Marine Corps offers big bonuses for selective reenlistments

By Christopher Dennis
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps is offering up to $90,000 in retention bonuses for high-demand career fields, including Raiders, reconnaissance and explosive ordnance disposal, as it seeks to retain young Marines with key skills.

The selective reenlistment bonuses for fiscal year 2020 include incentives for aviation maintenance, air traffic controllers, infantry squad leaders and Marines willing to make a lateral move to select specialties such as intelligence and cyberdefense, a command bulletin issued Friday said.

“Retention our experienced and qualified Marines remains one of the Commandant’s highest priorities,” it said. “Achieving retention goals is vital for shaping and sustaining the Marine Corps’ enlisted force.”

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert B. Neller said in a letter in October that the Corps needed to recruit 38,500 members to fill gaps in the ranks.

The Marine Corps has a younger population than the other services but a higher turnover rate, and nearly two-thirds of Marines are sergeants or below, Neller said.

The incentives include a bonus for Marines in reenlistment zones between 17 months and six years of active service laterally moving to counterintelligence/human intelligence specialist for 72 months, who could gain an additional $8,000, the statement said.

Marines who move into a select occupation for 72 months will rate a $40,000 payment in addition to the field’s reenlistment bonus, which could range from $4,500 to $57,000, depending on the specialty and the Marine’s rank.

The bulletin cited an example of a sergeant with between 17 months and six years of active service laterally moving to counterintelligence/human intelligence specialist for 72 months, who could get a combined bonus of $90,000.

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SEATTLE — Washington state sued the Navy on Tuesday over its expansion of jet operations on an island north of Seattle, saying officials failed to adequately consider the effect that additional noisy flights would have on people or wildlife.

“The Navy has an important job, and it’s critical that their pilots and crews have the opportunity to train,” Attorney General Bob Ferguson said in a news release announcing the lawsuit. “That does not relieve the federal government of its obligation to follow the law and avoid unnecessary harm to our health and natural resources.”

The Navy’s public affairs office said it does not comment on litigation.

The Navy in March authorized the expansion of its Growler program by up to three dozen jets, adding to the 82 already based on Whidbey Island, north of Seattle.

The low-flying jets conduct electronic warfare to jam enemy communications and launch systems, and under the expansion plans crews would perform around 100,000 takeoffs and landings a year for the next three decades.

That, Ferguson said, could have serious effects on nearby residents. The state Health Department has outlined how exposure to noise levels similar to those at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island could disrupt children’s learning and cause sleep disturbance, cognitive impairment and cardiovascular disease.

It could also disrupt the feeding and breeding of eagles and marbled murrelets, a type of seabird.

In the news release, Quinault Indian Nation President Fawn Sharp called on the federal government to strike a balance between national security and environmental preservation.

“Unregulated, unrestrained noise pollution from increased military training operations presents a clear threat to the health and solitude of our state’s fragile ecosystems, treaty-protected resources and endangered species,” she said.

In its decision to approve the expansion plan, the Navy said the number of flights on the island would be comparable to those that occurred from the 1970s through the 1990s. It also said it would continue to invest in technologies to reduce engine and aircraft noise.

The state’s lawsuit alleges violations of the National Environmental Protection Act and the federal Administrative Procedure Act. Ferguson said he intended to add claims under the Endangered Species Act.

The National Parks Conservation Association said it supports the lawsuit, noting that the flights could also affect Ebey’s Landing, a historical preserve on Whidbey Island, and Olympic National Park. The association recently filed a lawsuit accusing the Navy of withholding information about noise pollution from the jets over Olympic National Park.

Navy Secretary Richard Spencer wrote a letter in March to the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, rebuffing its call for additional noise monitoring and tracking of the effect on tourism. He said the Navy had already performed noise monitoring and noted it was spending $876,000 to refurbish a home at Ebey’s Landing built in 1860.

**Correction**

In a story in Wednesday’s edition about an in vitro fertilization benefit program for injured veterans, The Associated Press erroneously reported the number of times Crystal Wilson and her husband conceived through the Department of Veterans Affairs benefit program. They did not conceive through the program, though one of their three rounds of IVF treatment was paid for by it.
Pentagon spent $1.2M to support July 4 event

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — It cost the Pentagon about $1.2 million to fly aircraft and set up armored vehicles in support of the president’s “Salute to America” event on the National Mall on July Fourth.

The Independence Day celebration raised concerns in the days leading up to the event partly due to its unknown costs to the military for the flyovers and armored vehicles at the event was about $1.2 million.

Additional funding was also used to transport two M1A2 Abrams tanks and two M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles from the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Ga., which were used as static displays near the Lincoln Memorial during Independence Day celebrations in Washington. The cost to the military for the flyovers and armored vehicles at the event was about $1.2 million.

Several of the Navy’s Fleet Week events, which occur at port cities across the country, were also listed as comparison events by the Pentagon. The costliest in 2017 were $2.5 million in Los Angeles at $1.6 million, San Francisco at $1.8 million and New York at $2.5 million with the inclusion of fuel costs.

According to the Pentagon, the following aircraft were flown during the Salute to America event on July Fourth:

- The Coast Guard had two MH-60J/T Jayhawk, an HH-60 Dolphin helicopter and a HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft from the Coast Guard Atlantic Sector at U.S. Coast Guard Station Amnoklip, Md.
- The Air Force had a B-2 Spirit stealth bomber from the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.; two F-22 Raptors from the 1st Fighter Wing at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.; and a VC-25 aircraft — also known as Air Force One — from the Presidential Airlift Group at Joint Base Andrews, Md.
- The Marine Corps flew a V-22 helicopter, which is the new Marine One aircraft, and two MV-22 Ospreys aircraft from Marine Helicopter Squadron One at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.
- The Navy had two F-35C Lightning II from Strike Fighter Squadron 147 at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif.; two F/A-18 Hornet aircraft from Strike Fighter Squadron 37 at Naval Air Station Oceana, Va.; and six F/A-18 Hornet aircraft from the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron — known as the Blue Angels — from Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla.
- The Army flew four AH-64E Apache Guardian helicopters from the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade at Fort Campbell, Ky.

The ceremonial units that also participated came from the military services’ own training budgets designated for flying hours, “which are imperative to military readiness,” according to a Pentagon statement released Tuesday.

Aircraft from each military service flew over the event during parts of Trump’s speech in which he spoke of historical events regarding the United States and its armed services. A military band played each service’s song as their aircraft flew over the crowd standing at the Lincoln Memorial.

The Department of Defense has a long history of showcasing military assets to the country in order to recognize our military’s contributions to the safety and security of the nation, and to assist in recruiting future generations of service members,” the Pentagon statement says.

The Pentagon also listed similar flyover demonstrations by the military services, with the Air Force having the most — 660 flyovers in 2018. The Army conducted 44 flyovers and the Marine Corps had 22 flyovers. For fiscal year 2019, the Navy had 47 flyovers.

The Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon and the Free Country ensemble with the U.S. Marine Corps Band from the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C., also participated in the Salute to America event.

If Mark Esper is nominated by President Donald Trump to be defense secretary, he must by law step down as acting secretary until his confirmation.

By Caitlin M. Kenney

WASHINGTON — Navy Secretary Richard Spencer could become the third acting defense secretary since January if President Donald Trump officially nominates Mark Esper for the top job at the Pentagon, defense officials said Tuesday.

Spencer would take over the acting defense secretary position after Mark Esper was nominated and confirmed by the Senate. In May, Esper was sworn in as the new acting defense secretary after MATTIS resigned.

If Esper is nominated and Spencer becomes the third acting defense secretary, he must by law step down as acting secretary until his confirmation.

As the deputy defense secretary, Shanahan stepped into the acting defense secretary position after Mattis resigned. In May, the White House announced Trump intended to nominate him as defense secretary. However, Shanahan’s nomination was never sent to the Senate officially before he resigned.

If Shanahan had been nominated, he would not have been forced to step down as acting defense secretary once Esper must take over under the Federal Vacancies Act, said the Pentagon official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. “And so Secretary Shanahan as the acting secretary had to step in as acting defense secretary once Mattis resigned, a senior Pentagon official said during the briefing.

“Is this the case?” asked Esper, who commented on the condition of anonymity. “And so Secretary Shanahan as the acting secretary had to step in as acting defense secretary once Mattis resigned, a senior Pentagon official said during the briefing.

If for some reason Esper’s nomination is withdrawn on or it is rejected by the Senate, a new 210-day limit will start, the senior Pentagon official said.

Once Esper is nominated and Spencer takes on the role of acting defense secretary, close U.S. allies and partner nations will be notified “to ensure a smooth transition, so they’re aware of how we’re conducting the transition,” Esper said.

“We’re going to be transparent as we move through the process. It’s very important for the department, for everybody in the world, to know we have a plan,” he said.

“Only one person will serve as the secretary of defense. That person has all the authorities necessary at the appointed time to defend American interests and protect the homeland.”
YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — U.S. Naval Forces Japan bid farewell to a retiring commander and welcomed a new one Wednesday at a ceremony in Yokosuka’s theater.

Rear Adm. Brian Fort, a surface warfare, or ship-borne, officer by training, assumed command from Rear Adm. Gregory Fenton, a naval aviator who held the post for two years.

“The Navy got it right when they selected you for this assignment,” Fenton told Fort during the ceremony.

Naval Forces Japan works with the Japan Self-Defense Force to develop cooperative defense strategies, among other responsibilities. Its partner organization, Navy Region Japan, is responsible for seven bases across the Indian and western Pacific oceans, including Yokosuka, that support the Navy’s operations.

About 48,000 military and civilian personnel work for Naval Forces Japan and Navy Region Japan.

Fort, of Little Rock, Ark., comes to Yokosuka — headquarters of Naval Forces Japan — after two years commanding Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific. He graduated from the University of Arkansas, the Naval War College and Joint Forces Staff College.

“Your background in installation command matters with Navy Region Hawaii will help set you up for success and further advance the partnership between the United States Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force,” Fenton said.

Fenton, of Grand Ledge, Mich., is retiring after 33 years in the Navy. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, the Naval Test Pilot and other service schools.

“Now is the right time to move onto our next adventure,” Fenton said. “I absolutely look forward to spending time doing things that were displaced over the last 33 years, and I especially look forward to doing many of those things with my wife, family and friends.”

Fenton, being relieved, saluted U.S. Pacific Fleet commander Adm. John Aquilino and recalled his first day on the job in Japan.

“Early in the morning on June 17, 2017, I got my first wake-up on the command cellphone advising me the USS Fitzgerald suffered a collision at sea,” he said.

The Fitzgerald, a destroyer, ran into the Philippine-flagged ACX Crystal cargo ship, killing seven sailors. It’s still undergoing more than $300 million in repairs in Pascagoula, Miss.

Two months after the Fitzgerald collision, another Navy destroyer, the USS John S. McCain, collided with a commercial tanker, killing 10 Yokosuka-based sailors.

The McCain, repaired in dry dock at Yokosuka, recently took its place at the base pier and may soon be back in service.

Fenton dealt firsthand with the aftermath of both events. Fort, while in Hawaii, was assigned to lead the investigation into the Fitzgerald collision. Together, the collisions caused the Navy to reevaluate its training requirements, operations tempo and readiness for sea.

During his time in Hawaii, Fort also worked with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, also known as the Kaijou Jieitai. He hosted the cadet training vessel JS Kashima and guided-missile destroyer JS Inazuma for training, and the helicopter carrier JS Ise during Rim of the Pacific, the largest international maritime warfare exercise.

“We are thrilled for the opportunity to continue to serve alongside and work alongside the Kaijou Jieitai every day,” Fenton said during the ceremony. “The alliance, the partnership, and the friendship of our two nations and our two navies has never been stronger.”

lopez.christian@stripes.com
Twitter: @Clopez_Stripes
Navy honors those who helped save ship after collision

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Fifty USS John S. McCain sailors have been recognized for bravery and damage control efforts two years after the destroyer’s deadly collision with a commercial vessel near Singapore.

Seven McCain crew members who attended a ceremony aboard the ship Wednesday were presented with medals by U.S. Pacific Fleet commander Adm. John Aquilino and 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Phil Sawyer, a Navy statement said.

“To commemorate on this ship what these men and women did is both notable and fitting, because the memory of their actions represents the toughness and pride of our Navy,” Aquilino said, according to the statement. “It also helps remind the next generation of Sailors the moral character, personal sacrifice, and selfless commitment required to not give up the ship.”

Confusion among watchstanders on the night of Aug. 21, 2017, led to a loss of steering control and the ship crossed in front of a commercial tanker, which slammed into a berthing area on the McCain’s port side, killing 10 sailors. It was the second of two fatal collisions involving 7th Fleet ships that summer.

Cmdr. Ryan Easterday — who took charge of the McCain during a ceremony last week attended by the late Sen. John McCain’s widow, Cindy McCain, and two of his children — said untold stories of heroism as sailors scrambled to save the flooding vessel make up the “second, more positive half of a painful chapter in the ship’s history.”

“This morning you will hear about a crew, that in the midst of chaos and calamity, displayed exceptional initiative, technical competence, teamwork, grit, determination, and an unconquerable spirit,” he said, according to the statement.

Overall, the Navy said, seven sailors were awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, the services’ highest noncombat decoration awarded for heroism; 15 were awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, and 28 received the Navy Achievement Medal.

The ship spent 11 months in dry dock at Yokosuka undergoing repairs before it moved to the base pier in November. The Navy has not announced when it will return to sea, but former McCain skipper Cmdr. Micha Murphy said during last week’s change of command ceremony that it would “finally get underway this fall.”

news@stripes.com
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Popular hip-hop artist Kid Ink recently wrapped up a whirlwind Pacific tour, where the “Show Me” and “Main Chick” rapper performed for thousands of troops at bases in Korea and Japan.

Sponsored by Armed Forces Entertainment, the six-performance jaunt kicked off on July 2 at Osan Air Base, South Korea, and ended Tuesday evening at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni on mainland Japan.

On Saturday, Kid Ink — who has more than 100 tattoos on his body — headlined the second day of the Fourth of July-themed Camp Foster Festival on Okinawa. The opening day featured platinum-selling singer-songwriter Jason Derulo.

Derulo, who performed in a wheelchair and on crutches because of a basketball injury, pleased the crowd with hits like “Whatcha Say,” “Ridin’ Solo” and “Talk Dirty.”

By Carlos M. Vazquez II

Stars and Stripes

Crowd-pleasers at Camp Foster

vazquez.carlos@stripes.com
Twitter: @StripesCarlos
US advancing plan for a coalition on Iran

**By Robert Burns**
Associated Press

JOINT BASE MYER-HENDerson Hall, Va. — The United States will move ahead with plans to build a new coalition of nations to monitor and deter Iranian threats against commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf area and in a heavy trafficked waterway between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff said Tuesday.

Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford said the Pentagon has developed a specific plan, and he believes it will be clear within a couple of weeks which nations are willing to participate.

Mark Esper, the acting secretary of defense, raised the issue last month with allied officials at NATO headquarters, but no nations were ready to commit to participating. Esper said at the time that the plans would have to be further refined.

Dunford said he discussed the matter Tuesday with Esper and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and that plans are coming together.

“We’re getting ready now to move out,” Dunford told a small group of reporters at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Va. “We have a pretty clear concept of what we want to do.”

He suggested that the project could begin with a small coalition.

“This will be scalable. So, with a small number of contributors we can have a small mission and we’ll expand that as the number of nations that are willing to participate identify themselves,” he said.

He said the U.S. military’s main role would be to provide “maritime domain awareness” and intelligence and surveillance information — to the ships of coalition partners that would conduct patrols in vulnerable waterways like the Strait of Hormuz, which separates the Persian Gulf from the Gulf of Oman, as well as the Bab El Mandeb, a heavily trafficked stretch of water in the Horn of Africa.

Any escorting of commercial ships would be done by military ships sailing under the flag of the commercial vessel, he said.

The initiative was triggered last month by Trump administration concerns that Iran was behind recent attacks of commercial ships in the Persian Gulf region.

Lawmakers in Iran seek tolls in Strait

**By Joshua Karsten**
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — The Pentagon said it is committed to the “free flow of commerce” through the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway critical to global oil shipments, where Iranian lawmakers have proposed imposing transit tolls on ships that Tehran deems unstable.

“The Strait of Hormuz is an international waterway,” Pentagon spokeswoman Cmdr. Rebecca Rebharb said in response to a Stars and Stripes email query Tuesday.

“Potential to restrict transit impacts the international community and undermines the free flow of commerce. The U.S., along with our allies and partners, is committed to freedom of navigation and remains well positioned and postured to preserve the free flow of commerce.”

The response followed Iranian media reports of a push by lawmakers to begin parliamentary debate this week on proposals aimed at countering U.S. sanctions, including imposing tolls on shipping.

The strait, which at its narrowest point is about 20 miles wide, includes the territorial waters of Iran and Oman. Although tolls exist for many international waterways that exist entirely within one country, such as the Panama Canal, maritime legal experts say tolls would not be permissible in what has long been considered an international transit point.

Many in Iran would seek to “compensate” Iran for security expenses along the strait, lawmaker Amirhossein Qazizadeh, a member of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff said Tuesday.

“If Iran is the real guarantor (of security) in the region and in international waters, then the parliament believes that … all ships in the region should pay the cost in the form of tolls, based on international norms, and due to conduct of the United States,” Hashemi said in an interview with the Tehran-based Sobhe No newspaper.

Tolls would be collected from “unfriendly countries, meaning those who have no trade relations with us and have recognized US sanctions (against Iran),” Hashemi said.

Collecting tolls at the strait wouldn’t comply with international agreements, Thomas Callender, a senior fellow for defense programs at The Heritage Foundation and former Navy subma- rine officer, told The Washington Examiner on Monday.

“There’s no question whatsoever about the rights of commercial vessels as per international treaties in the Strait of Hormuz and that they have this right to transit unimpeded,” Callender said, according to the Examiner. “To be trying to charge essentially tax to pass through this is a form of extortion.”

If tolls were imposed, ships that paid them might run afoul of U.S. sanctions, which could lead to them losing access to the U.S. financial system and the ability to do business with the United States or U.S. companies. Roughly one-fifth of the world’s crude oil transits through the Strait of Hormuz, according to the American Soci- ety of International Law.

Iran has repeatedly threatened to close the 35-mile-long water- way to stop oil traffic if U.S. sanc- tions threaten Iranian oil exports.

The United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, which Iran has signed but not ratified, considers closure of the strait illegal.

Already high tensions in the region soared last month after Tehran shot down a U.S. military surveillance drone. The U.S. said the drone was flying over interna- tional waters, while Iran said the drone had entered its territory.

The U.S. was poised to launch a retaliatory strike on Iran but pulled back at the last minute.

Since then, the Trump admin- istration has sent additional ground troops, an aircraft carrier strike group, an amphibious readiness group and a bomber squadron to the region, where it maintains multiple bases in part- ner nations.

Lt. j.g. Christopher Monroe looks through binoculars on the bridge of the USS McFaul while transiting the Strait of Hormuz in May. Iran is considering imposing tolls on ships in the Strait amid tensions.

US Capitol Hill lawmakers have also been considering legislation to further sanction Iran and support allies in the region.

The Whirlwind:
Whirlwind crew uses small ship to play big role

**From Front Page**
A 178-foot patrol boat, the Whirlwind is one of 21 forward deployed ships with the U.S. 5th Fleet in Manama, Bahrain, that carry out surveillance and operations such as board- ing small ships in vulnerable vessels.

The stated aim of the mission is to ensure freedom of navigation and commerce in one of the world’s most vital waterways.

Last month, when limpet mines exploded on two petro- chemical tankers in the Gulf of Oman, forcing both crews to abandon ship, black smoke rose into the air, the U.S. Navy responded to the distress calls. Those incidents came after Emirati authorities said four ships had been sabotaged in the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah.

The United States has blamed Iran for the attacks. Iran denies carrying them out.

They came against a backdrop of increasing fraction between Tehran and Washington after the Trump administra- tion last year withdrew from the 2015 accord that Tehran negotiated with the United States and world powers, according to a spokesman for Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization.

The Whirlwind had dispatched about 2,500 additional troops to the Persian Gulf region last month, citing information that Iran was planning to “seek to disrupt” Norfolk, Virginia.

The ship is the United States’ most advanced littoral combat ship. The Whirlwind is planned to be deployed in the Persian Gulf region from port in Manama to carry out a joint exercise with its sister ship, the USS Hurricane.

The Whirlwind clipped along at a speed of 32 knots, passing traditional wooden dhows and oil tankers. One-fifth of the world’s oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, where shipping lanes narrow to just a few miles across.

A large part of the patrol boat’s mission is surveillance, Liu said. “We look at what people are doing, patterns of life.”

The Whirlwind is one of the smallest vessels in the U.S. Navy and it’s all hands on deck for the four officers and 26 enlisted sailors on board.

Captain specialist Jonathan Osuna, who docks below deck to cook spaghetti and meatballs, also drives the ship into port.

“We because we are so small, pretty much everybody does everything,” said Lt. Erik Anastos, operations officer, who is from Arlington, Va.

After the raising of a huge American flag, the crew is ordered to be “ready for ad- versary action,” manning the weapons stations that include four mounted machine guns and a Griffin missile system.

They haul on their helmets and body armor.

“When we man gun quar- ters, the whole crew is involved,” said Lt. Austin Rodolfo, weapons officer. “The people who handle the lines, the IT men, basically every kind of rig operates the gun mounts.”

At the back of the ship is a boat with a .50-caliber machine gun, which can slide into the water so the crew can board other ships. But the only time it’s been used in recent months was in a goodwill mission in cooperation with the Qatari navy.

The crew coordinates closely with allied navies in the region, including those of Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The ship will spend a maxi- mum of about 10 days on pa- rol out of port at a time. In between, the crew carries out routine exercises.

The temperature in Manama has been hovering around 110 degrees. But on the deck of the four-engine ship, the ther- mometer has been 120 degrees.

While there has been a growing prospect of hostilities with Iran, the most immediate challenge is the heat, according to hospital corpsman Jose Gonzalez, of Texas, who is tasked with handling anything medical-related onboard.
China urges US to scrap Taiwan arms sale

By Seth Robson
Stars and Stripes

China is demanding that the United States scrap a plan to sell more than $2 billion worth of military hardware, including M1A2 Abrams tanks and Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, to Taiwan.

Such a deal violates international law, norms of international relations and the “One China” policy and interferes in China’s internal affairs, undermining the nation’s sovereignty and security, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters Tuesday, according to the state-run Global Times newspaper.

Under “One China,” the U.S. acknowledges Beijing’s view that it has sovereignty over Tai- wan but considers its status as unsettled. The island split from the mainland in 1949 and is self-governing.

“The Chinese side is strongly dissatisfied with and firmly op-
posed to the U.S. plan to sell arms to Taiwan,” Geng said. “We have lodged stern representations with the U.S. side on this.”

He called on the U.S. to “im-
mediately cancel” the deal before it harms the countries’ ties and peace and stability in the region.

The sale could include 254
Stingers, 108 Abrams tanks and
hundreds of machine guns, am-
munition and other equipment, according to statements by the Pentagon’s Defense Security and Cooperation Agency announcing the State Department’s assent to the deal Monday. It is worth more than $2 billion.

The move comes as the U.S. and China clash over trade and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

The U.S. supports peaceful
reunification of the island with the mainland but is committed to helping Taiwan defend itself if it is attacked, according to Carl Baker, executive director of the Pacific Forum think tank in Hawaii.

U.S. Navy ships have transited the Taiwan Strait eight times in the past year, moves that draw strong protests from Beijing. France and Canada have also sent ships through the strait.

It’s unclear how effective the Abrams tanks would be in the defense of Taiwan, Baker said in a phone interview Wednesday.

However, the arms sale is likely to go ahead despite Chinese protests and signals America’s commitment to the defense of the island, he said.

There have been recent moves by the U.S. showing commitment to Taiwan that include visits by senior officials.

And Taiwan was referred to as a “country” in an Indo-Pa-
cific Strategy report released last month by the Department of Defense.

“That has symbolic signifi-
cance,” Baker said.

“We’re trying to show that we really do support Taiwan as an independent entity without going beyond what we are required to do under the ‘One China’ policy,” he said.

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson

In a first, Chinese military deploys for medical drill with German forces

By John Vandiver
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Chinese army for the first time has deployed armored medi-
cal vehicles and personnel to Eu-
rope to conduct training with the German military, marking a groundbreaking foray into NATO territory.

The exercise, dubbed Com-
bined Aid 2019 and involving about 100 Chinese soldiers, Ger-
man engineer medics, is a joint drill in the Bavarian town of Feld-
kirchen focused on responding to a simulated cholera outbreak.

The exercise takes place at a time of growing strains between the German government and the Trump administration over a range of issues, including Berlin’s lagging defense spending and Germany’s support for a natural gas pipeline from Russia.

“The participating teams will practice joint command and control and will learn to cooperate in treating and managing mass casualties in large-scale disease outbreaks,” the Chinese Defense Ministry said in multiple state-
controlled media outlets as the exercises began last week.

The two-week exercise set to end July 17 has garnered head-
lines in China, where the training in Germany was characterized as part of an effort to strengthen ties with European nations.

Yue Gang, a retired PLA colo-
nel, told the South China Morning Post that the exercise was a break-

through given that NATO is wary of China’s military development.

“The PLA in the future will need to go abroad to protect Chi-
a’s overseas interests in coun-
tries along the Belt and Road Initiative, and if there could be some basic mutual trust and un-
derstanding with NATO forces, the risk of potential conflict could be greatly mitigated,” Gang told the Hong Kong-based newspaper.

Beijing is developing a global network of ports, railways and roads to advance its trade inter-
est, including in Europe, as part of its Belt and Road campaign.

However, recent moves by China on NATO’s turf have at-
tracted U.S. scrutiny. At U.S. European Command headquar-
ters in Stuttgart, officials have expressed concern about China purchasing stakes in numer-
ous European ports, as well as China’s “polar silk road” Arctic ambitions.

Jorge Benitez, a NATO ex-
pert with the Atlantic Council in Washington, said Germany’s hosting of the Chinese military and the way it is playing in China “gives the impression that NATO allies are disagreeing with the U.S. and seeking better relations with China.”

“The presence of the Chinese military in Germany for this ex-
ercise creates very bad optics for Germany, NATO and the U.S. and is a cheap propaganda victory for China,” Benitez said.

German defense officials have played down such concerns, say-
ing the exercise is about protecting civilians from disease and epidemics.

“It helps to support the require-
ments in order to interact in a joint UN medical scenario,” the Ger-
man army said in a statement.

The two countries conducted a similar exercise in China in 2016 and plan to continue training together in the future, German military officials said.

China’s military has brought new medical equipment for the drills, including a new generation field tent hospital system, tracked and wheeled armored ambu-
lanes and other gear to “demon-
strate the new developments and achievements of field ambulance technology vehicle made by the Chinese army,” the Defense Min-
istry statement said.

The exercise, while small and not focused on combat, comes as Washington attempts to pres-
sure its allies in Europe to take a tougher stance on China.

In recent months, it has intensi-
fied pressure on NATO members to avoid China’s Huawei 5G tele-
com infrastructure, which Amer-
ican officials say poses a threat and would force Washington to cease certain types of informa-
tion sharing.

But the U.S. also is trying to unite allies at a time when Ber-
lin and Washington have been at odds on a range of issues, includ-
ing German defense spending levels and trade disagreements.

On Monday, a German govern-
ment spokesman also rejected a request by the U.S. that Berlin send ground troops to Syria to provide relief for American forc-
es that are part of the anti-Islamic State coalition.

Last month President Donald Trump threatened to shift up to 2,000 troops from Germany to Poland, in part because “Germa-
ny is not living up to what they are supposed to be doing with respect to NATO, and Poland is.”

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

Find out the best installations in the Pacific, chosen by your fellow Stars and Stripes readers!
Admiral: No plans to house border migrants at Gitmo

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

There have been no discussions to use an under-construction contingency mass migration complex at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to house migrants seeking asylum at the U.S. border with Mexico, the military’s top official for operations in South and Central America said Tuesday.

“No discussion or order has been given to me to prepare that site for southwest border flow,” Adm. Craig Faller, commander of U.S. Southern Command, said during testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee subpanel on emerging threats and capabilities.

The hearing focused on SOUTHCOM’s defense strategy.

The $23 million contract in question was awarded Feb. 22 and includes site shaping for tents; concrete pads for camp headquarters; galleys and trash bins; perimeter and service roads; and a mass notification system, according to an announcement about the project from the Defense Department.

“The contract also funds utility systems, exterior lighting, a vehicle parking area and the removal of two family housing trailer units. Work is estimated for completion in December,” Lt. Gen. Bradford Shwedo said at Wednesday’s hearing.

“Are you aware of this contract and have you been part of any discussions of what that mass migration complex is going to be used for?” asked Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H.

One of the missions of SOUTHCOM is mass migration operations, and it has conducted operations at this site in the past with migrants from Cuba and Haiti, Faller said. The new funding will transition the current site, which turns to mud after it rains and can hold a couple of hundred people, to one that could support “tens of thousands” in a “very spartan camp,” Faller said.

Sen. Mazie K. Hirono, D-Hawaii, also expressed concern about the facility.

“And you’ve seen the same news reports, senator, but the program money and the project we’re overseeing and the mission we have are for mass migration and not the southwest border,” Faller said.

He agreed to notify the committee if discussions begin about housing asylum-seekers arriving at the U.S. southern border in Cuba.

Faller said soldiers use the facility at Guantanamo for training exercises related to this mass migration mission and that he’s personally seen the construction underway.

Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security is turning to the Defense Department for other options to house migrants, primarily from Central America, who are seeking asylum at the U.S. border with Mexico.

The Defense Department agreed in May to build six tents along the border to detain adult migrants. The department has also agreed to allow the Department of Health and Human Services to house migrant children at Fort Sill, Okla.

By MATT O’BRIEN
Associated Press

Amazon and Microsoft are battling it out over a $10 billion opportunity to build the U.S. military its first “war cloud” computing system. But Amazon’s early hopes of a shock-and-ave victory may be slipping away.

Formally called the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure plan, or JEDI, the military’s computing project would store and process vast amounts of classified data, allowing the Pentagon to use artificial intelligence to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities.

The Defense Department hopes to award the winner-take-all contract as soon as August. Oracle and IBM were eliminated at an earlier round of the contract competition. But Amazon isn’t the only if the project isn’t derailed first. It faces a legal challenge by Oracle and growing congressional concerns about alleged Pentagon favoritism toward Amazon.

Military officials hope to get started soon on what will be a decade-long business partnership they describe as vital to national security.

“This is not your grandfather’s internet,” said Daniel Goure, vice president of the Lexington Institute, a defense-oriented think tank. “You’re talking about a cloud where you can go from the Pentagon literally to the soldier on the battlefield carrying classified information.”

Amazon was considered an early favorite when the Pentagon began detailing its cloud needs in 2017, but its candidacy has been marred by an Oracle allegation that Amazon executives and the Pentagon have been overly cozy. Oracle has a final chance to make its case against Amazon — and the integrity of the government’s bidding process — in a court hearing Wednesday.

“This is really the cloud sweepsstakes, which is why there are such fierce lawsuits,” said Wedbush Securities analyst Daniel Ives.

Ives said an opportunity that was “a no brainer” for Amazon a year ago now seems just as likely to go to Microsoft, which has spent the past year burnishing its credentials to meet the government’s security requirements.

For years, Amazon Web Services has been the industry leader in moving businesses and other institutions onto its cloud — a term used to describe banks of servers in remote data centers that can be accessed from almost anywhere. But Microsoft’s Azure cloud platform has been steadily catching up, as have other providers such as Google, in both corporate and government settings.

With an acronym evoking “Star Wars,” and a price tag of up to $10 billion over the next decade, JEDI has attracted more attention than any other federal cloud contract with the Central Intelligence Agency. It beat out IBM for that deal in 2013.

Worried that the Pentagon’s bid seemed tailor-made for Amazon, rival Oracle and IBM lodged formal protests last year arguing against the decision to award it to a single vendor.

In an October blog post, IBM executive Sam Gordy wrote that a single-cloud approach went against industry trends and “would give bad actors just one target to focus on should they want to undermine the military’s IT backbone.”

The Government Accountability Office dismissed those protests, but Oracle took its case to the Court of Federal Claims, where it pointed to emails and other documents that it says show conflicts of interest between Amazon and the government.

Oral arguments in that case began Wednesday. The case has delayed the procurement process. The Pentagon says it hopes to award the contract as early as Aug. 23.

Oracle’s argument is centered on the activities of a Defense Department official who later went to work for Amazon. Amazon says Oracle has exaggerated that employee’s role in the procurement.
Private sector tops Pentagon in cyber recruiting

By Patrick Kelley
CQ Roll Call

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is crafting a variety of new initiatives to attract talent to cyber programs as the Defense Department faces a chronic cyber talent shortage. The department hopes to fill that gap by offering a variety of bonuses for enlisting, reenlisting and retaining computer engineers.

The lateral move initiative may not be as successful as it hopes. The Pentagon needs to do a better job of communicating its value proposition for cyber careers within and outside the Defense Department, according to Sally Luzader, an assistant professor at Purdue University’s Department of Computer Science.

Luzader said of the Pentagon’s red team, “They are so talented and in demand, but it is small here or how can I turn it on its head?”

“Startups are ready to pay extra money just to attract students away from some of these big names,” Mohan said.

“Back on the East Coast, Wall Street quantitative trading businesses are showering computer geniuses with cash to help shave lucrative nanoseconds off transaction times.”

Air Force cyber operators participate in Exercise Black Demon in May at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The Pentagon struggles to recruit tech talent to fill out the ranks of its cybersecurity mission against high-paying positions that companies in the private sector offer.

“We really get out-recruited.”

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Luzader said. William Crumpler, a research assistant at the Center for Strategic and International Studies who has studied the federal cyber workforce gap, said government cyber programs need to “focus on the coolness factor.”

By this logic, the Pentagon would do well to shed its stiff, top-down image, which some veterans say is a myth.

“I’ve been lots of places that are not the military that were way more rigid than my experience both at the (U.S. Naval Academ)y and onboard a submarine,” said J.P. Mellor, a Naval Academy graduate and head of the computer science and software engineering program at the Rose Hulman Institute of Technology.

“There was plenty of room (in the military) for my creativity.”

Mellor left the Navy decades ago, but sees ample room for innovation on the Pentagon’s red teams.

“That’s a super-creative activity,” Mellor said. “You have to try to figure out what could go wrong here or how can I turn it on its head?”

Mohan agrees, saying working on teams tasked with testing network security — hacking, essentially — “becomes a bit of an art and not completely a science.”

One reason — perhaps the main reason — the Pentagon has trouble filling these jobs is its sales pitch, or lack of one.

Mellor couldn’t recall the Defense Department recruiting on Rose-Hulman’s Terre Haute, Ind., campus, but said his students often intern and later start careers at the companies with structured internship programs that recruit the students in person.

A provison in the House version of the fiscal 2020 defense spending bill would direct the Pentagon to hire like private companies, saying the Pentagon should work with universities to recruit cyber-skilled students during their junior and senior years, giving them time to complete the requisite security clearance.

“That would totally do it,” Mellor said. “I think that’s a great strategy.”

But Mellor would advise the Pentagon not to wait until the students’ junior years.

Many Rose-Hulman students, like those at other universities, often start internships after their freshman year, return to school and spread the word about their apprenticeships, sometimes recruiting classmates to apply to the company where they worked.

The result is job security before graduation, with more than 90% of Rose-Hulman students accepting full-time job offers before their senior year final exams, Mellor said.

Marines: Bonuses offered to retain skilled Marines in high-demand fields

FROM FRONT PAGE

The lateral move initiative may not be coupled with any of the fiscal year’s four “kicker” bonuses, including the early reenlistment incentive.

First-term riflemen, machine gunners, mortarmen, assaultmen or anti-tank gunners who accept the terms for transfer into the infantry squad leader specialty as part of the Squad Leader Development Program are also not eligible for the 72-month lateral move bonus. They are eligible for the primary specialty bonus of $54,000 for corporals and $57,000 for sergeants and above.

A second program that aims at retaining ground combat Marines to serve as infantry squad leaders offers a $20,000 kicker for first-term Marine riflemen who reenlist for 48 months and agree to stay at a certain unit for at least 75% of their second term.

Assaultmen in the 0351 specialty, which the Corps is phasing out, are also eligible for the 0311 rifman specialty’s reenlistment bonus — up to $8,000 — and the $20,000 kicker.

Marines in some aviation and air traffic control fields with certain qualifications can also earn kickers of up to $20,000 in addition to any reenlistment bonus offered for their job field, the bulletin said. Pilots were already eligible for bonuses ranging between $45,000 and $280,000, depending on the aircraft and length of enlistment, according to the service’s news release.

Other services also have offered a variety of reenlistment bonuses and promotions for select career fields in the past year.

In February, the Air Force offered bonuses of up to $90,000 for airmen reenlisting in some of the 89 eligible jobs.

Last year, the Navy said it would promote petty officers who take “hard jobs in hard locations,” as well as bonuses for other skills needed to man a growing fleet.
Survey: Vets say Afghanistan, Iraq wars not worth it

By Nikki Wentling
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — About two-thirds of veterans think the Iraq War was not worth fighting, and more than 50% think the same about the war in Afghanistan, according to the Pew Research Center.

Pew, a nonpartisan think tank, released results of a new study Wednesday in which 64% of veterans approved of President Donald Trump by a greater degree than does the general public.

About Trump's overall performance, a majority of veterans approve of the way he's handling the duties of commander in chief and about half said his policies have made the military stronger — more positive responses than from the general public.

As with Americans overall, there are deep partisan divides among veterans.

In part, Pew attributes the gap in views to the fact that veterans are more likely to identify with the Republican Party. Nearly 60% of veterans identify with the GOP, compared to 44% of other Americans, Pew said.

However, Pew found that even within the GOP, veterans are more supportive of Trump's decisions than other Republicans.

"Even after taking these partisan differences into account, veterans stand out from the public in their support for Trump," Pew says in its report.

For instance, while 81% of veterans approved of Trump's performance, 75% of other Republicans approved of the job he's doing. In the general population, 57% approved of Trump's job performance.

About Trump's decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, 82% of veterans said they approved of it versus 57% of Republicans overall.

On Trump's decision to withdraw from the Afghan war, 78% of veterans approved of it versus 57% of Republicans overall.

Despite their support, about half of Republican and Democratic veterans said Trump doesn't listen enough to military leaders when making national security decisions.

"A similar share say they have little trust in him to make the right decisions about the use of military force," the report reads.

Democrats were far less supportive of Trump's national security decisions and his overall performance. Just 6% of veterans who identify as Democrats said they approved of the way Trump was handling the role of commander in chief, and 8% of other Democrats did.

The partisan divide mirrors views from veterans during former President Barack Obama's administration. A Pew report from 2011 found 77% of Democratic veterans approved of Obama as commander in chief, while 81% of Republicans disapproved.

According to a poll this week from ABC News and the Washington Post, Trump's approval rating has reached the highest point of his presidency as the 2020 election campaign intensifies. The poll found 44% of Americans approve of the job that he's doing.

Court: Trump can’t ban critics from his Twitter account

By Larry Neumeister
Associated Press

NEW YORK — President Donald Trump can’t ban critics from his Twitter account, a federal appeals court ruled Tuesday, siding with the First Amendment in declaring victory against the Islamic State.

Trump administration’s ban on transgender servicemembers — which has rarely been seen, "the irony in all of this is that we write at a time in the history of our government and its officials is subject to wide-open, robust debate," Circuit Judge Barrington D. Parker wrote on behalf of a three-judge panel.

The debate generates a “level of passion and intensity the likes of which have rarely been seen,” the court’s decision read.

“Thermon is always in balance of our nation when the conduct of our government and its officials is considered. To create a false and misleading account that the First Amendment means anything, it means that the best response to disfavored speech on matters of public concern is more speech, not less,” the court ruled.

The Justice Department did not comment. The ruling came in a case brought by the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University. It had sued to block seven individuals blocked by Trump after criticizing his policies.

During oral arguments earlier this year, attorney Jennifer Turley argued for the president, saying that the account was created long before Trump became president and that he was acting in a private capacity.

Parker was critical during those arguments. "Are you seriously urging us to believe that the president is not acting in his official capacity when he is tweeting?" Parker said.
Trump calls for revamping care for kidney disease

By Lyrann Neergard
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is directing the government to revamp the nation’s care for kidney disease so more people whose kidneys fail have a chance at early transplants and home dialysis — along with better prevention so patients don’t get as sick to begin with.

Senior administration officials told The Associated Press that Trump was set to sign an executive order Thursday directing his administration to pay federal prosecutors to help revamp the care for kidney disease. The administration also aims to ease financial hardships for living donors, including making it easier for doctors and clinics to help patients get dialysis.

Monday to new child sex trafficking charges. Federal prosecutors in New York accuse him of abusing dozens of underage girls in the early 2000s, paying them hundreds of dollars in cash for massages and then molesting them at his homes in Florida and New York. He could face up to 45 years in prison if convicted.

Speaking to reporters Tuesday, Trump repeatedly praised Acosta, calling him a “really great secretary of labor” and “very good at his job. He suggested it’s not unusual to find past mistakes if you look hard enough.

“You know, if you go back and look at everybody else’s decisions, whether it’s a U.S. attorney, or an assistant U.S. attorney or a judge, if you go back 12 or 15 years ago or 20 years ago and look at their past decisions, I would think you would probably find that they would wish they probably did it a different way,” said Trump.

In sympathetic words that seemed to echo his statements of support for then-Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, who had been accused of sexual misconduct as a young man, Trump also said he felt “very badly” for Acosta “because I’ve known him as being somebody that works so hard and has done such a good job.”

Still, he said his administration would be going back to look “very closely” at the circumstances of the deal that allowed Epstein to avoid prosecution on federal charges, plead guilty to lesser state charges and serve 13 months in jail, during which he was allowed to leave to go to his office during the day.

Former Trump Press Secretary Sarah Sanders had said in February that the White House was looking into Acosta’s role in the settlement.

The White House has not responded to repeated questions about whether there ever was any government prosecution and, if there was, what it found.

Acosta himself weighed in Tuesday on Twitter, ignoring the calls for his resignation and criticizing the charges brought against Epstein in New York to new evidence that “offers an important opportunity to more fully bring him to justice.”

“The crimes committed by Epstein are horrific, and I am pleased that NY prosecutors are moving forward with a case based on new evidence,” he tweeted.

On Capitol Hill, a slew of Democrats called for Acosta’s resignation, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who accused him of handling “a sex trafficking case involving Jeffrey Epstein in 2008 under my watch” at the Labor Department “in a way that I was not a fan of his, that I can tell you,” Trump said.

His comments on Tuesday came as a parade of Democratic presidential candidates and party leaders demanded that Acosta, a former federal prosecutor in south Florida, resign or be fired over his role in a secret 2008 plea deal that let Epstein avoid federal prosecution after allegations he sexually molested hundreds of dollars in cash with young girls in the early 2000s, paying them

Strip club to host golf event at Trump resort

By DAVID A. FAHRENBOLD
The Washington Post

President Donald Trump’s golf resort in Doral, Fla., is scheduled to host a golf tournament Saturday put on by a Miami-area strip club, which will allow golfers to pay a dancer to be called an Epstein called the “caddy girl” while they play at the president’s club.

The “Shadow All Star Tournament” is organized by the Shadow Cabaret, a strip club in Hialeah, Fla. Emanuelle Mancuso, Shadow Cabaret’s marketing director, said in a telephone interview that this was the first time the club had held a tournament at Trump Doral.

The Trump name and family crest are displayed prominently in the strip club’s advertising materials, which offer golfers the “caddy girl of your choice.”

Mancuso said the strip club did not intend to send a political statement by choosing Trump’s resort. Rather, she said, the choice was for entertainment reasons.

Shadow Cabaret, she said, “The president needs to answer for the Cabinet,” she said. “It’s going to be clothes all the way” at the golf course, Mancuso said. “At the venue is different.”

In a statement, the Trump Organization confirmed the event is happening and said it was for a “worthwhile cause” — a Miami-based charity. A spokesperson said the company had not approved the tournament’s advertisements before they were placed.

Mancuso, the cabaret’s marketing director, said the tournament would benefit a basketball-themed charity called Miami All Stars. Online advertisements for the tournament also include logos for the J.B. and J.R. WNBA.

Carlos Alamillo, the charity’s director, said his group serves about 40 youths in Miami. “We provide everything. We provide fitness, nutrition, basketball and academics,” he said.

The charity’s website says it is “a non-profit organization under the laws of the State of Florida. However, Franco Ripple, a spokesperson for the state, said Tuesday that it is not registered as a charity in Florida.

Mancuso said there would be no nudity at the event, but don’t immediately respond to questions about why his organization’s name was missing from the original marketing.

A spokesperson for the NBA and WNBA said that the leagues were not affiliated with the tournament and that their logos were used in the ads without permission.
Bidens earned over $15M after leaving White House

By Stephen Braun
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, took in more than $15 million since leaving the Obama White House, according to newly released documents, catapulting the Democratic presidential candidate into millionaire status and denting the working-class aura he’s developed over decades.

Long fond of describing himself as “Middle Class Joe” while he held a little more than half of his government salary, the former vice president stressed his working-class roots from the very beginning of his bid for his party’s 2020 presidential nomination. But federal tax returns and a financial disclosure released Tuesday show that since Biden left public office, his income has surged, thanks to a lucrative book deal and publicity tours that brought in more than $4 million.

Biden’s disclosure showed that he also made at least $2.7 million in 2018, don’t want the House majority to be defined by the liberal flank as they face voters for reelection next year. They prefer the party hew to Pelosi’s center-left approach.
Death in Nevada may be linked to California quake

BY CHRISTOPHER WEBER
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A powerful July 4 earthquake in the Southern California desert may have killed a man in neighboring Nevada, authorities said Tuesday.

It would be the first death linked to the magnitude 6.4 quake near Ridgecrest that was felt far and wide.

The Nye County Sheriff’s Department said deputies on Tuesday found a 56-year-old man pinned under a tree and gunshots, about 150 miles from the quake’s epicenter.

The man was last seen alive at a local gas station the day before the earthquake.

It is believed the man was working on the Jeep, which apparently fell off of its jacks when the quake hit, Sgt. Adam Tippets said.

The man’s name wasn’t immediately released.

No other deaths or serious injuries have been linked to the quake or to a magnitude 7.1 temblor that struck the same Mojave Desert area on Friday.

The quakes buckled highways, cracked buildings and ruptured gas lines that sparked several house fires.

A sprawling Navy base near Ridgecrest remained closed to nonessential personnel Tuesday as the military worked to determine damage.

Teams had so far surveyed just 10% of the 1,200 facilities at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, spokeswoman Margo Allen said. It was unclear when personnel and their families will be able to return.

Water and gas service had been restored at the base, but engineers were ensuring buildings were safe to enter. The shaking cracked walls in a chapel and school and brought down missary shelves, Allen said.

“There came off the walls. There’s a lot of cleaning up that still has to happen,” she said.

One person sustained a minor foot injury.

Officials said most employees live off base, mainly in Ridgecrest. Some personnel were evacuated to the naval base in Ventura County. Officials were still reviewing damage Tuesday in communities outside the base.

It could be several more days before water service is restored to the tiny town of Trona, where officials trucked in portable toilets and showers.

President Donald Trump on Monday declared an emergency in California because of the quakes, pving the way for federal aid. The declaration authorized the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster relief efforts.

The large quakes were followed by thousands of smaller aftershocks. The U.S. Geological Survey said the aftershocks will taper off, and the probability of another large quake — magnitude 4 or higher — also will decrease.

Virginia becomes election battleground over gun laws

BY ALAN SUDERMAN AND SARAH RANKIN
Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Deep-pocketed interest groups and activists on both sides of the long-running fight over gun laws are gearing up for a major clash in Virginia, now a key election battleground in the issue after Republicans on Tuesday adjourned a special legislative session called by the governor to consider gun control measures in the wake of a mass shooting.

The state’s off-year election will be closely watched because Virginia is the only state where control of the Legislature is up for grabs in 2019. Republicans currently hold a narrow majority.

GOP lawmakers abruptly ended the session after less than two hours and postponed any movement on gun laws until after the November election. Democrats and gun control advocates vowed to force them from office.

“If these ‘leaders’ won’t enact solutions that their own constituents are demanding, then we’re going to fight tooth and nail for representatives who will,” Kris Brown, president of the Brady gun control group, said in a statement.

Scores of gun control advocates gathered Tuesday outside the Capitol, jeering at Republicans who will,“ This year the gun control lobby is slamming louder than ever in an effort to distract voters” from scandals involving top Democrats.

Virginia is generally considered a gun-friendly state and is home to NRA’s headquarters.

Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s gun control group made a splash at the tail end of the 2015 legislative elections by announcing it was spending $2.2 million in two open state Senate races to help the Democratic candidates.

Republicans were shocked at the amount the billionaire’s group was putting into Virginia, but one Bloomberg-backed candidate won in a Northern Virginia district that has voted reliably Democratic by large margins in past elections while the other lost in the race for a pivotal swing seat in the Richmond area.

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Calif. OKs benefits for young illegal immigrants

Associated Press
SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California has become the first state to offer taxpayer-funded health benefits to young adults living in the country illegally.

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill into law Tuesday that makes low-income adults age 25 and younger eligible for the state’s Medicaid program regardless of their immigration status.

State officials expect the plan to cover about 90,000 people and cost taxpayers $98 million. California already covers children ages 18 and younger regardless of immigration status.

The law will not give health insurance benefits to everyone 25 and younger, but only those whose income is low enough to qualify.

Newsom and Democratic legislative leaders say they plan to further expand coverage to more adults in the years to come.

Republican President Donald Trump has called the move “crazy.” Advocates of the measure say it’s a way to improve the health of immigrants in the state by providing them with access to the medical care they need.

Many immigrants who are in the country illegally are already enrolled for some government-funded programs, but they only cover emergencies and pregnancies.

Democrats had pushed to expand the coverage to even more adults, but Newsom rejected the proposals, saying it would cost about $3.4 billion to provide coverage to all California adults living in the country illegally. But he has vowed to keep expanding coverage in future years.

No Scum Allowed Saloon draws crowd to NM ghost town

Associated Press
WHITE OAKS, N.M. — A saloon in a New Mexico ghost town attracts regulars with diverse backgrounds and opinions with a promise to “have dialogue.”

The No Scum Allowed Saloon in White Oaks, N.M., pulls in people from around the state and sometimes tourists from overseas because of its reputation and catchy name, the Albuquerque Journal recently reported.

Saloon owner Karen Haughness, one of the nine people who live in White Oaks, said the saloon’s regulars often exceed the town’s population. She said the saloon cultivates civil discourse among visitors.

“We are different. We come from different places. We are different politically. We have extreme liberals and extreme conservatives,” said Haughness, who also works as a school psychologist and sells antiques on the side.

“But we can state opinions without getting into arguments. We have dialogue.”

Rick Virden, 66, a former Lincoln County sheriff who has a ranch between White Oaks and Carrizozo, said there are quite a few people who come to the saloon on a regular basis.

“And some of them are from quite a ways away,” he said.

The town was founded after gold was discovered in the region in 1879. Outlaw Billy the Kid is said to have visited White Oaks often looking for a good time.

People moved out as gold mining evaporated, with the last mine closing in 1930. Today, the No Scum Allowed Saloon’s regulars make up to about three times the town’s single-digit population.

Above: A customer enters the No Scum Allowed Saloon in White Oaks, N.M., which is a ghost town in Lincoln County, N.M., that was founded after gold was discovered in the region in 1879. Left: Karen Haughness, one of the nine people who live in White Oaks, owns the No Scum Allowed Saloon. She said the saloon’s regulars, whose numbers exceed the town’s population, get along despite diverse backgrounds and opinions.

Below: David Spencer, left, and Skye are among the regulars at the No Scum Allowed Saloon. Spencer remembers past days when the saloon’s roof was so leaky patrons had to move their beers around to avoid them getting watered down by rain.

Trustees vote to change name of Calif.’s Dixie School District

Associated Press
SAN RAFAEL, Calif. — Trustees of the Dixie School District voted Tuesday to change the name of the 180-year-old district, which critics linked to the Confederacy and slavery.

Dixie will be renamed the Miller Creek Elementary School District, trustees decided. The vote was 3-1 with one abstention.

Trustees rejected three other options: Laurel Creek, Creekside or Konne school district.

Trustees also voted 4-1 to rename the district’s only elementary school, from Dixie to Lucas Valley Elementary.

The name change issue pitted parents against each other for months and generated heated debate in San Rafael, an overwhelmingly white city of 59,000 people.

Some insisted the Dixie name was racially insensitive, while others complained the proposed change was political correctness run amok.

The board of trustees voted in April to change both the name of the San Francisco Bay Area district and the name of its elementary school by Aug. 22, when classes resume.

The cost of the name change, such as replacing signs, was estimated at nearly $40,000, and the Marin Community Foundation pledged to cover it.

Dixie is a nickname for the southern U.S. states that formed the pro-slavery Confederacy in 1860, sparking the Civil War.

The legacy of the Confederacy prompts political, legal and cultural conflicts to this day.

Those who supported changing the name said the district was named Dixie by James Miller, the school founder, on a dare by Confederate sympathizers.

Those who opposed the change said the school system was named for Mary Dixie, a Miwok Indian woman who Miller knew in the 1840s.
UK plan to regulate online porn being watched as test case

By Kelvin Chan
Associated Press

LONDON — The global push to more tightly regulate the internet and big tech firms is spreading to one of the web’s biggest and least visible corners: porn.

The British government wants to require porn websites to verify age, echoing similar moves in Europe and the U.S. It has released its own requirements as the official consultation closed Wednesday. The consultation drew 15,000 responses.

The plan, which is expected to come into force late this year, would mean a person’s porn viewing habits can be tracked. Those who don’t verify will be cut off from the site.

Under the plan, which is expected to come into force late this year, British porn site visitors will be asked to prove they are 18 or older. Options to do so would include buying a card with an access code in a shop, where they will have to show photo ID, or going online to submit a copy of a passport or driver’s license or use a credit card.

The British government isn’t operating the system itself. Instead, it’s being outsourced to private companies, which can sell their own age verification technology.

Oversight, meanwhile, has been handed to the British Board of Film Classification, a film ratings and censorship body akin to the Motion Picture Association of America.

Privacy campaigners worry that bundling over personal information to access adult sites means a person’s porn viewing habits can be tracked. Those fears are compounded by the lack of privacy and security standards for age verification providers.

Instead, there’s a voluntary certification with vague and imprecise requirements.

“There are huge privacy concerns with how the data will be held,” said Myles Jackman, a London-based lawyer. “Also, there’s a risk that that data will be hacked, breached, stolen or published in the public domain.”

The film board acknowledges that “age-verification is not a silver bullet,” but it will stop kids inadvertently coming across inappropriate material. “Determined teenagers will find ways to access pornography.”

Otherwise, all that’s known about the data is the volume of transactions and how long each one lasts.

From The Associated Press

Another speedy bull run in Spain leaves 4 hurt

Associated Press

PAMPLONA, Spain — Health authorities said another speedy bull run in Pamplona has left three bruised runners and one person unconscious in the Spanish city.

There were no gorings by the six bulls of the Jandilla breeding ranch racing along the 930-yard course to the bullring, the Red Cross said.

Four people — two Americans and two Spaniards — have been gored since this year’s daily races started Sunday in the northern Spanish city.

All runs have lasted under three minutes. Wednesday’s was 2 minutes and 19 seconds.

In recent years, highly trained animals have tended to run together. An adherent applied to the cobbled pavement also prevents the pack from slipping and breaking apart as in past races. The nine-day San Fermin fiesta attracts party-goers and bull aficionados from around the world.

From The Associated Press
Mayflower replica to help mark anniversary

MA — A replica of the Mayflower will be sailing to Boston as part of the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims’ landing in Massachusetts. Organizers said the Mayflower II will be on display at the Charlestown Navy Yard on May 14-19 and visitors will have an opportunity to board the ship for free.

The vessel has been undergoing an $11.2 million restoration at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut since 2016. The full-scale replica ship was built in England in the 1950s and has been berthed in Plymouth Harbor.

Circus dog found safe after vanishing from act

DE — SMYRNA — A circus dog that vanished during a Fourth of July performance in Delaware was found safe and returned to its owners.

Delaware State News reported a 3-year-old Pierre was found near the Smyrna park where he disappeared.

Zebrini Family Circus spokesman Margaret Valencia said Pierre isn’t one to wander, and he wouldn’t have been scared off by loud noises or large crowds.

The circus had to move on before Pierre was found, but he was reunited with it in Massachusetts.

Police: Woman threw snake in carjacking

SC — GREENVILLE — Police said a woman stole a vehicle after throwing a nonpoisonous snake at the driver, then crashed through barricades set up for a polo vaulting exhibition in a South Carolina city.

In a news release, Greenville Police identified the suspect as Hilmary Moreno-Berrios, 29.

Authorities allege Moreno-Berrios demanded a woman’s keys and threw a live black snake at her. They said she then drove the stolen SUV into the city-owned property for the Liberty Bridge Jump-Off.

Moreno-Berrios was charged with carjacking, malicious damage to property and five traffic violations.

Police probe violent Disneyland fight

CA — LOS ANGELES — A video capturing a family’s violent fight at Disneyland has prompted police to reopen their investigation into the brawl and may result in charges.

Anaheim Police Sgt. Darin Wyatt said officers were called to the theme park to help break up the melee, which began between a brother and sister and quickly involved other family members.

Wyatt said the family members declined to cooperate with authorities and were escorted off Disneyland property. Police are working with the city attorney’s office to see if any charges should be filed.

Sheriff's K-9 spooked by fireworks found safe

NC — CONCORD — A North Carolina sheriff’s office said one of its K-9s which ran from its handler when some fireworks went off nearby was found safe.

The Cabarrus County Sheriff’s Office said Igor was outside with his handler and without a leash. Chief Deputy James Bailey said that at the time some fireworks went off near the handler’s home and Igor ran away despite the handler’s verbal commands.

The sheriff’s office said on its Facebook page that a person going to work in Concord found the dog about a mile away from where he ran off.

Naked man injured in jump from pickup

CT — WILTON — Police in Connecticut said a naked man was seriously injured when he jumped out of the back of a moving pickup.

Wilton police said John Rodas, 34, of Gardiner, N.Y., was taken to a hospital with a life-threatening head injury after the incident. His condition was not released.

The pickup driver told officers a naked man jumped into the back of his truck after unsuccessfully trying to open the locked doors. Police said the man later jumped out of the truck while it was moving and landed in the road.

Police trying to find peacock’s owner

NH — NEWTON — Anyone missing a pet peacock? Police in Newton said they found the peacock Sunday. He was walking around residents’ yards and perched on their porches or railings in town and in neighboring Plaistow.

Police said some people called and said they felt trapped inside their homes, so an animal control officer brought him in.

A tongue-in-cheek Facebook post said the peacock was “terrorizing” residents.

Man accused of biting off woman’s finger

AL — HUNTSVILLE — An Alabama man was arrested after police said he bit off a woman’s finger during a fight.

News outlets reported that Shay Michael Thome, 48, of Huntsville was arrested and charged with first-degree assault.

Police said the victim knows Thome’s wife. Some men tackled Thome after the woman was bitten.

Authorities: Truck crash sends pig parts flying

IL — GREENEVILLE — Authorities said an intersection in an unincorporated area of northern Illinois was closed for eight hours after a crash involving two semi-trucks sent pig carcasses across the road.

The approximate number of geese Maryland wildlife officials said they’ve euthanized in an effort to curb excessive population growth. U.S. Department of Agriculture spokesman Kevin Sullivan told The Salisbury Daily Times his team “humanely euthanized” the Canada geese at the request of city officials in Salisbury.

The Liberty Bridge Jump-Off organizers said the Mayflower replica ship will be on display at the Mayflower replica to help mark anniversary of the Pilgrims’ landing in Massachusetts. In a news release, Greenville Police identified the suspect as Hilmary Moreno-Berrios, 29.

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Man accused of using bulldozer to assault son

WA — MALFTBY — A Washington state man was accused of using a bulldozer to push an SUV with his adult son inside down an embankment.

The Daily Herald reported that John Postema, 78, was arrested on suspicion of first-degree assault.

The son told the Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office that Postema drove the bulldozer through a barbed wire fence and pushed his Jeep Cherokee down the 20-foot embankment at the family’s nursery in Maltby.

A judge released Postema without bail.

From wire reports
**FACES**

**Tackling a classic**

Cast, crew discuss reimagining Disney’s ‘The Lion King’

By Katie Campione

Associated Press

Disney’s “The Lion King” has received no shortage of remakes and spinoffs since its 1994 release. Now, as the film reaches its silver anniversary, Disney delivers a new take on the animated musical.

Cast and crew discussed reimagining the classic as they gathered in Hollywood on Tuesday night for “The Lion King” world premiere.

“I think I’m really lucky, because I feel like a lot of the people who are experiencing it don’t remember the first one,” joked Donald Glover, who voices adult Simba.

“The original film is such a big part of who I was,” Glover continued, adding he felt the weight of his role especially during his duet of “Can You Feel the Love Tonight?” with co-star Beyoncé.

“Tackling it was really just trying to make the song feel as emotional as it was before,” he said.

While the remake pays homage to the source material, many cast and crew noted that a new approach allowed for more creative liberties than the first.

Hans Zimmer, who composed the original film’s underscore, said he was excited to produce new compositions as well as revamp original music cues.

“This time, I could breathe,” he said, explaining that some of his music was performed too fast the first time around. “I could let them play properly. I could do things with music that I never did before.”

Composer Lebo M. said the remake features tunes from the original, and a host of new songs, as well as the anthem “He Lives in You,” which debuted in the stage production.

“We wrote it originally for the movie 25 years ago, and it made its mark on Broadway and around the world, and it’s now a very special version in this movie soundtrack,” he said. “The music department, we were crazy.”

At times, so did the cast.

Actor Billy Eichner, who voices Timon, said director Jon Favreau (who also helmed Disney’s recent remake of “The Jungle Book”) allowed him to record his voiceovers alongside his co-star Seth Rogen, the voice of Pumbaa. Most voice actors do the job solo.

“I think it all comes back to Jon Favreau for being brilliant and knowing how to do a spectacular film that people can also relate to and make it feel organic and genuinely funny,” Eichner said. “Even when Donald Glover came in to do ‘Hakuna Matata’ in our scenes together, we were all riffing. We kept it very organic and very raw, and I think the movie hopefully benefits from that.”

Glover shared a similar sentiment about Favreau, saying the director’s vision for the remake is the reason he signed on.

“The story of us all being connected... the universal truth that we really can’t ignore anymore,” he said. “If we don’t really like see the value of our lives together what’s the point of all this? Because we’re all connected.”

**Beyoncé drops new original song from film**

Beyoncé dropped a new original song from Disney’s live-action “Lion King” remake on Tuesday.

“Spirit” comes at a pivotal moment for Nala, the character voiced by Beyoncé, in the film that comes out July 18. She also co-wrote the song.

It’s part of an album called “The Lion King: The Gift” that Beyoncé is executive producing and performing on along with other artists. It will be released digitally July 11, with the physical album coming July 19.

“The Gift” is a companion to the “Lion King” soundtrack, which consists mostly of songs from the film, along with a new number from Elton John and Tim Rice, who wrote the songs for the original “Lion King.”

From: The Associated Press

**Nelson taking Farm Aid to Wisconsin dairy land**

Willie Nelson, John Mellencamp, Neil Young and Dave Matthews will headline Farm Aid 2019 when the music and food festival visits Wisconsin’s struggling dairy county in September.

The event will be held Sept. 21 at the Alpine Valley Music Theatre in East Troy, about 30 miles southwest of Milwaukee.

Farm Aid said in Tuesday’s announcement that the U.S. farming economy this year resembles how things were when Nelson founded Farm Aid in 1985.

Wisconsin, which bills itself as “America’s Dairyland,” is the No. 2 milk producing state behind California, and is known particularly for its cheese. Farm Aid spokeswoman Jennifer Fahey told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that the choice of Wisconsin was partly a response to the state’s dairy crisis.

Farm Aid has raised $57 million to support family farms since 1985.

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**Emmy-winning actor Rip Torn dies at 88**

Award-winning television, film and theater actor Rip Torn has died at the age of 88, according to his publicist.

Rick Miramontez said Torn died Tuesday at his home in unincorporated Louisianna’s St. Bernard parish, his wife and daughters by his side. No cause of death was given.

Torn was a free-spirited Texan who overcame his quirky name to become a distinguished actor who won an Emmy late in his career.

Torn was born in 1937 in New Orleans and was one of five children. He was the only one of his siblings to survive past infancy.

His career spanned seven decades, ranging from an early career of dark, theatrical roles to comic comedic performances later in life, including the role of Patches O’Hoolihan in 2004’s “Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story.”

**Netflix losing ‘Friends’**

AT&T is pulling “Friends” from Netflix to beef up its upcoming streaming service, the wireless company announced Tuesday.

The bundle, which owns the WarnerMedia entertainment business, also said that its service will be called HBO Max. It will launch in spring of 2020. As the name suggests, it will contain HBO content, other video from the Warner Bros. studio — like “Friends” — and new series and movies that are exclusive to the service.

AT&T has not announced a price.

Netflix for years has been playing up its original shows and movies, but much of its most popular video belongs to other companies. “Friends” is its second-most watched show on Netflix, according to Nielsen.

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Other news

- **Arizona State University** will present its 2019 Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Journalism to Lester Holt on Nov. 4 in Phoenix. Holt has anchored NBC’s flagship “Nightly News” since 2015, following eight years as anchor of the newscast’s weekend edition and 12 years as co-anchor of “Weekend Today.”

From: The Associated Press
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Terry Leonard, Editor
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Sean Moore, Managing Editor for Presentation
Joe Gromelski, Managing Editor for Digital

**BUreau STAFF**

*Europe/Mideast*
Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
(+49) 631.3615.9090; DSN (314) 583-9090

*Pacific*
(+49) 631.3615.9350; DSN (314) 583-9350

Robert Reismann, Mideast Circulation Manager
Mideast
Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
Europe/Mideast

**Circulation**

Mideast
Robert Reismann, Mideast Circulation Manager
robert.reismann@stripes.com
(+1) 202/898-0033
Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
brians.bowers@stripes.com

**Contact Us**

Washington
tel: (+1) 202/866.0003
fax: 633 3rd St. NW Suite 116, Washington, DC 20001-3050

Reader letters
kletters@stripes.com
Additional contacts
stripes.com/contactus

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**Opinion**

**Acosta's cowardice then should cost him now**

By Kathleen Parker

Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — It helps to know people in high places, especially if you're a sex offender and your name is Jeffrey Epstein.

Some might say that Epstein, the multimillionaire, is surrounded by the summits of wealth and self-indulgence by his own volition. He is undeniably intelligently, a rather shameless sexual being. He made efforts early years who built his fortune in part by running a money management firm that catered to the mega-rich. He’s also a philantropist who specializes in collecting brilliant minds.

His ascent from the middle class in which his family grew up was a result of creating the wealthiest of the wealthy, which allowed him to surround himself with the highest and the mightiest, including two presidents, Bill Clinton and Donald Trump. Although Trump now denies a relationship with Epstein, in 2002 he told New York magazine a different tale:

“T’ve known Jeff for fifteen years. Terrifying guy. He’s a lot of fun to be with. It is even safer to be [with him] because women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side.”

Facing a federal indictment in 2007 for sex crimes that could have landed him in prison for life, Epstein instead got off easy. His legal team, which included high-priced attorneys and a clever lobbyist, secured for him, Robert J. Starr, secured a sweetheart nonprosecution deal for Epstein that allowed him to plead guilty to lesser state charges. Epstein made sure to secure some small amount of cooperation from Alexander Acosta, then U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida and now the U.S. secretary of labor. Thanks to these two legal minds and one duff puppet, Epstein ultimately served just 13 months in county jail and was allowed to spend up to 12 hours a day on “work release” six days a week. He also had to pay restitution to some of the victims and register as a sex offender.

This was in spite of a 53-page federal indictment prepared by the FBI that identified 36 potential victims, some as young as middle-school aged.

There’s little question that Acosta was out-lawyered, but perhaps he was also disarmed by the attentions of these celebrities. A clear-cut trial where a Havard law professor, had famously defended O.J. Simpson. Starr, of course, was the independent counsel who investigated the Clinton Whitewater case, leading into the Monica Lewinsky cliffhanger.

In a 2011 letter trying to defend himself after the cusly plea deal, Acosta wrote that he faced “a year-long assault on the prosecution and the prosecutors” by “an army of legal superstars.” He also asserted that defense lawyers “investigated individual and their families, looking for personal peccadillos that may provide a basis for disqualification.”

Given, grab a hanky. Acosta has also said he feared the young accusers might not be their own best witnesses. Perhaps not.

Then again, it’s disheartening to see a man cross-examined by high-profile lawyers might have worked in their favor. Instead, the alleged victims were kept in the dark about a nonprosecution agreement and the records were sealed, in contravention of the federal Crime Victims’ Rights Act.

Justice is lost when the defendant appears to be catching up with Epstein.

On Monday, a new 14-page federal indictment unsealed Thursday, July 11, 2019
Uber offers more room, less talk at a cost

By Cathy Bussewitz
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Uber passengers can now experience a more spacious ride and a less talkative driver—if they're willing to shell out a few extra dollars.

The ride-hailing giant launched “comfort” rides in dozens of cities Tuesday. Riders are guaranteed 36 inches of legroom in “newer” cars—meaning those that are under 5 years old—and they can request a preferred air temperature. Riders can also use the app to tell drivers they don’t want to chat, avoiding what some consider an awkward exchange.

Uber is responding to requests from business travelers and others who say they just want to work or rest quietly. “It’s a way to set up an expectation up front…it takes some guesswork out of the process,” said Aydin Ghajar, senior product manager at Uber.

In the early days of ride-hailing, when drivers for Uber and its main U.S. rival, Lyft, began picking up riders in their personal cars, riders were often chaty, asking the drivers lots of questions.

“It was so new and innovative that a lot of people were curious about other things they (drivers) did,” said Harry Campbell, founder of The Rideshare Guy, a blog and online community for drivers. “Over the years, it’s gotten more transactional.”

Uber rolled out a “quiet mode” for Uber Black — its premium car service — in May. Some drivers like it; they don’t want to have to look at social cues,” Campbell said. “Other drivers feel that it’s a little dehumanizing. … I do feel like in our society, everything is turning into an app, and we’re losing the last art of conversation.”

Comfort rides cost 20% to 40% more for time and distance charges than standard Uber X rides. The move could help Uber boost revenue, which could nudge the company closer to profitability.

“I think it would help maybe to boost those numbers a little bit and maybe give some of the analysts on Wall Street something more to hang their hat on to remain bullish on the stock, based on the fact that the company still is not profitable,” said Daniel Morgan, vice president of Synovus Trust Co.

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Court: Amazon can be sued for defective product

By David Porter
Associated Press

A federal appeals court has ruled that Amazon can be sued over a defective product sold by one of its third-party vendors, in a decision the dissenting judge called “a relatively uncharted area of law.”

The lawsuit was brought by a Pennsylvania woman who suffered permanent blindness in one eye after a retractable dog leash she bought online snapped and hit her four years ago.

Heather Oberdorf sued Amazon for $1 million over a defective product sold by one of its third-party vendors, in “newer” cars—meaning those that are under 5 years old — and they can request a preferred air temperature.

Amazon had cited a 1980s Pennsylvania case involving a man who was injured by a tractor his father had bought at an auction. A court had found the auction house couldn’t be held liable because it only acted as an agent for the seller.

The appeals court disagreed with that interpretation. “This enables third-party vendors to conceal themselves from the customer, leaving customers injured by defective products with no direct recourse to the third-party vendor,” the majority wrote.

“There are numerous cases in which neither Amazon nor the party injured by a defective product, sold by Amazon.com, were able to locate the product’s third-party vendor or manufacturer.”

That is what occurred in Oberdorf’s case, according to the ruling, as neither she nor Amazon was able to contact the vendor, The Furry Gang.

The appeals court also said the Communications Decency Act doesn’t shield Amazon from liability because Amazon “plays a large role in the actual sales process” and isn’t merely a publisher of information or content provided by third parties.

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Hosted by Michelle Harven and Air Force veteran Desmon Farris.
WIMBLEDON, England — Novak Djokovic used a 10-game run to transform what was shaping up as an even, entertaining Wimbledon quarterfinal into a lopsided romp.

“I felt,” Djokovic said later, “like I managed to dismantle his game.”

That’s a pretty accurate description of what happened Wednesday at Centre Court.

Down an early break, the defending champion grabbed control midway through the opening set Wednesday and never let go, transforming the 21st-seeded David Goffin 6-4, 6-0, 6-2 to reach his ninth semifinal at the All England Club.

“He was everywhere,” Goffin said.

On Friday, the No. 1-seeded Djokovic will face No. 23 Roberto Bautista Agut of Spain, a first-time Grand Slam semifinalist.

Goffin is supposed to be on the island of Ibiza right now, having a bachelor party with a half-dozen pals ahead of his November wedding, but instead he will play on after beating No. 26 Guido Pella of Argentina 7-5, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

“Well,” the 31-year-old Bautista Agut said, “it feels better to be here in London.”

Djokovic is seeking his fifth Wimbledon championship and 17th Grand Slam trophy overall.

In the quarterfinals on the other side of the draw, Roger Federer won his 100th match at Wimbledon and it put the eight-time champion into his 13th semifinal at the All England Club.

Djokovic was broken in his opening service game but didn’t have much trouble after that, beating eighth-seeded Kei Nishikori 4-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Federer is the first player to win 100 matches at one Grand Slam tournament. His overall record at the grass-court Grand Slam is 100-12.

In the semifinals, Federer will face Rafael Nadal for the first time since their classic 2008 Wimbledon final.

Nadal set up a much-anticipated rematch by beating Sam Querrey 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 in the quarterfinals.

Djokovic was broken midway through the opening set but was ahead 2-0 when Federer won the first two before Nadal triumphed in a five-set epic widely considered one of the best matches of all time.

Against Querrey, Nadal was broken when serving for the first set at 5-4. But he converted his fourth break point in the next game, then saved three break points at 6-5 before finally clinching the set.

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Federer is the first player to win 100 matches at one Grand Slam tournament. His overall record at the grass-court Grand Slam is 100-12.

In the semifinals, Federer will face Rafael Nadal for the first time since their classic 2008 Wimbledon final.

Nadal set up a much-anticipated rematch by beating Sam Querrey 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 in the quarterfinals.

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Silver seeks changes to draft trades

By Tim Reynolds
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — NBA Commissioner Adam Silver wants the hot game fixed.

Mindful that it was awkward for draft picks this year who were selected by one team and had already been traded to another — but because of league rules, were unable to be introduced by their actual franchise for more than two weeks — Silver said a discussion at the league's board of governors meeting Tuesday was about how to change that going forward.

Several ideas are under discussion, including changing the rules about how and when draft-night trades can be announced. It could be earlier next season and not necessarily attached to the early July end to the moratorium on trades and certain signings.

"We've got to fix that," Silver said.

First-round draft picks were issued hats to wear on stage at the draft, corresponding with the team that chose them. DeAndre Hunter went No. 4 overall, taken by the Los Angeles Lakers. His rights had been traded twice — first to New Orleans as part of the Anthony Davis deal, then to Atlanta. But since neither of those trades could be closed before July 6, Hunter wore a Lakers cap on stage.

"We talk about being fan-friendly, and that isn't fan-friendly," Silver said.

There are plenty of changes that will be under consideration in the next few months, including one about the rules regarding the start to the negotiating period for free agents. Silver said that was also a topic among the board of governors on Tuesday.

For the draft-night-traded players, it's about more than the hats. Because some draft picks couldn't be part of their franchises before July 6, they were assured of missing the start of NBA Summer League. It cost a few players the chance to play in summer league at all, which disappointed many of them.

That won't be an issue next year, with Summer League in Las Vegas scheduled to begin on July 10, 2020, and long after the NBA's new league year is underway. Some franchises have already been traded to another — but because of July 6, they were as sure of missing the start of NBA Summer League.

Silver seeks changes to draft trades

By Doug Ferguson
Associated Press

John Daly is free to ride a cart during the week of the British Open — just not at Royal Portrush.

Daly's manager said Tuesday he is likely to play the Barbados Championship next week in Kentucky, and the two-time major champion with osteoarthritis in his right knee already has been granted a cart to use in the PGA Tour event.

Andy Pazder, the chief tournaments and competition officer for the PGA Tour, said Daly late last year was approved to use a cart through 2019 at PGA Tour events and PGA Tour Champions events that require walking.

Daly, who has not played a regular PGA Tour event since The Greenbrier last summer, also is contemplating the Barracuda Championship in Reno, Nev., the following week.

The R&A announced Tuesday that Daly had withdrawn from the British Open "due to a medical condition."

The nature of that condition — be it his arthritic knee or a spider bite — was not entirely clear.

Daly has been dealing with arthritis in his knee, and he says he also was diagnosed as diabetic. That led him to request a cart for the PGA Championship at Bethpage Black under the Americans with Disabilities Act, which the PGA of America approved after Daly submitted the required medical information.

The R&A rejected his request for a cart over the weekend, saying it felt walking was an integral part of the tournament. "We must also ensure, as far as possible, the challenge is the same for all players in the field," it said.

Pulling out of the British Open, however, might also be linked to a social media post from Daly on Sunday.

In a Twitter note that he described as "My life chapter 84k," Daly says he was on vacation in England last week when he was bitten by a spider without realizing it. He was taken to an emergency room on Friday — apparently at University Hospital in Pennsylvan — and taken straight into surgery to remove a major infection in his abdominal area.

He says he also was treated for early sepsis from a brown recluse.

His post included hashtags that say he was in some serious pain, glad to be alive and the photos were too graphic.

Daly won the PGA Championship in 1991 at Crooked Stick, making him exempt from qualifying for as long as he wants. He won the British Open at St. Andrews in 1995 and is exempt for that through 2026 when he is 60. Daly still has past champion status on the PGA Tour, allowing him into tournaments that have room in the field.

Daly drives his cart during the PGA Championship in May. Organizers of the British Open have refused a request from former champion Daly to use a golf cart at Royal Portrush this month.

2019 Petty’s Garage Warrior Mustang

Save up to $2,750 plus get a FREE Richard Petty Driving Experience

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2019 Petty’s Garage Warrior Mustang

John Daly drives his cart during the week of the British Open — just not at Royal Portrush.

Daly is a huge fan of Richard Petty and his famous Petty’s Garage. In 2019, John Daly and the PGA of America partnered with Petty’s Garage to introduce the 2019 Petty’s Garage Warrior Mustang, a new Mustang supports the military community.

John Daly is the star of the Petty’s Garage Warrior Mustang. The Warrior Mustang is a one-of-a-kind vehicle designed to support military veterans and their families. Daly is an avid supporter of the military and has been involved with various military-related causes throughout his career.

The Warrior Mustang is the official vehicle of the Richard Petty Driving Experience. The Driving Experience is a program that provides military veterans and their families with a unique opportunity to learn the art of stock car racing from Petty himself.

The Warrior Mustang is part of the Petty’s Garage Collection, a line of signature vehicles designed to support military veterans and their families. Petty’s Garage is an automotive manufacturing and design company founded by Richard Petty, one of NASCAR’s most successful drivers.

Only 8 Left!
Sagan captures fifth stage of Tour de France

Associated Press

COLMAR, France — Peter Sagan of Slovakia silenced his critics and won the fifth stage of the Tour de France Wednesday as Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe kept the race leader’s yellow jersey.

Vosges massif.

Since 2012, Sagan has failed to win the green jersey just once, when he was disqualified following a crash with Mark Cavendish two years ago.

As he crossed the finish line to win the fifth stage of the Tour de France in Colmar.

He took resounding revenge in Colmar, garnering ahead in the middle of the road to edge Wout van Aert and Matteo Trentin.

“I just have to ride with passion and the victory comes,” Sagan said. “I have to say thanks to all my teammates. They have done a great job and finally we have the Tour de France victory that we were looking for. It’s very nice for us. We controlled all day, on the flat part and towards the finish. I did my best. Everyone needs good luck and a good day for winning.”

The team sealed its second stage of the Tour de France victory that we were looking for. It’s very nice for us. We controlled all day, on the flat part and towards the finish. I did my best. Everyone needs good luck and a good day for winning.”

The sprint was not contested by pure sprinters, Alaphilippe, long-range climber, and the Frenchman who won the Tour of Flanders in Belgium last weekend, took a swig of Champagne and assumed the overall leader’s yellow jersey after Wednesday’s stage.

Sagan, who is bidding for a record seventh World Cup from FIFA, the international soccer governing body, the French man’s team got $35 million for winning last year.

The U.S. women’s team has earned the U.S. Soccer Federation for gender and pay discrimination. The women will get bonuses about five times less from the U.S. than the men who won the World Cup.

The case is currently in mediation.

Kate Lane, who watched the parade, called the pay gap “massive” for the soccer players and “unfair” for most women.

“Especially in male-dominated professions,” said Lane, of Limerick, Ireland. “Women put just as much commitment into their work as their male counterparts.”

She’s hopeful the younger generation is soaking up the message from the women’s team, noting a girl about 7 years old wearing an “Equal Pay” T-shirt.

Earlier Wednesday, team members joined New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, as he signed a law expanding gender pay equality in the state. He said women’s soccer players should be paid the same as male players.

U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin, a Democrat, de Blasio, also a Democrat, who won the awards for the most meritorious service, de Blasio, also a Democrat, who won the awards for the most meritorious service.

The team won the World Cup in 2015, with a dramatic penalty shootout against Argentina.

At the rally, Rapinoe noted the diversity of the team: “We have pink hair and purple hair, we have tattoos and dreadlocks, we have white girls and black girls and everything in between. Straight girls and gay girls.”

The parade is named for the straddles of ticker tape that used to be showered down from nearby office buildings. The tape has since been replaced with paper confetti, already drifting down from office buildings before Wednesday’s parade started.

The team had already started celebrating its record fourth Women’s World Cup title. After touching down at Newark Liberty International Airport on Monday, players shared a toast and sang “We Are the Champions.” Team members appeared on ABC’s “Good Morning America” in Times Square on Tuesday to show off their trophy and answer questions from cheering kids.

Rapinoe, the outspoken star who won the awards for the tournament’s best player and top scorer, also appeared on CNN and MSNBC later Tuesday.

Rapinoe told CNN’s Anderson Cooper that Republican President Donald Trump’s slogan “Make America Great Again” is “harking back to an era that wasn’t great for everyone. It might’ve been great for a few people.”

Rapinoe told MSNBC’s Rachel Maddow that Trump had yet to invite the women’s soccer team to the White House.

Trump had tweeted that he would invite the team, win or lose. Rapinoe has said she wouldn’t be going to the White House.

Rapinoe has said she wouldn’t be going to the White House. The team has accepted an invitation to visit Congress.

Ashton Phillippe finished in the main pack Wednesday, with Vos, the overall pick in the 2016 draft.

The Blackhawks traded promising defenceman Henri Jokiharju to Buffalo on Tuesday for Alex Nylander, who hasn’t lived up to expectations since he was selected by the Sabres with the eighth overall pick in the 2016 draft.

The 21-year-old Nylander made his NHL debut with Buffalo in April 2017, but he had just three goals and three assists in 19 games with the Sabres. He has had some trouble with injuries and inconsistency. In other NHL news:

Former Nashville Predators captain Greg Johnson has died. He was 48.

Tom Laidlaw, his former agent, told USA Today Johnson died Monday at his home in Michigan. No other details were provided.

Johnson also played for Detroit, Pittsburgh and Chicago during his 12 years in the NHL, finishing with 145 goals and 224 assists in 785 games.

FANS IN NY CHEER CHAMPS, EQUITY

By Ali Swenson

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Adoring fans lined New York City’s Canyon of Heroes on Wednesday to praise the World Cup–winning U.S. women’s national soccer team as athletic leaders on the field — and as advocates for pay equity off it.

Construction workers sounded air horns above crowds chanting “USA! USA!” as the bountiful parade moved up a stretch of lower Broadway that has long hosted so-called ticker tape parades for world leaders, veterans and hometown sports stars.

Co-captain Megan Rapinoe and her teammates shared a float with Mayor Bill de Blasio and U.S. Soccer Federation president Carlos Cordeiro, arrived as the Tour in the wake of her now-legendary victory pose, took a swig of Champagne and handed the bottle to a fan. Goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher held the World Cup trophy aloft.

Aly Hoover, 12, of Glen Ridge, N.J., stood at the sidelines with a “Equal Pay” T-shirt.

Garret Prather brought his newborn son “to celebrate how the American women made us proud on and off the field.”

The team sealed its second tournament win by beating the Netherlands 2-0 on Sunday. It will get $4 million for winning the

The U.S. women’s soccer team, with Golden Ball winner Megan Rapinoe, center, celebrates at City Hall after a ticker tape parade Wednesday in New York. The U.S. beat the Netherlands 2-0 to win the title.

The France team won its first World Cup in 1998, but the United States has never won the tournament.

The United States will face the Netherlands in the World Cup final on Sunday.

The Netherlands has not played in a World Cup final since 1999, when it lost to France.

The Netherlands won the European Championship in 2017, but it was eliminated in the first round of the World Cup this year.

The United States qualified following a crash with Mark Cavendish two years ago.

The French team has not won a World Cup since 1998, and it has not reached the semifinals since 2006.

The French team is coached by Didier Deschamps, who led the country to the World Cup title in 1998.

The French team is coming off a 4-0 win over South Korea in its last group stage match. The Netherlands is coming off a 1-0 loss to Spain.

The Netherlands has never won a World Cup, but it has reached the final twice in the past three tournaments, losing both times.

The United States is looking to make its first World Cup final since 1999. The United States has won one World Cup, in 1999.

The United States has already been eliminated from the tournament, but it is still in contention for a playoff spot.

The United States has played five matches in the tournament, winning two, losing one and drawing two.

The United States has scored 10 goals and allowed 11 goals in the tournament.

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Union wants more for its young stars

By Ronald Blum
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The baseball players’ association has outlined goals for the sport’s unprecedented midterm collective bargaining, objectives likely to meet resistance from management unless the union is willing to make trade-offs.

Baseball’s five-year labor contract expires in December 2021, but the sides agreed to open negotiations early. Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred said management and the union had only one preliminary meeting in the nearly 1½ years since management first discussed each side’s bargaining. The sides are exchanging dates for possible bargaining sessions.

“We are interested in re-establishing a competitive environment,” union head Tony Clark told the Baseball Writers’ Association of America on Tuesday. “We are interested in restoring meaningful free agency. We are interested in getting players something closer to their value as they are producing it. We are interested in ensuring that the best players are on the field at all times. We are interested in improving the dynamics for entry-level players. And we are interested at getting to a point where we can get our hands around.”

Following decades of growth, payrolls have remained in the $4.1 billion range since 2017, according to figures compiled by the commissioner’s office, and players have complained about two straight slow free-agent periods. The union accuses clubs of holding top prospects in the minors to delay their eligibility for salary arbitration and free agency, and it ties rebuilding teams to non-competitive and four straight seasons of decreasing attendance.

Baseball’s three-tiered economic structure has been in place since 1976: Players make or close to the minimum salary for their first few seasons; they become free agents after five years and lower salaries than they expected.

“It produced the contracts that MLB Players’ Not, that Bryce Harper got, that Manny Machado got,” Manfred said. “If in fact Tony has an idea about how he wants to make that process different, we’ve told him — and so I’m willing to say it here — you need to tell us new mechanisms you think will address your concerns about the market.”

Manfred said clubs make rosier projections far differently than a decade ago.

“They manage it based on data, analytics, algorithms that did not exist 10 years ago, and when people make data based on data and actual information as opposed to a gut feeling as to how the future’s going to turn out, I think there is more consistency in the way clubs approach and value individual players,” Manfred said.

Baseball’s slow-free-agent market contrasts with that of the NBA, which gained a flurry of publicity when its free agents started signing through March.

“Baseball has done nothing, given no direction for an alteration in the baseball,” Manfred told the Baseball Writers’ Association of America on Tuesday. “The biggest flaw in that logic is that baseball somehow wants more home runs. If you sat in an owner’s meeting and listened to people talk about the way our game is being played, that is not the sentiment among the owners for whom I work. There is no desire on the part of ownership to increase the number of home runs in the game. To the contrary, they’re concerned about how many we have.”

Batters have hit 3,691 homers in 1,345 games, on pace for 6,668 over the full season. That would be 19% above last year’s 5,558 and 9% over the record 6,105 hit in 2017 that topped the Steroids Era high mark of 5,693 in 2000.

“Pitchers have raised issues about particularly the tackiness and the seams on the baseball, and we do believe that those could be issues that are related to the performance of the ball and we’re trying to get our hands around,” Manfred said.

He firmly rejected claims that MLB changed the ball to spark offense.

“Manipulation of the baseball is a great conspiracy theory,” Manfred said. “How you manipulate a human-dominated handmade manufacturing process in any consistent way, it’s a smarter human being than I.”

Union head Tony Clark, a former All-Star first baseman, said some of his members have sent balls to the players’ association office.

“The ball suddenly changed and I don’t know why,” Clark said. “With something that seems to have changed as dramatically as it has, where does that put guys? How were those statistics represented? How did they manifest themselves in an overarching conversation so that you can compare yourself with somebody?”

MLB: Baseballs not juiced

Manfred denies pitchers’ claims league trying to boost offense

By Ronald Blum
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Faced with a record onslaught of home runs that has convinced many pitchers that baseballs are juiced, Commissioner Rob Manfred says the sport has been unable to find any changes in the manufacturing process.

A May 2018 report to Major League Baseball by professors specializing in physics, mechanical engineering, statistics and mathematics concluded there was less drag on the ball, causing more home runs. MLB still has not figured out why, and Manfred denied accusations by AL All-Star starter Justin Verlander and other pitchers that baseballs deliberately altered them.

“Baseball has done nothing, given no direction for an alteration in the baseball,” Manfred told the Baseball Writers’ Association of America on Tuesday. “The biggest flaw in that logic is that baseball somehow wants more home runs. If you sat in an owner’s meeting and listened to people talk about the way our game is being played, that is not the sentiment among the owners for whom I work. There is no desire on the part of ownership to increase the number of home runs in the game. To the contrary, they’re concerned about how many we have.”

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“How do you manipulate a human-dominated handmade manufacturing process in any consistent way, it’s a smarter human being than I.”

Rawlings manufactures major league baseballs in Costa Rica, and then stores them in Washington, Mo., at 70 degrees and 50 percent humidity. All teams store their balls at about 70 degrees, and Arizona and Colorado use humidity to maintain humidity at 50 percent.

Manfred said that produces the baseballs and something happens to the owners to support a system that produces our baseballs and something happens to that company, we would be in a very difficult position.

“If we didn’t have some control over the company that produces our baseballs and something happens to that company, we would be in a very difficult position.”

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MLB has commissioned laser tests to measure seam width and height. Manfred said that causes of the decreased drag are found, it is possible the ball’s specifications could be changed to decrease home runs.

“We just haven’t made a decision on that,” he said. “Changing the baseball is a mechanism by which you could manage the way the game is being played. We haven’t missed that idea. But if we were going to do it, we would do it in a way that was transparent to the media and the fans in advance.”

Thursday, July 11, 2019

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ADDITIONAL

BY RONALD BLUM

AP baseball writer Ben Walker contributed to this report.
**MLB**

**Show:** Indians' Bieber takes home MVP trophy

**FROM BACK PAGE**

“Baseball is a funny game,” said Bieber, a most unlikely MVP after being added late to the roster.

With fans hoping to see a replay of Monday’s jaw-dropping aerial show when 312 homers cleared the walls, this became the Arm-Star Game up until the late innings.

Darby champ Pete Alonso of the Mets grounded a two-out, two-run single past Gleyber Torres in the eighth to close the NL’s gap. After a double steal put runners at second and third against Cleveland reliever Brad Hand, White Sox catcher James McCann made a tumbling catch on Mike Moustakas’ twisting foul pop to end the inning.

Chapman closed to give the AL its 19th win in 22 games, with a tie stuck in there. He got a little encouragement with two outs — Yankees teammate CC Sabathia, honored this week for his contributions on and off the field.

“I kind of expected it, to be honest,” former NL MVP Kris Bryant said. “You only see them once, so they have the advantage.”

“There are a lot of hard throwers and great pitchers over there. Unless you’ve seen them before, it’s a difficult matchup,” he said.

Cleveland favorite Michael Brantley had an early RBI double off losing pitcher Clayton Kershaw. Jorge Polanco drove in a run with an infield single for a 2-0 edge in the fifth and another scored on a double-play grounder.

“I wanted to swing the bat early. I had some nervous jitters I wanted to get out,” Brantley said.

Winning pitcher Masahiro Tanaka, Lucas Giolito and Shane Greene did their part to protect the lead with scoreless innings.

Bieber dazzled in front of a chanting home crowd, striking out Willson Contreras, Ketel Marte and Ronald Acuna Jr. in the first with a 1-0 lead.

“It was electric out there, the fans got in on it and it was fun,” AL manager Alex Cora of the Red Sox said. “And I’m glad that he got the MVP. He plays at this level. He’s really good.”

The biggest misplay of the night might have been on the scoreboard. NL All-Stars David Dahl of Colorado and Willson Contreras of the Cubs had their names misspelled — “Davis Dahl” and “Wilson Contreras” — on the outfield videoboard. Jeff McNeil was accompanying it was of Mets teammate Jacob deGrom.

“That was tough, to see deGrom’s picture up there,” McNeil said. “I didn’t really like that. I wanted to see my picture up there. I know my family did, too. What are you going to do, guess, but I don’t think that should happen.”

**Tribute**

All players wore a uniform patch with No. 45 to honor late Angels pitcher Tyler Skaggs. Los Angeles teammate Mike Trout and Tommy La Stella switched their jerseys to Skaggs’ number, and there was a progym moment of silence.

Up next

The regular season resumes on Thursday night with one game, Houston at Texas. All teams are back in action Friday. Next year’s All-Star Game is at Dodger Stadium for the first time since 1980.

By Ronald Blum

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Baseball players’ union head Tony Clark says a job has been done in marketing Boston Red Sox outfielder Mookie Betts, the reigning AL MVP.

“Mookie should be a household name,” Clark told the Baseball Writers’ Association of America on Tuesday. “Mookie should be a one-name guy. You say Ronaldo. You say Messi. You say Mookie. You should know who Mookie is, and outside of the baseball world, I don’t know how many do.”

Betts earned his fourth straight All-Star selection after helping Boston win the World Series last year.

“In the grand scheme of things with respect to players that should be at the forefront of every conversation and should be in conversations even with non-baseball fans, Mookie is one of them,” Clark said. “No doubt about it. And unless or until we fix that, it’s going to be difficult for others to be a part of that conversation, too.”

Clark said baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred probably would be in position to answer what is required to increase Betts’ recognition.

“I want to be able to turn on the TV and see players on products with sponsors, licensees, up and down the rows of the streets, whether you’re in a big city or a small city, I would like to see them overlap in other sports and other industries and on TV and in commercials promoting movies,” Clark said. “I would love to see all of that, so that our guys are mainstream. Promoting our guys on baseball channels is not going to get us there. Baseball fans know who Mookie is. Non-baseball fans deserve to know who Mookie is.”

Betts set the All-Star Game to start the eighth inning but did not have any plate appearances.

**Hedging Betts**

Players’ union says poor job has been done marketing OF Mookie

**Mookie should be a one-name guy. You say Ronaldo. You say Messi. You say Mookie. You should know who Mookie is,** Tony Clark baseball players’ union head

**The New York Yankees’ Gleyber Torres, left, and the Boston Red Sox: Mookie Betts celebrates the American League’s 4-3 victory Tuesday at the All-Star Game in Cleveland.**

**TONY DEjak/JP**

**Scoreboard**

**American League**

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**National League**

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**No games, scheduled**

**Tuesday’s game**

All-Star Game: AL 4, NL 3

No games

**Thursday’s Games**

No games

**Friday’s games**

**Wednesday’s games**

No games scheduled

**Scoreboard**

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**NL**

New York Yankees pitcher CC Sabathia waves to the fans during the ninth inning of Tuesday’s All-Star Game in Cleveland. Sabathia, in his final season, was honored for contributions on and off the field.
By Tom Withers
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Michael Brantley came back, took a well-deserved bow and delivered like always. Shane Bieber picked a perfect inning and took home an MVP trophy and a shiny new pickup truck.

Carlos Carrasco stood up to cancer.

On an idyllic night for baseball, Cleveland connections shined brightest at the 88th All-Star Game. Even Sandy Alomar Jr., whose storybook home run run the last time the Indians hosted an All-Star Game in 1997 made him an MVP and local legend, enjoyed another moment on the star-studded stage.

And then Bieber matched him, winning MVP honors after striking out the side in the fifth as the AL staff combined for 16 strikeouts in a 4-3 win over the NL and returning to pitch to prominence a night after Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Pete Alonso and Joc Pederson knocked balls over Progressive Field in 2019.

“It's an incredible feeling now, now that it's kind of sinking in,” Bieber said. “Just to be able to do it in front of the home crowd and my first All-Star Game is definitely not something I expected, especially being added to the game four or five days ago,”

Bieber was a late All-Star injury replacement on Friday to give the Indians four representatives.

The 23-year-old, who soared through Cleveland's minor league system and won 11 games as a rookie in 2018, showed a veteran's routine in the fifth when he fanned Chicago's Willson Contreras, Arizona's Ketel Marte and Atlanta's Ronald Acuna Jr. in succession while protecting a 1-0 lead.

The crowd chanted “Let's Go Bieber,” during his performance, and it's an anthem that will likely be heard each time he takes the mound going forward.

“Kind of stepped off the back of the mound after one of the pitches and wasn't totally able to look up and see everything, just because there was so much going on, but I heard everything and really soaked it all in,” Bieber said. “I can't really thank the fans enough for creating that moment for me and making it really special.”

While Bieber's unexpected MVP put a perfect cap on Cleveland's magical night — in fact, he donated his hat to the Hall of Fame — Carrasco's appearance served as the most poignant moment.

The 32-year-old was recently diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia, and during Major League Baseball's “Stand Up to Cancer” campaign, Carrasco stood in the third-base coach's box, flanked by his teammates and Indians manager Terry Francona.

Carrasco held a sign that read “I Stand” while Lindor's said: “Cookie,” the pitcher's nickname.

“When I saw him, it puts everything in perspective,” said Boston manager Alex Cora, who guided the AL team. “We got caught up in wins and losses and pennant races and all that stuff and rivalries, and then that happens. And there's more than baseball in life.”

“And we're thinking and praying for him, his family and hopefully he can be back on the field sooner rather than later.”

Brantley returned for the first time as a member of the Houston Astros, who were happy to sign the outfielder as a free agent last winter after the Indians let him walk after 10 seasons.

He was greeted with a thunderous ovation during player introductions, stopping to squeeze Francona tightly before slapping hands with the rest of the AL squad.

“I was very emotional. I was running away from the rest of the NL,” Brantley said. “I Stand” while Lindor's said: “Cookie,” the pitcher's nickname.

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“I was very emotional. I was trying to hold it together,” Brantley said. “To come back in front of these fans that I played for, for 10 years, I just want to say thank you for their support, thank you for that ovation. It means so much to me. It's going to last a lifetime.”

Brantley heard an even bigger roar in the second inning with an RBI double off Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw for a 1-0 lead.

Alomar, a member of Cleveland's coaching staff since 2010, caught a ceremonial first pitch from Cora, whose New York Yankees pinstripes will never completely cover his love for the Indians. He began his career in Cleveland, and it was only fitting the big left-hander got to say goodbye in his final season.

Cora sent Sabathia to the mound in the ninth inning to talk to Yankees closer Aroldis Chapman before getting another standing ovation.

“His one of the best pitchers in the big leagues for the last, what, 15 years,” Cora said. “The guy has won more than 250 games, 3,000 strikeouts. Everything started here in Cleveland. We all know how special it is, so I decided to let everybody know who he is and I think it was a nice tribute.”

Cleveland's crown also had its say, booing Cubs All-Stars Javier Baez and Kris Bryant, who crashed their World Series party in 2016.

“If I was a (Cleveland) fan, I'd boo us, too,” Bryant said. “It was a nightmare Series from my perspective.”

On this night, Cleveland celebrated its past, present and future.

“It's such a good, hard, gritty town,” Bieber said. “I can't say enough about how this All-Star Weekend and week has been run. I was told to go to some guys and they told me it's one of the better-run All-Star Games and weekends in my lifetime. Cleveland has the kind of people that are guys that have been to three or four, five, six All-Star Games.”

Carrasco, Bieber help Cleveland shine
BY BEN WALKER
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — For one night, the pitchers took back the power.

Hours after an awesome Home Run Derby got everyone buzzing even louder about monster shots and juiced balls, only a couple flew out of Progressive Field on Tuesday.

Instead, Justin Verlander blazed 97 mph heat, Shane Bieber and Aroldis Chapman each struck out the side and the American League slowed a loaded NL lineup 4-3 for its seventh straight win in the All-Star Game.

“I know it’s the year of the home run, but pitching dominated today,” Colorado slugger Nolan Arenado said.

Sure did—at least until play resumes Thursday.

Facing Christian Yelich, Cody Bellinger and a bunch of boppers, the AL staff combined to strike out 16.

SEE SHOW ON PAGE 30

Stealing the show

MLB ALL-STAR GAME

Pitchers dominate as AL wins for 7th straight time

Indians pitcher Shane Bieber holds the MVP trophy after the All-Star Game on Tuesday in Cleveland. Bieber and his American League teammates held off the National League 4-3.

Tony Dejak/AF

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US women’s soccer team celebrated in NYC » Page 28