere," the letter said. "Dual-use technologies are continuously evolving and outpacing our processes to defeat them. To maintain our edge on the battlefield, our Army will transform to a leaner, more lethal force by adapting how we fight, train, organize, and buy equipment."

At the tactical level, that means incorporating more drones into combat unit formations and putting less emphasis on manned aircraft.

To that end, the Army will reduce one aerial cavalry squadron per aviation brigade in the active component, George and Driscoll said. It also will consolidate aviation sustainment requirements.

Ground units will be adapted as well. All infantry brigade combat teams will be converted to mobile brigade combat teams, resulting in a leaner formation, according to



STEPHANIE SWEENEY/U.S. Army

Soldiers fire artillery on Oahu, Hawaii, in 2020. The Army will convert all infantry brigade combat teams to mobile brigade combat teams, according to a letter sent to Army commands on May 1, following a directive issued by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

the letter.

"We are trading weight for speed, and mass for decisive force," it said.

The letter didn't specify what the exact changes to brigade configurations would look like. However, trading weight and mass for speed means that such units are likely to have fewer tanks and other armored vehicles.

The changes center on organizing the Army to more effectively counter China in the Indo-Pacific, which is the Pentagon's top priority. As part of the force structure overhaul, soldier rotations to the

Pacific are expected to increase.

The Army leaders also reiterated some of the changes announced by Hegseth, including the merger of Army Futures Command and Training and Doctrine Command into one headquarters.

That "aligns force generation, force design, and force development under a single headquarters," the letter said.

Meanwhile, U.S. Army Forces Command will become Western Hemisphere Command through the consolidation of Army North and Army South.

Such moves will reduce the

number of general officers, which has been a priority for Hegseth.

The Army remains committed to introducing new long-range missiles and modernized unmanned systems into formations, George and Driscoll said. The service also will field the M1E3 tank as planned.

In addition, the Army will cancel procurement of "outdated crewed attack aircraft" such as older versions of the Apache helicopter and various tactical vehicles.

"Yesterday's weapons will not win tomorrow's wars," the leaders said.

Marines barracks uplift delayed by funding, hiring freeze

By CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Marine Corps' barracks improvement effort is being hindered by uncertain congressional funding and the federal hiring freeze as the service has pushed back its completion goal to at least 2037.

"[Our Marines] don't ask for much — just a decent, quiet place to lay their head at night. With a continuing resolution, all that comes to a screeching halt," Gen. Eric Smith, commandant of the Marine Corps, said Thursday at the Modern Day Marine expo in Washington.

With a price tag of about \$11 billion, the Marine Corps Barracks 2030 initiative aims to modernize unaccompanied housing for single Marines, streamline barracks maintenance and refresh furniture and appliances every 10 years.

The initiative, with an initial target completion of 2030, is now on track to have Marines in modernized barracks by 2037, service officials said last week.

But delays in funding, such as

the stopgap measure under which the federal government is operating, could push the completion date to as late as 2045.

Additionally, President Donald Trump implemented a federal hiring freeze in January that is preventing the Marine Corps Installations Command from hiring about 150 civilian housing specialists to do work now being done by Marines. Those specialists were slated to start in February but are unable to do so until the hiring freeze is lifted.

The federal government has been operating under a full-year continuing resolution since March 14, after lawmakers failed to agree on appropriations for fiscal 2025, which began Oct. 1.

The stopgap funding bill is a temporary extension of last year's funding, plus an additional \$6 billion for pay raises for junior troops as well as weapons purchases and operations.

"You can't hire the labor. You can't buy the building or materials. You can't start a new project. So, you continue to put lipstick on a pig, and you keep the old bar-

racks around for just another year, and another year, and another year," Smith said.

About 17,000 junior enlisted Marines were living in squalid barracks as of 2023, according to the Government Accountability Office, a federal watchdog. During barracks inspections at various installations, the GAO observed mold, pests, sewage issues, and extreme temperatures.

With questions about long-term funding, the Marine Corps is doing what it can now to improve the barracks, service officials said. Eric Mason, unaccompanied housing team lead for the Marine Corps Installations Command, said Wednesday that the number of Marines living in poor conditions was lower than 17,000 now.

"I can only tell you that number has decreased, and it will continue to decrease. Once we get out to our potential 2030 — or 2035, 2037 — [completion date], that number should hopefully go away," Mason said.

The service has 11 ongoing renovation projects, with 12 more in the pipeline. Additionally, pro-

grams are being rolled out at Marine Corps bases that are collecting data on streamlining maintenance and improving barracks security.

The service launched a pilot program in March at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., that installed common access card-enabled door locks on nine barracks. A common access card is the standard identification for active-duty troops.

The program at Beaufort is meant to provide better security for troops, as they swipe into their private rooms rather than using a key or a key card. Troops also must swipe into common areas in the barracks buildings.

The program will run for one year before it potentially expands to other installations. If approved by the Defense Department, Mason said CAC-enabled locks would likely not become standard for Marine barracks until at least 2027.

The Marine Corps also rolled out a program for troops living in barracks to submit maintenance requests to building managers to

streamline repairs for issues such as leaks, mold and pests. The online portal is already seeing widespread use, capturing 1,000 requests per week.

"As someone from public works, that's a bit of a concern. We want to get that number down. We don't want the main source of things that need to be fixed in the building to be the Marines seeing the problem," said Jason Canfield, program manager for QSRMax, the new service portal that Marines use to register maintenance requests.

While the service initially aimed to make certain current junior enlisted Marines would see improved barracks conditions, the new timeline for 2037 or later means they might not benefit from the Barracks 2030 initiative. But service officials said fixing the barracks remains a top priority.

"When you start hearing Marines say, 'I am going to my home' [when] referring to barracks — I think that's a great way to measure the success that we have had on improving the quality of life," Mason said.

PACIFIC

Navy secretary tours S. Korean shipyards

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

Secretary of the Navy John Phelan visited South Korea as part of his first international tour since taking office, meeting with senior officials and touring two of the country's largest shipyards.

Phelan met Wednesday with acting Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and Adm. Yang Yong-mo, the South Korean navy's chief of staff. The meetings focused on strengthening U.S.-South Korea-Japan defense cooperation, the Navy said in a news release that day.

Han, who announced his resignation Thursday, also discussed enhanced collaboration in high-end technology and shipbuilding and addressed concerns over "increased aggression" from China, according to the release.

Han is widely expected to run in

the June presidential election following the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol in December. Yoon was dismissed from office after a failed attempt to impose martial law.

Phelan, a vocal advocate for expanding U.S. shipbuilding capacity, has expressed interest in joint ventures with allies. His itinerary included visits to two of South Korea's top shipbuilders, Hanwha Ocean Shipbuilding and HD Hyundai Heavy Industries.

During a stop in Japan ahead of his South Korea visit, Phelan described the South's shipyards as "very, very efficient."

"I'm eager to kind of see how they are set up and see if there are any ideas we can take from them and pass on to our colleagues in America," he told *Stars and Stripes* on April 28 at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.

In South Korea, Phelan said cooperation with local shipyards is critical for keeping U.S. naval assets operational in the Indo-Pacific.

"Leveraging the expertise of these highly capable shipyards enables timely maintenance and repairs for our vessels to operate at peak performance," he said in Wednesday's release.

Hanwha recently completed repairs on the dry cargo ship USNS Wally Schirra — the first Military Sealift Command vessel repaired in South Korea, according to the Navy. The replenishment oiler USNS Yukon is also undergoing maintenance there.

HD Hyundai recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Huntington Ingalls Industries, the largest U.S. shipbuilder, to explore joint efforts in accelerating defense and commercial ship



U.S. Navy

Navy Secretary John Phelan, second from left, tours HD Hyundai Heavy Industries in Ulsan, South Korea, on Wednesday.

production, according to an April 7 news release from Huntington Ingalls.

Phelan began his trip last Monday in Japan, where he toured Ja-

pan Marine United's Isogo Works shipyard in Yokohama and met with senior Japanese officials, including Defense Minister Gen Nakatani.



South Korean navy

Crew members aboard a South Korean frigate prepare to depart for a naval exercise last Monday.

S. Korean navy stages 2-sea, 2-fleet exercise as North flexes new warship

By YOOJIN LEE
Stars and Stripes

The South Korean navy concluded a four-day maritime exercise designed to bolster combat readiness and "uplift the will to fight for victory," as North Korea tested weapons on its newly launched destroyer.

The drills, held April 28 through Thursday, took place in the East Sea — also known as the Sea of Japan — and in the East China Sea. Approximately 20 warships and 10 aircraft were involved, according to a South Korean navy news release Friday.

The exercise featured realistic training in anti-ship, anti-submarine and anti-aircraft warfare, as

well as responses to drone threats and maritime interdiction operations, the navy said.

Three frigates, a minelayer, a logistics support vessel, patrol boats and speed boats took part, along with a P-3 maritime patrol aircraft and Lynx helicopters, according to the release.

The drills were led by the South Korean navy's 2nd and 3rd fleets, which focused on building operational readiness in their respective theaters and preparing for various naval threats, the service said.

South Korea's coast guard and maritime special operations forces also participated in what the navy described as a comprehensive

readiness demonstration.

"Through this exercise, all crew members could acquire combat readiness to quickly and accurately respond to threats in real combat," Cmdr. Im Hyun-sik of the frigate ROKS Gyeongnam said in the release.

Meanwhile, North Korea test-fired a range of weapons aboard its new destroyer, the Choe Hyon, on April 28 and 29 following the ship's launch at Nampho Shipyard, according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

The vessel reportedly fired a supersonic cruise missile, a strategic cruise missile, an anti-aircraft missile, and a 127 mm automatic naval gun.

US, S. Korea rehearse response to threats targeting satellites

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Space Forces Korea recently participated in its first space-defense tabletop exercise alongside South Korean government and military space experts, including representatives from the Ministry of National Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Polaris Lynx brought together 40 participants to simulate responses to threats targeting satellites, according to a Friday news release from the Joint Chiefs.

Scenarios included enemies jamming the GPS system and threatening satellites with close-up maneuvers, the release said. It also incorporated elements from recent global events and considered the strategic and diplomatic implications of defensive space operations.

The exercise featured "an in-depth discussion on mutual defense capabilities development against hostile spatial threats," according to the release.

"Polaris Lynx was a fantastic success story, bringing together the U.S. and [South Korea] for an effective table-top exercise, focusing primarily on the improvement of command and control within the Space Domain," Air Force Maj. Rachel Buitrago, U.S. Space Forces Korea spokeswoman, said Friday.

The exercise enhanced the allies' combined ability to respond to threats in space and demonstrated the Space Force role in USFK, she said.

The event comes amid growing concerns over space security in the

region. North Korea has continued attempts to expand its satellite fleet, which includes three now in orbit. The country failed three times last year and twice in 2023 to launch additional satellites.

South Korea, by contrast, has successfully launched four military surveillance satellites, most recently on April 22 aboard a SpaceX rocket from Cape Canaveral, Fla.

U.S. Space Forces Korea, established in December 2022, plays a key role in monitoring North Korean missile activity, including tracking and identifying launches using surveillance satellites. In March 2023, the unit's first commander, Lt. Col. Joshua McCullion, outlined its mission to identify missiles during their preparation phase.

Space Forces Korea has taken part in other joint exercises on the peninsula, including the large-scale Freedom Shield drills.

Polaris Lynx stemmed from a November meeting of the Space Cooperation Working Group in Washington, D.C., where officials from the U.S. and South Korea agreed to hold joint counter-space threat training.

South Korean agencies participating included the Joint Chiefs and other military officials, experts from the Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Korea AeroSpace Administration, Korea Aerospace Research Institute and the Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoojin Lee contributed to this report.

PACIFIC

F-35C pilot earns Marine Corps' aviator award

By BRIAN McELHINEY
Stars and Stripes

Maj. Zachary Sessa didn't expect to fly combat missions when he deployed last summer aboard the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln with the Marine Corps' first F-35C Lightning II squadron.

But on Nov. 9 and 10, Sessa led the stealth fighter's first combat sorties, targeting Houthi weapons storage facilities in Yemen. The Iranian-backed group had been attacking military and civilian vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Sessa's role in the mission earned him the Alfred A. Cunningham Award, named for the Marines' first aviator, and the title of Marine Aviator of the Year, according to an April 23 news release from the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

His unit — Fighter Attack Squadron 314, based at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. — was also named Marine Fighter Attack Squadron of the Year.

It was embarked with Carrier Air Wing 9 aboard the Abraham Lincoln between July 11 and Dec. 14.

After leaving its homeport, the carrier was informed it would operate in the 5th Fleet's area of responsibility, Sessa told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday. The fleet oversees operations in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean.

That was when "the possibility



U.S. Marine Corps

Maj. Zachary Sessa, an F-35C Lightning II pilot with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314, was recently named Marine Aviator of the Year for leading the aircraft's first combat sorties in Yemen.

of combat operations certainly came to the table," he said from Yuma, Ariz., where he is now an F-35 instructor pilot.

"This wasn't my first deployment in an F-35," he said, "but it was my first flying combat sorties, so it was a challenging experience to learn a completely different [area of responsibility]."

Sessa, 33, of Butler, Pa., also

served as the Marines' first F-35C weapons and tactics instructor during the deployment, according to the release.

The F-35C, used by both the Navy and Marine Corps, is a long-range, carrier-capable strike fighter, according to manufacturer Lockheed Martin.

Sessa said he flew the combat missions at night, which required

changes to his sleep schedule.

"A lot of these challenges were things that I was familiar with from a previous deployment that I hadn't even really thought about," he said. "But as we started executing these operations, they became increasingly important because fatigue certainly sets in."

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Davis, the 314th's commander during the de-

ployment, credited Sessa with the squadron's success.

"Maj. Sessa's integral role in unprecedented combat strikes and his contribution to mission success is a testament to his leadership, experience, and proficiency, forever etched in Black Knight history," Davis said Thursday.

A third-generation aviator, Sessa comes from a family of pilots. His father, retired Pennsylvania National Guard Capt. Michael Sessa, flew the A-7D Corsair attack plane. His grandfather, retired Marine Ron Sessa, later became a commercial pilot.

"My grandfather owned a little plane for a while, and I remember I was probably 9 or 10 going out there and flying around with my dad and grandfather," Zachary Sessa said.

He said an internship at the Pentagon while attending the College of Wooster in Ohio helped him decide to serve. He was commissioned in March 2015.

During the deployment, Sessa said he helped train six F-35 section leads, three division leads, two air combat maneuvering instructors, one Lightning tactics instructor, two low-altitude tactics instructors and one F-35 mission commander.

"It's not just a couple pilots out there flying an F-35," he said. "There is a massive network of assets and efforts that [are] taking place to allow these sorties to occur."

Authorities face protests over military misconduct on Okinawa

By BRIAN McELHINEY
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

NAHA CITY, Okinawa — Okinawa's prefectural government lodged formal protests Friday with Japanese and U.S. authorities following a Marine's indictment in an alleged sexual assault — the fourth such case involving American service members on the island in the past year.

Vice Gov. Takekuni Ikeda delivered protest letters signed by Gov. Denny Tamaki to Shinya Ito, director of the Okinawa Defense Bureau and Ambassador Manabu Miyagawa of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Okinawa Liaison Office. Ikeda, Ito and Miyagawa made statements but did not take questions from reporters.

Later in the day, Ikeda presented a similar letter to Maj. Gen. Brian Wolford, commander of Marine Corps Installations Pacific, and U.S. Consul General Andrew Ou during a meeting at Camp Foster, a spokeswoman for the prefecture's Military Base Affairs Division said by phone Friday.

It is customary for Japanese

government officials to speak to the media only on the condition of anonymity.

A spokesman for the command, Marine 1st Lt. Grant Hoel, confirmed the meeting took place but declined further comment by phone Friday.

The protests were spurred by Wednesday's indictment of Marine Pfc. Austin R. Wedington on charges of sexually assaulting a Japanese woman on Foster in March and injuring another woman who tried to intervene. The first woman is a civilian employee on a U.S. base, Japanese public broadcaster NHK reported April 24.

Copies of both letters were distributed to reporters following the morning meeting in Naha.

The letter to U.S. officials demands a review of military training and educational programs, enhanced disciplinary measures, implementation of further preventative steps, protection for base employees, and compensation for the victims.

"This incident has had a tremendous impact on [Japanese employees], questioning whether they can go to work safely," Ikeda

said.

Roughly 9,000 Japanese are employed at American bases on Okinawa.

Friday's protest is the latest in a series of official objections raised by Japanese authorities since June. Prior efforts included petitions from governors across Japan, meetings with U.S. diplomats, and direct communications from Tamaki to U.S. commanders.

On Wednesday, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Takehiro Funakoshi conveyed "strong regret" over Wedington's indictment to U.S. Ambassador to Japan George Glass in Tokyo, Miyagawa said. Glass also met with Defense Minister Gen Nakatani on Monday, according to a post on the ministry's official X account.

Three other sexual assault cases involving U.S. service members have been handled by Okinawa courts in the past year.

In December, Air Force Senior Airman Brennon R.E. Washington was convicted of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a minor. He is appealing his five-year prison sentence. Two other Marines are awaiting trial in separate cas-



KEISHI KOJA/Stars and Stripes

Okinawa Vice Gov. Takekuni Ikeda, right, speaks with Ambassador Manabu Miyagawa (green shirt), of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Okinawa Liaison Office, and Shinya Ito, director of the Okinawa Defense Bureau, after delivering a protest letter Friday at the prefecture's office in Naha.

es of sexual assault and attempted sexual assault.

In response to rising concerns, U.S. Forces Japan in October implemented liberty restrictions prohibiting troops from visiting off-base drinking establishments between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.

"The repeated occurrence of sexual assaults by service members not only casts strong doubts

on the effectiveness of these measures but also raises serious questions about the state of discipline within the U.S. military on Okinawa," Friday's letters stated.

The first formal forum for cooperation between the U.S. military and Okinawan leaders is slated for May 9 at Foster, according to an unsigned statement from USFJ on Friday.

MILITARY

Yokota school opens pair of time capsules

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A brick-sized cellphone, a Pokemon card and a purple Teletubbies toy were among the items pulled from a pair of time capsules buried a quarter-century ago in a schoolyard at this airlift hub in western Tokyo.

Three former pupils returned to Joan K. Mendel Elementary on Friday to help hundreds of current students and faculty crack open the capsules in the school's assembly hall.

Items recovered included a Nokia cellphone with a retractable antenna; a Michael Jordan basketball card; memorabilia from Pokemon, "The Lion King" and Teletubbies; LEGO and other building blocks; a Snoopy figurine; a Beanie Babies elephant; a yo-yo; a computer disk; and a collection of kindergarteners' handprints.

There was also a first edition of Stars and Stripes for the new millennium, dated Jan. 1, 2000. It included a lead story about ID checks at the Yokota commissary, which was also the subject of a letter to the editor. The 40-page newspaper also featured an article about former Beatle George Harrison being attacked by an intruder in his mansion, and a cartoon about doomsday preppers riding out the turn of the millennium in a bunker.

Fifth-grader Lillie Hawkins was among the youngsters cheering as the items were removed from the long, metal tubes. A stuffed purple Tinky Winky Teletubbies toy was the most surprising thing recovered, she told Stars and Stripes at the event.

"I hate the Teletubbies — they are creepy and scary," she said. "I didn't know they were popular 25 years ago."

The Beanie Babies elephant interested fourth-grader Caroline Martin, who has "too many to count" of the pellet-filled plushies.

Caroline brought a recorder to the event, noting that she can play the song "Hot Cross Buns" on it. The instrument is one of several items — including a recent copy of Stars and Stripes — that students



A pair of time capsules were buried at the school in 2000.

plan to place inside another time capsule to be buried for another quarter-century.

Melissa Yu was among the former students who returned to help reveal the treasures.

"I don't remember what's in this capsule other than Pokemon cards and a cellphone," she told the kids ahead of the unveiling.

In the years since she left Yokota, Yu served briefly in the Air Force and traveled to all seven continents. She works as a talent agent in Atlanta and is going back to law school on the GI bill, she told the children.

Yokota's acting deputy commander, Lt. Col. Stephen Pituch, told the students he was a senior airman fixing aircraft when the capsules were buried. Back then people used paper maps instead of satellite navigation to find their way around, he said.

"There were no iPhones ... there was no Facebook ... no YouTube," he added. "How would you live? It was so hard."

The Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, which happened about a year after the capsules were buried, changed "how we act and how we respond to things," Pituch told the children.

Another former student, Michael Visnyei, didn't have to travel far for the event. He works at Yokota's Kanto Lodge.

Another former student, Nashville pizza shop owner Andrew King, said he'd been planning to see the capsules opened since they were buried on May 2, 2000.

The trip to Yokota was a chance to show his wife, Jessica, who came with him, one of the places where he grew up as the son of a soldier, he added.



PHOTOS BY JOSHUA L. DEMOTT/Stars and Stripes

Former Joan K. Mendel Elementary students open a time capsule they helped create and bury a quarter-century ago at the school on Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Friday. They are from right, Melissa Yu, Andrew King, and his wife, Jessica.



Students, faculty and others gather for the time capsule's opening at Joan K. Mendel Elementary School.

DODEA school in Germany addresses concerning lead levels

By MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — An Army garrison in Bavaria is replacing faucets at a Defense Department school after four sinks there registered elevated lead levels.

The readings were taken at Ansbach Elementary School on Katterbach Kaserne in early April during annual water quality tests, U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach spokesman Nathan Van Schaik said Friday.

Lead was not found in any of the

school's designated drinking fountains or bottle-filling stations, which are equipped with high-quality filters, Van Schaik said. The school notified parents Wednesday.

"If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 10 parts per billion (0.01 milligrams per liter), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends taking action to reduce the lead," Van Schaik said.

The elevated levels were found in rooms 16A, 35A, 46A, and 109C,

Van Schaik said. The respective readings were 0.05, 0.026, 0.017 and 0.026 milligrams per liter. Information on whether those rooms are used for classes wasn't available Friday.

Results of the testing came back April 24, Van Schaik said, and base commander Col. Aaron Southard issued a memo to the community Tuesday.

The base posted "no drinking" signs at all sinks until further testing could be done, Southard wrote in the memo.

It also started replacing faucets in the affected rooms and at the school at large. Follow-up testing on all school sinks and drinking fountains was scheduled for Saturday.

Three family housing units at Katterbach also registered lead levels above the EPA threshold and had their kitchen faucets replaced, Van Schaik said.

Lead usually enters the water system when lead plumbing materials corrode, the EPA website states. It is seen mostly in the U.S. in

older cities and homes.

Ansbach Elementary opened in 1986 and accommodates students through fifth grade.

Testing on base takes place in family housing areas and places with children under age 6 at least once within a five-year cycle, Van Schaik said. Sampling takes place at the school annually.

The EPA has a maximum contaminant level goal of zero for lead in drinking water because the substance is toxic to humans, and particularly to children.

MILITARY

Budget: Some Republicans push back on 'underinvestment'**FROM PAGE 1**

cies, including certain nuclear programs run by the Department of Energy.

OMB Director Russel Vought indicated the \$1 trillion defense budget would include a separate funding package under consideration now in Congress that would provide the Pentagon about \$150 billion to invest in shipbuilding, a layered missile defense shield and other defense priorities.

Republicans are pushing that bill through Congress using the reconciliation process, which will allow them to bypass Democratic opposition and pass the legislation with a simple majority vote.

But Wicker and other Republicans blasted the Trump administration for including those funds in its \$1 trillion proposal. Wicker said he would work to increase Pentagon spending for 2026 over the White House proposal.

"This budget would decrease President Trump's military options and his negotiating leverage," Wicker said in his statement. "We face an axis of aggressors led by the Chinese Communist Party, who have already started a trade war rather than negotiate in good faith. We need a real peace

through strength agenda to ensure [China's President] Xi Jinping does not launch a military war against us in Asia, beyond his existing military support to the Russians, the Iranians, Hamas, and the Houthis."

The House Armed Services Committee's chairman, Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., also pledged to find ways to increase military spending over the skinny budget proposal.

He wrote in a statement that he was concerned the U.S. defense industrial base could not handle the challenge of a prolonged conflict with a near-peer adversary after years of flat Pentagon budgets and a full-year continuing resolution for fiscal 2025.

"This all stems from chronic underinvestment in our national security, which is being driven by OMB bureaucrats," Rogers said. "We are currently at the lowest level of defense spending as a percentage of GDP since before World War II. That is no longer sustainable in the threat environment we face."

Other Republican senators also expressed concerns about the defense spending level, including Sen. Mitch McConnell of Ken-

tucky and Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, who is the chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

McConnell called the inclusion of the proposed supplemental funds in the White House budget "a gimmick." Collins charged the budget proposal was late and lacking needed detail.

"Based on my initial review, however, I have serious objections to the proposed freeze in our defense funding given the security challenges we face," she wrote. "... Ultimately, it is Congress that holds the power of the purse."

The White House proposal also showed dramatic cuts to non-defense federal spending.

Trump wants to cut non-defense spending by about \$163 billion in fiscal 2026 with cuts to almost all the federal departments. The Defense Department and the Department of Homeland Defense would see slight funding increases under the proposal.

The skinny budget release indicates the Pentagon intends to provide a 3.8% boost to pay for service members, fund Trump's proposed Golden Dome homeland missile defense program, increase spending on shipbuilding infrastructure



SHELBY WEST/Norfolk Naval Shipyard

USS Toledo returned to the fleet April 19, following successful completion of its engineered overhaul at Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

and projects, continue efforts to modernize nuclear weapons programs and move forward with the F-47 Next Generation Air Dominance program to build a sixth-generation fighter jet.

The budget information released does not indicate how much funding the Pentagon will

propose for any of those or other individual projects.

It was not clear Friday when the White House would release its full fiscal 2026 budget proposal. Officials at the Pentagon deferred comment to the White House, which did not immediately respond to an inquiry.

Zone: Troops can detain in new area**FROM PAGE 1**

It is considered part of Fort Bliss, which is in the west Texas city. Stryker armored combat vehicles deployed from Fort Carson, Colo., to work in the area will monitor the El Paso defense area using cameras at stationary points and on mobile patrols, Carmichael said.

Soldiers have also begun to hang signs on the land to warn people they are entering a military base, he said.

"The establishment of a second National Defense Area increases our operational reach and effectiveness in denying illegal activity along the southern border," said Air Force Gen. Gregory Guillot, NORTHCOM commander. "This is the second area in which Joint Task Force — Southern Border service members who are already detecting and monitoring through stationary positions and mobile patrols nearby can now temporarily detain trespassers until they are transferred to an appropriate law enforcement entity."

The land in New Mexico is part of the Roosevelt Reservation and was acquired by the Army from the Department of the Interior. The Army will hold ownership for three years, the service said.

Troops working in these zones can detain, search and offer medical aid to those found in it and then contact federal agents to col-



CRIST JOSEPH/Department of Defense

U.S. soldiers assigned to Joint Task Force — Southern Border patrol along the southern border, at Fort Bliss, Texas, on March 23.

lect them.

Troops working outside the zones are only able to monitor and report potential illegal activity back to Customs and Border Protection.

Roughly 6,600 soldiers and Marines are working along the southwest border.

Military deployments to support Customs and Border Protection first began in 2018 during President Donald Trump's first term and continued under former

President Joe Biden with about 2,500 National Guard at the border at the end of his administration.

When Trump returned to office in January, he ordered active-duty forces to the mission. So far, more than 4,000 have deployed to the border.

Trump ordered the creation of the military border zones last month to get around laws that prohibit the military from conducting civilian law enforcement.

Mexico rejects Trump plan to send troops across border

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Saturday that President Donald Trump proposed sending American troops into Mexico to help her administration fight drug trafficking but that she rejected it.

Her remarks to supporters in eastern Mexico came in response to a Wall Street Journal article published the day before, describing a tense phone call last month in which Trump reportedly pressured her to accept a bigger role for the U.S. military in combating drug cartels in Mexico.

"He said, 'How can we help you fight drug trafficking? I propose that the United States military come in and help you.' And you know what I said to him? 'No, President Trump.'"

She added: "Sovereignty is not for sale. Sovereignty is loved and defended."

White House National Security Council spokesman James Hewitt said in a statement later Saturday that Trump has worked closely with Mexico's president "to achieve the most secure southwest border in history."

"Dangerous Foreign Terrorist Organizations, however, continue to threaten our shared security and the drugs and crime they spread threaten American communities across the country," the

statement said.

"The President has been crystal clear that Mexico must do more to combat these gangs and cartels and the United States stands ready to assist and expand the already close cooperation between our two countries."

The U.S. military presence has increased steadily along its southern border with Mexico in recent months, following Trump's order in January to increase the army's role in stemming the flow of migrants.

The U.S. Northern Command has surged troops and equipment to the border, increased manned surveillance flights to monitor fentanyl trafficking along the border and sought expanded authority for U.S. Special Forces to work closely with Mexican forces in conducting operations against cartels.

Trump designated many of the gangs and cartels smuggling drugs into the U.S. as foreign terrorist organizations on Feb. 19, restricting their movements and lending law enforcement more resources to act against them.

But Sheinbaum's hardline stance Saturday signaled that U.S. pressure for unilateral military intervention would put her and Trump on a collision course after months of cooperation on immigration and trade.

NATION

Trump seeks to rename Veterans Day to honor WWI

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump wants to change the name of Veterans Day to “Victory Day for World War I,” saying it would better highlight American military achievement.

In a late-night post Thursday on Truth Social, Trump also said he would make May 8 “Victory Day for World War II.” The war ended

in Europe on May 8, 1945, and on Sept. 2 that same year in the Pacific.

“We won both Wars, nobody was close to us in terms of strength, bravery, or military brilliance, but we never celebrate anything,” Trump said. “That’s because we don’t have leaders anymore, that know how to do so! We are going to start celebrating our victories

again!”

Trump did not say whether he intends to designate May 8 as a new federal holiday, which would require approval by Congress.

Veterans Day, celebrated on Nov. 11, was established in 1938 as Armistice Day.

It was broadened in 1954 to honor Americans who fought in World War II and the Korean War. Con-

gress that year passed legislation to change the name of the holiday to Veterans Day. The bill was signed into law by President Dwight Eisenhower.

It was made a federal holiday in 1968, and in the years since, veterans of subsequent wars have been honored on that day.

Across Europe, countries will celebrate V-E Day on Thursday,

marking 80 years since the end of WWII in Europe.

Some 416,000 U.S. troops died across theaters during WWII, according to the National World War II Museum.

The Soviet Union also lost roughly 10 million troops in combat during the war. The defeat of Nazi Germany is celebrated on May 9 in Russia.

Cuts have eliminated many health-tracking programs

By MIKE STOBBE
Associated Press

NEW YORK — U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s motto is “Make America Healthy Again,” but government cuts could make it harder to know if that’s happening.

More than a dozen data-gathering programs that track deaths and disease appear to have been eliminated in the tornado of layoffs and proposed budget cuts rolled out in the Trump administration’s first 100 days.

The Associated Press examined draft and final budget proposals and spoke to more than a dozen current and former federal employees to determine the scope of the cuts to programs tracking basic facts about Americans’ health.

Among those terminated at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were experts tracking abortions, pregnancies, job-related injuries, lead poisonings, sexual violence and youth smoking, the AP found.

“If you don’t have staff, the program is gone,” said Patrick Breyse, who used to oversee the CDC’s environmental health programs.

Federal officials have not given a public accounting of specific surveillance programs that are being eliminated.

Instead, a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services spokeswoman pointed the AP to a Trump administration budget proposal released Friday. It lacked specifics, but proposes to cut the CDC’s core budget by more than half and vows to focus CDC surveillance only on emerging and infectious dis-



BEN GRAY/AP

Demonstrators hold a rally in support of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in front of the agency’s headquarters in Atlanta, last month, after layoffs were announced. Among those terminated at the CDC were experts tracking abortions, pregnancies, job-related injuries, lead poisonings, sexual violence and youth smoking, The Associated Press found.

eases.

Kennedy has said some of the CDC’s other work will be moved to a yet-to-be-created agency, the Administration for a Healthy America. He also has said that the cuts are designed to get rid of waste at a department that has seen its budget grow in recent years.

“Unfortunately, this extra spending and staff has not improved our nation’s health as a country,” Kennedy wrote last month in *The New York Post*. “Instead, it has only created more waste, administrative bloat and duplication.”

Yet some health experts say the eliminated programs are not duplicative, and erasing them will leave Americans in the dark.

“If the U.S. is interested in making itself healthier again, how is it going to know, if it cancels the programs that helps us understand these diseases?” said Graham Mooney, a Johns Hopkins University public health historian.

The core of the nation’s health surveillance is done by the CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics. Relying on birth and death certificates, it generates information

on birth rates, death trends and life expectancy. It also operates long-standing health surveys that provide basic data on obesity, asthma and other health issues.

The center has been barely touched in layoffs, and seems intact under current budget plans. But many other efforts were targeted by the cuts, the AP found.

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, which surveys women across the country, lost its entire staff — about 20 people. It’s the most comprehensive collection of data on the health behaviors and

outcomes before, during and after childbirth. Researchers have been using its data to investigate the nation’s maternal mortality problem.

Recent layoffs also wiped out the staffs collecting data on in vitro fertilizations and abortions.

The CDC also eliminated its program on lead poisoning in children, which helped local health departments — through funding and expertise — investigate lead poisoning clusters and find where risk is greatest.

The staff and funding seems to have remained intact for a CDC data collection that provides insights into homicides, suicides and accidental deaths involving weapons. But CDC violence-prevention programs that acted on that information were halted. So, too, was work on a system that collects hospital data on nonfatal injuries from causes such as shootings, crashes and drownings.

Also going away, apparently, is the CDC’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey. The system is designed to pick up information that’s not found in law enforcement statistics.

Further, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, which tracks job-related illnesses and deaths and makes recommendations on how to prevent them, was gutted by the cuts.

The HHS cuts eliminated the 17-member team responsible for the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, one of the main ways the government measures drug use. Also axed were the CDC staff working on the National Youth Tobacco Survey.

Trump draws criticism with AI image of himself as the pope

Associated Press

NEW YORK — President Donald Trump posted an artificial intelligence-generated image of himself dressed as pope as the mourning of Pope Francis continues and just days before the conclave to elect his successor is set to begin. Trump’s action drew rebukes from a group representing Catholic bishops in New York and among Italians.

The image, shared Friday night on Trump’s Truth Social site and

later reposted by the White House on its official X account, raised eyebrows on social media and at the Vatican, which is still in the period of nine days of official mourning following Francis’ death on April 21. Catholic cardinals have been celebrating daily Masses in his memory and are due to open the conclave to elect his successor on Wednesday.

The death of a pope and election of another is a matter of utmost solemnity for Catholics, for whom the pope is Christ’s vicar on Earth. That

is all the more true in Italy, where the papacy is held in high esteem even by nonreligious Italians.

The image featuring Trump in a white cassock and pointed miter, or bishop’s hat, was the topic of several questions during the Vatican’s daily conclave briefing Saturday. Italian and Spanish news reports lamented its poor taste and said it was offensive, given that the period of official mourning is still underway.

The Vatican spokesman, Matteo Bruni, declined to comment.

In the United States, the New York State Catholic Conference, which represents the bishops of the state in working with government, accused Trump of mockery.

“There is nothing clever or funny about this image, Mr. President,” they wrote. “We just buried our beloved Pope Francis and the cardinals are about to enter a solemn conclave to elect a new successor of St. Peter. Do not mock us.”

Italy’s left-leaning *La Repubblica* also featured the image on its

homepage Saturday with a commentary accusing Trump of “pathological megalomania.”

Asked to respond to the criticism, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said that, “President Trump flew to Italy to pay his respects for Pope Francis and attend his funeral, and he has been a staunch champion for Catholics and religious liberty.”

The episode comes after Trump joked last week about his interest in the vacancy.

NATION

Judge strikes down Trump order on law firm

By MARK BERMAN
The Washington Post

A federal judge on Friday struck down President Donald Trump's executive order aimed at the law firm Perkins Coie, saying his actions were an unconstitutional effort to punish the firm for taking on clients and cases he dislikes.

The ruling marked the first time a judge has permanently blocked one of Trump's orders targeting a law firm.

"No American President has ever before issued executive orders like the one at issue in this lawsuit targeting a prominent law firm with adverse actions," U.S. District Judge Beryl A. Howell wrote in a scathing 102-page opinion. The case, she said, "presents an unprecedented attack" on the importance of independent lawyers.

It was unclear whether the

Trump administration planned to appeal Howell's ruling. The White House and Justice Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday evening.

Trump has issued several executive orders punishing prominent law firms with ties to his perceived opponents.

He directed that firms lose government contracts and their employees be blocked from entering government buildings, interacting with government officials or being hired for government jobs.

Perkins Coie was the first of four law firms targeted by Trump to file lawsuits challenging his actions.

Judges at least temporarily blocked most of Trump's punishments for those firms; they are all seeking to have his orders entirely struck down.

Nine other powerful law firms, seeking to avoid Trump's wrath, reached agreements with the Trump administration.

These firms, which include some of the wealthiest in the country, pledged a combined nearly \$1 billion in pro bono work for causes the administration said it supports, including helping veterans.

Trump's penalties for some firms and deals with others have roiled the legal profession in recent months. Attorneys across the country have been enraged by his actions and angered by firms reaching agreements, and several have left places that made deals in protest.

Firms that made deals have, in some cases, described them as necessary to stay in business, and several said the administration will not decide which cases they take up.

Lawyers at firms—including some that made deals—said they were skeptical of those words. Trump, meanwhile, has boasted about the firms cutting deals with him, suggesting putting them to work on other issues, including trade negotiations.

Perkins Coie and the other firms challenging Trump's orders in court—WilmerHale, Jenner & Block and Susman Godfrey—have received an outpouring of support from across the legal community, with hundreds of other firms and attorneys backing their efforts. In Perkins Coie's case, Trump had accused the firm of "dishonest and dangerous activity" and pointed to its representation of the campaign of Hillary Clinton, his opponent in the 2016 presidential election.

The law firm said in court papers that Trump's punishments placed

its ability to represent clients and stay in business "under direct and imminent threat."

In a statement Friday, Perkins Coie said Howell's ruling "affirms core constitutional freedoms all Americans hold dear, including free speech, due process, and the right to select counsel without the fear of retribution."

Howell had previously appeared deeply skeptical of Trump's order targeting the firm. She temporarily blocked portions of his penalties in March, saying during a hearing: "It sends little chills down my spine."

In her opinion released Friday evening, Howell laced into Trump's order at much greater length.

Howell said Trump targeted the firm because it had represented clients he disliked or people who had challenged some of his actions, among other reasons.

Stations targeted for cuts provided lifelines during disasters

By JOHN RABY
AND JAMIE STENGLE
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — After Hurricane Helene devastated Asheville, N.C., the sound coming from open car windows as residents gathered on a street at the top of a ridge trying to get cell service last fall was Blue Ridge Public Radio. And as they stood in line for water or food, the latest news they had heard on the station was a frequent topic of conversation.

"The public radio station was alerting people what was going on," said Lisa Savage, who volunteered at an area church after the hurricane.

Now public radio stations are being targeted for cuts by President Donald Trump. Last week, he signed an executive order aimed at slashing public subsidies to NPR and PBS, alleging "bias" in the broadcasters' reporting.

Public radio stations have been a lifeline for residents during natural disasters that take out power, the internet and cell towers. And in many remote and rural areas across the U.S., they can be a lone source of local news.

About a week after she had vol-



JEFFREY COLLINS/AP

People gather on a hill in Asheville, N.C., to find a little cellphone service after Hurricane Helene devastated the area in September.

unteered in the Asheville area, Savage recalled driving through another hard-hit community and hearing updates on Blue Ridge Public Radio on where residents could pick up water.

Trump's order instructs the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and other federal agencies "to cease Federal funding for NPR and PBS" and further requires that they work to root out indirect

sources of public financing for the news organizations.

The broadcasters get roughly half a billion dollars in public money through the private CPB, which has said that it is not a fed-

eral executive agency subject to Trump's orders.

The heads of PBS, NPR and CPB all suggested Friday that the order was illegal, and a court fight seems inevitable.

The White House has also said it will be asking Congress to rescind funding for the CPB as part of a \$9.1 billion package of cuts. Local stations operate on a combination of government funding, donations and philanthropic grants, and stations in smaller markets are particularly dependent on the public money.

WMMT, based in the eastern Kentucky community of Whitesburg, can be heard in parts of five Appalachian states. The station's general manager, Teddy Wimer, said listeners "want to hear people that sound like folks that they know from Appalachia," and the station, which currently operates from a renovated Winnebago called the Possum Den, relies on CPB funding.

"We're in an economically disadvantaged area of the country," Wimer said. "Most of our listeners who really rely upon our programming don't have the funds to ramp up their support."

Appeals court muddies plan to send Voice of America staff back to work

By SCOTT NOVER
AND BART SCHANEMAN
The Washington Post

Voice of America staffers were preparing to go back to work this week after winning a court victory against the Trump administration. Now, that seems unlikely.

The broadcaster has been effectively shut down since the Trump administration issued a March executive order dismantling the U.S.

Agency for Global Media, which oversees VOA and doles out federal funding to other groups tasked with promoting democracy and countering propaganda overseas, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia and Middle East Broadcasting Networks.

After nearly every affected network sued, U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth granted a pre-

liminary injunction against the White House on April 22, saying that the executive order was arbitrary and probably exceeded the president's authority.

That seemed like good news for VOA. Michael Abramowitz, the agency's director and one of the plaintiffs in litigation against the government, told staff in an email Friday night that USAGM was restoring access to employee ac-

counts and preparing to bring staff back to the office next week in a "phased return."

But on Saturday, a three-judge panel on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit issued a stay of the April 22 ruling.

In a split opinion, the court decided the government was likely to succeed on the merits of its case, and that the district court

judge didn't have the authority to block provisions of Trump's executive order regarding workforce decisions and disbursement of grants.

It was not immediately clear whether Voice of America's back-to-work plans have been halted in the wake of that ruling. Agency staff were awaiting guidance from the government as of Saturday afternoon.

NATION

Trump soured on Waltz over use of military

By MICHAEL BIRNBAUM,
JOHN HUDSON, EMILY
DAVIES, SARAH ELLISON
AND NATALIE ALLISON
The Washington Post

President Donald Trump's decision to oust his national security adviser, Michael Waltz, was the product of a slow accumulation of frustration with a former Green Beret officer who was seen as far more eager to use military force than his boss in the Oval Office.

Waltz's fate was sealed by his inclusion of a journalist on a sensitive Signal group chat in March. But he had been clashing with other top officials since early in the administration, including over whether to pursue military action against Iran, senior officials and Trump advisers said Friday.

The episode has left some senior White House officials questioning the need for a traditional National Security Council and content to leave Secretary of State Marco Rubio, whom Trump on Thursday named as Waltz's interim replacement, in a caretaker role for quite some time, a decision that will likely diminish an institution that has had a powerful role in shaping the foreign policy of modern presidencies. And it sidelines a key figure in the White House with a long track record of favoring military intervention, officials said. Trump has nominated Waltz to be his ambassador to the United Nations, so he will remain in government.

Waltz's troubles built up over time, and White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles increasingly felt he was not a good fit for the president, according to a senior White House official, a Trump adviser and one additional person familiar with the matter on Friday. They and others spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal personnel considerations.

In announcing the shift, Trump on Thursday vowed in a social media post that "together, we will continue to fight tirelessly to Make America, and the World, SAFE AGAIN."



Former national security adviser Michael Waltz attends a Cabinet meeting with President Donald Trump on Wednesday in Washington.

But Waltz also upset Trump after an Oval Office visit in early February by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, when the national security adviser appeared to share the Israeli leader's conviction that the time was ripe to strike Iran, two of the people said.

Waltz appeared to have engaged in intense coordination with Netanyahu about military options against Iran ahead of an Oval Office meeting between the Israeli leader and Trump, the two people said.

Waltz "wanted to take U.S. policy in a direction Trump wasn't comfortable with because the U.S. hadn't attempted a diplomatic solution," according to one of the people.

"It got back to Trump and the president wasn't happy with it," that person said.

Netanyahu's office released a

statement Saturday confirming that he met with Waltz ahead of his Oval Office visit with Trump but denying that he had "intensive contact" with him.

A spokesman for Waltz did not respond to a request for comment. Wiles said: "Mike and I have been friends for many years and I have a great deal of respect for him." And White House Communications Director Steven Cheung said: "The President sets the agenda and it's up to his Administration to implement those policies, and everyone was rowing in the same direction which is why he had the most successful First 100 days in history."

The view by some in the administration was that Waltz was trying to tip the scales in favor of military action and was operating hand in glove with the Israelis.

"If Jim Baker was doing a side deal with the Saudis to subvert

George H.W. Bush, you'd be fired," a Trump adviser said, referring to Bush's secretary of state. "You can't do that. You work for the president of your country, not a president of another country."

The change reduces the number of competing visions coming to a president who has been eager to make his mark at home and abroad. During his first term, Trump had little choice but to draw from traditional Republicans to stock his White House. Now, thanks to a broader generational shift within the Republican Party, a younger cohort has known no one but Trump as their standard-bearer. And the president himself has grown more focused on finding people loyal to him who will execute his plans.

Rubio, the temporary replacement, hails from the same traditionalist wing of the Republican

Party as Waltz. But he has more readily shed his old views, officials say, and has emerged as a forceful spokesman for Trump. That includes policy on Russia and Ukraine, where the secretary of state has threatened both sides that Washington could walk away from peace talks, with the consequences seemingly worse for Ky-iv.

Waltz's ouster came even as some other prominent members of the administration, including Vice President JD Vance, tried to throw him a lifeline, two senior White House officials said Friday. Vance took Waltz on a March trip to Greenland, which Trump has said he wants the U.S. to acquire. The decision to take him along was in part to boost the embattled adviser days after the Atlantic reported that Waltz had inadvertently included the magazine's editor on a planning chat coordinating military action in Yemen, one of the officials said.

The vice president — who in foreign policy matters is much more skeptical of military action than Waltz — also tried to introduce the national security adviser to other conservatives who fell in the Vance camp, the official said.

In the end, however, Wiles and other members of the White House senior staff grew to feel that Waltz wasn't a good fit in the West Wing — and specifically with Trump. Even before Signalgate, the national security adviser was on thin ice, with some White House officials warning that he might be one of the first senior advisers to be swapped out. His handling of sensitive discussions on Signal — which is not approved inside the government for classified conversations — may have been the final factor, even though he held on for more than a month after it was publicized, officials said.

"Signal is an approved app for government use and is loaded on government phones," White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said Thursday, defending Waltz's use of the app more generally.

Musk's SpaceX launch site is approved as the new city of Starbase

Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas — The South Texas home of Elon Musk's SpaceX rocket company is now an official city with a galactic name: Starbase.

A vote Saturday to formally organize Starbase as a city was approved by a lopsided margin among the small group of voters who live there and are mostly Musk's employees at SpaceX. With all the votes in, the tally was 212 in favor to 6 against, according to results published online by the Cameron County Elections De-

partment.

Musk celebrated in a post on his social platform, X, saying it is "now a real city!"

Starbase is the facility and launch site for the SpaceX rocket program that is under contract with the Department of Defense and NASA that hopes to send astronauts back to the moon and someday to Mars.

Musk first floated the idea of Starbase in 2021 and approval of the new city was all but certain. Of the 283 eligible voters in the area, most are believed to be Starbase

workers.

The election victory was personal for Musk. The billionaire's popularity has diminished since he became the chain-saw-wielding public face of President Donald Trump's federal job and spending cuts, and profits at his Tesla car company have plummeted.

SpaceX has generally drawn widespread support from local officials for its jobs and investment in the area.

But the creation of an official company town has also drawn

critics who worry it will expand Musk's personal control over the area, with potential authority to close a popular beach and state park for launches.

Companion efforts to the city vote include bills in the state Legislature to shift that authority from the county to the new town's mayor and city council.

All these measures come as SpaceX is asking federal authorities for permission to increase the number of South Texas launches from five to 25 a year.

The city at the southern tip of

Texas near the Mexico border is only about 1.5 square miles, crisscrossed by a few roads and dappled with airstream trailers and modest midcentury homes.

SpaceX officials have said little about exactly why they want a company town and did not respond to emailed requests for comment.

"We need the ability to grow Starbase as a community," Starbase General Manager Kathryn Lueders wrote to local officials in 2024 with the request to get the city issue on the ballot.

NATION

Why May the 4th is celebrated as Star Wars Day across the galaxy

By **ANDREW DEMILLO**
Associated Press

It didn't begin a long time ago or in a galaxy far far away, but every May 4 it feels like images, memes and promotional deals involving "Star Wars" have an inescapable gravity.

May 4 — or May the 4th, as fans say — has evolved over the years into Star Wars Day, an informal holiday celebrating the space epic and its surrounding franchise.

What is Star Wars Day?

Star Wars Day was created by fans as a sly nod to one of the films' most popular catchphrases, "May the force be with you." Get it? Good, now May the 4th be with you too.

It's not an official holiday but has become so well-known that even former President Joe Biden marked it last year when "Star Wars" actor Mark Hamill dropped by the White House a day beforehand.

"I think it's a very clever way for fans to celebrate their passion and love for 'Star Wars' once a year," said Steve Sansweet, founder and executive chairman of Rancho Obi-Wan, a nonprofit museum in California that has the world's largest collection of "Star Wars" memorabilia.

How did it begin?

The phrase "May the 4th be with you" was used by fans in the years after the first film was released in 1977, and even appeared in a British political ad in 1979 celebrating Margaret Thatcher's victory as prime minister on May 4 that year.

How has it spread?

May the 4th caught on informally among fans through inside jokes shared on social media and viewings of the films to mark the occa-



CHIANG YING-YING/AP

Runners dressed as characters of the "Star Wars" movies participate in the Star Wars Run event in New Taipei City, Taiwan, on Sunday.

sion. Businesses eventually joined in on the fun, with brands ranging from Nissan to Jameson Whiskey running ads or posting on social media about it.

Disney, which acquired Lucasfilm in 2012, embraced the day as a way to further promote the franchise with merchandise, special screenings and other events surrounding the brand.

Not all "Star Wars" fans are enthused about how ubiquitous the once-underground joke has become. Chris Taylor, a senior editor at Mashable and author of "How Star Wars Conquered the Universe," labels himself a "May the 4th grinch" in part because of its commercialization.

"I love a good dad joke as much as anyone, but my God you can take it too far," Taylor said.

How is it being celebrated this year?

The day is being celebrated on a large and small scale this year. Disney+ is launching the new series "Star Wars: Tales of the Underworld" on the date, and it comes as the second season gets underway for another franchise series, "Andor."

Most Major League Baseball teams have marked the day in recent years with special events incorporating "Star Wars" characters.

It's a town-wide celebration in New Hope, Pa., which shares its name with the subtitle of the first "Star Wars" film. The town of about 2,600 people, located 30 miles northeast of Philadelphia, plans to have costumed characters throughout town with restaurants serving themed items like a "YodaRita."

Buffett to step down as Berkshire Hathaway CEO

By **MAEGAN VAZQUEZ**
The Washington Post

Legendary investor Warren Buffett said Saturday that he plans to step down from his role leading Berkshire Hathaway.

Buffett, 94, serves as the conglomerate's chairman and chief executive. He said Saturday that he will recommend to the Berkshire Hathaway board that longtime executive Greg Abel become CEO at the end of 2025.

"I think the time has arrived where Greg should become the chief executive officer of the company at year end," Buffett said onstage at Berkshire Hathaway's annual meeting in Omaha, Neb.

Buffett has previously signaled that his successor as CEO would be Abel, who already oversees Berkshire's Wall Street investments. Abel has spent more than two decades at Berkshire.

Although Buffett will give up his official duties, he plans to keep his large stake in the company and plans to remain an informal presence there. "I would still hang around and conceivably be useful in a few cases, but the final word would be what Greg said," Buffett said.

Other than Buffett's children, most of Berkshire's board of directors — including Abel — did not know of his intention to retire this year until his public announcement at the shareholder meeting, he said.

According to The Associated Press, Abel addressed the news onstage about an hour after Buffett's announcement. "I just want to say I couldn't be more humbled and honored to be part of Berkshire as we go forward," he said.

Buffett, whose sustained success



Buffett

as an investor earned him the nickname "Oracle of Omaha," is the fifth-richest person in the world, according to Forbes Magazine — amassing a net worth of some \$168 billion. He became chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway in 1970 and earned a reputation as a savvy stock picker whose investments outperformed the S&P 500 index more often than not.

Berkshire Hathaway's portfolio for decades included a stake in The Washington Post Co., then controlled by the Graham family. He stepped down from The Post board in 2011. The newspaper was sold to billionaire Jeff Bezos in 2013.

Though Buffett became famous for his stock picks, Berkshire Hathaway over the years became a conglomerate in its own right, with wholly owned subsidiaries that have a massive presence in industries such as insurance, cargo rail, utilities and energy production.

STARS AND STRIPES

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market

Transportation 944

VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

- International Shipping
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- Inland trucking (U.S. & Europe)
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For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations

LOGISTICS EUROPE GMBH

Are you in the picture?

Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.
No one covers the bases the way we do.

However you read us, wherever you need us.

WORLD

Putin says no need yet to use nukes in Ukraine

Associated Press

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in comments broadcast Sunday that the need to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine had not arisen and that he hopes it will not.

In a preview of an upcoming interview with Russian state television, published on Telegram, Putin said Russia has the strength and the means to bring the conflict in Ukraine to a "logical conclusion."

Responding to a question about Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory, Putin said: "There has been no need to use those (nuclear) weapons ... and I hope they will not be required."

"We have enough strength and means to bring what was started in 2022 to a logical conclusion with the outcome Russia requires," he said.

Putin signed a revamped version of Russia's nuclear doctrine in November 2024, spelling out the circumstances that allow him to use Moscow's atomic arsenal, the

world's largest.

That version lowered the bar, giving him that option in response to even a conventional attack backed by a nuclear power.

Russia and Ukraine are at odds over competing ceasefire proposals.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said a ceasefire is possible "even from today" if Moscow is serious about ending the war.

Speaking Sunday at a joint news conference with Czech President Petr Pavel, Zelenskyy noted that Russia has ignored a U.S. proposal for a full ceasefire for 54 days and thanked the Czech Republic for backing Ukraine's call for a 30-day ceasefire.

"Putin is very eager to show off his tanks at the (Victory Day) parade," Zelenskyy said, "but he should think about ending his war."

Putin on Monday declared a unilateral 72-hour ceasefire in Ukraine to mark Victory Day in World

War II, as the U.S. presses for a deal to end the 3-year-old war. The Kremlin said the truce, ordered on "humanitarian grounds," will run from the start of May 8 and last through the end of May 10 to mark Moscow's defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 — Russia's biggest secular holiday.

Meanwhile, 11 people were wounded in a Russian drone attack overnight on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said Sunday. Two children were among the wounded.

The attack woke up Valentyna Fesiuk, an 83-year-old resident of Kyiv's Obolon district.

"I was just sleeping when the house shook. It was at 12:30. An apartment on the 12th floor caught fire," she told The Associated Press.

The car of another resident, Viacheslav Khotab, caught fire.

"I saw my car burning. I was covered with broken glass," he said. "I



EFREM LUKATSKY/AP

Workers clean up near burnt cars and a crater made by a drone in a residential area following a Russian air raid Sunday in Kyiv, Ukraine.

couldn't do anything."

The 54-year-old was frustrated with stalled peace negotiations: "They can't agree on anything, and we are the ones who suffer the consequences."

Daryna Kravchuk, an 18-year-old student in the district, described how "five to six minutes after the air raid was activated, we heard a strong impact, everything started shaking. ... There were three strikes almost in a row after the air raid was activated."

"It's very scary to witness, we

have been suffering from this for so long. People are just suffering all the time. ... It's still very hard to see our country constantly being destroyed," she told the AP.

Russia fired a total of 165 exploding drones and decoys overnight, Ukraine's air force said. Of those, 69 were intercepted and a further 80 lost, likely having been electronically jammed. Russia also launched two ballistic missiles.

Russia's Defense Ministry said its air defenses shot down 13 Ukrainian drones overnight.

Australia's re-elected prime minister says the voters chose unity

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Australia's re-elected Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Sunday was greeted by well-wishers at a Sydney café and said the country had voted for unity over division.

Albanese's center-left Labor Party won an emphatic victory in elections on Saturday. As vote counting continued, the government was on track to win at least 85 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber where parties need a majority to form an administration.

Labor held 78 seats in the previous Parliament, and gaining seats in a second term is rare in Australian politics.

"The Australian people voted for unity rather than division," Albanese told reporters in the crowded café in inner-suburban Leichhardt where he and his fiancée, Jodie Haydon, gathered with colleagues and supporters for coffee.

"We'll be a disciplined, orderly government in our second term, just like we have been in our first,"

he added.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers, the government's top economic minister, explained the election result as voters seeking stability after U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff disruptions to the global economy.

"This was beyond even our most optimistic expectations," Chalmers told Australian Broadcasting Corp. of the election result.

"We know that this second term has been given to us by the Australian people because they want stability in uncertain times," he added.

In an election result reminiscent of Canada's recent contest, conservative opposition leader Peter Dutton lost his parliamentary seat. His alliance of parties was reduced to 37 seats.

Canada's opposition leader, Pierre Poilievre, lost his seat after Trump declared economic war on the U.S. neighbor. Poilievre had previously been regarded as a shoo-in to become Canada's next prime minister and shepherd his Conservative Party back into power for the first time in a decade.

Senior Australian lawmakers say they feared late last year they would become the first government to be tossed out after a single three-year term since the turmoil of the Great Depression in 1931.



Albanese

UK police arrest several Iranian men over suspected attack plot

Associated Press

LONDON — British counterterrorism officers arrested several Iranian men over an alleged plot to attack an unspecified target in London, the Metropolitan Police force said Sunday.

Police said five men aged between 29 and 46 were detained on Saturday in various parts of England on suspicion of preparing "a terrorist act."

Four are Iranian citizens and the nationality of the fifth is still being established.

All the suspects are being questioned at police stations and have not been charged. Police said they are searching several properties

in London, Manchester in north-west England and Swindon in western England.

Police said the attack plot targeted a single location that was not being named "for operational reasons."

Commander Dominic Murphy, head of the force's Counter Terrorism Command, said police are still working to establish a motive "as well as to identify whether there may be any further risk to the public."

Separately, three other Iranian men, aged 39, 44 and 55, were arrested in London on suspicion of a national security offense as part of an unrelated investigation, police

said.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said the arrests were "serious events that demonstrate the ongoing requirement to adapt our response to national security threats."

"The government continues to work with police and intelligence agencies to support all the action and security assessments that are needed to keep the country safe," she said.

Police have not determined whether the alleged plot is connected to Iran, but Britain's domestic intelligence service has warned of a growing threat from attackers linked to Tehran.

Brazilian police arrest two people over alleged plot targeting Lady Gaga concert

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Police in Brazil said on Sunday that two people have been arrested in connection with an alleged plot to detonate explosives at a free Lady Gaga concert in Rio de Janeiro.

The Rio event on Saturday was the biggest show of the pop star's career that attracted more than 2 million fans to Copacabana Beach and had crowds screaming and dancing along.

Even as Brazilian authorities

said they arrested suspects in the hours before Lady Gaga's show, the event went ahead without disruption — leading some to question the seriousness of the threat. Serious security concerns typically lead organizers to cancel such massive events — as happened with Taylor Swift's concerts in Vienna last year.

Police said said nothing about the alleged plot at the time an effort to "avoid panic" and "the distortion of information."

On Sunday, a spokesperson for Lady Gaga said the pop star and her team "learned about this alleged threat via media reports this morning. Prior to and during the show, there were no known safety concerns, nor any communication from the police or authorities to Lady Gaga regarding any potential risks."

Security was tight at Saturday's concert, with 5,200 military and police officers deployed to the beach.

FACES

Faith not the focus

‘The Righteous Gemstones’ embraces depravity in its final season even as it seeks to appeal to Christians

By **KRYSTA FAURIA**
Associated Press

For a show about a Christian megachurch pastor and his nepo baby children — between the sex, violence and full-frontal nudity courtesy of Walton Goggins — the final season of “The Righteous Gemstones,” airing Saturdays on AFN-Spectrum, is rife with its trademark depravity.

But Danny McBride, who stars in and created the HBO series, has always hoped it would speak to people of faith, even as he acknowledged his crude sense of humor might not be for everyone.

“My hope honestly with creating the show was that people who were religious would watch it. That, ultimately, they would understand that this isn’t making fun of them, but it’s probably making fun of people that they identify and are annoyed by,” he told The Associated Press ahead of the fourth and final season’s finale, which aired Sunday stateside. “A lot of people who come up to me, honestly, their first thing will be like, ‘I go to church and I think it’s funny.’”

McBride grew up in a devout Christian household in the South. His mom even led a puppet ministry when he was a kid. At some point, though, the 48-year-old decided churchgoing wasn’t for him. But his fascination remained, particularly as he began to learn more about megachurches after moving to Charleston, S.C.

“I felt like it kind of was reflective of America in a way that everything is sort of turned into a money game,” he said. “The idea that like we could take something like religion and ultimately turn it into a corporation.”

McBride’s series follows widowed patriarch Eli Gemstone (John Goodman) and his three adult children, the eldest of whom is played by McBride. Although the series is steeped in modern evangelical culture, McBride said, in general, people of faith

were not meant to be the target of his satire. “It was more about hypocrites and people who were saying one thing and living another,” he said.

Celebrity preachers like Joel Osteen and T.D. Jakes have been fixtures of evangelical culture since the early aughts thanks to their massive congregations and strategic media presence, not to mention the Billy Grahams, Jerry Falwells and Jim Bakkers that preceded them. But a new generation of Instagram-savvy preachers has made its way into pop culture, like Hillsong’s now-disgraced Carl Lentz and Justin Bieber’s pastor, Judah Smith.

With that fame comes scrutiny and the charge that their celebrity and wealth stand in contrast to the message of Jesus. But that disaffection with religious leaders that McBride exploits isn’t new, says Kathryn Lofton, a professor of religious studies and American studies at Yale University.

“There’s not a lot of very positive depictions of evangelists in American media in the last 50 years,” Lofton said.

The Christianity of the Gemstone empire is anything but austere. The second episode of this season, for example, closes with Eli’s kids hosting their extravagant annual give-a-thon in honor of their late mother’s birthday.

“If the line’s busy, call back. Somebody’s gonna pick up. It might just be God,” implores Uncle Baby Billy (Goggins). And what’s a church service without a choir, dancing and, of course, jet packs?

For Deon Gibson, a graphic artist who used to work for pastor Paula White before she became the head of Donald Trump’s White House Faith Office, the show is right on the nose.

“I knew those characters while I worked in the megachurches,” he said. “Aside from the Hollywood theatrics, it is spot on. The conversations they have, the switching around of power and positions.”



HBO/AP

“The Righteous Gemstones” stars Edi Patterson (left), Danny McBride and Adam Devine.

McBride did admit it was a difficult subject to satirize considering the viral videos that often surface showing similarly extravagant stunts and rock concerts being performed at church.

One comment on the show’s subreddit shares a video clip of James River Church’s annual Stronger Men’s Conference in Missouri. “Thought this was a scene from the show at first,” the commenter says of the massive pyrotechnics, monster trucks and acrobats descending from the ceiling.

“My biggest fear would be that we would put stuff in the show and then like months later before the show comes out you would like see a church actually doing something we were doing,” McBride said. “You’re like, ‘I just hope people don’t think we’re ripping them off.’”

Adam Devine said he thinks making satire in general is a challenge right now.

“Some of the headlines in the news, you’re like, well, that wouldn’t even work because people would be like, ‘That’s too crazy,’” Devine said.

For all its critique and humor though, the series also infuses moments of tenderness and poignancy. One storyline that culminates in the series finale is Devine’s character Kelvin’s struggle with his queer identity and his relationship with his partner.

“I hope that some kids who feel like hopeless and they’re battling over whether they’re gay or not, that this gives them a sense of hope that you can come out and be accepted by your family, by people within your church,” Devine said. “Not everyone is going to turn their backs on you.”

But Gibson, who still considers himself a believer but is no longer part of a congregation, thinks the show’s depictions of the megachurch world might be a tough hurdle for some people to get over.

“I think it would offend some people, the honesty of some of the characters. But I like the show because I saw both sides. I saw that side of the ministry corruption, but at the end of the day, they were people,” he said. “They were regular people who just got caught up in the fame and the money.”

‘Rust’ director Souza says he wishes he’d never written the film

By **DAVID MATTHEWS**
New York Daily News

“Rust” director Joel Souza said last week he did not watch the film’s star Alec Baldwin in his TLC reality series.

Souza told The Guardian he hadn’t seen “The Baldwins,” which follows the exploits of Alec, wife Hilaria and their seven children in New York City.

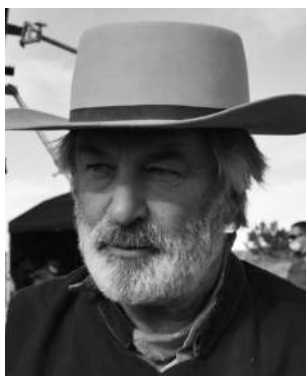
“I think I was busy hitting myself in the face with a frying pan that night,” Souza said about missing the show’s Feb. 23 premiere.

The series also touches on the aftermath of Baldwin fatally shooting cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and injuring Souza in an on-set accident in October 2021 while during rehearsals for the Western in Santa Fe, N.M.

The gun should have been loaded with blanks, but a live round was inadvertently chambered.

Baldwin was charged with involuntary manslaughter but the charge was ultimately dismissed last summer in the middle of trial when the prosecution was accused of improperly withholding evidence. Baldwin and the producers did pay a settlement to Hutchins’ family.

The film’s on-set armorer, Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter last year and was sentenced to serve 18 months in prison.



TNS photos

Left: Baldwin on the set of “Rust”; Right: director Souza.

The film was ultimately completed — at the behest of Hutchins’ family, who wanted to see her work released and will receive a portion of the film’s earnings — with cinematographer Bianca Cline. A limited theatrical release is planned alongside same-day digital purchase and rental options.

“You think about the chain of events that started that morning. Bad decision after bad decision was made,” Souza

told The Guardian. Talk about the butterfly effect. I wish I never wrote the damn movie.”

Ruth Buzzi, comedy sketch player on groundbreaking series ‘Laugh-In,’ dies at 88

Ruth Buzzi, who rose to fame as the frumpy and bitter Gladys Ormphby on the groundbreaking sketch comedy series “Rowan & Martin’s Laugh-In” and made more than 200 television appearances during a 45-year career, died May 1 at age 88.

Buzzi died at her home in Texas, her agent Mike Eisenstadt said. She had been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and was in hospice care. Shortly before her death, her husband Kent Perkins, had posted a statement on Buzzi’s Facebook page, thanking her many fans and telling them: “She wants you to know she probably had more fun doing those shows than you had watching them.”

Buzzi won a Golden Globe and was a two-time Emmy nominee for the NBC show that ran from 1968 to 1973. She was the only regular to appear in all six seasons, including the pilot.

She was first spotted by “Laugh-In” creator and producer George Schlatter playing various characters on “The Steve Allen Comedy Hour.”

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OPINION

Antisemitism Act shows the mire of identity politics

BY JASON WILLOCK

The Washington Post

Here's a quaint idea: If the government is going to punish someone, it should be for something the person has done, not the viewpoint he or she holds while doing it.

Antidiscrimination laws have made that distinction harder and harder to maintain. The Antisemitism Awareness Act would continue the trend. The AAA passed the House 320-91 last year, but on Wednesday it stumbled in a Senate committee as Democratic lawmakers and Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., raised free-speech concerns. The pause is welcome because the legislation is flawed. But the real lesson is broader: America's civil rights model for managing diversity warps public debate and needs to be reconsidered.

The AAA would broaden the definition of antisemitism, essentially by defining anti-Zionism as antisemitic for the purposes of civil rights law. The legislation incorporates examples of antisemitism including "applying a double standard" to Israel.

Applying a double standard to Israel or any other country is protected by the First Amendment, of course. But in civil rights law, the line between politically charged speech and harassment of an identity group is blurry. Persistent anti-Israel advocacy on college campuses could be classified as discrimination against Jewish students. So, if the AAA passed, colleges would have a greater incentive to tamp down anti-Israel activities to avoid civil rights investigations.

Think about it this way: Suppose college students occupied a campus building to call for wealth redistribution, as sometimes happened during the Occupy Wall Street movement of the early 2010s. That might break campus rules or local laws, but it's none of the federal government's business. But suppose

students instead occupied a campus building to condemn the state of Israel. That could be an antisemitic act under the AAA and therefore evidence that the college is violating civil rights. The real offense, as far as the federal government is concerned, is not conduct but the viewpoint behind it.

Blurring the distinction between viewpoints and actions gets the government deeper into the business of trying to control thought. Perhaps that is necessary to suppress discrimination against Jews. But Leo Strauss, one of the foremost Jewish intellectuals of the 20th century, warned about where this logic could lead: "The prohibition against every 'discrimination' would mean the abolition of the private sphere, the denial of the difference between the state and society, in a word, the destruction of liberal society," he said during a 1962 speech. "We have empirical data," he noted drily, about the effect of "the abolition of liberal society" on "the fate of the Jews."

Strauss was a conservative. Until recently, many liberals would have scoffed at the idea that civil rights enforcement was in tension with "liberal society." But the Trump administration's assault on Harvard and other universities could jolt liberal thinking. The administration cited antisemitism and civil rights laws to demand far-reaching changes to Harvard's governance last month. When the university balked, the administration began to withhold research funding, and Harvard filed a lawsuit defending its constitutional right to run its own affairs.

The Ivy League has been in populist-conservative crosshairs for years, of course. But the outbreak of (sometimes vicious) anti-Israel activism on college campuses since the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack has given the right an ideal opening to go on the attack. President Donald Trump is trying to turn the civil rights model pioneered and expanded by liberals

against liberalism's own power centers. He might not be successful — the Harvard defunding appears legally ham-fisted — but Strauss' warning about state control of the private sphere under the guise of antidiscrimination ought to look more prescient to liberals now.

At the very least, fixating on nondiscrimination flattens public debate. Jacob M. Miller, a senior at Harvard who was president of the campus Hillel in 2023, observes the tediousness of parsing whether anti-Israel activism at Harvard is antisemitic. "This excessive focus on semantics is symptomatic of a larger problem with our politics," he writes in the student newspaper. "We reflexively condemn reprehensible ideologies only insofar as they are racist or hateful — rather than because they're plain wrong."

Miller adds that this "has created a twisted incentive structure — one in which Jews on campus feel compelled to characterize certain behaviors as antisemitic because they know that is the one sin campus will surely condemn." After all, if a viewpoint can be labeled discriminatory, the door is open to government discipline. That tends to reduce debates with historical, religious and foreign-policy dimensions into contests about whether one racial or ethnic or sexual group or another is victimized.

The administration is trying to revolutionize the federal government's civil rights powers so they are used against left-wing, rather than right-wing, groups and institutions. The Antisemitism Awareness Act is just a footnote in that project. But the resistance it faced in the Senate should highlight the more fundamental danger of even indirect government efforts to supervise thought in a polarized society.

Jason Willock is a Washington Post columnist focusing on law, politics and foreign policy.

My new ChatGPT-added car and I are on the skids

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

The Washington Post

I hate my new car.

Rather, I hate the AI that came with it. I hate the ChatGPT that informs the female voice that talks to me regardless of whether I've requested her indulgence. She's turning me from a person who merely talked to herself into a ranting she-devil who screams at a nonexistent entity, probably risking arrest and permanent confinement in a mental institution (if we still had those).

My German-made vehicle is not atypical of 2025 models. Carmakers increasingly are incorporating artificial intelligence into their products, to help drivers get maximum pleasure from their ride. Why don't they light me a cigarette while they're at it?

As a Point A-to-Point B kind of person, I view cars as modes of transport, not spa experiences. As a long-distance commuter, I will spend extra money on comfort, mostly the seat, and the safety features that enhance the likelihood I will survive a worst-case scenario. I usually drive a white car because it's impossible to miss against a backdrop of asphalt, which tends to absorb darker-colored cars.

After several white SUVs (I lease), I indulged my wild side and selected a sportier, scaled-down car with a light silver-green finish. "Nobody else has it," my dealer told me. Mistake No. 1. He also seduced me with promises of "incredible technology." Of course, this is the same dealer who once told me to read the

manual and I'd know as much as he does. In other words, buena suerte, honey.

"Over the top" doesn't quite describe what this car can do. It doesn't drive itself, though it did take control of the steering wheel on my first ride, easing me into the center of my lane from which I had drifted slightly. No, no, no. Diving into the three-inch-thick User Manual that consumed the entire cavity of the glove compartment, I was able to dismantle the "steering wheel help option" that had been selected for me.

Did I mention she's a talker?

Here's the thing. I'm not lonely. Ever. I don't need a chatterbox riding shotgun. I prefer to talk to myself, which I do pretty much all the time. Other loners and introverts will understand. Among other explanations, I find myself amusing and I never interrupt or contradict myself.

Some things my invisible minder does quite well. I'll say, "Hey Mercedes, I'm hot," and she'll say, "I'm turning the temperature down to 64." Fine. Thank you. "You're welcome." Ugh. Other things have been so annoying, I was forced to break my Lenten vow to cease using profanity.

I'm driving along wishing my car were white and chatting with myself when Miss Prissy Pants interrupts to say she can't help me with "that" right now. "I'm not talking to you," I say, and she responds, "I'm sorry, could you repeat that, please?" "I'm not talking to you, dadgummit!" "I'm afraid I'll need more

information to help you with that," she says, "but did you know that I can make animal sounds? Ask me what sound a dog makes." Seriously? Of course, I did. And she did. Bark like a dog. She can do elephants, giraffes and cats, too. I stopped there.

I called my dealer, and he said if I just hit "stop" when she starts talking, "she'll eventually learn that you don't want to chat." I couldn't find the stop button, so I tried being nicer in hopes she'd pipe down. I said, "Hey, Mercedes, are we going to be good friends?" Nada. She ghosted me. I hoped this meant she didn't want to be friends and wouldn't talk to me anymore.

But she isn't a mind reader (yet). And she probably means well. Wait, no she doesn't. She doesn't mean anything. She's not real. She's not a person. She's ... what exactly? A rude, chatty know-nothing is what. "Helpers" like her are everywhere. And I just want to be left alone.

In no time, cars will even take over the driving so we can text and wave to the highway patrol robots as we speed past. The array of technological indulgences can't fully be imagined even now, though if my car is any indication of what's ahead, those of us who find comfort in solitude and silence will be begging the tech gods for '53 Chevies and rotary phones.

In the meantime, my car has forced me to stop talking to myself and, therefore, has robbed me of my favorite travel buddy. Thanks a lot, Mercedes. Please don't say it.

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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| 15 | | | | | 16 | | | 17 | | | | |
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| 28 | 29 | 30 | | | 31 | | 32 | | | | | |
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| 56 | | | | | 57 | | | | 58 | | | |
| 59 | | | | | 60 | | | | | 61 | | |

ACROSS

- 1 Police officer
- 4 Apply cream
- 7 Hock
- 11 "Exodus" author
- 13 Summer on the Seine
- 14 Big fair, for short
- 15 Greek cheese
- 16 Frilly wrap
- 17 Blueprint
- 18 Young horses
- 20 Tabloid writing
- 22 Stannum
- 24 Neckwear clasp
- 28 Postal tote
- 32 Pulitzer category
- 33 Ms. Bombeck
- 34 "Kapow!"
- 36 "SNL" segment
- 37 Shipbuilding woods
- 39 Meadow
- 41 Most rational
- 43 Geese formation
- 44 Corp. moguls
- 46 Famed restaurant guide
- 50 Laptop connection
- 53 Like sashimi
- 55 Hawaiian coffee
- 56 "Law & Order: SVU" actor
- 57 Verb for you
- 58 Dance partner?
- 59 Spruced up

- 60 Successful at-bat
- 61 Coifs

- 26 "The Kite Runner" boy
- 27 Assess
- 28 Citi Field team
- 29 Length times width
- 30 Mogadishu-born supermodel
- 31 Mountain pass
- 35 Dallas cager, for short
- 38 Compass dir.
- 40 "— who?"
- 42 Sacred scroll
- 45 Mumbai dress
- 47 Suitable
- 48 Part of A.D.
- 49 Labels
- 50 Humorist
- 51 Here, in Dijon
- 52 Nourished
- 54 Drench

DOWN

- 1 Sleeve end
- 2 Layered cookie
- 3 Pocket bread
- 4 Cotillion celeb
- 5 On
- 6 Humdinger
- 7 Chinese beef dishes
- 8 Rocker Rose
- 9 New Deal agcy.
- 10 Dijon denial
- 12 2002 Winter Olympics site
- 19 Bro or sis
- 21 Cover
- 23 Pick up a perp
- 25 Capital of Azerbaijan

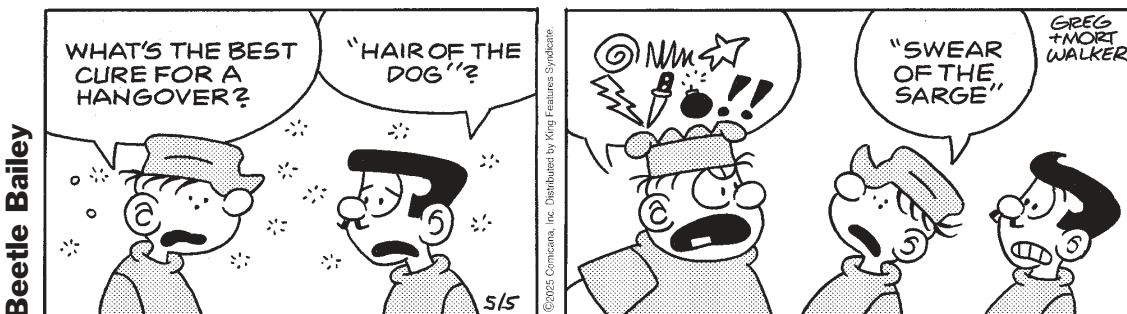
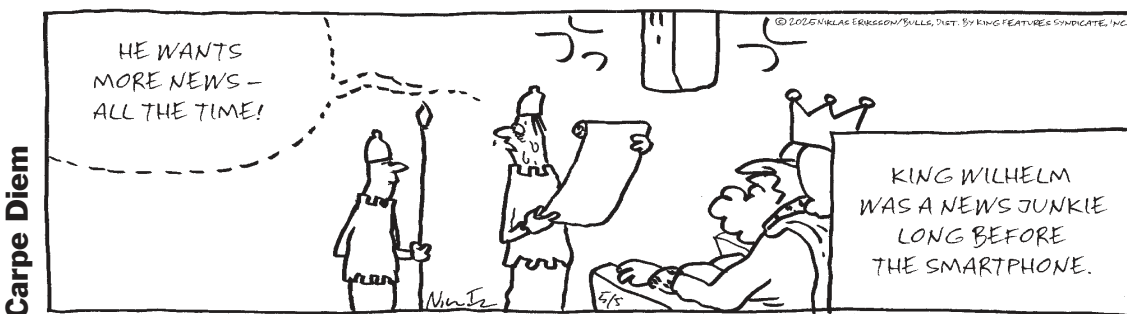
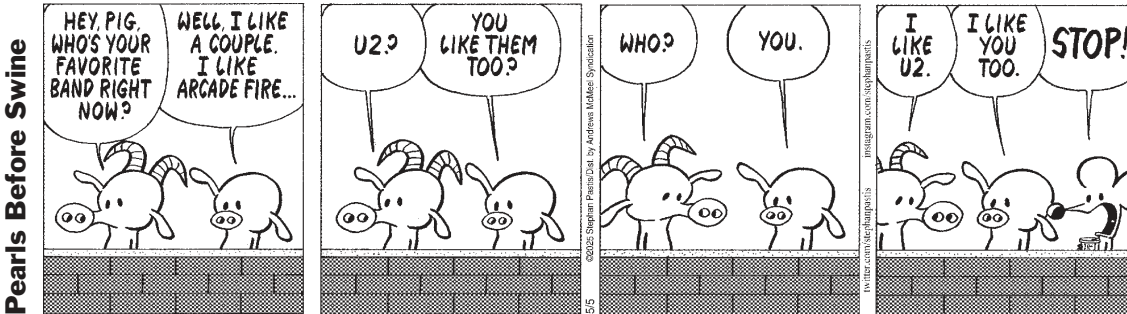
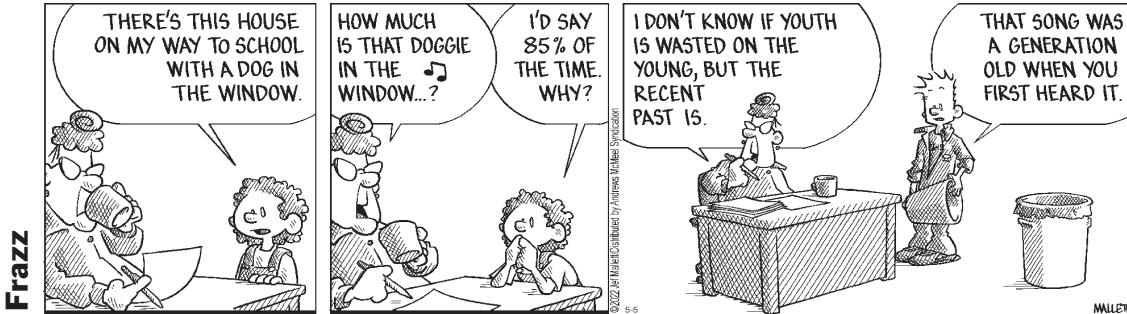
Answer to Previous Puzzle

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| L | E | E | | S | I | T | A | R | | S | S | I | |
| D | A | R | T | | N | O | M | | C | O | E | D | |
| A | S | S | A | Y | | M | E | L | I | N | D | A | |
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| N | E | A | T | E | N | | | D | E | C | E | I | T |
| E | R | R | I | N | G | | | S | T | U | C | C | O |
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5-5

CRYPTOQUIP

HFBW REF LJROCNZXRH
 NRBLFHA NRBLJXQWO QRSWSA
 REFNZRJQ SFHW FHO EXSSXRH:
 ZTW CHXZWO HFZTFHQ.
Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF SOME FAMOUS DESIGNERS WERE TO EMBELLISH SPECIAL PENNIES, WOULD THOSE BE FASHION CENTS?
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals D



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Baltimore reports lowest monthly homicide tally

MD BALTIMORE — In April, the city of Baltimore saw the lowest number of monthly homicides in its modern history.

After a historic decrease in the number of homicides in 2024, the downward trend has continued into this year, and in April, Baltimore recorded just five homicides, according to the Baltimore Police Department. This is the lowest number of monthly homicides in the city since it started recording the data in 1970.

Of the five homicides in April, four were instances of gun violence. All of the victims were Black men.

Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott attributed the city's decrease in violent crime to the work of the Baltimore Police Department, as well as the community violence interruption programs in Baltimore and Maryland State government.

Discovery of dead animals spoils house sale

GA ATLANTA — A home in northwest Georgia attracted some potential buyers, likely with the modest price tag of \$275,000.

"Welcome home to this amazing 1919 Farm in Layette, GA sitting on 10 acres of beautiful land," the Zillow listing states. "This is a perfect spot for horses and livestock."

But it turns out, the home wasn't fit for animals and definitely not humans, according to Walker County investigators. The five people living in the home were arrested and charged with multiple counts of animal cruelty, and the house has been condemned.

The couple visiting the Highway 151 home with their real estate agent saw a dead ferret inside a crate and multiple dogs and cats living in "deplorable" conditions. They alerted an animal control officer, launching an investigation.

Outside, investigators found the dead ferret, crates containing two dead goats and a decomposing bunny. The sheriff's office assisted animal control officers with the investigation.

Nine dogs, four cats, two horses, two goats, two donkeys, a sheep and a pony were removed from the property, investigators said. The livestock was taken to a rescue organization, while the dogs and cats were taken to the county animal shelter for adoption.

Pastor notified books at museum may be returned

DC WASHINGTON — A veteran activist of the Civil Rights Movement said he was notified by the Smithsonian Institution that items he loaned to the National Museum of African American History and Culture may be returned, amid a potential review of the museum's collec-



AUSTIN JACKSON, WISE COUNTY (TEXAS) MESSENGER/AP

Dime dump

A United States Armored Co. employee tosses a clump of dirt filled with dimes after millions of coins spilled along U.S. 81/287 in Alvord, Texas. A tractor-trailer hauling \$800,000 in dimes rolled over in an accident, authorities said. For half a day, workers got on their hands and knees to pick up the coins in addition to using brooms and shovels and large industrial vacuums.

tions ordered by President Donald Trump.

Rev. Amos C. Brown, pastor of Third Baptist Church in San Francisco, loaned two books to the Smithsonian, which have been displayed since the museum opened nearly a decade ago. One of his items is an edition of "The History of the Negro Race in America" by George Washington Williams, which was written in 1880 and is among the first books to document Black American history and racism in the U.S. The other is a Bible that Brown carried during protests alongside the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The reasons given for the items' return initially raised alarms that the Trump administration had begun to make visible changes to a museum considered to be a crown jewel of Black American culture.

Town's sugary soda tax is first to defy state ban

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A tax on sugary drinks took effect Thursday in the beachside community of Santa Cruz, seven years after California banned cities and counties from implementing local grocery taxes as part of a reluctant deal with the powerful beverage industry.

The 2-cent-per-ounce tax, approved by voters in November, is the first in the state since lawmakers approved the 2018 deal. The

American Beverage Association spent heavily to campaign against the ballot measure in the small city of 60,000, and in court called the tax illegal and likely to strain city resources.

Santa Cruz officials are prepared to challenge the state's preemption law in court, and despite the legal uncertainty, hope their new tax will spur other states and cities to act. The measure aims to reduce sugar consumption, especially among children and teens, and raise money for health programs and other community initiatives.

Academy grad granted probation after flag flap

MD ANNAPOLIS — A Naval Academy graduate accused of ripping down a pride flag from an Annapolis tattoo shop was given probation before judgment following a bench trial last week.

Benjamin Michael, 44, was given probation before judgment, meaning he can avoid further penalties if he meets the terms of his one year of unsupervised probation. He was facing four misdemeanor charges, including two counts for a hate crime, according to court records. One of the hate crime counts was dropped, according to court records.

Michael graduated from the academy in 2004 and served in the

Marines from 2004 to 2013, according to the Marine Corps, ending his career as a captain at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

Glowing caterpillars released to aid butterflies

FL TALLAHASSEE — Biologists waded through knee-high vegetation in Florida until they reached a spot where purple flowers grew in cone-like formations — then the team got out the glow-in-the-dark caterpillars.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission announced April 30 that biologists had released caterpillars of the frosted elfin butterfly in Ichetucknee Springs State Park earlier in the month.

"This handsome butterfly is now rare or has disappeared from most of its historic range in the eastern U.S. and southern Canada," the FWC said in a news release. "Florida has the largest remaining population in the Southeast."

FWC staff visited the popular springs about an hour's drive from Gainesville to deposit the small, green caterpillars onto their host plant, the purple sundial lupine.

Biologists waited until the caterpillars were old enough that they were nearly ready to begin metamorphosis, then they placed them onto the plant to eat and

shortly after choose a leaf to build a chrysalis.

Overdose deaths dropped by nearly a third last year

KY FRANKFORT — The number of overdose deaths in Kentucky last year dropped by 30.2% — down to 1,410 lives lost — giving state leaders a surge of confidence that prevention and treatment efforts are making progress against an addiction epidemic they say is shattering families across the state.

This was the third straight yearly decrease in drug overdose deaths for the state, although prior declines were substantially smaller. Kentucky has long been plagued by high rates of addiction to opioid painkillers, and fatal overdoses surged during the COVID-19 pandemic, when treatment was hard to get and people were socially isolated.

Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear, who announced the latest overdose statistics on Thursday, called the results a "watershed moment" reflecting years of painstaking work to combat the spread and use of drugs.

Fentanyl and methamphetamine continued to be the most prevalent drugs contributing to overdose deaths in Kentucky.

SCOREBOARD/TENNIS

DEALS

Saturday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Sent RHP Chayce McDermott to Norfolk (IL) on a rehab assignment. Placed 3B Ramón Urias on the 10-day IL, retroactive to May 1. Recalled 3B Coby Mayo from Norfolk.

BOSTON RED SOX — Reinstated LHP Brennan Bernardino from the bereavement list. Placed 1B Triston Casas on the 10-day IL. Selected the contract of 3B Abraham Toro from Worcester (IL). Optioned RHP Luis Guerrero to Worcester.

DETROIT TIGERS — Sent RHP John Brebbia to Toledo (IL) on a rehab assignment. Reinstated RHP beau Brieske from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Tyler Owens to Toledo.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Sent 3B Yoán Moncada to Inland Empire (CAL) on a rehab assignment. Recalled RHP Michael Darrell-Hicks from Salt Lake (PCL). Optioned LHP Jake Eder to Salt Lake. Selected the contract of RHP Touki Toussaint from Salt Lake. Placed LHP Garrett McDaniels on the 15-day IL, retroactive to May 2.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Reinstated RHP Matt Brash from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Troy Taylor to Tacoma (PCL). Sent RHP Jackson Kowar to ACL Mariners on a rehab assignment.

TEXAS RANGERS — Reinstated SS Corey Seager from the 10-day IL. Optioned INF Jonathan Ornelas to Round Rock (PCL). Assigned RHP Dane Dunning outright to Round Rock.

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Sent RHP Kendall Graveman to ACL D-Backs on a rehab assignment.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Recalled INF/OF Hyeseong Kim from Oklahoma City (PCL). Placed 2B Tommy Edman on the 10-day IL, retroactive to April 30.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Optioned RHP Craig Yoho to Nashville (IL). Recalled RHP Elvin Rodriguez from Nashville. Sent LHP DL Hall to ACL Brewers on a rehab assignment.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Reinstated OF Brandon Marsh from the 10-day IL. Reinstated LHP Ranger Suárez from the 15-day IL. Optioned OF Cal Stevenson to Lehigh Valley (IL). Placed RHP José Ruiz on the 15-day IL, retroactive to May 1.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Selected the contract of RHP Tanner Rainey from Indianapolis (IL). Transferred RHP Justin Lawrence from the 15-day IL to the 60-day IL. Placed INF Isiah Kiner-Falefa on the 10-day IL, retroactive to May 1.

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Optioned RHP Roddey Muñoz to Memphis (IL). Recalled RHP Michael McGreevy from Memphis.

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Sent 2B Jake Cronenworth to ACL Padres on a rehab assignment. Recalled C Luis Campusano from El Paso (PCL). Optioned 1B Connor Joe to El Paso. Assigned 1B Yuli Gurriel outright to El Paso. Sent OF Jackson Merrill to San Antonio (TEX) on a rehab assignment.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

CALGARY FLAMES — Signed F Matt Coronato to a seven-year contract.

CAROLINA HURRICANES — Signed G Frederik Andersen to a one-year contract extension.

MONTREAL CANADIENS — Reassigned F Oliver Kapanen to Laval (AHL). Loaned G Cayden Primeau to Laval.

GOLF

CJ Cup Byron Nelson

Saturday
At TPC Craig Ranch
McKinney, Texas
Purse: \$9.9 million
Yardage: 7,569; Par: 71
Third Round

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Scottie Scheffler | 61-63-66—190-23 |
| Ricky Castillo | 65-66-67—198-15 |
| Adam Schenk | 66-67-65—198-15 |
| Erik Van Rooyen | 66-67-65—198-15 |
| Kurt Kitayama | 66-65-68—202-11 |
| Jhonattan Vegas | 63-69-67—199-14 |
| Eric Cole | 64-69-67—200-13 |
| Nicolas Echavarria | 68-66-66—200-13 |
| Rasmus Hojgaard | 65-67-68—200-13 |
| Antoine Rozner | 66-71-63—200-13 |
| Sam Stevens | 65-65-70—200-13 |
| Andrew Putnam | 64-69-68—201-12 |
| Sam Burns | 67-67-68—202-11 |
| Cameron Champ | 64-70-68—202-11 |
| Will Gordon | 64-72-66—202-11 |
| Mark Hubbard | 69-65-68—202-11 |
| Sungjae Im | 67-68-67—202-11 |
| Takumi Kanaya | 67-67-68—202-11 |
| Patrick Rodgers | 69-67-66—202-11 |
| Kevin Roy | 67-68-67—202-11 |
| Danny Walker | 68-68-66—202-11 |
| Vince Whaley | 69-66-67—202-11 |
| Pierceson Coody | 67-70-66—203-10 |
| Si Woo Kim | 67-69-67—203-10 |
| Patton Kizzire | 64-70-69—203-10 |
| Nate Lashley | 68-69-66—203-10 |
| Ben Martin | 66-68-69—203-10 |
| Max McGreevy | 66-71-66—203-10 |
| Trey Mullinax | 65-69-69—203-10 |

AUTO RACING

Andy's Frozen Custard 300

NASCAR Xfinity Saturday
At Texas Motor Speedway
Fort Worth, Texas.
Lap length: 1.50 miles
Start position in parentheses

- (20) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 208 laps, 0 points.
- (12) Taylor Gray, Toyota, 208, 36.
- (27) Riley Herbst, Toyota, 208, 0.
- (1) Austin Hill, Chevrolet, 208, 50.
- (7) Sam Mayer, Ford, 208, 44.
- (5) Harrison Burton, Ford, 208, 31.
- (3) Jesse Love, Chevrolet, 208, 34.
- (31) Ryan Sieg, Ford, 208, 33.
- (21) Brandon Jones, Toyota, 208, 33.
- (4) Jeb Burton, Chevrolet, 208, 29.
- (9) Daniel Dye, Chevrolet, 208, 26.
- (10) Anthony Alfredo, Chevrolet, 208, 26.
- (35) William Sawalich, Toyota, 208, 24.
- (34) Parker Retzlaff, Chevrolet, 208, 23.
- (8) Matt DiBenedetto, Chevrolet, 208, 22.
- (33) Corey Day, Chevrolet, 208, 24.
- (18) Brennan Poole, Chevrolet, 208, 20.
- (22) Sammy Smith, Chevrolet, 208, 19.
- (13) Carson Kvatil, Chevrolet, 208, 18.
- (14) Nicholas Sanchez, Chevrolet, 208, 32.
- (32) Mason Massey, Chevrolet, 207, 16.
- (26) Kyle Sieg, Ford, 207, 15.
- (19) Ryan Ellis, Chevrolet, 207, 14.
- (11) Blaine Perkins, Chevrolet, 207, 13.
- (37) Joey Gase, Chevrolet, 207, 12.
- (28) Mason Maggio, Chevrolet, 207, 11.
- (16) Dean Thompson, Toyota, 205, 10.
- (24) Josh Bilicki, Chevrolet, 205, 9.
- (15) Nick Leitz, Chevrolet, 204, 8.
- (38) Garrett Smithley, Chevrolet, 201, 7.
- (25) Jeremy Clements, Chevrolet, accident, 200, 6.
- (36) Katherine Legge, Chevrolet, 200, 0.
- (30) Kris Wright, Chevrolet, 199, 4.
- (17) Leland Honeyman, Chevrolet, vibration, 165, 3.
- (2) Justin Allgaier, Chevrolet, accident, 155, 22.
- (6) Sheldon Creed, Ford, accident, 104, 14.
- (29) Josh Williams, Chevrolet, accident, 97, 1.
- (23) Christian Eckes, Chevrolet, engine, 47, 1.

Race statistics

Average speed of race winner: 106.429 mph.
Time of race: 2 hours, 55 minutes, 54 seconds.
Margin of victory: 1.265 seconds.
Caution flags: 11 for 62 laps.
Lead changes: 12 among 6 drivers.
Lap leaders: A.Hill 0; J.Allgaier 1-24; A.Hill 25; J.Allgaier 26-49; A.Hill 50-102; J.Allgaier 103-153; S.Mayer 154-158; D.Dye 159; K.Larson 160-189; A.Hill 190-192; N.Sanchez 193; S.Mayer 194-206; K.Larson 207-208.
Leaders summary (driver, times led, laps led): J.Allgaier, 3 times for 99 laps; A.Hill, 3 times for 57 laps; K.Larson, 2 times for 32 laps; S.Mayer, 2 times for 18 laps; D.Dye, 1 time for 1 lap; N.Sanchez, 1 time for 1 lap.
Wins: A.Hill, 3; J.Allgaier, 2; J.Love, 1; B.Jones, 1; S.Smith, 1; C.Zilisch, 1; A.Almirola, 1.
Top 16 in points: 1. J.Allgaier, 471; 2. A.Hill, 420; 3. S.Mayer, 391; 4. J.Love, 374; 5. B.Jones, 326; 6. C.Kvatil, 324; 7. J.Burton, 320; 8. R.Sieg, 317; 9. S.Smith, 312; 10. H.Burton, 307; 11. S.Creed, 304; 12. C.Zilisch, 299; 13. D.Dye, 293; 14. T.Gray, 285; 15. N.Sanchez, 283; 16. D.Thompson, 249.

Black Desert Championship

Saturday
At Ivins, Utah
Purse: \$3M
Yardage: 6,629; Par: 72
Third Round

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Hae-Ran Ryu | 63-67-68—198-18 |
| Ruoning Yin | 71-67-62—200-16 |
| Esther Henseleit | 65-68-68—201-15 |
| Wei-Ling Hsu | 64-70-69—203-13 |
| Ariya Jutanugarn | 64-70-69—203-13 |
| Chanettee Wannasaen | 68-68-67—203-13 |
| Brooke Henderson | 71-67-66—204-12 |
| Yan Liu | 72-67-65—204-12 |
| Rio Takeda | 70-69-65—204-12 |

LIV Golf Korea

Saturday
At Incheon, South Korea
Purse: \$20 million
Yardage: 7,376; Par: 72
Second Round

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| Bryson DeChambeau | 65-66-13 |
| Richard Bland | 66-69 -9 |
| Charles Howell III | 70-66 -8 |
| Jason Kokrak | 69-67 -8 |
| Dean Burmester | 68-68 -8 |
| Talor Gooch | 65-71 -8 |
| Carlos Ortiz | 71-66 -7 |
| Louis Oosthuizen | 66-71 -7 |
| Lucas Herbert | 71-67 -6 |
| Thomas Pieters | 71-67 -6 |
| Bubba Watson | 69-69 -6 |
| Jinichiro Kozuma | 68-70 -6 |
| Jon Rahm | 72-66 -6 |

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Eastern Conference

| | W | L | T | Pts | GF | GA |
|----------------|---|---|---|-----|----|----|
| Columbus | 7 | 1 | 3 | 24 | 18 | 10 |
| Philadelphia | 7 | 3 | 1 | 22 | 21 | 10 |
| Cincinnati | 7 | 2 | 1 | 22 | 15 | 12 |
| Inter Miami CF | 6 | 1 | 3 | 21 | 20 | 11 |
| Charlotte FC | 6 | 4 | 1 | 19 | 18 | 12 |
| Nashville | 5 | 4 | 2 | 17 | 20 | 14 |
| Orlando City | 4 | 2 | 5 | 17 | 18 | 12 |
| New England | 5 | 4 | 1 | 16 | 9 | 7 |
| New York | 4 | 4 | 3 | 15 | 12 | 13 |
| NYC FC | 4 | 4 | 2 | 14 | 12 | 13 |
| Chicago | 3 | 4 | 4 | 13 | 18 | 22 |
| D.C. United | 3 | 5 | 3 | 12 | 13 | 23 |
| Atlanta | 2 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 12 | 20 |
| Toronto FC | 1 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 16 |
| CF Montréal | 0 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 16 |

Western Conference

| | W | L | T | Pts | GF | GA |
|----------------|---|---|---|-----|----|----|
| Vancouver | 8 | 1 | 2 | 26 | 22 | 8 |
| Minn. United | 5 | 2 | 4 | 19 | 15 | 10 |
| Portland | 5 | 3 | 3 | 18 | 21 | 19 |
| San Diego FC | 5 | 4 | 2 | 17 | 21 | 15 |
| LAFC | 5 | 4 | 2 | 17 | 17 | 16 |
| Austin FC | 5 | 5 | 1 | 16 | 7 | 13 |
| Seattle | 4 | 3 | 4 | 16 | 17 | 13 |
| Colorado | 4 | 3 | 4 | 16 | 15 | 16 |
| FC Dallas | 4 | 4 | 3 | 15 | 14 | 19 |
| San Jose | 4 | 6 | 1 | 13 | 24 | 20 |
| Real Salt Lake | 4 | 7 | 0 | 12 | 12 | 17 |
| St Louis City | 2 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 8 | 12 |
| Houston | 2 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 10 | 16 |
| Sporting KC | 2 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 16 | 21 |
| LA Galaxy | 0 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 20 |

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Saturday's games

Nashville 1, Atlanta 1, tie
New England 2, Toronto FC 0
Columbus 4, Charlotte FC 2
D.C. United 2, Colorado 1
Miami 4, New York 1
Philadelphia 2, CF Montréal 1
Minnesota 3, Austin FC 0
Orlando City 0, Chicago 0, tie
San Diego FC 5, FC Dallas 0
Vancouver 2, Real Salt Lake 1
Los Angeles FC 2, Houston 0
San Jose 4, Portland 1
Seattle 4, St Louis City 1

Sunday's games

Cincinnati at New York City FC
LA Galaxy at Sporting Kansas City

Saturday, May 10

Atlanta at Chicago
Miami at Minnesota
D.C. United at Toronto FC
Austin FC at Cincinnati
LA Galaxy at New York City FC
New England at Orlando City
Columbus at Philadelphia
Real Salt Lake at FC Dallas
Seattle at Houston
Charlotte FC at Nashville
San Diego FC at St Louis City
San Jose at Colorado
Sporting Kansas City at Portland

Sunday, May 11

Los Angeles FC at Vancouver

NWSL

| | W | L | T | Pts | GF | GA |
|----------------|---|---|---|-----|----|----|
| Kansas City | 5 | 2 | 0 | 15 | 14 | 5 |
| Orlando | 5 | 2 | 0 | 15 | 14 | 5 |
| Portland | 3 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 11 | 9 |
| Washington | 4 | 3 | 0 | 12 | 10 | 10 |
| Gotham FC | 3 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 12 | 8 |
| Seattle | 3 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 7 | 6 |
| Angel City | 3 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 13 | 14 |
| San Diego | 3 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 12 | 8 |
| Bay FC | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 6 |
| North Carolina | 2 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 9 |
| Louisville | 2 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 13 |
| Houston | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 10 |
| Utah Royals FC | 1 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 11 |
| Chicago | 1 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 14 |

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Friday's games

Louisville 2, Houston 1
Angel City 4, Washington 3
Seattle 1, Kansas City 0

Saturday's games

Portland 1, Orlando 0
North Carolina 2, Utah Royals FC 0

Sunday's games

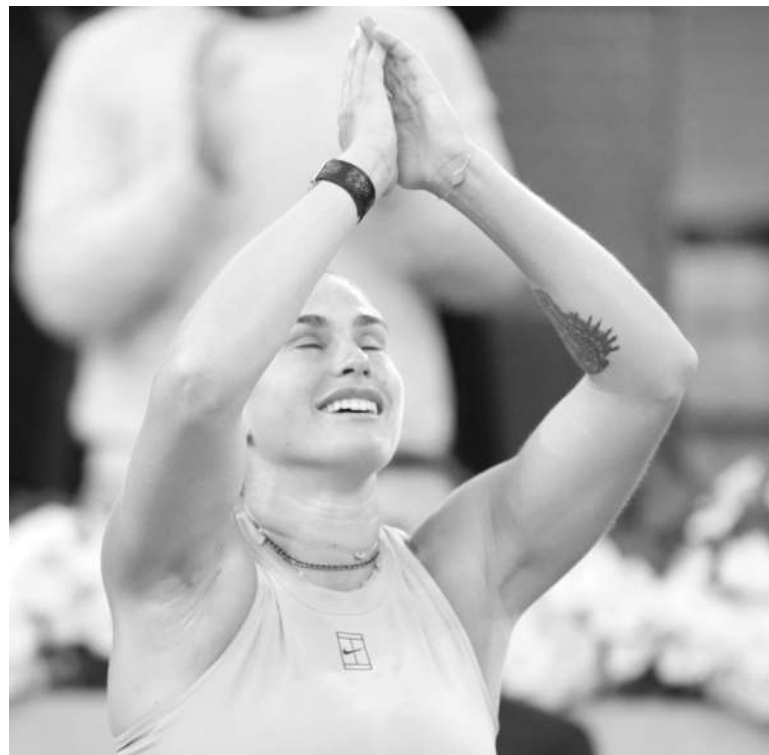
Chicago at Gotham FC
Bay FC at San Diego

Friday, May 9

Gotham FC at Louisville
Utah Royals FC at Angel City

Saturday, May 10

Washington at Chicago
Orlando at North Carolina
Portland at San Diego



JOSE BRETON/AP

Aryna Sabalenka celebrates after winning the Madrid Open final against Coco Gauff in Madrid on Saturday.

Sabalenka handles Gauff in Madrid for 20th career victory

Associated Press

MADRID — No. 1-ranked Aryna Sabalenka beat No. 4 Coco Gauff in straight sets to win her record-tying third Madrid Open and 20th career title Saturday.

Sabalenka powered through the first set and edged the American in a tiebreaker for 6-3, 7-6 (3) on the Caja Mágica clay court.

Sabalenka added to titles in Madrid in 2021 and 2023 and equaled Petra Kvitova's tournament record. It was also Sabalenka's tour-leading third title of the year after Brisbane and Miami. She also pulled level with Gauff on head-to-head with five wins apiece.

Gauff could have risen to No. 2 with a victory. The 2023 U.S. Open champion lost only one set this week until the final. Gauff's great record in finals slipped to nine wins in 11.

Sabalenka battered Gauff with her drive early on, winning 17 consecutive points during one section for a 4-1 start. When Gauff found her weakness by spreading her shots around, the former champion dug in to force a second-set tiebreaker and crush any chance of a comeback.

Sabalenka missed a championship point on a break chance in the second set, recalling her failure to convert three championship points in a loss to Iga Swiatek in last year's final. After yelling at herself for her missed opportunity, the three-time Grand Slam winner shook off her demons, set-

led down and finished off her tour-high 31st win of 2025.

When Gauff's final shot hit the net, Sabalenka thrust her arms into the air.

"It was a really tough match," Sabalenka said. "At the end of the second set it was really intense and I was very emotional. I am happy I was able to handle my emotions."

In the men's final on Sunday, Casper Ruud played Jack Draper.

With the help of painkillers, Casper Ruud overcame a rib ailment to defeat Francisco Cerundolo in straight sets on Friday.

Draper beat Lorenzo Musetti 6-3, 7-6 (4) in the other semifinal to make his third final of the year.

Ruud received treatment on his rib three games into the match and went on to win 6-4, 7-5 on the Caja Mágica center court.

The 15th-ranked Norwegian saved 15 of the 18 break points he faced against the 21st-ranked Argentine.

Ruud said he felt something in his rib during the warmup, just before going out on the court. He said he "felt it in nearly every shot, especially the serve."

"I wasn't sure I was going to be able to finish the match, honestly," Ruud said. "I got a couple of painkillers, which is not the ideal thing, but at the same time in a situation like this, you have to do that now and then. It was easing and getting better as the match went on."

MLB

ROUNDUP

Marlins walk off A's with grand slam

Associated Press

MIAMI — Kyle Stowers hit a game-ending grand slam for his second homer of the day, sending the Miami Marlins to a 9-6 victory over Mason Miller and the Athletics on Saturday.

The Marlins were down to their last out when Stowers drove a 101.7 mph fastball from Miller deep to left-center for his sixth homer of the season. He also hit a tying two-run shot in the third against Osvaldo Bido.

It was Stowers' second multi-homer performance in the last three games. He also went deep twice in a 12-7 loss at the Dodgers on Wednesday.

Javier Sanoja had two hits and scored two runs for Miami, which had lost six in a row. Lake Bachar (2-0) pitched two innings for the win.

Brent Rooker, JJ Bleday and Luis Urias homered for the A's, who had won five of six. Jacob Wilson had two hits and scored twice.

Guardians 5, Blue Jays 3: Daniel Schneemann hit his first career grand slam and added a solo shot, leading visiting Cleveland to a come-from-behind victory over Toronto.

With the Blue Jays leading 3-1 and two outs in the ninth inning, Schneemann pulled an 0-1 pitch from Yimi Garcia into the stands in right field for his first multi-homer game and fourth long ball of the season. Schneemann gave the Guardians their first run with a solo homer off Chad Green in the eighth.

Bo Bichette hit his first home run of the season for Toronto, but it wasted six shutout innings from right-hander Kevin Gausman and lost for the first time in four games.

Rays 3, Yankees 2: Curtis Mead and José Caballero had RBIs in a two-run eighth inning, and visiting Tampa Bay overcame Aaron Judge's 11th home run to beat New York and stop a four-game losing streak.

Judge homered in the first against Zack Littell (2-5), who retired his next 11 batters before Austin Wells started the fifth with his sixth homer for a 2-1 lead.

Judge has four homers in his last six games. The two-time AL MVP is hitting a major league-leading .432 and has a 29-game on-base streak. He is 26 for 52 during a 13-game hitting streak.

Astros 8, White Sox 3: Jake Meyers homered twice and set a career high with seven RBIs, helping visiting Houston beat Chicago.

Batting ninth, Meyers had four hits in his third career multihomer game.

Hunter Brown (5-1) struck out nine in six innings, winning his fifth straight decision. The right-



LYNNE SLADKY/AP

The Marlins' Kyle Stowers is doused with ice after hitting a walk-off grand slam in the ninth inning against the Athletics on Saturday in Miami. Stowers had two homers and six RBI in the Marlins' 9-6 victory.

hander allowed three runs — all in the first inning — and four hits.

Giants 6, Rockies 3: Matt Chapman hit a grand slam to help host San Francisco beat lowly Colorado.

Chapman connected against Jake Bird (0-1) with one out in the sixth, capping a five-run inning after the Rockies scored three times in the top of the frame. It was Chapman's third career grand slam, and the first for the Giants this season.

Colorado dropped to a major league-worst 6-27.

Angels 5, Tigers 2: Kyle Hendricks pitched into the eighth inning for his first win with host Los Angeles, Luis Rengifo and Kyren Paris each had a two-run single and the Angels stopped a seven-game losing streak by defeating Detroit.

The 35-year-old Hendricks (1-3) allowed one run and four hits over 7 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings in his sixth start for LA after spending his first 11 seasons with the Chicago Cubs. He entered with a 6.65 ERA but faced only one batter more than the minimum through seven innings.

Spencer Torkelson ended Hendricks' shutout bid with his 10th home run — a one-out shot in the eighth.

Padres 2, Pirates 1: Fernando Tatis Jr. sprinted home on a wild pitch by Pittsburgh closer David Bednar in the top of the ninth inning to lift visiting San Diego to a rainy win.

Tatis, who exited Friday night's win in the third inning after taking a 93 mph pitch off his left forearm, led off the ninth with a double. He stole third and took off when a

pitch from Bednar (0-3) to Xander Bogaerts skipped in front of catcher Joey Bart. The ball squirted to Bart's right and Tatis' slide just beat Bart's lunging tag to give the Padres their fourth straight victory.

Twins 4, Red Sox 3: Kody Clemens hit a two-run homer in his first game at Fenway Park — with his famous father in attendance — and visiting Minnesota beat Boston.

With former Red Sox ace Roger Clemens watching from a luxury box along the first-base line, his son drove an 0-1 slider from Hunter Dobbins (2-1) over the short wall in the right-field corner to push the Twins ahead 3-1 in the sixth inning.

Phillies 7, Diamondbacks 2: Aaron Nola (1-5) pitched six shutout innings with eight strikeouts in his first win of the season, and host Philadelphia beat Arizona.

J.T. Realmuto and Max Kepler homered for the Phillies in their sixth win in seven games. Philadelphia went for a sweep of the weekend series Sunday.

Cubs 6, Brewers 2: Pete Crow-Armstrong and Dansby Swanson hit back-to-back homers off Jose Quintana in the fourth inning as visiting Chicago defeated Milwaukee.

Kyle Tucker also went deep to help the NL Central-leading Cubs beat the two-time defending division champions for a second straight night. Chicago's Jameson Taillon (2-1), Julian Merryweather and Brad Keller combined on a four-hitter.

Mariners 2, Rangers 1: Rowdy Tellez hit a tiebreaking RBI single

in the ninth inning, and visiting Seattle beat Texas for its sixth consecutive victory.

Jorge Polanco led off the ninth with a pinch-hit double off Chris Martin (0-4). Polanco advanced to third on Ben Williamson's grounder before scoring on Tellez's pinch-hit liner into center.

Nationals 11, Reds 6: Amed Rosario homered and drove in four runs to propel visiting Washington to a victory over Cincinnati.

Rosario, who hit a two-out RBI double in the fourth inning off Reds starter Nick Lodolo (3-3) to tie it at 3, connected on a three-run shot for his second homer this season to put the Nationals up 6-3 in the sixth.

Royals 4, Orioles 0: Kris Bubic made it through five innings despite an early rain delay, and visiting Kansas City hit three solo homers in a victory over Baltimore.

Cavan Biggio, Kyle Isbel and Vinnie Pasquantino went deep for the Royals, who have won 10 of their last 12. KC has pitched four shutouts in its last eight games.

Dodgers 10, Braves 3: Freddie Freeman homered and drove in four runs, Shohei Ohtani also went deep and Roki Sasaki earned his first major league win as visiting Los Angeles beat Atlanta for its seventh straight victory.

Sasaki (1-1) allowed three runs and six hits over five innings in a game pushed back more than three hours because of rain. The 23-year-old right-hander gave up a home run to Ozzie Albies but received plenty of offensive support in his seventh big league start since arriving from Japan to much fanfare.

Scoreboard

American League

| East Division | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|------|-----------------|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| New York | 19 | 14 | .576 | — |
| Boston | 18 | 17 | .514 | 2 |
| Toronto | 16 | 17 | .485 | 3 |
| Tampa Bay | 15 | 18 | .455 | 4 |
| Baltimore | 13 | 19 | .406 | 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ |

| Central Division | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|------------------|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Detroit | 21 | 13 | .618 | — |
| Cleveland | 19 | 14 | .576 | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Kansas City | 18 | 16 | .529 | 3 |
| Minnesota | 14 | 20 | .412 | 7 |
| Chicago | 9 | 24 | .273 | 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ |

| West Division | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|------|----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Seattle | 20 | 12 | .625 | — |
| Houston | 17 | 15 | .531 | 3 |
| Athletics | 18 | 16 | .529 | 3 |
| Texas | 16 | 18 | .471 | 5 |
| Los Angeles | 13 | 19 | .406 | 7 |

National League

| East Division | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|------|-----------------|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| New York | 22 | 11 | .667 | — |
| Philadelphia | 19 | 14 | .576 | 3 |
| Washington | 15 | 19 | .441 | 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Atlanta | 14 | 18 | .438 | 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Miami | 13 | 19 | .406 | 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ |

| Central Division | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|-----------------|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Chicago | 21 | 13 | .618 | — |
| Cincinnati | 18 | 16 | .529 | 3 |
| Milwaukee | 16 | 18 | .471 | 5 |
| St. Louis | 14 | 19 | .424 | 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Pittsburgh | 12 | 22 | .353 | 9 |

| West Division | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|------|-----------------|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Los Angeles | 23 | 10 | .697 | — |
| San Diego | 21 | 11 | .656 | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| San Francisco | 21 | 13 | .618 | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Arizona | 17 | 16 | .515 | 6 |
| Colorado | 6 | 27 | .182 | 17 |

Friday's games

Baltimore 3, Kansas City 0
 N.Y. Yankees 3, Tampa Bay 0
 Boston 6, Minnesota 1
 Athletics 6, Miami 1
 Toronto 5, Cleveland 3
 Chicago White Sox 7, Houston 3
 Seattle 13, Texas 1
 Detroit 9, L.A. Angels 1
 Cincinnati 6, Washington 1
 Philadelphia 3, Arizona 2
 L.A. Dodgers 2, Atlanta 1
 San Diego 9, Pittsburgh 4
 Chicago Cubs 10, Milwaukee 0
 N.Y. Mets 9, St. Louis 3
 San Francisco 4, Colorado 0

Saturday's games

Tampa Bay 3, N.Y. Yankees 2
 Houston 8, Chicago White Sox 3
 Cleveland 5, Toronto 3
 Miami 9, Athletics 6
 Minnesota 4, Boston 3
 Kansas City 4, Baltimore 0
 Seattle 2, Texas 1
 L.A. Angels 5, Detroit 2
 San Diego 2, Pittsburgh 1
 San Francisco 6, Colorado 3
 Philadelphia 7, Arizona 2
 Chicago Cubs 6, Milwaukee 2
 Washington 11, Cincinnati 6
 L.A. Dodgers 10, Atlanta 3
 N.Y. Mets at St. Louis, p.p.d.

Sunday's games

N.Y. Mets at St. Louis, 2
 Kansas City at Baltimore
 Minnesota at Boston
 Tampa Bay at N.Y. Yankees
 San Diego at Pittsburgh
 Cleveland at Toronto
 Athletics at Miami
 Arizona at Philadelphia
 Houston at Chicago White Sox
 Chicago Cubs at Milwaukee
 Seattle at Texas
 Colorado at San Francisco
 Detroit at L.A. Angels
 Washington at Cincinnati
 L.A. Dodgers at Atlanta

Monday's games

L.A. Dodgers (TBD) at Miami (Alcantara 2-3)
 Cleveland (Ortiz 2-3) at Washington (Irvin 2-1)
 San Diego (Pivetta 5-1) at N.Y. Yankees (Rodón 4-3)
 Cincinnati (Singer 4-1) at Atlanta (Smith-Shawver 1-2)
 Chicago White Sox (Smith 1-1) at Kansas City (Ragans 1-1)
 San Francisco (Roupp 2-2) at Chicago Cubs (Boyd 2-2)
 Houston (Blanco 2-2) at Milwaukee (Myers 0-0)
 Pittsburgh (Mlodzinski 1-3) at St. Louis (Mikolas 1-2)
 N.Y. Mets (Canning 4-1) at Arizona (TBD)
 Seattle (Miller 2-3) at Athletics (Severino 1-3)

NHL PLAYOFFS

Scoreboard

First Round

EASTERN CONFERENCE
Florida 4, Tampa Bay 1

Florida 6, Tampa Bay 2
Florida 2, Tampa Bay 0
Tampa Bay 5, Florida 1
Florida 4, Tampa Bay 2
Florida 6, Tampa Bay 3

Washington 4, Montreal 1

Washington 3, Montreal 2, OT
Washington 3, Montreal 1
Montreal 6, Washington 3
Washington 5, Montreal 2
Washington 4, Montreal 1

Carolina 4, New Jersey 1

Carolina 4, New Jersey 1
Carolina 3, New Jersey 1
New Jersey 3, Carolina 2, 2OT
Carolina 5, New Jersey 2
Carolina 5, New Jersey 4, 2OT

Toronto 4, Ottawa 2

Toronto 6, Ottawa 2
Toronto 3, Ottawa 2, OT
Toronto 3, Ottawa 2, OT
Ottawa 4, Toronto 3, OT
Ottawa 4, Toronto 0
Toronto 4, Ottawa 2

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Dallas 4, Colorado 3

Colorado 5, Dallas 1
Dallas 4, Colorado 3, OT
Dallas 2, Colorado 1, OT
Colorado 4, Dallas 0
Dallas 6, Colorado 2
Colorado 7, Dallas 4
Saturday: Dallas 4, Colorado 2

Edmonton 4, Los Angeles 2

Los Angeles 6, Edmonton 5
Los Angeles 6, Edmonton 2
Edmonton 7, Los Angeles 4
Edmonton 4, Los Angeles 3, OT
Edmonton 3, Los Angeles 1
Edmonton 6, Los Angeles 4

Vegas 4, Minnesota 2

Vegas 4, Minnesota 2
Minnesota 5, Vegas 2
Minnesota 5, Vegas 2
Vegas 4, Minnesota 3, OT
Vegas 3, Minnesota 2, OT
Vegas 3, Minnesota 2

Winnipeg 3, St. Louis 3

Winnipeg 5, St. Louis 3
Winnipeg 2, St. Louis 1
St. Louis 7, Winnipeg 2
St. Louis 5, Winnipeg 1
Winnipeg 5, St. Louis 3
St. Louis 5, Winnipeg 2
Sunday: at Winnipeg

Second Round

Best-of-7; x-if necessary
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Washington vs. Carolina

Tuesday: at Washington, AFN-Sports2, 1 a.m. Wednesday CET, 9 a.m. Wednesday JKT

Thursday: at Washington

Saturday, May 10: at Carolina

Monday, May 12: at Carolina

x-Thursday, May 15: at Washington

x-Saturday, May 17: at Carolina

x-Monday, May 19: at Washington

Toronto vs. Florida

Monday: at Toronto, AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m.

Tuesday CET, 10 a.m. Tuesday JKT

Wednesday: at Toronto

Friday: at Florida

Sunday, May 11: at Florida

x-Wednesday, May 14: at Toronto

x-Friday, May 16: at Florida

x-Sunday, May 18: at Toronto

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Vegas vs. Edmonton

Tuesday: at Vegas, AFN-Sports2, 3:30 a.m. Wednesday CET, 11:30 a.m. Wednesday JKT

Thursday: at Vegas

Saturday, May 10: at Edmonton

Monday, May 12: at Edmonton

x-Wednesday, May 14: at Vegas

x-Friday, May 16: at Edmonton

x-Sunday, May 18: at Vegas

Stars rally past Avs in Game 7

Rantanen has hat trick in third period as Dallas eliminates his former team to advance

By STEPHEN HAWKINS

Associated Press

DALLAS — Mikko Rantanen really took over for the Dallas Stars when they needed him the most against this former team — in the third period of Game 7.

Rantanen assisted on Wyatt Johnston's tie-breaking power-play goal with 3:56 left before completing his third-period hat trick with an empty-netter as the Stars overcame a two-goal deficit to beat the Colorado Avalanche 4-2 on Saturday night to wrap up the first-round Western Conference playoff series.

"He just decided that we were not going to go home," Dallas coach Pete DeBoer said. "What you witnessed there was special."

Rantanen, who was in the playoffs with the Avalanche the past seven seasons and part of their 2022 Stanley Cup title, had a four-point period for the second game in a row. He is only the second player in NHL history to have four points in the third period of a Game 7.

"The series was probably exactly what I expected," Rantanen said. "I expected a seven-game series even before Game 1. I think belief was there with the group the whole time."

The Stars move on to the second round to face the top-seeded Jets or Blues, who played their own Game 7 on Sunday night.

Colorado had a 2-0 lead when Nathan MacKinnon made a short snap shot only 31 seconds into the third period. It was the first goal he has scored in five Game 7s, but all of those are losses.

Traded twice in a six-week period earlier this season, first from the Avs to the Hurricanes and then to Dallas in a deadline deal that included a \$96 million, eight-year contract extension, Rantanen had five goals and seven assists in the series against his original team.

"A difficult year personally, mentally, tough overall. To be traded twice, it's not fun ever to get traded even once, but twice in a season," said Rantanen, who said the handshake line with his former teammates after the game was emotional for him.

"They're my brothers for sure. Most of them I know really well and played with them for 10 years," Rantanen said. "Obviously we're enemies this series on the ice, but I'll always love them off the ice. It's emotional for sure because everything happened so quick."

Rantanen got the Stars' first goal with 12:11 left on a shot from above the middle of the circles. He tied the game at 2 on a power play with



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Dallas fans and the Stars' Mikko Rantanen celebrate after Rantanen scored an empty-net goal against the Colorado Avalanche in the third period in Game 7 on Saturday.

6:14 left went he skated behind the net and took a wraparound shot that ricocheted off the skate of Colorado defenseman Samuel Girard behind goalie Mackenzie Blackwood. Rantanen then sealed the win with an empty-netter with 3 seconds remaining to complete his first career playoff hat trick.

"You saw a switch flip I think in Game 6 for him. He just decided that he was going to take over, and he's big enough, strong enough, skilled enough to do that," said Matt Duchene, who had two assists.

Dallas goalie Jake Oettinger, playing in a Game 7 for the fourth postseason in a row, had 24 saves. He is 3-1 in those games.

Blackwood stopped 15 shots, including one in the second period to keep the game scoreless with his right leg fully extended to the post while Mikael Granlund tried a wide sweeping shot from the front of the crease.

Stars coach Pete DeBoer became the first player or coach in NHL history to be part of nine Game 7 victories. He is 9-0 in Game 7s, a record accumulated with four different teams since 2012. His first came with New Jersey, and he has since had three each with San Jose and Dallas and two with Vegas. The Stars have won a seven-game series in each of his first three seasons with them.

The Avalanche have now lost seven Game 7s in a row since 2002, the last four with coach Jared Bednar. They are the only NHL, NBA or MLB team to lose seven consecutive Game 7s, according to OptaSTATS.

"It's tough because you put your heart and soul into the whole year, the series, all of it and then you're in a good position and then it slips away on you," Bednar said. "It's tough because I know how hard these guys worked and how bad they wanted it and that's all you really think of at this point."

Dallas has won all four Game 7s it has played against Colorado, and reached the Stanley Cup Final after each of the first three. They went to seven games in the Western Conference final in both 1999 and 2000, and the Stars won a seven-game series in the second round of the pandemic-impacted 2020 playoffs.

Josh Manson put the Avs ahead 1-0 on a short-handed goal midway through the second period when they got another fortunate bounce.

Two nights after Colorado avoided elimination at home when its go-ahead goal in Game 6 came on a puck bounced off a Dallas player, Manson's shot ricocheted off the post and then the back of Oettinger's left shoulder before trickling over the line.

Oilers deeper than in 2023 series loss to Golden Knights

By MARK ANDERSON

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The Golden Knights focused their efforts two years ago on limiting Oilers stars Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl, a successful strategy that gave Vegas the series victory and helped put it on the path to winning the Stanley Cup.

The teams meet again in the second round of the NHL playoffs, beginning Tuesday, and McDavid and Draisaitl once more have the Golden Knights' attention.

But Vegas is also concerned about the rest of Edmonton's lineup, which is noticeably deeper than when they met in 2023.

"We were just talking today how they seem to run four lines more than they have in the past," Golden Knights defenseman

Shea Theodore said Saturday. "I think their depth is definitely better, and that's going to have to be something we're going to have to prepare for."

That depth was evident in the Oilers' 4-2 first-round series victory over Los Angeles. McDavid and Draisaitl combined for 21 points and four others had at least five points apiece. Fourth-line center Mattias Janmark, who played for Vegas in 2020-22, scored the winning goal in Game 5 against the Kings.

"We're not hiding from anyone because we feel we have so many good players that can play against other teams' top lines," Edmonton coach Kris Knoblauch said. "Connor and Leon are our two most valuable players, and they typically impact the game

more than anybody every single night. But they can only do it so many times. We need other guys stepping up. It was nice to see in the LA series other guys step up."

Jay Woodcroft was the Oilers' coach two years ago when McDavid and Draisaitl nearly carried the team to the series victory, combining for eight goals and six assists as the teams split the first four games. Draisaitl was left completely off the scoresheet in the final two games. McDavid continue to produce with three goals, but he had no assists.

The result was an Edmonton team that scored at least four goals in three of the first four games getting held to a combined five over the final two.

The Golden Knights won both games and

advanced to the Western Conference final.

Now they stand in each other's way again, Vegas hoping to capture its second title in three seasons and the Oilers trying to reach the Stanley Cup Final for the second straight year. Edmonton took Florida to seven games last year before watching the Panthers skate off with the cup.

"They changed their head coach and they use their depth players more," Golden Knights coach Bruce Cassidy said. "They still rely on their two big guys, obviously, but they won games with depth against LA."

Cassidy said he didn't know if the Oilers would put McDavid and Draisaitl on the same line or split them up. What Knoblauch decides could affect Vegas' strategy, but maybe not.

NBA

Nuggets surge to rout Clippers in Game 7

BY ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

DENVER — Not this time.

Nikola Jokic got plenty of help from his teammates and Denver's scoring surge held up in a 120-101 blowout of the shellshocked Los Angeles Clippers in a Game 7 laugher on Saturday night.

The Nuggets led by as many as 35 and while the franchise's biggest blowout in a win-or-go-home scenario won't make up for last year when Denver blew a 20-point fourth-quarter lead over Minnesota at home in Game 7 of its Round 2 series, it certainly exorcised some of those demons.

"It feels good," interim Nuggets coach David Adelman said, "but I also know we're flying to OKC tomorrow."

No. 4 seed Denver advanced to take on the No. 1 seeded and well-rested Oklahoma City Thunder, which swept Memphis in the first round and has had a week off heading into the second-round series that begins Monday night.

When Adelman reminded a friend recently that the reward for surviving this gritty series with the Clippers was a date with the team that went an NBA-best 68-14, his buddy retorted that what actually awaited the winner was a 72-14 team.

"OK, that's right," Adelman replied. "Appreciate that, bro."

The Nuggets and Thunder split their season series 2-2 and if Denver can reproduce its effort from Saturday night, the next series could be a tight one, too.

Jokic had 16 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists in 33 minutes but for a change he was overshadowed by his teammates. Aaron Gordon led Denver with 22 points, Christian Braun had 21, Jamal Murray and Russell Westbrook chipped in 16 each and Michael Porter Jr. scored 15.

"In playoffs we know that everybody needs to step up, offensively, defensively, whatever, energy-wise. And everybody who plays needs to contribute something," Jokic said. "It was special today the guys did that."

Braun also played terrific defense on James



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Nuggets forward Aaron Gordon dunks as Los Angeles Clippers center Ivica Zubac and guard Norman Powell look on in the second half of Game 7 of a first-round playoff series Saturday.

Harden, who was held to 7 points on 2-for-8 shooting.

"Everybody behind me allowed me to guard him. But I think maybe the biggest part was Russ," Braun said. "He's played against James, he's played with James, so he knows his game. ... The coaches trusted me tonight. We didn't want to switch. They kept me on him all night. So credit goes to those guys and the coaches."

Kawhi Leonard led Los Angeles with 22 points and Ivica Zubac had his quietest game of the series with 10 points.

"I don't think this team was 30 points better than us," Leonard said. "We saw that throughout the first six games of this series, but you've got to give them credit. They came out, ran hard

in transition, got easy points and they made shots."

Hanging over the Nuggets all season, one that included the firings of their head coach and their general manager, was their Game 7 fiasco in Round 2 last year just when it looked like they were primed to defend the franchise's first NBA championship.

And after frittering away a 22-point fourth-quarter advantage in Game 4 of this series — only to be saved by the first buzzer-beating dunk in NBA playoff history, courtesy of Gordon — Denver and the Ball Arena crowd only grew more energized instead of anxious as the lead kept growing and the Clippers kept missing.

Global: Popovich's legacy not limited to achievements on basketball court

FROM PAGE 24

France's Tony Parker and Argentina's Manu Ginobili formed one of the league's all-time Big Threes with Tim Duncan — another player whose worldview as perhaps a bit different, having grown up in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Boris Diaw, Tiago Splitter, Marco Belinelli, Beno Udrih, Jakob Poeltl, Fabricio Oberto, Pau Gasol and many more were part of the Spurs program as well. Popovich had international coaches — Italy's Ettore Messina made big headlines in Europe when he joined San Antonio, for example. And Popovich picked the brains of others when he was coaching the U.S. national team, including former French national team coach (and Wembanyama's coach) Vincent Collet, someone he went head-to-head with for Olympic gold at the Tokyo Games in 2021.

"There are smart people everywhere," Popovich once said, around the time he was taking over as the U.S. coach. "None of us has it all figured out. Everybody brings something to the table that you might not have thought about."

If anyone came close to having it all figured out, it was Popovich.

He's a Basketball Hall of Famer. The NBA's all-time win leader. A five-time champion with the Spurs. He coached the U.S. to Olympic gold. And that's just the stuff everybody knows about. Ask the people who operate the San Antonio Food Bank what Popovich has quietly done for them and the answers will take a while. Same goes for the Innocence Project and St. Jude's Children's Hospital, two other causes he supports.

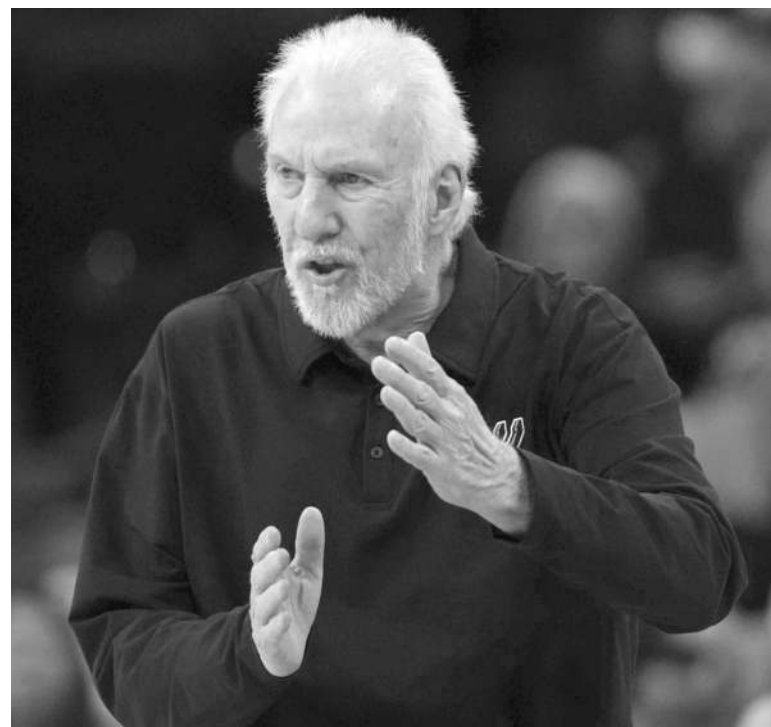
Popovich was more than a

coach. He was a guy from Indiana who could shoot the ball well and was smart, parlayed that into an Air Force education, should have made the 1972 U.S. Olympic team as a player, took some of the disappointment from that and began learning how to coach instead, took over a Division III team in California that had lost 88 consecutive conference games and turned it into a champion, kept climbing the ladder and here we are.

The Air Force Academy — a place Popovich would return to many times after his graduation — taught him countless lessons, including to embrace different views and to never stop evolving.

"What you learn there is to get over yourself," Popovich said. "It's not about you."

Popovich never stopped learning, either. He changed the



ERIC GAY/AP

Gregg Popovich retires as the winningest coach in NBA history with 1,422 regular season victories to go alongside five championships.

Spurs. Changed the NBA, too. Forget the championships and records and one-liners and ev-

everything else. He helped change the NBA.

That's his legacy.

Scoreboard

First Round

Best-of-seven; x-if necessary
Eastern Conference
New York 4, Detroit 2

New York 123, Detroit 112
Detroit 100, New York 94
New York 118, Detroit 116
New York 94, Detroit 93
Detroit 106, New York 103
New York 116, Detroit 113

Cleveland 4, Miami 0

Cleveland 121, Miami 100
Cleveland 121, Miami 112
Cleveland 124, Miami 87
Cleveland 138, Miami 83

Indiana 4, Milwaukee 1

Indiana 117, Milwaukee 98
Indiana 123, Milwaukee 115
Milwaukee 117, Indiana 101
Indiana 129, Milwaukee 103
Indiana 119, Milwaukee 118, OT

Boston 4, Orlando 1

Boston 103, Orlando 86
Boston 109, Orlando 100
Orlando 95, Boston 93
Boston 107, Orlando 98
Boston 120, Orlando 89

Western Conference

Golden State 3, Houston 3

Golden State 95, Houston 85
Houston 109, Golden State 94
Golden State 104, Houston 93
Golden State 109, Houston 106
Houston 131, Golden State 116
Friday: Houston 115, Golden State 107
Sunday: at Houston

Denver 4, L.A. Clippers 3

Denver 112, L.A. Clippers 110, OT
L.A. Clippers 105, Denver 102
L.A. Clippers 117, Denver 83
Denver 101, L.A. Clippers 99
Denver 131, L.A. Clippers 115
L.A. Clippers 111, Denver 105
Saturday: Denver 120, L.A. Clippers 101

Oklahoma City 4, Memphis 0

Oklahoma City 131, Memphis 80
Oklahoma City 118, Memphis 99
Oklahoma City 114, Memphis 108
Oklahoma City 117, Memphis 115

Minnesota 4, L.A. Lakers 1

Minnesota 117, L.A. Lakers 95
L.A. Lakers 94, Minnesota 85
Minnesota 116, L.A. Lakers 104
Minnesota 116, L.A. Lakers 113
Minnesota 103, L.A. Lakers 96

Second Round

Sunday

Indiana at Cleveland

Monday

New York at Boston
Denver at Oklahoma City

Tuesday

Indiana at Cleveland

NBA PLAYOFFS/KENTUCKY DERBY

Mitchell uses Jazz's disappointment from 2021 to fuel Cavaliers

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

INDEPENDENCE, Ohio — Donovan Mitchell hasn't allowed himself to enjoy leading the Cleveland Cavaliers to the top seed in the Eastern Conference.

As the Cavaliers continued to surpass expectations and wrapped up the regular season with the NBA's second-best record, the painful memories of what happened the last time he was on a team with a top seed provided more fuel for his leadership.

Mitchell is in a conference semifinal for the fourth time in his eight-year career. His biggest disappointment came in the 2021 playoffs, when the Utah Jazz were the top seed in the Western Conference but were eliminated by the Los Angeles Clippers.

As Cleveland prepared to open the Eastern Conference semifinals Sunday night against the Indiana Pacers, Mitchell is ready for another shot at getting to a conference final — and possibly beyond — for the first time.

"I'm fortunate enough to have another crack at it," he said. "It's not just myself, but for the group, just continuing to want to take that next step. That's why we play this game. We don't play to have a 64-win season and be happy. We play to win the championship. That's the goal, and that's really what is fueling me."

The Jazz won the first two games of that series but lost the next four to a Clippers squad that didn't have Kawhi Leonard for the final two games after he suffered a knee injury.

Mitchell certainly did his part in that series, averaging 34.8 points, 5.3 assists, and 5.0 rebounds. His step-back 3-pointer early in the third quarter in Game 6 gave Utah a 24-point lead, only to see Los Angeles rally back for a 131-119 victory. It was the largest comeback victory — or in the Jazz's case, a collapse — by a team in a series-clinching game over the last 25 seasons.

Cavs coach Kenny Atkinson, an assistant with the Clippers in 2021, knows how much that series molded Mitchell.

"The fact that he's been through his experiences, being the No. 1 seed, it's huge. I feel more comfortable because this guy's been through it. It's happened to him before. He knows what a series looks like. He knows when the tactics change," Atkinson said. "Because he has that experience, he's going to be more aggressive in communicating with me and his teammates."

Mitchell has already been aggressive during the regular sea-



MICHAEL LAUGHLIN/AP

Donovan Mitchell played for Utah when the Jazz were the top seed in the Western Conference, but were eliminated by the Clippers.

son, making sure Cleveland didn't rest on its laurels when it started the season 15-0, reached 60 wins for the third time in franchise history — and first without LeBron James — or got the top seed in the East for the first time in eight years.

When asked for the biggest difference between the Utah squad four years ago and the Cavaliers this year, Mitchell sees a bigger level of desperation instead of contentment.

"It's not just what I've been preaching, I think guys feel it — Evan (Mobley), DG (Darius Garland), JA (Jarrett Allen), Ty (Jerome), Dre (De'Andre Hunter), Max (Struss) — we all know there's a level of desperation among this group," Mitchell said. "Not every series is going to be a sweep. We understand that. Maybe you get hit in the mouth, but continue to use that as fuel and work to be the best."

Mitchell's message to his teammates going into the Indiana series will be the same as before Cleveland took on the Heat and swept them in four games — take care of home court and remain consistent in their approach.

The Pacers won three of the four regular-season meetings. The last two came during the final week when Mitchell was sitting out due to an injured ankle and after the Cavs wrapped up the top seed.

Indiana coach Rick Carlisle knows Mitchell can not only carry a team to a win in the fourth quarter, he can also determine a series.

"Just go look at Game 2 of the Miami series," Carlisle said. "Miami was playing a great game; they were hanging in, I think they had a lead, and Mitchell just elevated his game, their game, and he gets 17 in the fourth quarter, and from then on, they completely dominated the series."



ABBIE PARR/AP

Sovereignty, ridden by Junior Alvarado crosses the finish line to win the 151st running of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs Saturday in Louisville, Ky. Sovereignty outdueled Journalism down the stretch.

Sovereignty outduels Journalism in the slop

By BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Sovereignty gave trainer Bill Mott a second Kentucky Derby victory. This time there was no doubt about it and no asterisk.

The 3-year-old colt outdueled 3-1 favorite Journalism down the stretch to win the 151st Derby in the slop on Saturday, snapping an 0-for-13 skid by owner Godolphin.

Mott won his first Derby in 2019, also run on a sloppy track, when Country House was elevated to first after Maximum Security crossed the finish line first and was disqualified during a 22-minute delay.

It took a few minutes for Saturday's results to be made official while the stewards sorted out a photo for second and reviewed a traffic-choked start.

Mott knew all the while who earned the garland of red roses.

"This one got there the right way," the Hall of Fame trainer said. "I mean, he's done well, he's a great horse, he comes from a great organization and I can't say enough about the horse and the organization that started him out and made this happen."

Godolphin is the racing stable of Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

It was quite a weekend for the sheikh. His filly, Good Cheer, won the Kentucky Oaks on Friday and earlier Saturday, Ruling Court — a son of 2018 Triple Crown winner Justify — won the 2,000 Guineas in Britain.

Sovereignty splashed through 1¼ miles in 2:02.31 and paid \$17.96 to win at 7-1 odds.

"It's great," Mott said. "I think it will take a little while to sink in."

Journalism didn't have the cleanest of trips in the 19-horse field, but rallied to stay in the fight. He found trouble early before jockey Umberto Rispoli swung him outside to get him in the clear. They made a move at the leaders with Sovereignty and jockey Junior Alvarado right behind them.

"He was saying to me, 'Listen, I'm ready,' so from there I started picking up," Alvarado said.

The two colts hooked up for a sixteenth of a mile for a thrilling battle against the backdrop of 147,406 roaring and rain-soaked fans before Sovereignty surged



BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Junior Alvarado celebrates after riding Sovereignty to win the the Kentucky Derby on Saturday.

ahead inside the eighth pole and drew clear.

"I saw the blue silks (of Godolphin) coming at us and I knew that was the one we were going to have to be concerned about," said Michael McCarthy, Journalism's trainer. "The winner ran a better race."

Alvarado won his first Derby in six tries. He and Sovereignty were reunited after Alvarado had missed the colt's last start in the Florida Derby because he was injured.

"It's more than a dream come true," the 38-year-old Venezuelan said. "I thought I had a great chance. I was confident the whole week."

Fast-closing Baeza — who got into the race on Thursday after another horse was scratched — was a neck back in third. Final Gambit was fourth and Owen Almighty finished fifth.

Citizen Bull, the lone entry for six-time Derby-winning trainer Bob Baffert, set the pace but finished 14th. Baffert was back on the first Saturday in May having serving a three-year suspension by Churchill Downs after his Medina Spirit crossed the finish line first in 2021 and failed a postrace drug test.

Rain made for a soggy day, with the Churchill Downs dirt strip listed as sloppy and fans protecting their fancy hats and clothing with clear plastic ponchos.

SPORTS



First-round thriller

Stars finish off close series with rally over Avalanche » **NHL playoffs, Page 21**

ON BASKETBALL

Global view

Popovich's eye for international talent helped forever change NBA

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
Associated Press

Gregg Popovich understood the world. That goes back long before the basketball world knew who he was. It can probably be traced to at least Popovich's time at the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he majored in Soviet studies and was on his way to becoming a spy.

He became an icon instead.

Popovich's time as coach of the San Antonio Spurs ended Friday, six months after a stroke essentially ended his tenure — in that capacity, anyway — without him knowing it. He stepped down, Mitch Johnson was promoted from acting coach to head coach, and just like that, the Spurs started a new chapter.

Popovich isn't going anywhere. He's still the team president. He'll be around. He'll have influence. His role going forward is probably largely up to him, a right that he's earned over the last 30 or so years. His view of the world shaped many of the things San Antonio is today. Same goes for the rest of the league as well, and as proof, look at any roster these days.

Some of the best players in the game — Nikola Jokic, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Luka Doncic, Giannis Antetokounmpo and the Spurs' own franchise player in Victor Wembanyama among them — were born outside the United States. Would they have been in the league without Popovich? Almost certainly, yes. But did Popovich and San Antonio help create the path that saw more international players get into the league? Most definitely.

"They were a pioneer around the international game," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said of the Spurs — specifically Popovich and his longtime right-hand man, team CEO R.C. Buford — earlier this year. "They were scouting internationally in a deep way long before many other teams."

Basketball is played all over the world, and Popovich — forever the student — wanted to learn about all of it. He was finding players in Europe in the late 1980s, long before it became common. As the stories go, he still can't walk around places like Belgrade without being recognized. That's probably not much of an exaggeration, either.

Just look at the roster of all-time San Antonio greats:

SEE GLOBAL ON PAGE 22

INSIDE

Nuggets advance with Game 7 rout
Page 22



ERIC GAY/AP

By the time Victor Wembanyama, right, arrived in San Antonio, Spurs president and now former head coach Gregg Popovich had already been recruiting international talent to his team for years.

Sovereignty wins close Kentucky Derby upset » **Page 23**



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