

NBA

Youthful Magic off to a fast start thanks to defense **Page 24**



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Volume 82 Edition 172 ©SS 2023 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023 平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く) 発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥50 **50¢/Free to Deployed Areas**



Ukrainian Presidency Press Service

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stand at the National Defense University on Monday in Washington. Zelenskyy addressed U.S. military officers, kicking off his visit aimed at persuading Congress to provide more military aid.

System to help military family moves facing delay

By **MATTHEW ADAMS**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. Transportation Command has delayed the rollout of new computer systems designed to help streamline the annual moving process for hundreds of thousands of military families and designate a single contractor to ship their household goods around the world, defense officials said.

The command awarded its global household goods contract worth an estimated \$6.2 billion to HomeSafe Alliance in November 2021. The company will provide “complete door-to-door global household goods relocation transportation and warehouse services worldwide,” once the company takes over military moves, according to the command’s announcement.

Moves originally were slated to begin under this new contract in September. But technical issues arose in the development of the Defense Department’s MilMove and HomeSafe Alliance’s HomeSafe Connect — two new computer programs designed to plan, track and expedite moves, command officials said.

More than 800 companies are responsible for 170,000 domestic shipments and 300,000 globally each year, said Andy Dawson, director of the Defense Personal Property Management Office at U.S. Transportation Command. During the military’s peak moving season in the summer, the customer satisfaction rate was 74% for 2023.

“That equates to tens of thousands of service members and families that aren’t satisfied with

SEE DELAY ON PAGE 7

‘Can get the job done in Europe’

Zelenskyy addresses US military officers as more money for Ukraine aid in limbo

By **SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked the students and faculty of the National Defense University on Monday to put themselves in the shoes of his country’s troops as they await reinforcements in their fight against Russia.

“Every one of you here understands what it means for a soldier to wait for munitions, waiting for

weeks, months, not knowing if support will come at all,” Zelenskyy said. “Every one of you with command experience knows what it means when instead of moving forward you’re just watching, waiting for armor or equipment while your enemy is satisfied and preparing for assaults.”

That is the situation that Ukraine’s military faces as U.S. aid for Ukraine’s war effort dwindles and a divided Congress remains

RELATED

GOP stays firm on border deal despite Zelenskyy’s appeal
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locked in a stalemate over a \$61 billion measure that would keep Ukraine from succumbing to Russian forces, Zelenskyy said.

“Any of you with a son or daughter in a combat zone just wouldn’t get it if they were told that protecting lives could wait because there’s a little more debating [to do],” he said.

Zelenskyy’s appearance at the university marked the start of a two-day visit to Washington, D.C., aimed at rallying flagging Western support for his nation. He deli-

SEE UKRAINE ON PAGE 6

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Epic Games wins antitrust lawsuit against Google

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A federal court jury has decided that Google's Android app store has been protected by anticompetitive barriers that have damaged smartphone consumers and software developers, dealing a blow to a major pillar of a technology empire.

The unanimous verdict reached Monday came after just three hours of deliberation following a four-week trial revolving around a lucrative payment system within

Google's Play Store. The store is the main place where hundreds of millions of people around the world download and install apps that work on smartphones powered by Google's Android software.

Epic Games, the maker of the popular Fortnite video game, filed a lawsuit against Google three years ago, alleging that the internet search giant has been abusing its power to shield its Play Store from competition in order to protect a gold mine that makes bil-

ions of dollars annually. Just as Apple does for its iPhone app store, Google collects a commission ranging from 15% to 30% on digital transactions completed within apps.

Apple prevailed in a similar case that Epic brought against the iPhone app store. But that 2021 trial was decided by a federal judge in a ruling that is under appeal at the U.S. Supreme Court.

"Victory over Google!" Epic CEO Tim Sweeney wrote in a post on X.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (Dec. 13)	\$1.05	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
British pound (Dec. 13)	\$1.23	Britain (Pound)	1.2526
Japanese yen (Dec. 13)	142.00	Canada (Dollar)	1.3611
South Korean won (Dec. 13)	1282.00	China (Yuan)	7.1767
		Denmark (Krone)	6.9210
		Egypt (Pound)	30.8990
		Euro	0.9283
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8099
		Hungary (Forint)	355.87
		Israel (Shekel)	3.7117
		Japan (Yen)	145.68
		Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3084
		Norway (Krone)	11.0058
		Philippines (Peso)	55.59
		Poland (Zloty)	4.03
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7509
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3434
		South Korea (Won)	1317.52
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8776		
Thailand (Baht)	35.75		
Turkey (NewLira)	29.0470		

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

INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	8.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
Federal funds market rate	5.33
3-month bill	5.42
30-year bond	4.33

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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MILITARY

Defense bill calls for study on Red Hill effects

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

A provision in the proposed National Defense Authorization Act would require the federal government to assess health impacts on military families exposed to tap water contaminated by jet fuel from the Navy's Red Hill storage facility in Hawaii.

Sen. Brian Schatz and Rep. Ed Case, Hawaii Democrats, on Thursday successfully inserted several provisions regarding Red Hill in the NDAA, which specifies spending and policy priorities for the Defense Department, Schatz said in a news release that day.

"The potential health impacts of this crisis remain one of my highest priorities," Case said in the release.

Schatz and Case sit on defense appropriations subcommittees in the Senate and House, respectively.

The NDAA awaits votes by the full House and Senate and the signature of President Joe Biden.

The language in the bill directs the government to track the health implications of fuel leaks from Red Hill for uniformed service members and their dependents.

The tracking would be done in coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Hawaii Department of Health "to ensure a holistic and unified approach that documents and ultimately addresses illnesses affecting service members, dependents and civilians," according to the re-



ZABARR JONES/Defense Department

A service member supporting Joint Task Force-Red Hill inspects fuel from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, on Dec. 7.

lease.

The underground Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, built during World War II just 100 feet atop a crucial Oahu aquifer, was ordered emptied and permanently closed by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in March 2022.

The decision came in the wake of a spill of 20,000 gallons of jet fuel in November 2021 that contaminated one of three wells used by the Navy to supply tap water to military communities on and near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Thousands of residents were forced to relocate for several

months, with many complaining of rashes, nausea, diarrhea, dizziness and a host of other health conditions.

Dozens of residents and former residents have joined a federal lawsuit seeking compensation for illnesses and financial losses.

Many have complained that their medical issues have not been properly addressed by the military.

"People who were exposed to toxic fuel from this leak should know what kind of impact that might have on their long-term health and what kind of additional

federal help they can get," Schatz said in the news release.

"This study will give doctors, public health experts, and those affected by the leak a better understanding of what that kind of exposure can do to someone's health," Schatz said.

The scope of Red Hill contamination may vastly exceed the November 2021 spill, according to a recent report.

Late last month, the Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative, a working group of state, county and city of Honolulu officials, estimated that as much as 2 million gallons of

fuel may have leaked or spilled into the ground from the facility over the past eight decades.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is increasingly concerned about the long-term effects of jet fuel exposure on service members, who can be exposed on the job or in homes on contaminated installations.

"VA works with the Department of Defense and other federal agencies to track these situations and relay relevant and timely information to Veterans," the agency states on its website in a section devoted to jet fuel exposure.

The website highlights several of the most egregious examples of installation contamination, recently adding the Red Hill area to Camp Lejeune in North Carolina and Karshi Khanabad Air Base in Uzbekistan.

"Scientific research on the long-term effects of exposure to jet fuels is inconclusive; however, if an individual is exposed to jet fuel at very high levels over a long period of time, lung and heart problems may develop," the website states.

The bill also requires the Defense Department to work with Hawaii officials and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help identify additional resources for those affected by jet fuel contamination.

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Unmanned micro market opens on second aircraft carrier

By KELLY AGEE
Stars and Stripes

An unmanned, self-checkout micro market opened recently aboard the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, a second experiment in convenient retail at sea that gives sailors 24/7 access to food, beverages and other essentials.

Dubbed Micro Market@Sea, the tiny prototype shop is the second established aboard a warship by the Navy Exchange. The first one opened on the amphibious transport dock USS San Antonio in December 2020.

At-sea shoppers can expect to find a variety of food, beverages and health and wellness items. The Dwight D. Eisenhower's micro market has tallied about \$200,000 in sales since serving its first sailor on Oct. 4, according to Navy Exchange Service Command.

"This self-service initiative strengthens the Navy's quality of life mission and supports operational readiness by offering Sailors convenient and accessible necessities at any time of the day,"

command spokeswoman Kristine Sturkie said by email Dec. 6. "Furthermore, the self-service register for checkout supports manning requirements."

Retail service specialists — active-duty sailors who work with ship stores — are responsible for managing the micro markets and keeping them stocked.

Self-checkouts allow them to serve concurrently in places like the ship's store, laundry and barbershop.

There have been no reports of theft from the Dwight D. Eisenhower's micro market, Sturkie said, adding that anti-theft mitigation measures are in place.

The at-sea concept was born out of ashore options that have been operating since 2015. Nearly 80 ashore markets can be found worldwide at Navy hospitals, shipyards, hangars and office spaces, Sturkie said.

"Navy Exchange Command is committed to continuous innovation and is ever-evolving to meet the needs of the Fleet and strengthening the Navy's quality of life mission," she said. "With



U.S. Navy

An unmanned, self-checkout micro market opened recently aboard the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower.

that, the Micro Market 'self-service' concept began at shore commands to support Sailors who work around the clock."

It's unclear when other Navy ships can expect to see a micro

market. Sturkie said the command will determine the way forward after the test phase ends in May aboard the Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Homeported at Naval Station

Norfolk, Va., the carrier has been operating in the Middle East since October.

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MILITARY

IG: Guardsman acted alone in doc leak

Probe faults over 12 at base as derelict in duties

By DOUG G. WARE
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Air National Guardsman Jack Teixeira acted alone in leaking classified military information but more than a dozen others at the Massachusetts base where he worked were derelict in their duties and failed to respond appropriately to the situation, an Air Force investigation has concluded.

Teixeira, 21, was arrested in April after officials said he had been sharing top-secret information with a group of other users on the social media site Discord. The leaks included intelligence on Russia's war in Ukraine.

"[The] investigation found individuals in Teixeira's unit failed to take proper action after becoming aware of his intelligence-seeking activities," the Air Force said Monday about the inspector general report. "However, the investigation did not find evidence that members of Teixeira's supervisory chain were aware of his alleged unauthorized disclosures."

Teixeira, a member of the 102nd Intelligence Wing at Otis Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod in Massachusetts, joined the Air National Guard in 2019 and attained the rank of airman first class and became a Cyber Transport Systems journeyman.

"Every airman ... is entrusted with the solemn duty to safeguard our nation's classified defense information. When there is a breach



STEFANI REYNOLDS/TNS

This photo illustration created on Apr. 13, shows Air Force National Guardsman Jack Teixeira reflected in an image of the Pentagon.

of that sacred trust, for any reason, we will act in accordance with our laws and policies to hold responsible individuals accountable," Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall said.

The monthslong investigation by the Air Force inspector general into the incident said no one aided Teixeira in leaking the classified intelligence, but it identified several service members at the Guard base who failed in some way to take the appropriate actions when they eventually found out what Teixeira was doing.

For example, Col. Sean Riley, commander of the 102nd Intelligence Wing, was relieved of his command, and Col. Enrique Dovallo, the wing's surveillance and reconnaissance group commander, received administrative action for "concerns with unit culture and compliance with policies and standards." Also, commanders from

the 102nd Intelligence Support Squadron and the detachment overseeing administrative support for airmen in the unit were permanently removed, according to the report, which did not name them.

"Air National Guard leaders initiated disciplinary and other administrative actions against 15 individuals ... for dereliction in the performance of duties," Kendall's office said. "The actions ranged from relieving personnel from their positions, including command positions, to nonjudicial punishment."

The investigation noted multiple lapses in security that allowed Teixeira repeated access to sensitive compartmented information, or SCI — one of the top levels of classification — without supervision and the report said several violations of security protocols were not properly reported.

"Some members mistakenly believed they could report violations to their supervisors (chain of command) and/or other officials, instead of the proper security official, as required in this case," the report states.

The investigation also found Teixeira continued to access secret information even after he had been ordered to stop.

"As a result, additional available security actions were not taken, and no further inquiry or investigation occurred," according to the report. "After interviewing higher levels of the supervisory chain, it appears knowledge of these security incidents was not fully disclosed above the squadron level. Based on the preponderance of the evidence gathered during the investigation, three individuals in the unit who understood their duty to report specific information regarding Teixeira's intelligence-

seeking and insider threat indicators to security officials, intentionally failed to do so."

On at least one occasion, the full details of Teixeira's behavior weren't properly reported due to worries that military officials might "overreact."

"Had any of these members come forward, security officials would likely have facilitated restricting systems/facility access and alerted the appropriate authorities, reducing the length and depth of the unauthorized and unlawful disclosures by several months," the report said.

Investigators noted several other indirect contributing factors in the leaks, such as confusion at the base about what actions needed to be taken when the violations were found, whether Teixeira had a "need to know" about the classified intelligence, and a lack of supervision and oversight during the night shift, which Teixeira often worked.

As a result of the leaks, Teixeira faces six counts of federal espionage charges including unauthorized retention and transmission of classified national defense information. He has pleaded not guilty and is in jail awaiting trial. Each count carries a prison sentence of up to 10 years. The Justice Department is also investigating the leaks. It's not yet known when Teixeira will stand trial, due partly to the large amount of classified material involved in the case. U.S. officials said in July that the documents are held by several agencies. Each must be consulted before the materials can be turned over to defense attorneys as part of the discovery process.

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Portugal shipment shows full range of DOD's ability to move supplies

By PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

A Portuguese port recently took its first turn shipping American military goods from Europe back to the United States as part of efforts to diversify the ways the Pentagon moves cargo in and out of the Continent.

On Thursday in Setubal, roughly 500 pieces of equipment belonging to the Army's 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division from Fort Campbell, Ky., was loaded onto a stateside-bound ship, the service said in a statement the same day.

The push to gain options for moving equipment and supplies across Europe reflects a growing focus on mobility by NATO.

The Portuguese port "is the furthest west that we've ever operated coming in or out of Europe," said Col. Robert Kellam, commander of the 598th Transportation Brigade. "We were able to effectively connect the furthest point in eastern Estonia to the furthest west port in Portugal and connect all the transportation nodes from here to there."

The equipment, including light medium tactical vehicles and heavy expanded mobility tactical trucks, arrived in Poland months earlier before it was moved on to Estonia.

U.S. troops deployed to Estonia used the equipment in Operation Atlantic Resolve, the allied mission that began following Russia's 2014 aggression against Ukraine.

The brigade and the Germany-based 21st Theater Sustainment Command, to which it reports, conducted the operation along with the Portuguese military and port authority, the Army said.

Setubal, which is just south of Lisbon, is the latest European port to cooperate with the U.S. military since Atlantic Resolve began in 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and began backing armed separatists in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

In 2021, when the Army and Danish troops offloaded hundreds of pieces of equipment during a first-of-its-kind mission at the Danish port of Esbjerg, the U.S. said expanding the number of seaports that can support Army de-



ANDREW JO/U.S. Army

Portuguese army Maj. Gen. Joao Paulo de Almeida, left, talks with Col. Robert Kellam, center, and Lt. Col. Michael Harrell during an operation Thursday, at the port of Setubal in Portugal.

ployments was a key objective.

Since then, the Army has also begun using the port of Adria in Bar, Montenegro.

The Army expects more cooperation with Portugal in the future, 21st TSC spokesman Maj.

Vonnie Wright said Tuesday.

"We both desire to do more with each other, and this was a successful joint operation," Wright said.

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MILITARY



U.S. Air Force

The eight airmen killed in the crash of a CV-22B Osprey on Nov. 29. Top row, from left: Maj. Jeffrey Hoernemann, Maj. Eric Spendlove, Maj. Luke Unrath and Capt. Terrell Brayman. Bottom: Tech. Sgt. Zachary Lavoy, Staff Sgt. Jake Turnage, Senior Airman Brian Johnson and Staff Sgt. Jake Galliher.

Air Force identifies seventh airman recovered following Osprey crash

BY ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The Air Force has identified the seventh CV-22B Osprey crew member recovered after the tiltrotor crashed off southwestern Japan with eight aboard.

The body of Maj. Jeff Hoernemann, 32, of Andover, Minn., was discovered over the weekend by divers from the Navy and the Air Force's 320th Special Tactics Squadron, according to an Air Force Special Command news release.

The service announced the discovery Sunday but did not publicly disclose that it was Hoernemann's body until Monday, after his family was notified.

Hoernemann was a CV-22 instructor pilot and chief of weapons tactics assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo.

One of the Osprey's eight crew members — Maj. Eric Spendlove, 36, of St. George, Utah — remains missing nearly two weeks after the Osprey went down off the coast of Yakushima Island during a training mission.

U.S. and Japanese divers are continuing their search, according to the news release.

"The main priority is returning our Airmen home and taking care of their family members," the command wrote. "Support to, and the privacy of, the families and loved ones impacted by this incident remains AFSOC's top priority."

The body of Staff Sgt. Jake Galliher, 24, of Pittsfield, Mass., was found the day of the crash. Five more were discovered Dec. 4 along with the Osprey's fuselage. The remains and wreckage were found about 100 feet below the surface.

Two were identified Dec. 5 as Maj. Luke Unrath, 34, of Riverside, Calif. and Tech. Sgt. Zachary Lavoy, 33, of Oviedo, Fla.

Three more were identified Dec. 6 as Capt. Terrell Brayman, 32, of Pittsford, N.Y.; Staff Sgt. Jake Turnage, 25 of Kennesaw, Ga.; and Senior Airman Brian Johnson, 32, of Reynoldsburg, Ohio.

A preliminary investigation indicated that an equipment failure, rather than human error, was likely the crash's cause, Air Force Special Operations Command said Dec. 6.

Since then, the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps have grounded their Osprey tiltrotor aircraft until the investigation determines the cause of the crash and recommendations are made to return the aircraft to service.

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Flight pause set during F-16 recovery efforts

BY DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The U.S. and South Korean militaries are working together to recover an F-16 Fighting Falcon that crashed this week in the Yellow Sea, according to the U.S. 7th Air Force.

The command is coordinating with the Air Force Safety Center and South Korean navy to retrieve the F-16 lost from the 8th Fighter Wing at Kunsan Air Base, 7th Air Force spokeswoman Maj. Rachel Buitrago told Stars and Stripes by email Tuesday.

The fighter was over the Yellow Sea on a training operation when it experienced an in-flight emergency at 8:43 a.m. Monday.

The pilot ejected and was rescued at sea by the South Korean navy and coast guard. A South Korean air force helicopter airlifted the pilot, who was awake and in stable condition, to Kunsan, Buitrago said. Kunsan, about 115 miles south of Seoul, is home to the 8th Fighter Wing, which operates roughly 30 F-16s.

Once the aircraft is recovered, it will be scrutinized to determine the cause of the crash, Buitrago

said. The exact location of the recovery efforts in the Yellow Sea will not be disclosed due to operational security, she added.

The flying status of F-16s on the Korean Peninsula "has not changed," Buitrago said. However, she added that the wing's commander, Col. Matthew Gaetke, ordered a two-day pause on flights "to focus on the recovery of the pilot and aircraft and in preparation for the safety investigation."

"We want to extend our sincere thanks to the [South Korean] coast guard, navy and air force for all of their assistance in the rescue and recovery efforts," Buitrago said.

South Korea's military will continue providing support to the U.S. for the incident, Ministry of National Defense spokesman Jeon Ha Gyu said Monday during a press conference in Seoul.

The crash comes about seven months after an F-16 from the 8th Fighter Wing crashed into a farmer's field about 10 miles from Osan Air Base.

That pilot suffered non-life-threatening injuries and F-16 flights in South Korea were paused for three days, the wing said at the time.



SAMUEL EARICK/U.S. Air Force

An F-16 Fighting Falcon takes off at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, on Nov. 15.

Chief Master Sgt. Flosi chosen for top enlisted airman post

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

Chief Master Sgt. David A. Flosi was selected Monday to serve as the Air Force's next top enlisted airman, the service announced.

As the 20th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Flosi, a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, will advocate for the enlisted force and be a primary adviser to Gen. David Allvin, the service chief of staff, and other senior leaders and civilians on issues involving the welfare, readiness, morale and proper use and progress of airmen.

"He is a phenomenal leader and wingman who will empower our total force," Allvin said in a statement. "His unique experiences, attitude and commitment will prove essential as we re-optimize our force for great power competition. I am excited to work with him as we follow through on our efforts to meet today's pacing challenge."



Flosi

Flosi, who earned the rank of chief master sergeant in August 2015, now serves as the top enlisted leader at Air Force Materiel Command at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, according to the Air Force.

He will replace Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass sometime in the new year, the service said.

Bass became the first woman in Defense Department history to serve as a service-level senior enlisted leader when she took the job in August 2020.

"Chief Flosi is an incredibly strong leader who has proven himself in every role at every level," Bass said in a statement. "I have no doubt he will continue building and developing our Air Force to be the future force our nation needs to compete, deter and win in any domain."

Flosi began his Air Force career in 1996 as a nuclear weapons specialist, and he has held various leadership duties in both conventional and nuclear munitions, as well as missile operations, program management and test and contingency

operations.

Before arriving at Wright-Patterson, he served as the command chief master sergeant at the Air Force's Sustainment Center at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma.

His awards include the Legion of Merit with an oak leaf cluster, the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters, Air and Space Commendation Medal and the Air and Space Achievement Medal with three oak leaf clusters.

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EUROPE

Ukraine: Congress remains in stalemate over \$61B aid measure

FROM PAGE 1

vered his speech to military officers but his words were pointedly aimed at lawmakers in the halls of Congress a few miles away.

“Let me be frank: if there’s anyone inspired by unresolved issues on Capitol Hill, it’s just [Russian President Vladimir] Putin and his sick clique,” he said.

The war in Ukraine has driven a deep wedge between Democrats and Republicans, with Republicans seeking to tie any future funding for the country to changes in U.S. immigration policy that Democrats oppose.

The likelihood of Ukraine securing additional American aid anytime soon diminished significantly last week when Senate Republicans blocked a \$111 billion emergency spending bill that would have provided about \$50 billion in assistance to Ukraine’s military.

The collapse of the legislation followed warnings to lawmakers from the White House that the U.S. will run out of funding by the end of the year to send weapons and assistance to Ukraine.

Zelenskyy was meeting Tuesday with members of Congress in an urgent bid to shore up support before lawmakers depart for a holiday recess on Friday. He was set to meet with senators as well as House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., who leads an increasingly skeptical Republican conference.

On Monday, Zelenskyy invoked the legacy of former President Ronald Reagan, a hero to many Republicans, when speaking about the gravity of the present moment.

He said Reagan’s role in the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 ushered



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, center, is escorted by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., left, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., on Tuesday.

in an era of freedom and democracy that Ukraine is now trying to uphold.

“We can show our children, grandchildren what real confidence is, as was shown to us when in Berlin, the great words were spoken: ‘Tear down this wall,’” Zelenskyy said. “We need no less confidence now than President Reagan had then.”

The Ukrainian leader also compared his country’s fight for its sovereignty to World War II, pointing out America joined the war in Europe exactly 82 years ago. He made the case that Ukrainians are sacrificing themselves

to prevent a larger conflict that could force American service members into battle.

“Now, it’s without American boots on European ground defending freedom against Russia’s invasion,” he said. Instead, American Bradley Fighting Vehicles, High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, 155mm-caliber artillery, Army Tactical Missile Systems and F-16 fighter jets “can get the job done in Europe.”

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Monday reiterated America’s “unshakable” commitment to providing Ukraine with its battlefield needs. He said the students at the

Appeal for aid fails to break GOP demand for border restrictions

BY ERIK WASSON
AND ZACH C. COHEN
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — Republican senators emerged from a closed-door meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday steadfast in their demands that Democrats accept tougher border restrictions as the price for more U.S. aid to Ukraine.

Senate Armed Services ranking member Roger Wicker, a Mississippi Republican, said he’d prefer to get Ukraine aid wrapped up before the end of the year but said congressional approval will more likely slip to early January as the border talks continue.

“The house is not on fire,” Wicker said of Ukraine’s need for ammunition and other weaponry.

Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican, said Zelenskyy understood the end-of-year politics at play on Capitol Hill.

“He’s an elected official himself,” Tillis said leaving the meeting. “He understood we have to go through this political process and get border security wrapped up.”

Many Republicans voiced support for Ukraine but remained steadfast in the border demands.

“There will be no supplemental without border security reform,” Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, added.

Democrats are resisting most of the Republican demands, leaving both sides locked in a standoff and delaying military assistance to help Ukraine at a critical moment in its fight against Russia’s invasion.

Majority Leader Chuck Schumer left the meeting with Zelenskyy calling the session “productive” and “very powerful.”

National Defense University, a Pentagon institution that trains national security leaders, is studying the example set by Ukraine.

Zelenskyy was living proof, Austin said, that a single person’s leadership can “help rally an embattled democracy and inspire the free world and change the course of history.” He then linked Ukraine’s fate to the trajectory of global security in the 21st century and alluded to the battle being

waged on Capitol Hill.

“Dr. [Martin Luther] King once said that the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy,” Austin said. “We’re living in just such a time and we must all decide on where we stand.”

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Report: US general traveling to Ukraine in advisory role

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A three-star U.S. Army general based in Germany is now spending a lot of time in Kyiv, where he is taking a hands-on role in improving the quality of advice the U.S. is giving to Ukraine’s military, according to a New York Times report.

Lt. Gen. Antonio Aguto Jr., who leads the military’s security assistance initiative for Ukraine from the U.S. Army’s European headquarters in Wiesbaden, is being dispatched to the Ukrainian capital on a rotational basis, the newspaper said Monday.

Col. Martin O’Donnell, a spokesman for U.S. Army Europe and Africa, declined to comment when asked about Aguto’s report-

ed travels to Ukraine, citing operational security reasons.

“U.S. military officials regularly engage with the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv and senior Ukrainian military leaders to consult on a range of issues,” O’Donnell said.

U.S. European Command’s Gen. Christopher Cavoli, who serves as NATO’s supreme allied commander, also has been playing a larger role in delivering military advice to officials in Ukraine, a move that comes as the counter-offensive against Russia has turned into a virtual stalemate.

Last month, Cavoli made his first visit to Ukraine since Russia’s February 2022 full-scale invasion, joining Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on an unannounced visit to Kyiv.

Their trip was meant to demon-

strate the U.S. commitment to supporting Ukraine, even as uncertainty grows over the durability of Washington’s pledge to keep weapons flowing to the country.

This week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is in Washington to try to galvanize support for his war effort, which is heavily dependent on weapons and ammunition deliveries from the U.S. and European countries.

However, Ukraine’s failure to make substantial gains during its much-anticipated summer counter-offensive has raised questions about Kyiv’s military strategy.

It also has tested the patience of some Republicans in Washington who want to curtail American support for Ukraine.

Sen. J.D. Vance, a Republican from Ohio who is a prominent crit-

ic of continued support, said Sunday that the U.S. should encourage Ukraine to give up land to Russia to end the fighting.

“What’s in America’s best interest is to accept Ukraine is going to have to cede some territory to the Russians and we need to bring this war to a close,” Vance said on CNN’s “State of the Union.”

However, Zelenskyy said Monday that giving up territory isn’t an option. He also said there was no sign that Russian President Vladimir Putin is interested in any kind of peace deal.

“Let me be frank with you, friends: If there’s anyone inspired by unresolved issues on Capitol Hill, it’s just Putin and his sick clique,” Zelenskyy said in a speech at the National Defense University in Washington. “They

see their dreams come true when they see the delays or some scandals and ... when the support of freedom fighters (goes) down.”

Zelenskyy and U.S. backers of Ukraine have argued that Europe’s security is riding on the war’s outcome because a victorious Putin would be emboldened.

Critics of that outlook, however, say Moscow’s military difficulties in Ukraine have exposed the limits of Russian might and its ability to challenge the American-led NATO alliance.

On Tuesday, Zelenskyy met with Senate and House leaders, and later in the day was to meet with President Joe Biden to make his case for more support.

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MILITARY

USS Oscar Austin readies for '24 move to Spain

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

Naval Station Rota is sending command staff and other officials stateside to assist sailors and their families attached to one of two destroyers moving to Spain as part of a long-anticipated expansion of allied sea power in Europe.

USS Oscar Austin is scheduled to switch its homeport to Rota toward the end of summer 2024, Capt. Teague Suarez, NS Rota's commander, said Dec. 1 at a town hall meeting on Facebook. A sec-

ond destroyer, as yet unidentified, will deploy in 2026, he added.

It wasn't clear exactly when the Rota team will go to Norfolk, Va., the ship's current home. But the Navy hosted meetings there in November for sailors and their families, and established a newsletter to keep them informed.

In May, Spain greenlighted a plan to add the vessels, which will bring the total of U.S. destroyers based at Rota to six.

That agreement came a little more than a year after Russia's

full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and amid increasing concern about a growing Russian submarine presence from the North Atlantic to the Mediterranean Sea.

U.S. commanders have long championed the increase in firepower. The Arleigh Burke-class destroyers work in conjunction with land-based Aegis ballistic missile defense sites to protect Europe.

The U.S. began keeping destroyers in Spain in 2014, begin-

ning with USS Ross and USS Cook.

The vessels are armed with vertical launch anti-submarine rockets, Tomahawk missiles and MK-46 torpedoes. They are designed for anti-air, anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, and the most recent versions can simultaneously defend against aircraft and missiles, according to the Navy.

Oscar Austin was undergoing \$41.6 million in maintenance and modernization upgrades when an

electrical fire in November 2018 extensively damaged the ship, effectively taking it out of service until 2022, according to USNI News reports at the time.

In February 2022, the destroyer subsequently completed sea trials, a final step in rejoining the fleet, according to the Navy. The ship also took part in NATO's Formidable Shield exercise in the North Atlantic in May.

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Delay: Tests to be run during off-peak moving season and short, local distances

FROM PAGE 1

their relocation experience, and we owe it to them to deliver," Dawson said. "It's safe to say the large volume, the majority of shipments will remain in the [current system] for peak season [next year]."

The change in systems was driven by complaints from military families about delays in pickups and deliveries of goods and damage to items during transportation.

A 2020 analysis by the Defense Department inspector general found 20% of domestic household goods shipments in 2018 had at least one damage claim.

The analysis also concluded the Transportation Command did not have reliable data to determine whether service members' goods were being delivered on time or in good condition.

The command is working with HomeSafe to schedule testing dates between mid-December

2023 through the end of January. Once that's complete, defense officials have picked several bases in the U.S. where short local moves, within a 50-mile radius, will begin. For example, in the Norfolk, Va., area, they'll be moving shipments within ZIP codes south of the Chesapeake Bay, Dawson said.

The command developed a system called MilMove for service members to upload change-of-station orders and initiate a re-

quest for their new shipment to be scheduled.

HomeSafe Alliance developed HomeSafe Connect to be used by service members, the government and the industry to track a shipment sent from MilMove.

Any substantial rollout, however, won't take place from May through Labor Day because of risks associated with trying a new system during peak season for moving.

Between 100,000 and 150,000

shipments take place during that time, said Jessica Brown, a Transportation Command spokeswoman.

"Moving in and of itself is a stressful situation," Dawson said. "Changes are tremendously hard to execute during that peak season period. As a strategy to reduce the risk, we've just kind of taken that off the table."

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MIDEAST

Houthi strike Norwegian tanker with missile

Rebels claim they fired on vessel after it rejected warning calls; no US ships in vicinity

By JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A missile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels slammed into a Norwegian-flagged tanker in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen near a key maritime chokepoint, the rebels and authorities said Tuesday.

The assault on the oil and chemical tanker *Strinda* expands a campaign by the Iranian-backed rebels targeting ships close to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait into apparently now striking those that have no clear ties to Israel. That potentially imperils cargo and energy shipments coming through the Suez Canal and further widens the international impact of the Israel-Hamas war now raging in the Gaza Strip.

Houthi military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree issued a video statement saying the rebels only fired on the vessel when it "rejected all warning calls."

The U.S. military's Central Command issued a statement Tuesday saying an anti-ship cruise missile "launched from a

Houthi-controlled area of Yemen" hit the *Strinda*.

"There were no U.S. ships in the vicinity at the time of the attack, but the USS *Mason* responded ... and is currently rendering assistance," CENTCOM said. The *Mason* is an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer that has been involved in several of the recent incidents off Yemen.

France's Armies Ministry separately said that its frigate *Languedoc* shot down a drone that was "threatening" the *Strinda* during the attack. The French frigate "then positioned itself to protect the affected vessel, preventing an attempt to hijack the ship," the French military said.

The private intelligence firms Ambrey and Dryad Global had earlier confirmed the attack happened near the crucial Bab el-Mandeb Strait separating East Africa from the Arabian Peninsula.

Geir Belsnes, the CEO of the *Strinda's* operator, J. Ludwig Mowinckels Rederi, also confirmed the attack took place.

"All crew members are unhurt

and safe," Belsnes said. "The vessel is now proceeding to a safe port."

The *Strinda* was coming from Malaysia and was bound for the Suez Canal and then on to Italy with a cargo of palm oil, Belsnes said. Saree alleged without offering any evidence that the ship was bound for Israel.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which provides warnings to sailors in the Middle East, earlier reported a fire aboard an unidentified vessel off Mokha, Yemen, with all the crew aboard being safe. The coordinates of that fire correspond to the last known location of the *Strinda* based off satellite tracking data analyzed by The Associated Press.

The Houthis have carried out a series of attacks on vessels in the Red Sea and also launched drones and missiles targeting Israel. In recent days, they have threatened to attack any vessel they believe is either going to or coming from Israel, though there was no immediate apparent link between the *Strinda* and Israel.

Israel's national security adviser, Tzachi Hanegbi, said over the weekend that Israel has called on its Western allies to address the threats from Yemen and would give them "some time" to organize a response. But he said if the threats persist, "we will act to remove this blockade."

Analysts suggest the Houthis hope to shore up waning popular support after years of civil war in Yemen between their forces and Saudi-backed forces.

France and the United States have stopped short of saying their ships were targeted in rebel attacks, but have said Houthi drones have headed toward their ships and were shot down in self-defense. Washington so far has declined to directly respond to the attacks, as has Israel, whose military continues to describe the ships as not having links to their country.

Global shipping has increasingly been targeted as the Israel-Hamas war threatens to become a wider regional conflict — even during a brief pause in fighting during which Hamas exchanged

hostages for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. The collapse of the truce and the resumption of a punishing Israeli ground offensive and airstrikes on Gaza have raised the risk of more sea attacks.

The Bab el-Mandeb Strait is only 18 miles wide at its narrowest point, limiting traffic to two channels for inbound and outbound shipments, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Nearly 10% of all oil traded at sea passes through it.

Major Danish shipper Maersk said Tuesday it had "implemented additional security measures for our vessels and seafarers in the area including rerouting" around the strait.

"The recent escalations and statement from Yemen's Houthi movement are concerning as they expand the scope of commercial vessels that could be a potential target for the Houthis," the shipper said.

"Clearly there is a need for the situation to be de-escalated to ensure safety of people and that trade of essential goods can move in a normalized manner."

Israel strikes across Gaza as cease-fire calls leave US isolated

By NAJIB JOBAIN,
WAFAA SHURAF
AND SAMY MAGDY
Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli forces carried out strikes across Gaza overnight and into Tuesday as they pressed ahead with an offensive that officials say could go on for weeks or months, even as global calls for a cease-fire left both Israel and its main ally, the United States, increasingly isolated.

The war ignited by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel has already brought unprecedented death and destruction to the impoverished coastal enclave, with much of northern Gaza obliterated, more than 18,000 Palestinians killed, and over 80% of the population of 2.3 million pushed from their homes.

The health care system and humanitarian aid operations have collapsed in large parts of the besieged enclave, and aid workers have warned of starvation and the spread of disease among displaced people in overcrowded shelters and tent camps.

Raids across Gaza

Strikes overnight and into Tuesday in southern Gaza — in an area where civilians have been told to seek shelter — killed at least 23 people, including seven children and six women, according to hos-



TSAFRIR ABAYOV/AP

Israeli forces evacuate a wounded soldier from Gaza, near the border between Gaza and southern Israel on Tuesday.

pital records and an Associated Press reporter who saw the bodies arrive at a hospital.

Islam Harb's three children were among those killed overnight when Israeli airstrikes flattened four residential buildings in the town of Rafah on the Egyptian border. The family was sharing their home with nine displaced people, he said.

In central Gaza, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah received the bodies of 33 people killed in strikes overnight, including 16 women and four children, according to hospital records. Many were killed in strikes that hit residential buildings in the built-up Maghazi refugee camp.

In northern Gaza, Israeli forces stormed the Kamal Adwan Hospi-

tal, ordering all men, including medics, into the courtyard, said Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza.

The U.N. humanitarian office said the hospital has 65 patients, including 12 children in intensive care and six newborns in incubators. Some 3,000 displaced people are sheltering there, it said, all awaiting evacuation because of severe shortages of food, water and electricity.

The military says it is rounding up men in northern Gaza as it searches for Hamas fighters. Photos and videos circulating online show groups of detainees stripped to their underwear, bound and blindfolded, and some who have been released say they were bea-

ten and denied food and water.

Calls for cease-fire

Israel launched the campaign after Hamas broke through its defenses and militants streamed into the south on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people and seizing about 240 others, of which about half remain in captivity. At least 105 Israeli soldiers have died in the Gaza ground offensive, the army says.

Israel's blockade of the territory — and intense airstrikes and ground fighting that have made aid nearly impossible to distribute — have led to severe shortages of food, water and other basic goods. The offensive has resulted in the deaths of over 18,000 Palestinians, according to health officials. They do not give a breakdown of civilians and combatants but say roughly two-thirds of the dead are women and minors.

Israel blames civilian casualties on Hamas, saying it positions fighters, tunnels and rocket launchers in dense urban areas, using civilians as human shields.

The U.N. secretary-general and Arab states have rallied much of the international community behind calls for an immediate cease-fire. But the U.S. vetoed those efforts at the U.N. Security Council last week as it rushed tank munitions to Israel to allow it to maintain the offensive.

Israel and the U.S. argue that

any cease-fire that leaves Hamas in power, even over a small part of the devastated territory, would mean victory for the militant group, which has governed Gaza since 2007 and has pledged to destroy Israel.

Expectations questioned

In a briefing with the AP on Monday, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant signaled that the current phase of heavy ground fighting and airstrikes could stretch on for weeks and that further military activity could continue for months.

But many experts consider Israel's aims to be unrealistic, pointing to Hamas' deep base of support among many Palestinians in Gaza, as well as the occupied West Bank, who see it as resisting Israel's half-century of military rule.

Even just destroying Hamas' military capability "will be a tall order without decimating what remains of Gaza," said the International Crisis Group, a think tank, in a report over the weekend that also called for an immediate cease-fire.

Israeli officials have said some 7,000 Hamas militants — roughly one-quarter of the group's estimated fighting force — have been killed and that 500 militants have been detained in Gaza over the past month.

NATION



MORGAN LEE/AP

New Mexico State Police Chief W. Troy Weisler, left, and Public Safety Secretary Jason Bowie attend a news conference on Monday, in Santa Fe, about the extension of an emergency public health order aimed at reining in gun violence and drugs in the Albuquerque area.

NM governor pushes proposal to limit rounds in some weapons' magazines

BY MORGAN LEE
Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. — New Mexico could become an early political testing ground for a proposal to make assault-style weapons less deadly.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Monday said she'll encourage the state's Democratic-led Legislature to consider statewide restrictions that mirror an unconventional proposal from U.S. senators aimed at reducing a shooter's ability to fire off dozens of rounds a second and attach new magazines to keep firing.

The proposed federal Go Safe Act was named after the internal cycling of high-pressure gas in the firearms in question and comes from such senators as New Mexico's Martin Heinrich, a Democrat. If approved, it would mean assault-style weapons would have permanently fixed magazines, limited to 10 rounds for rifles and 15 rounds for some heavy-format

pistols.

"I've got a set of lawmakers that are more likely than not to have a fair debate about guns, gun violence, weapons of war and keeping New Mexicans safe than members of Congress are," said Lujan Grisham, a Democrat, at a news conference in the state Capitol. "We will have to see how those votes all shake out."

Bans on assault rifles in several states are under legal challenge after the U.S. Supreme Court in June broadly expanded gun rights in a 6-3 ruling by the conservative majority. The decision overturned a New York law restricting carrying guns in public and affected a half-dozen other states with similar laws. After the ruling, New York and other states have moved to pass new gun restrictions that comply with the decision.

Lujan Grisham recently suspended the right to carry guns at public parks and playgrounds in New Mexico's largest metro area

under an emergency public health order, first issued in response to a spate of shootings that included the death of an 11-year-old boy outside a minor league baseball stadium. The order sparked public protests among gun rights advocates and legal challenges in federal court that are still underway.

The restriction on carrying guns has been scaled back from the initial order in September that broadly suspended the right to carry guns in most public places, which the sheriff and Albuquerque's police chief had refused to enforce.

New Mexico's Legislature convenes in January for a 30-day session focused primarily on budget matters. Other bills can be heard at the discretion of the governor.

The governor's health order includes directives for gun buy-backs, monthly inspections of firearms dealers statewide, reports on gunshot victims at New Mexico hospitals and wastewater testing for illicit substances.

After massacre, reservist's brain to be examined

BY DAVID SHARP
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — A tissue sample from the brain of a gunman who killed 18 people and injured 13 others in Maine has been sent to a lab in Massachusetts to be examined for signs of injury or trauma related to his service in the Army Reserve, officials said Monday.

The state's chief medical examiner wants to know if a brain injury stemming from 40-year-old Robert Card's military service could have contributed to unusual behavior he exhibited leading up to the Oct. 25 shootings at a bowling alley and at a bar in Lewiston.

A spokesperson for the medical examiner's office characterized the extra step as a matter of thoroughness "due to the combined history of military experience and actions."

"In an event such as this, people are left with more questions than answers. It is our belief that if we can conduct testing (in-house or outsourced) that may shed light on some of those answers, we have a responsibility to do that," Lindsey Chasteen, office administrator, wrote in an email.

Card's body was found two days after the shootings in a nearby town. The medical examiner already concluded that he died by suicide.

The tissue samples, first reported by The New York Times, were sent to a laboratory at Boston University that specializes in problems associated with brain trauma, including chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE, which has plagued many professional football players.

The concerns surround Card's exposure to repeated blasts while training U.S. Military Academy cadets about guns, anti-tank weapon

and grenades at West Point, N.Y. Card was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 304th Regiment, in Saco, Maine, starting in April 2014 and during that time he trained others on how to use hand grenades, the Army said.

A Pentagon spokesperson said Monday that the Army is participating in studies to try to better understand the relationship between "blast overpressure" and brain health effects, and in the meantime it has instituted several measures to reduce soldiers' exposure, including limiting the number of personnel near blasts.

"The Army is committed to understanding, mitigating, accurately diagnosing and promptly treating blast overpressure and its effects in all forms. While prolonged blast exposures can be potentially hazardous, even if encountered on the training range and not the battlefield, there is still a lot to learn," Lt. Col. Rob Lodewick said in a statement.

Family members and friends reported that Card had become paranoid, behavior that preceded him being hospitalized for two weeks last summer during training with fellow reservists at West Point. Among other things, Card thought others were accusing him of being a pedophile.

His fellow soldiers were concerned enough that his access to weapons was restricted when he left the hospital. At least one of the reservists specifically expressed concerns of a mass shooting.

Law enforcement officials in Maine were warned about concerns from Card's fellow reservists. But Card didn't answer the door at his home when deputies attempted to check on his well-being several weeks before the shootings.

Hunter Biden seeks dismissal of gun case, says law violates Constitution

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hunter Biden pushed back Monday against gun charges filed against him, challenging the case on multiple fronts as unconstitutional and politically motivated days after he was hit with new tax charges.

His defense attorney argued the gun case should be tossed out because an appeals court has found the law violates the Second Amendment under new standards set by the Supreme Court. Abbe Lowell also contended the charges against Hunter Biden violated immunity provisions that prosecutors agreed

to in a plea deal they abandoned after Republicans slammed it as a "sweetheart deal."

"These charges are unprecedented, unconstitutional and violate the agreement the U.S. Attorney made with Mr. Biden," Lowell said in a statement. "This is not how an independent investigation is supposed to work, and these charges should be dismissed."

The flurry of court documents comes as Hunter Biden faces charges in two states headed toward trial while his father, President Joe Biden, runs for reelection.

Prosecutors, for their part, have

previously said that any immunity provisions are now defunct along with the rest of the plea agreement that imploded over the summer. Special counsel David Weiss didn't immediately respond to Hunter Biden's other arguments, which also include a contention that Weiss wasn't properly appointed. The prosecution has until Jan. 16 to respond.

The original plea deal negotiated between the prosecution and the defense contained immunity provisions meant to bring "closure and finality" to the investigation and protect Hunter Biden from being

charged for "the same conduct" if Donald Trump was reelected, his previous lawyer said in court documents. Under the agreement, Hunter Biden would have pleaded guilty to misdemeanor tax charges and avoided a full prosecution on a gun count if he stayed out of trouble for two years. He's accused of having a gun for 11 days in 2018, a period where he has acknowledged using drugs. It's illegal for "habitual drug users" to own guns.

Since its dissolution of that deal, though, prosecutors have filed three felony gun counts in Delaware and, last week, nine tax counts in Califor-

nia alleging he schemed to avoid paying \$1.4 million in taxes between 2016 and 2019.

Firearm charges like those Hunter Biden is facing are seldom filed as standalone counts in non-violent offenses. An appeals court, meanwhile, has struck down the law itself, finding people shouldn't lose their right to bear arms due solely to past drug use.

That decision from the Louisiana-based 5th Circuit came after the Supreme Court set new standards for gun laws in 2022. President Biden called the Supreme Court opinion "deeply disappointing."

NATION

2016 election could factor into key 2020 case

Both sides see merit in discussing Trump's conduct at trial

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — To hear his lawyers tell it, Donald Trump was alarmed by Russia's interference in the 2016 election, motivated as president to focus on cybersecurity and had a good-faith basis four years later to worry that foreign actors had again meddled in the race.

But to federal prosecutors, 2016 is significant as the year that Trump spread misinformation about voter fraud and proved himself resistant to accepting the outcome of elections that might not go his way.

Even though a trial set for next year in Washington is centered on Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election, lawyers on both sides have signaled their desire — for totally different purposes — to draw attention to the tumultuous presidential contest four years earlier as a way to help explain his state of mind after his loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

"When we're talking about someone's belief or mental state, there is usually no one piece of evidence that is dispositive," said David Aaron, a former Justice Department national security prosecutor. "There's usually multiple data points that each side will argue indicates one mental state or the other."

The callback to the 2016 race is perhaps not surprising given the history-making events of that year,

when Russian operatives interfered in the election with what U.S. officials say was a goal of getting Trump elected over his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton. The meddling and its aftermath thrust the topic of election security and faith in democratic processes to the forefront of American discourse.

It will ultimately be up to U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan to determine what evidence is admissible at trial and what materials defense lawyers are entitled to get from prosecutors as part of the information-sharing process known as discovery. Special counsel Jack Smith's team says information about the 2016 election being sought by the defense is "wholly irrelevant" to the current case while telling Trump's lawyers and the judge that it wants to present evidence about Trump's history of claiming fraud.

Meanwhile, Smith on Monday asked the Supreme Court to take up and rule quickly on whether Trump can be prosecuted in the case. Smith made his request for the court to act with unusual speed to prevent any delays that could push back the trial of the 2024 Republican presidential primary front-runner, currently set to begin March 4, until after next year's presidential election.

Later Monday, the justices indicated they would decide quickly whether to hear the case, ordering

Trump's lawyers to respond by Dec. 20. The court's brief order did not signal what it ultimately would do.

The interest in 2016 was laid bare in recent court filings, including one in which defense lawyers made a long-shot request to force prosecutors to turn over all materials, including a classified version of a U.S. intelligence assessment, related to Russian interference and influence operations in that election.

They say the intelligence community's 2017 assessment that Russia's meddling in the race reflected a "significant escalation" by the Kremlin has direct bearing on Trump's confidence, or lack thereof, in the security of the 2020 election and helps explain the basis for him to have been "skeptical about the absence of foreign influence" in that year's race.

They also contend that actions he took as president, including a 2018 executive order imposing sanctions for foreign election interference, show he took the subject seriously. And they argue that the intelligence community assessment that Russia in 2016 sowed public discord shows Trump is not responsible for creating the environment prosecutors are now trying to "blame" him for.

"This evidence rebuts the position of the Special Counsel's Office that President Trump's actions between November 2020 and January



SETH WENIG/AP

A woman wearing gloves drops off a mail-in ballot at a drop box in Hackensack, N.J., on July 7, 2020. Federal prosecutors and lawyers for former President Donald Trump likely will invoke elements of the 2016 election in his trial on charges related to the 2020 election.

2021 were motivated by a desire to maintain office and undertaken with specific intent and unlawful purpose," defense lawyers wrote.

The motion, which glosses over that Trump was the intended beneficiary of Russian interference in 2016 and that Trump as president often sought to minimize that assessment, is pending. Even if it's unlikely Trump's lawyers will be able to persuade Chutkan to order prosecutors to produce the materials, the request opens a window into a line of defense the team could raise.

In a response, federal prosecutors said they were not in possession of

the classified information being demanded and that the request was part of an effort to delay the case. They also say there's no evidence the 2020 race was tainted by foreign interference.

Meanwhile, Smith's team sees 2016 as relevant for other reasons.

The prosecutors say they want the jury to hear Trump's "historical record" of sowing doubt in election results, including in 2016, when he claimed without evidence before Election Day that there had been widespread fraud and refused during a debate with Clinton to promise to respect the results of the election.

Jury hears attacks on Ga. election workers in Giuliani defamation trial

By SPENCER S. HSU
AND TOM JACKMAN
The Washington Post

Many messages called Ruby Freeman and Wandra ArShaye "Shaye" Moss traitors. Others said they should be hanged from trees, close enough to the U.S. Capitol "for people to hear their necks snap." And another message was from a person who just repeated the word at least 11 times.

"We're going to burn all those n— clothes you had ... and your daughter she's a f—ing whore. ... It's all over the internet," another man said in a recorded message to the two Black women, mother and daughter, a volunteer and a temporary election worker in Georgia.

On the first day of a defamation damages trial against Rudy Giuliani, attorneys for Freeman and Moss showed jurors examples of hundreds of thousands of communications that the two Georgia election workers received or were the subject of on social media after the former New York mayor and former lawyer for former President Donald Trump baselessly accused them of

tampering with 2020 presidential election vote counting at State Farm Arena in Atlanta.

The "campaign of defamation and emotional terror" unleashed against the two women was "swift ... racist, and it was vicious," the plaintiffs' attorneys, Michael J. Gottlieb and Von A. DuBose, said, respectively, in opening statements. Gottlieb told a federal jury in Washington



Giuliani

that the plaintiffs would back their request for "tens of millions of dollars" with evidence of the damages they suffered after Giuliani and his co-conspirators

made the names of the volunteer and the civil servant "synonymous with crimes, cheating and fraud" for millions of Americans.

In the lawsuit, Freeman and Moss said they received death threats and were forced into hiding after Giuliani repeatedly claimed in the weeks after the 2020 election that misleading security video footage showed

them bringing in "suitcases" full of fake votes for Joe Biden, and on at least one occasion directed Trump supporters to Freeman's home. Giuliani's claims were quickly debunked by election officials in Georgia, who explained that the so-called suitcases were regular ballot boxes and that nothing untoward had occurred.

Giuliani sat throughout the morning a dozen feet away from the plaintiffs. U.S. District Court Judge Beryl A. Howell instructed jurors that she had found him liable for more than a dozen defamatory statements, and that the only question is how much he should pay in damages.

In his opening statement, Giuliani lawyer Joseph Sibley told jurors: "There's no question these claimants were harmed. They didn't deserve what happened to them. But what happened to them happened because of a controversy involving a lot of people, not just Rudy Giuliani."

He said Giuliani did not make any of the threatening phone calls or messages, and the jury must determine whether he was the proximate cause of those threats.

Man charged in parade shooting set to represent himself at trial

AP/Report for America

WAUKEGAN, Ill. — The man accused of killing seven people at a July Fourth parade in suburban Chicago last year fired his public defenders on Monday and said he plans to represent himself at trial, slated to start in February.

Robert Crimo III is charged with 21 counts of first-degree murder, 48 counts of attempted murder and 48 counts of aggravated battery for the shooting in Highland Park, Ill. Dozens, including children, were injured.

Several times, Judge Victoria Rossetti asked if Crimo understood the possible penalties — including consecutive life sentences — if a jury finds him guilty. She suggested he reconsider his choice to represent himself. Crimo, 23, answered that he understood.

The judge asked Crimo if he had any legal education, and he said he had once been an observer in court. In response to the judge's questioning, Crimo said high school is the highest level of schooling he attained.

Rossetti explained that he would be responsible for all aspects of his defense, including filing motions,

subpoenaing witnesses, and making opening and closing statements.

Crimo agreed.

"You will be representing yourself," Rossetti finally said, before granting Crimo's request to schedule his trial as quickly as possible, in February 2024 rather than February 2025 as his original defense team had discussed with prosecutors.

Public defenders Greg Ticsay and Anton Trizna, who represented Crimo until Monday, declined to comment.

Lake County State's Attorney Eric Rinehart, whose office will be prosecuting the case, said in an emailed statement following Monday's court hearing that "prosecutors on this case have been working tirelessly since July 4, 2022, and will be ready for trial on the set date."

Prosecutors have said Crimo admitted to the shooting when police arrested him following an hour-long search on July 4, 2022.



Crimo

NATION

Heart of Hawaii's historic Lahaina reopens

BY LINDSEY WASSON
AND AUDREY McAVOY
Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii — The heart of Lahaina, the historic town on the Hawaiian island of Maui that burned in a deadly wildfire that killed at least 100 people, reopened Monday to residents and business owners holding day passes.

The renewed access marks an important emotional milestone for victims of the Aug. 8 fire, but much work remains to be done to safely clear properties of burned debris and rebuild.

The reopened areas include Banyan Tree Park, home to a 150-year-old tree that burned in the fire but that is now sprouting new leaves, Lahaina's public library, an elementary school and popular restaurants.

An oceanfront section of Front Street, where the fire ripped through a traffic jam of cars trying to escape town, reopened Friday.

Authorities are continuing to

recommend that people entering scorched lots wear protective gear to shield them from hazards.

On Sunday, the state Department of Health released test results confirming the ash and dust left by the fire is toxic and that arsenic is the biggest concern. Arsenic is a heavy metal that adheres to wildfire dust and ash, the department said.

The tests examined ash samples collected Nov. 7-8 from 100 properties built from the 1900s to the 2000s. Samples also showed high levels of lead, which was used to paint houses built before 1978.

The clean up is still in its early stages. For the past few months, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has been removing batteries, propane tanks, pesticides and other hazards from the town's more than 2,000 destroyed buildings.

Residents and business owners have been able to visit their properties after the EPA has finished clearing their lots.



LINDSEY WASSON/AP

Debris from former shops and businesses on Front Street is seen Friday in Lahaina, Hawaii. The area reopened Monday to residents and business owners with entry passes.

Michigan's Whitmer leads the way in national fight for abortion rights

BY JOEY CAPPALLETTI
Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. — Ten years ago, as Michigan's Republican-led Legislature was on the verge of passing one of the nation's most restrictive anti-abortion laws at the time, a 42-year-old state senator from East Lansing took to the Senate floor to speak out against what she knew was about to happen.

Minutes into her speech, Democrat Gretchen Whitmer tossed aside her prepared remarks and revealed for the first time publicly that she had been raped while attending college. Had she become pregnant, Whitmer said, she would not have been able to afford an abortion under the proposed law.

The bill, which Whitmer had derisively called "rape insurance" because it required women to declare when buying health insurance whether they expected to receive an abortion, passed anyway. But Whitmer, now in her second term as Michigan's governor after winning reelection by nearly 11 percentage points in 2022, this week removed the requirement from state law with the stroke of a pen after Michigan's Democratic-controlled Legislature sent her a bill tossing it aside.

"It's kind of a stunning full-circle moment where it does reinforce that these fights are worth having and they're winnable, even if sometimes it takes a little longer than it should," Whitmer said Monday in an interview with The

Associated Press.

Whitmer recalled the hundreds of calls and emails she received after her 2013 speech as a turning point for her, the moment when she realized how much people care about protecting a woman's right to choose whether she should have an abortion. It's a lesson she hopes to drive home all over the country as one of the nation's leading abortion rights advocates during what could prove to be a pivotal election year for the issue in 2024.



Whitmer

"The voters speak loud and clear," she said. "And so I do think that in this moment, in this country, this is an important, crucial issue for a lot of people."

Abortion rights moved to the political forefront after the U.S. Supreme Court in 2022 overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 decision that had long preserved them as a constitutional right. The court gave states the power to decide for themselves whether abortion should be legal.

Conservative states across the country moved quickly to enact abortion bans in various forms, leading to a wave of legal fights in places such as Texas, where a pregnant woman whose fetus has a fatal condition was forced to leave the state this week to obtain an abortion. Some Republicans, including several contenders for

the GOP presidential nomination, have also called for a national abortion ban.

The political fallout at the ballot box has mostly gone in the opposite direction. Democrats did better than expected in last year's midterms, limiting their House losses and maintaining a narrow Senate majority, and defending abortion rights worked in Democrats' favor in several states again this year. When constitutional questions about abortion rights appeared on the ballot, even voters in Republican-leaning states from Kansas to Ohio rejected GOP-backed efforts to curb them.

Whitmer says Democrats have won in Michigan by running unapologetically on the issue. Her party controls all levels of state government for the first time in 40 years after flipping both chambers of the Legislature last November.

That success was fueled by a citizen-led ballot initiative to enshrine abortion rights in the state Constitution in the wake of the Supreme Court decision. Whitmer and other Michigan Democrats emphasized their support for the initiative in their 2022 election campaigns.

President Joe Biden's reelection campaign views the defense of abortion rights as a winning issue for Democrats in 2024. They are quick to make note of boasts by former President Donald Trump that his appointment of three conservative Supreme Court justices instigated the court's reversal.

Pregnant Texas woman leaves state for abortion after court's decision

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — A pregnant Texas woman whose fetus has a fatal condition left the state to get an abortion elsewhere before the state Supreme Court on Monday rejected her unprecedented challenge of one of the most restrictive bans in the U.S.

Kate Cox, a 31-year-old mother of two, had spent nearly a week seeking court permission in Texas to end her pregnancy, but her attorneys said she could not wait any longer and left the state. Her baby has a condition known as trisomy 18, which has low survival rates, and her lawsuit argued that continuing the pregnancy jeopardized both her health and ability to have more children.

Texas' abortion ban makes narrow exceptions when the life of the mother is in danger but not for fetal anomalies. Republican Attorney General Ken Paxton argued that Cox had not shown that any of the complications in her pregnancy rose to the level of threatening her life.

"Her health is on the line. She's been in and out of the emergency room and she couldn't wait any longer," said Nancy Northup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights, which was representing Cox.

The organization did not disclose where Cox went. On Monday, she would have been 20 weeks and six days pregnant.

Hours after Cox's attorneys an-

nounced she had left Texas, the state Supreme Court issued its decision that ruled against Cox. It came three days after the court temporarily halted a lower judge's ruling that gave Cox permission to get an abortion.

"No one disputes that Ms. Cox's pregnancy has been extremely complicated. Any parents would be devastated to learn of their unborn child's trisomy 18 diagnosis," the court wrote. "Some difficulties in pregnancy, however, even serious ones, do not pose the heightened risks to the mother the exception encompasses."

Cox, who lives in the Dallas area, was believed to be the first woman in the U.S. to ask a court for permission for an abortion since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned last year. Her lawsuit quickly became a high-profile test of bans in Texas and a dozen other GOP-controlled states, where abortion is prohibited at nearly all stages of pregnancy.

Days after Cox filed her lawsuit, a pregnant woman in Kentucky also asked a court to allow an abortion. There has been no ruling yet in that case.

In Texas, Paxton mounted an aggressive defense to try to prevent Cox from having an abortion. He sent three Houston hospitals letters warning of legal consequences — both criminal and civil — if they allowed Cox's physician to provide the procedure.

WORLD

Poland's new PM vows to maintain Ukraine aid efforts

BY VANESSA GERA
AND MONIKA SCISLOWSKA
Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Poland's newly elected prime minister, Donald Tusk, vowed Tuesday that his government will be a stable ally of the United States and NATO and that it would work to mobilize the Western world to keep helping Ukraine.

In a wide-ranging inaugural speech to parliament, Tusk called on the nation's fractious political class to unite, saying it cannot afford divisions at a time when Russia is waging a war of aggression across Poland's border in Ukraine which many fear could spread if Moscow prevails.

"Poland's task, the new government's task, but also the task of all of us, is to loudly and firmly demand the full determination from the entire Western community to help Ukraine in this war," Tusk said in a ceremonious address attended by Ukraine's ambassador and former Polish presidents, including the anti-communist freedom fighter Lech Walesa. "I will do this from day one."

Tusk was elected by parliament on Monday and faces many challenges, from restoring democratic standards in his own country, working for the release of EU funding frozen due to democratic backsliding by his predecessors and facing the implications of the war just across Poland's and EU's eastern border in Ukraine.

Tusk said it hurts him to hear

that Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has to keep trying to persuade world leaders about the need to continue supporting Kyiv's struggle against Russia. Ukraine's troubles are deepening as winter sets in and allies are growing tired of funding its defense.

"They say it to President Zelenskyy's face that they no longer have the strength, that they are exhausted," Tusk said.

Tusk, a centrist leader who was previously prime minister from 2007-14, returns to power after nearly a decade as the head of a broad alliance.

Tusk

He finally takes power nearly two months after an Oct. 15 election which was won by a coalition of parties that ran on separate tickets, but promised to work together under Tusk's leadership to restore democratic standards eroded during the last eight years of Law and Justice rule and improve ties with allies.

Tusk's speech came a day after lawmakers chose him as the new prime minister after rejecting the former prime minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, of the Law and Justice party.

He also introduced the ministers in his new Cabinet, and the new government will face a confidence vote in the afternoon. They are to be sworn in Wednesday.



Suicide bomber attacks Pakistan police station

BY RIAZ KHAN AND MUNIR AHMED
Associated Press

PESHAWAR, Pakistan — A suicide bomber detonated his explosive-laden vehicle at a police station's main gate in northwest Pakistan early Tuesday, killing at least 23 troops and wounding 32 others, and causing a part of the building to collapse, the military and officials said.

The attack — one of the deadliest in recent months in Pakistan — also damaged businesses and shops nearby. A newly formed militant group — Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan, believed to be an offshoot of the Pakistani Taliban — claimed responsibility for the attack.

The military and local police said six other attackers were also involved in the assault at the police station, triggering an hourslong shootout before all six were killed.

Some of the wounded officers were said to be in critical condition, and there were fears the death toll would rise. Mohammad Adnan, a senior police official, said the casualties were taken to a local hospital.

Separately, the army statement said that "troops killed 27 insurgents" in multiple operations in the same region.

The attack targeted Daraban police station in Dera Ismail Khan, a city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan, local officer Kamal said. The



A soldier examines damages on the site of a bombing at a police station on the outskirts of Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan, on Tuesday.

province is a former stronghold of the militant Pakistani Taliban group, also known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP.

The newly formed militant group Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan, or TJP — believed to be an offshoot of the TTP — claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement, saying it targeted the officers who were at the police station. The statement also claimed that 20 officers were killed. However, this couldn't be independently verified.

Japanese court convicts 3 ex-soldiers in assault case from former service member

BY MARI YAMAGUCHI
Associated Press

TOKYO — A Japanese court on Tuesday convicted three former soldiers in a sexual assault case that authorities had dropped until the victim, a former service member, came forward demanding a reinvestigation and prompting a military-wide harassment probe.

The Fukushima District Court sentenced the former soldiers to two years but suspended the sentences for four years — meaning

they won't actually serve time.

Still, the ruling is a rare victory in a country that consistently ranks near the bottom in international gender equality surveys and where sexual misconduct complaints are often disregarded and victims tend to face criticisms for speaking up.

The case filed by Rina Ganoi in August 2021 was initially dropped. Nine months later, she came forward and demanded the case be reinvestigated, saying the experi-

ence caused her to give up her military career. Ganoi said she has been attacked on social media for coming forward, but that she did so because she wanted to prevent similar problems for other female service members.

Ganoi welcomed the ruling, saying it would prevent future victims. "Many victims still cannot speak up, but now we have this verdict, and I hope that more people come out and speak up," she told reporters.

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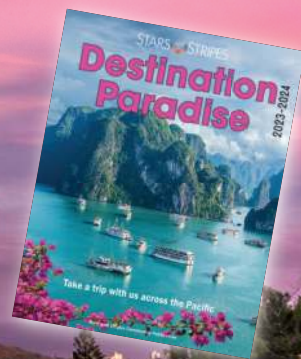
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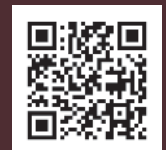
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STARS AND STRIPES

WORLD

No agreement in sight at climate summit

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A stark standoff between countries that want a dramatic phase-out to fossil fuels causing damaging warming and those that don't crushed hopes for an on-time finish to a critical climate summit Tuesday.

The United Nations-led summit known as COP28 was scheduled to end around midday after nearly two weeks of speeches, demonstrations and negotiations. But the climate talks almost always run long, and Monday's release of a draft agreement angered countries that

insist on a commitment for rapid phase-out of coal, oil and gas.

Instead, the draft called for countries to reduce "consumption and production of fossil fuels, in a just, orderly and equitable manner."

Majid al-Suwaidi, COP28 Director-General, said Monday night's draft was meant to get countries to start talking and presenting what are deal-killers for them, which are called "red lines."

"The text we released was a starting point for discussions," he said at a news conference midday on Tuesday. "When we released it,

we knew opinions were polarized, but what we didn't know was where each country's red lines were."

"We spent last night talking, taking in that feedback, and that has put us in a position to draft a new text," he said.

A new draft was promised to come out on Tuesday, but much of the critical work in the Dubai-based talks keeps getting delayed.

A senior negotiator for a developing nation who did not want to be named so as to not impact negotiations said the fossil fuel phase-out language would not be in the next version.

Navalny's whereabouts are unknown in Russia

Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia — The whereabouts of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny were unknown on Monday as officials at the penal colony where he is serving his sentence told one of his lawyers that he is no longer on the inmate roster, his spokeswoman said.

It had been nearly a week since the spokeswoman, Kira Yarmysh, had contacted Navalny. Prison officials "refuse to say where they transferred him," she said in posts on X, formerly known as Twitter.

A Navalny lawyer waiting at another penal colony in the region where he could have been transferred was told the facility had no such inmate, Yarmysh said.

"It remains unclear where Alexei is," she wrote.

Navalny has been serving a 19-year term on charges of extremism in a maximum-security prison, Penal Colony No. 6, in the town of Melekhovo in the Vladimir region, about 140 miles east of Moscow. He was due to be transferred to a "special security" penal colony, a facility with the highest security level in the Russian penitentiary system.

Russian prison transfers are notorious for taking a long time, sometimes weeks, during which there's no access to prisoners and information about their whereabouts is limited or unavailable. Navalny could be transferred to one of a number of such penal colonies across Russia.

Yarmysh earlier on Monday said that Navalny was due to appear in court that day via video link but did not, and that it has been six days since his lawyers or allies last heard from him.

Navalny, 47, has been behind bars since January 2021.



Navalny

Congo, rebel groups agree to a cease-fire

Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria — Congo's security forces and rebel groups have agreed on a 72-hour cease-fire to de-escalate tensions in the country's eastern region near the border with Rwanda, the White House announced just days before Congo's presidential election.

The agreement was backed by both Congo and Rwanda, Adrienne

Watson, a spokeswoman for the White House National Security Council, said in a statement Monday.

It said the agreement includes the withdrawal of forces occupying the locality of Mushaki and the RP1030 road in eastern Congo. The region has struggled with violent conflict for decades and armed groups fight either for control of mineral re-

sources or to defend their communities. The most prominent is the M23 rebel group with links to Rwanda.

Neither Congo nor Rwanda has publicly commented on the cease-fire, which the White House said would also help "advance the implementation of the confidence-building measures to protect civilians" as Congo prepares for the Dec. 20 presidential election.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Coast Guard helicopter that crashed is recovered

AK JUNEAU — A helicopter that crashed in southeast Alaska during a rescue mission last month has been recovered, the U.S. Coast Guard said Saturday.

The downed Coast Guard helicopter was recovered Friday and an investigation was ongoing. The MH-60 Jayhawk crashed on Read Island, about 80 miles east of Sitka, on Nov. 13. The four aircrew members were taken to Seattle for treatment after the crash. They have since been released, the Coast Guard said.

The Coast Guard previously described two of the crew members' injuries as serious.

"We are grateful our four crewmembers were released from Harborview Medical Center and are on the road to recovery," Coast Guard Capt. Brian McLaughlin, who led recovery efforts, said in a statement.

The crash was reported by the fishing vessel that had been the subject of the helicopter's search and rescue mission.

Grocery worker dies after being impaled by golf club

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A Minneapolis store clerk died after a customer beat him and impaled him with a golf club, police said.

The 66-year-old clerk was attacked Friday at the Oak Grove Grocery, a small neighborhood store in a residential area near downtown Minneapolis. A 44-year-old suspect is jailed on suspicion of murder.

Police responded to a call just before 1 p.m. and found the victim behind the counter "with a golf club impaled through his torso," according to a news release from Minneapolis police. The clerk died at a hospital.

Information from witnesses led police to an apartment building across the street. Police Chief Brian O'Hara said at a news conference late Friday that the suspect barricaded himself inside for six hours. After lengthy negotiations, officers took the man into custody, he said.

Woman arrested, drove car into religious group

MT BILLINGS — A woman has been arrested after she drove her vehicle several times at or through a religious group demonstrating on a sidewalk, hitting and injuring one man, Montana police said Sunday.

Genevieve Rancuret, 55, was pulled over by police in Billings on Saturday a few hours after the episode and taken to jail on charges of felony assault with a weapon — the vehicle — felony criminal mischief and driving under the influence, police said.

The 45-year-old man who was struck suffered minor injuries. Members of the group he was with, identified by police as Israelis for Christ, were holding signs and speaking through an amplifier at the



STEPHEN LAM, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/AP

Ready to dive

The Eagle Ray, an autonomous underwater vehicle for deep sea mapping, is seen on the aft deck aboard the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Ship Okeanos Explorer during a tour in San Francisco on Saturday.

time, a police spokesperson, Lt. Matt Lennick, said.

An update from police said the FBI was also reviewing what happened, along with local prosecutors, suggesting the federal agency was looking into whether it could be a bias-motivated crime.

Police try to ID 4 people who died in head-on crash

NM ESPANOLA — Authorities said Sunday that they are still trying to identify four people who died in a fiery two-vehicle crash on a New Mexico highway about 20 miles northwest of Española.

State police said officers were called to the scene on U.S. Highway 84 around 3:30 a.m. Saturday.

Two people were in each vehicle in a head-on collision, according to police. They said the jeep and pickup truck were fully engulfed in flames and all four victims were pronounced dead at the scene.

Chase ends with suspect, officers hurt in shootout

PA PHILADELPHIA — A police pursuit of a suspected gunman ended in a shootout that left two officers and a suspect wounded, police said.

The shooting happened around 2:30 a.m. Sunday, interim city Police Commissioner John Stanford said, after officers responded to reports of gunfire and saw a pickup truck that was occupied by a man believed to have been involved. The man initially stopped the truck after an offi-

cer activated his emergency lights, but he then drove off as the officer approached the vehicle on foot.

Officers soon spotted the truck again, and the pursuit ended when the driver rammed a police car. He then got out and started shooting at police, Stanford said.

Four officers returned fire, striking the 40-year-old man at least once. He was taken to a hospital and underwent surgery, and he was listed in critical condition.

One officer, a 32-year-old man who has served on the force for nine years, had a graze wound to his nose and was treated at a hospital. The other wounded officer, a 31-year-old man who has served on the force for six years, was shot in the ankle and had a graze wound to his head. He was hospitalized in stable condition, and his injuries were not considered life-threatening.

Inmate convicted in 1st trial of deadly prison riots

SC BISHOPVILLE — South Carolina jurors have found an inmate guilty of charges connected to the death of a fellow inmate during the deadliest U.S. prison riot of the past quarter-century.

The Lee County jury deliberated less than an hour on Friday before finding Michael Juan "Flame" Smith guilty of assault and battery by mob, weapon possession and conspiracy for his role in the 2018 violence. Trial Judge Ferrell Cothran Jr. gave Smith a 45-year sentence, although one five-year term issued will run concurrently with the other

time, news outlets reported.

Seven prisoners were killed and 22 seriously injured in the riot at the maximum-security Lee Correctional Institution in Bishopville, located about 50 miles east of Columbia. One inmate described bodies "literally stacked on top of each other, like some macabre woodpile."

Dozens of inmates have been indicted on charges related to the riots that occurred across three dormitories, and a string of defendants began pleading guilty over the summer. But Smith was the first prisoner whose case went to trial, according to the news outlets. Within four days he was convicted of the charges related to the death of 33-year-old Cornelius McClary.

Roadside zoo animals taken as part of probe

VA NATURAL BRIDGE — Over 100 animals — both living and dead — have been taken from a roadside zoo in western Virginia, according to court documents, as part of what state authorities are calling a criminal investigation.

One search warrant executed Wednesday at the Natural Bridge Zoo in Rockbridge County shows that 89 living animals were seized, while another 28 deceased animals were removed, The Roanoke Times reported.

The office of Attorney General Jason Miyares is conducting the investigation, with help from the Virginia State Police. The warrant said it had been issued in relation to the care of and cruelty to animals.

Mario Williams, an attorney for the zoo's owner, questioned the probe, telling WDBJ-TV earlier in the week that the zoo would seek to halt any permanent seizure of the animals, which he said would be unconstitutional.

School rejects GOP deal to reduce diversity jobs

WI MADISON — Universities of Wisconsin regents narrowly rejected a deal Saturday reached with Republicans that would have given employees a pay raise and paid for construction of a new engineering building in exchange for reductions in staff positions focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.

The regents voted 9-8 during an emergency meeting to reject the deal reached Friday after being brokered by Republican Assembly Speaker Robin Vos.

The deal would have frozen hiring for diversity positions, dropped an affirmative action faculty hiring program at UW-Madison and created a position at the flagship campus focused on conservative thought.

Conservatives have long criticized the UW system as a bastion of liberalism. Democrats have accused Republicans of holding employees hostage by blocking pay raises. They have argued that diversity initiatives enhance the collegiate experience and play a crucial role in identifying promising students who grew up with fewer resources.

FACES



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Detroit Lions head coach Dan Campbell, left, talks with former Lions running back Barry Sanders after practice on Aug. 8 in Allen Park, Mich. Sanders, a Pro Football Hall of Famer, played 10 years in Detroit.

What made Barry run?

Prime Video doc sheds new light on Sanders' decision to retire

BY JOE REEDY
Associated Press

Coach Dan Campbell and quarterback Jared Goff aren't the only popular Detroit Lions these days.

A movie about the franchise's greatest running back and his sudden retirement is Amazon Prime Video's most-viewed documentary.

"Bye Bye Barry" looks at Barry Sanders' 10-year career with the Lions and his decision to retire in 1999 despite being on the cusp of becoming the NFL's all-time leading rusher. It surpassed "Kelce," a documentary about Philadelphia Eagles center Jason Kelce, less than two weeks after its premiere.

"I think the timing is just right," Sanders said during an interview with The Associated Press. "Amazon felt like it was a story that a lot of people wanted to hear and that they wanted to tell. They felt like it was a good story for them to be able to tell a certain way. And I think people also like documentaries like 'The Last Dance' where people get an in-depth look."

While the 90-minute documentary looks at Sanders' entire career in Detroit, as well as being recruited to Oklahoma State University and winning the Heisman Trophy in 1988, a major focus is his decision to retire and head to London on the eve of the Lions opening training camp in 1999.

Sanders was 31 when he walked away with 15,269 career rushing yards and 109 touchdowns. He was 1,457 yards from passing Walter Payton to become the NFL's rushing king, a mark Emmitt Smith broke three years later.

Sanders' retirement drew comparisons to Jim Brown, who retired in 1966 at 29 after nine seasons in Cleveland. Brown announced his retirement in England while filming a movie.

"I've never thought of myself as having sort of mystique or being mysterious. But for people that don't

know me, I can see how maybe they can see it that way," Sanders said. "Hopefully, the documentary will answer a lot of questions. There is sort of a new group of fans. We hope we can reach a lot of them with the story. I think it's something they'll appreciate."

One detail throughout the documentary notes that Sanders was never concerned about statistics or the limelight. Sanders' father, Williams Sanders, discussed in a taped interview before his death in 2011 how his son didn't go back into the final regular-season game his senior year of high school because his team was up by five touchdowns, even though he could have finished as the top rusher in Wichita, Kan.

Sanders finished eight yards shy of overtaking Kansas City's Christian Okoye for the rushing title in his rookie season in 1989 because the Lions were well ahead of the Atlanta Falcons and he wanted other backs to get carries in the fourth quarter.

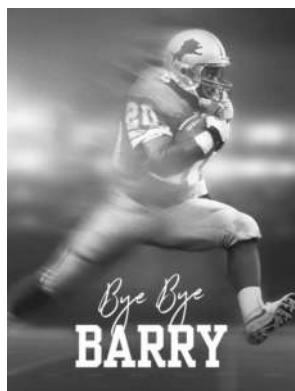
Noted Lions fans Jeff Daniels, Tim Allen and Eminem make appearances to discuss their memories of Sanders.

The best part, though, might be Sanders and his four sons going to London. In a scene filmed at a restaurant near London Bridge, they ask him about the decision and why he did it with a statement faxed to his local paper in Wichita instead of a press conference.

Sanders has been a part of Nissan's "Heisman House" campaign and a new generation of fans get to play him

on the Madden video games. Any ill will from the Lions is a thing of the past. A statue of Sanders was dedicated in front of Ford Field this season.

Sanders is hopeful the Lions can host and win a playoff game for the first time since the 1991 season, the longest current drought in the NFL. Sanders' only postseason victory came in an NFC divisional round game against the Dallas Cowboys. Detroit (9-4) has a two-game lead over Minnesota in the NFC North.



"Bye Bye Barry" looks back at Sanders' career with the Lions and his decision to retire in 1999 despite being on the cusp of becoming the NFL's all-time leading rusher.

New this week: 'Barbie,' 'Eras Tour' in your home

Associated Press

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

Movies

■ "Barbie." The blockbuster of the year is making its streaming debut, just in time for the holidays. Greta Gerwig's "Barbie" will premiere Friday on Max (formerly HBO Max) after its pink-festooned \$1.4 billion bonanza in theaters. (The film also remains available on video-on-demand.) So prepare your Mojo Dojo Casa House now for the hit of 2023.

■ After a tour through North American stadiums and a blockbuster debut in cinemas, Taylor Swift's "The Eras Tour" lands in homes, appropriately enough, on Swift's birthday. "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour," the concert film of Swift's career-spanning spectacular, premieres on premium on-demand Wednesday. How much it will cost to digitally rent the film hasn't been announced, but tickets to the movie cost \$19.89, a reference to Swift's album, "1989." An already lengthy film (2 hours and 49 minutes) will also now run past three hours, with the addition of three songs: "Wildest Dreams," "Long Live" and "The Archer." In her review, AP Music Writer Maria Sherman praised the experience of seeing the Time Magazine Person of the Year up close in "The Eras Tour," calling it "a near exact replica of her blockbuster concert performance."

■ More than two decades after the release of "Chicken Run," Aardman Animations has returned to the adventures of its defiant feathered protagonist, Ginger, in the sequel "Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget." The 2000 original remains the highest grossing stop-motion animation flick ever with more than \$227 million in ticket sales. But "Dawn of the Nugget," which introduces an all-new voice cast including Thandiwe Newton, Bella Ramsey and Zachary Levi, debuts Friday on Netflix. In it, Ginger has escaped from Tweedy Farm and found sanctuary elsewhere, but again must lead the flock to freedom.

■ In writer-director Rodrigo Moreno's "The Delinquents," Morán (Daniel Eliás) has a clever scheme to steal from the bank he works in. He'll steal only what he would be paid for 25 years of work, hide the money with a colleague (Esteban Bigliardi), confess to the crime and do three years in jail before having the rest of his life to himself. In the film, which streams Friday on Mubi, Moreno takes the hard genre apparatus of a heist movie and melts it into an

existential meditation on life, work and stolen time.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

Music

■ This year, it's a cowboy Christmas — so put a little yeehaw in your stocking. Country star Cody Johnson, fresh off his critically acclaimed studio album "Leather," is inviting viewers into his home for the holidays. On Wednesday on CMT, catch his "CMT Presents: A Cody Johnson Christmas" special, in which Johnson and his family share their favorite traditions — and Johnson breaks out into a Christmas classic or two. It's all the charm of a Texas holiday season, without having to leave the couch for the ranch. You'll have to provide yourself with the spiked eggnog, however.

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

Television

■ Peacock has been airing Bravo's "Ultimate Girls Trip" series where they pluck various "Real Housewives" cast members, past and present, from different cities and send them to a destination as far as Thailand and as close as the Berkshire mountains in Massachusetts. The latest iteration, "The Real Housewives Ultimate Girls Trip: RHONY Legacy" features some of the early cast members of "The Real Housewives of New York" (prior to its reboot this year with an all-new cast.) Kelly Killoren Bensimon, Luann de Lesseps, Dorinda Medley, Sonja Morgan, Ramona Singer and Kristen Taekman jet off to St. Barts to stay at a location familiar to fans, Saline Beach, featured in the reality show's fifth season. The first three episodes drop Thursday.

■ The 50th Annual Daytime Emmy Awards were postponed last June due to the Hollywood writers' strike and will now air Friday on CBS and Paramount+. Hosted by Kevin Frazier and Nischelle Turner of "Entertainment Tonight," "General Hospital" leads with 19 nominations followed by "The Bold and the Beautiful" with 14. "The Kelly Clarkson Show" has 11 nominations, the most for a daytime talk show. Longtime "All My Children" star Susan Lucci will receive a Lifetime Achievement award.

■ The second season of Prime Video's "Reacher" starring Alan Ritchson returns Friday and is based on Lee Child's novel "Bad Luck and Trouble." The new episodes see Reacher with a new cast of characters, as he is depicted as a loner who spends his life traveling from town to town, with no home base or belongings, except for a toothbrush. Season three has already been ordered.

— Alicia Rancilio

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published week-days (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

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OPINION

Migrant surge drives Europe's rightward lurch

By LEE HOCKSTADER

The Washington Post

As more than 1 million refugees, mostly from wars in the Middle East, were flooding into Europe eight years ago, many of them bound for Germany, then-Chancellor Angela Merkel tried to calm her countrymen rattled by the arrivals. "We can handle this," she said.

Now, at the end of another watershed migration year, it's clear Europe really cannot handle it.

Across the Continent, a spike in asylum seekers has triggered blazing headlines, political upheaval and new rules intended to stanch the influx. It has also contributed to a tilt toward populist and extremist parties in countries where it was previously unimaginable.

As Europe grapples with a shift in its post-war identity — an idea grounded in tolerance, pluralism and collectivism — Merkel's emollient words ring hollow. And as remarkable as the fallout over migration has been, equally striking is the extent to which the political class and analysts alike have failed to see it coming.

That lapse owes something to polling, in which migration seldom tops European voters' concerns. But when pollsters record distress over public services, education, housing and the affordability of basic goods, they apparently miss the view, grounded in evidence or not, that surging migration has intensified all those problems.

The most recent example arises in the Netherlands, a small country that punches above its weight; it ranks just 68th by population, according to the World Bank, but trades more with the U.S. than do France, Italy or Brazil.

Its outperformance stems partly from domestic politics long seen as stable to the point of soporific. That's what everyone expected from last month's Dutch elections — another

snoozy centrist victory. Except it turned out that everyone was wrong.

Among those who seemed surprised by the outcome was the top vote-getter, Geert Wilders, a firebrand fixture on the country's far right for decades. Wilders, who in the past has proposed banning the Quran, quitting the European Union and slamming the door on asylum seekers, softened his tone during the campaign. But Dutch voters knew what they were getting — he has served in parliament for a quarter-century, so long that Radio Netherlands once called him "the most famous bleach-blond since Marilyn Monroe."

Despite his misnamed Freedom Party's stunning victory — it finished a convincing first among 15 parties and more than doubled its seats in parliament — Wilders will struggle to secure a foothold in power. Having been a pariah for so long, he lacks allies that might join him in forming a coalition government.

Whatever the outcome in Amsterdam, the Dutch results have sent shock waves across Europe, already off-balance from right-wing parties that have surged in Germany, France, Austria, Belgium and Greece, as well as far-right blocs that already hold or share power in Italy, Hungary, Finland, Sweden and Slovakia. This is a Europe that would have been unrecognizable just five years ago. And while the political lurch involves specific national causes and characteristics, it shares in almost every instance a common denominator: a reaction to spiking migration.

Across the Continent, neither centrist nor leftist parties have devised an effective response to the gusher of asylum seekers, let alone a long-term strategy that might blunt the far-right's growing appeal. Without that, the waves of far-right gains might swell to a tsunami. In fact, as traditional governing parties try to forge migrant-deterrence policies that they regard as drastic, the risk is that some voters might see the plans differently — as pallid imitations of extremist proposals. By normaliz-

ing anti-immigration measures, centrist parties could fuel the very rightward tilt they fear.

That's one paradox. Another is that Europe — prosperous, peaceful (excluding Ukraine) and, for the most part, pragmatically governed — will likely remain a magnet for migrants from the Middle East and Africa regardless of the obstacles governments dream up.

Still another is that major countries across the Continent are struggling to limit or exclude migrants even as they face worker shortages — in hospitals, nursing homes, construction sites, restaurants, hotels and tech hubs — that are hobbling economies. Alarmed employers are pleading for more access to migrants. So are some fiscal conservatives, worried that generous state retirement plans are unsustainable without an infusion of younger foreign workers to pay into pension systems. But many voters are unmoved.

For now, Europe's efforts to wrestle with its migrant crisis are a contradictory mess.

One example: The German government helps fund rescue ships in the Mediterranean that, as Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has bitterly complained, incentivize migrants to make the dangerous sea crossing from North Africa. Yet many of those migrants dream of making their way to Germany itself, where Chancellor Olaf Scholz has promised to accelerate deportations and cut generous cash benefits as a way to deter them. In September, Germany said it would refuse migrants from Italy. Two days later, the German government reversed itself.

As politicians flail, migrant reception centers are overflowing across Europe, along with voters' frustrations. A continent marked for decades by moderation is being remade before our eyes.

Lee Hockstader has been The Washington Post's European Affairs columnist, based in Paris, since 2023. Previously he was a member of the Post editorial board; a national correspondent, a foreign correspondent, and a local reporter.

We all have roles to play in supporting the Constitution

By DAVID J. BOBB

Special to Stars and Stripes

The oath of enlistment for the United States armed forces has long included a promise to support and defend the U.S. Constitution. It is a job our military members have performed bravely and nobly since the earliest days of our nation.

But it is increasingly clear all Americans have a role to play in supporting our Constitution and its principles. This work is especially important if we want future generations of citizens to value the rights and liberties our country holds dear.

December 15 is Bill of Rights Day, marking 232 years since the first 10 amendments to the Constitution were ratified.

The Bill of Rights codifies rights all people should enjoy, such as freedom of speech and religion, due process, and protections against government overreach. But an appreciation of these rights is not passed to our children in their DNA. It must be taught and internalized — and we have much work to do on that front.

Research shows many young people feel increasingly disconnected from the core founding principles that long served as a source of unity for our country.

■ A 2022 study by the nonprofit Knight Foundation found 30% of students believe the First Amendment "goes too far." Only 57%

said news organizations should be able to publish without government censorship — hardly a reassuring majority.

■ According to a Pew Research Center report published last year, 62% of teens believe feeling welcome and safe online is more important than being able to speak our minds freely.

■ Pew researchers also found America's age 18-29 demographic now has a more positive view of socialism than capitalism.

While these statistics are alarming, we cannot blame our young people. We all have a shared responsibility, through our schools and at individual levels, to help our children understand the importance of America's founding and constitutional principles.

This is where civics education can play a powerful role.

At the Bill of Rights Institute, we work with 73,000 civics and history teachers who reach more than 7 million students per year. We see firsthand the effect education can have in helping students understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and why those rights and responsibilities exist.

Teaching our values and principles works. In fact, Knight Foundation researchers discovered that students who took classes with First Amendment content became more supportive of free speech rights. This has held true in every survey the organization conduct-

ed since 2004.

These types of results are possible when we prioritize civic learning and make an effort to connect our children to America's founding principles. I believe members of the United States military and veterans can play helpful roles in our children's civic education.

We were grateful to have Medal of Honor recipient Florent Groberg join us for a Constitution Day program in September. He immigrated to the United States when he was just 11 years old and felt compelled to serve his adopted country.

Groberg enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2008 and was wounded in Afghanistan in 2012 while protecting troops from a suicide bomber. To this day, Groberg considers taking his oath of enlistment, where he swore to support and defend the Constitution, as one of the proudest moments of his life.

Military members and veterans have taken that oath, and their families sacrificed in service to it. Talk to your children, their friends, and young family members about why your oath, and protecting our principles and rights as Americans, matter to you. Look for opportunities to speak at schools or to youth groups. Your story can make a difference.

David J. Bobb is president and CEO of the Arlington, Va.-based Bill of Rights Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to advance civics and history education.

Bizarro

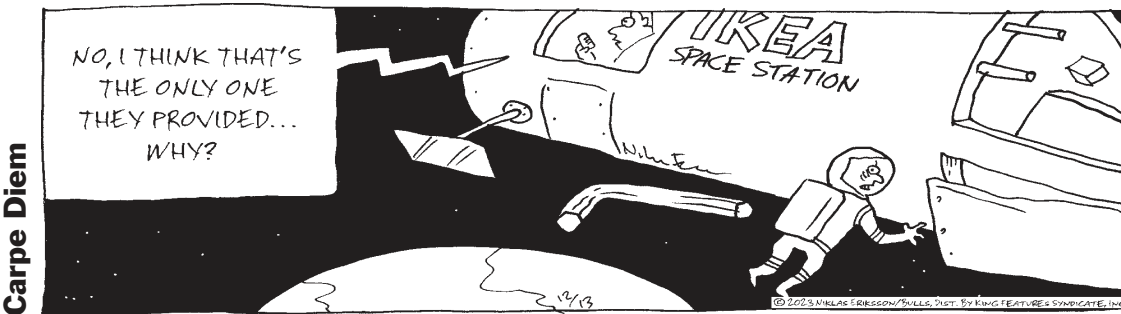
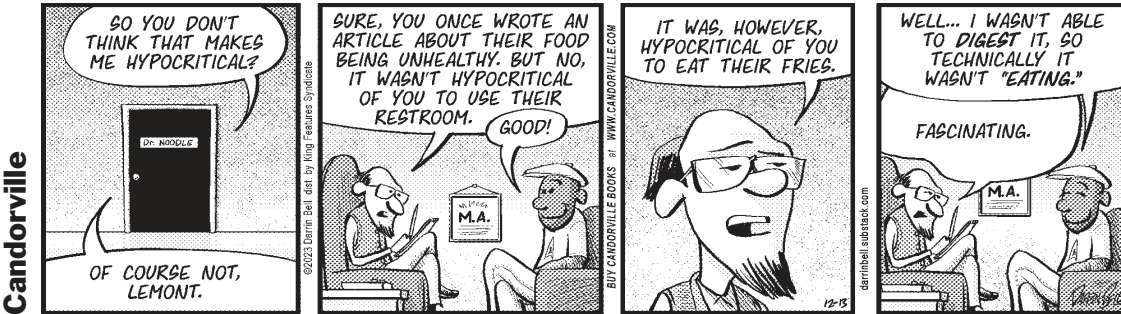
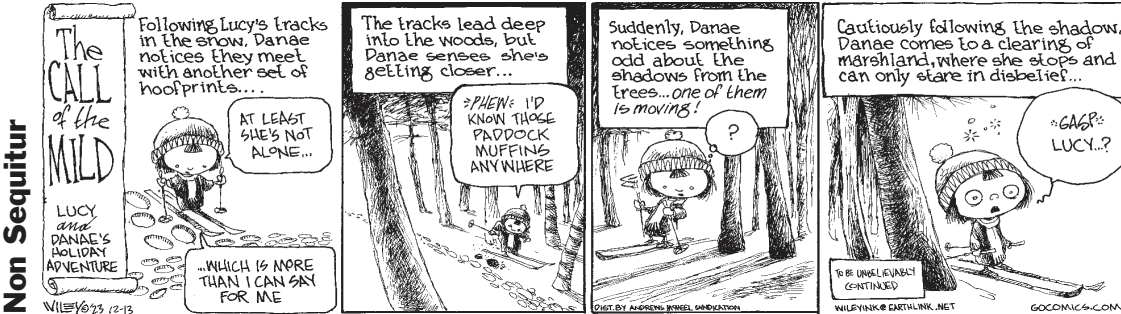
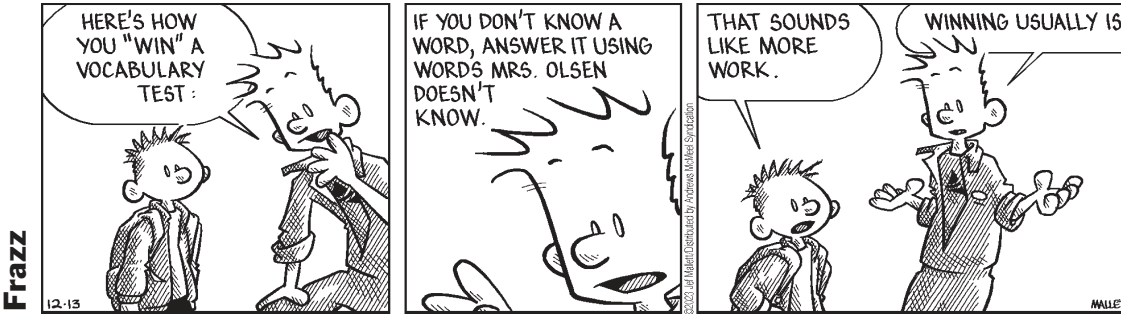


Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

Grid for Eugene Sheffer Crossword with numbered squares.



- ACROSS and DOWN crossword clues including 'Cowardly Lion', 'Deserve', 'Humbug!', etc.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Grid containing the answers to the previous crossword puzzle.

12-13 CRYPTOQUIP
S M J K K C L I V L G J L K S M V
I Q C R V B T . D V R X Q Q N K L S Q
Q J L V T , A C S ' Q Q D N A L I V Z T .
G X B V S K L G V Z V J K L S Z V .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: DON'T BE SO IMPATIENT TO SEE WATER BEADING ON THE MORNING GRASS. IT WILL HAPPEN IN DEW TIME. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals K

SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE SOCCER

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Bowl schedule

Saturday, Dec. 16
Myrtle Beach Bowl
Conway, S.C.

Georgia Southern vs. Ohio
Celebration Bowl
Atlanta

Howard vs. Florida A&M
New Orleans Bowl
New Orleans

Jacksonville St. vs. Louisiana
Cure Bowl
Orlando, Fla.

Miami (Ohio) vs. Appalachian St.
New Mexico Bowl
Albuquerque, N.M.

New Mexico St. vs. Fresno St.
LA Bowl Hosted
Inglewood, Calif.

UCLA vs. Boise St.
Independence Bowl
Shreveport, La.

California vs. Texas Tech
Monday, Dec. 18
Famous Toastery Bowl
Charlotte, N.C.

W. Kentucky vs. Old Dominion
Tuesday, Dec. 19
Frisco Bowl
Frisco, Texas

UTSA vs. Marshall
Thursday, Dec. 21
Boca Raton Bowl
Boca Raton, Fla.

USF vs. Syracuse
Friday, Dec. 22
Gasparilla Bowl
Tampa, Fla.

Georgia Tech vs. UCF
Saturday, Dec. 23
Camellia Bowl
Montgomery, Ala.

Arkansas St. vs. N. Illinois
Birmingham Bowl
Birmingham, Ala.

Troy vs. Duke
Armed Forces Bowl
Fort Worth, Texas

No. 24 James Madison vs. Air Force
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
Boise, Idaho

Georgia St. vs. Utah St.
68 Ventures Bowl
Mobile, Ala.

South Alabama vs. Eastern Michigan
Las Vegas Bowl
Las Vegas

Utah vs. Northwestern
Hawaii Bowl
Honolulu, Hawaii

Coastal Carolina vs. San Jose St.
Tuesday, Dec. 26
Quick Lane Bowl
Detroit

Bowling Green vs. Minnesota
First Responder Bowl
Dallas

Texas St. vs. Rice
Guaranteed Rate Bowl
Phoenix

Kansas vs. UNLV
Wednesday, Dec. 27
Military Bowl Presented
Annapolis, Md.

No. 23 Tulane vs. Virginia Tech
Duke's Mayo Bowl
Charlotte, N.C.

North Carolina vs. West Virginia
Holiday Bowl
San Diego, Calif.

No. 16 Louisville vs. Southern Cal
Texas Bowl
Houston

No. 22 Oklahoma St. vs. Texas A&M
Thursday, Dec. 28
Fenway Bowl
Boston

No. 17 SMU vs. Boston College
Pin Stripe Bowl
New York

Rutgers vs. Miami
Pop-Tarts Bowl
Orlando, Fla.

No. 19 NC State vs. Kansas St.
Alamo Bowl
San Antonio, Texas

No. 12 Oklahoma No. 14 Arizona
Friday, Dec. 29
Gator Bowl
Jacksonville, Fla.

Clemson vs. Kentucky
Sun Bowl
El Paso, Texas

No. 15 Notre Dame vs. No. 21 Oregon St.
Liberty Bowl
Memphis, Tenn.

Memphis vs. Iowa St.
Cotton Bowl
Arlington, Texas

No. 7 Ohio St. vs. No. 9 Missouri
FCS playoffs

Semifinals

Friday, Dec. 15

South Dakota St. vs. UAlbany
Saturday, Dec. 16

Montana vs. North Dakota St.
Championship
Saturday, Jan. 7

Semifinal winners

NCAA Division II playoffs

Championship

Harding vs. Colo. Sch. of Mines

NCAA Division III playoffs

Championship

North Central (Ill.) vs. Cortland

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Men's AP Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking:

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. Arizona (62)	8-0	1574	1
2. Kansas	9-1	1461	2
3. Purdue	9-1	1424	4
4. Houston (1)	10-0	1416	3
5. UConn	9-1	1344	5
6. Baylor	9-0	1239	6
7. Marquette	8-2	1221	8
8. Creighton	8-1	1073	10
9. North Carolina	7-2	992	9
10. Gonzaga	7-2	860	7
11. Oklahoma	9-0	848	19
12. Tennessee	6-3	835	17
13. Clemson	9-0	746	24
14. Kentucky	7-2	677	16
15. FAU	7-2	622	11
16. Illinois	7-2	589	20
17. Colorado St.	9-1	522	13
18. BYU	8-1	503	14
19. Texas	7-2	451	12
20. James Madison	9-0	441	18
21. Duke	6-3	315	22
22. Virginia	8-1	300	—
23. Wisconsin	7-3	213	23
24. Miami	7-2	156	15
25. Northwestern	7-1	147	—

Others receiving votes: Colorado 116, Mississippi 86, Texas A&M 58, Auburn 57, Memphis 56, Alabama 43, Utah 25, Iowa St. 20, Ohio St. 9, Providence 7, San Diego St. 7, TCU 6, Nevada 5, South Carolina 3, New Mexico 2, Washington 2, Kansas St. 1, Grand Canyon 1, Dayton 1, Saint Joseph's 1.

Men's USA Today Top 25

The USA Today Top 25 men's basketball poll, with first-place votes received in parenthesis, team's records, total points based on 25 for first place through one point for 25th and ranking in last week's final poll:

	Record	Pts	Pvs
1. Arizona (28)	8-0	796	1
2. Kansas (1)	9-1	739	3
3. Houston (3)	10-0	734	2
4. Purdue	9-1	712	4
5. Connecticut	9-1	675	5
6. Baylor	9-0	642	6
7. Marquette	8-2	614	7
8. Creighton	8-1	529	11
9. North Carolina	7-2	486	10
10. Tennessee	6-3	462	13
11. Clemson	9-0	426	20
12. Oklahoma	9-0	422	22
13. Gonzaga	7-2	418	8
14. Florida Atlantic	7-2	359	9
15. Kentucky	7-2	317	17
16. Illinois	7-2	288	18
17. Brigham Young	8-1	261	13
18. Colorado State	9-1	238	12
19. Duke	6-3	194	21
20. James Madison	9-0	181	24
21. Virginia	8-1	160	23
22. Texas	7-2	148	16
23. Wisconsin	7-3	92	—
24. Miami (Fla.)	7-2	82	15
25. Mississippi	9-0	79	—

Dropped out: No. 19 Texas A&M (7-3); No. 25 Ohio State (8-2).

Others receiving votes: Northwestern (7-1) 68; Texas A&M (7-3) 56; Auburn (6-2) 32; Colorado (7-2) 31; Alabama (6-3) 30; Memphis (7-2) 26; Iowa State (8-2) 21; TCU (7-1) 21; Ohio State (8-2) 18; San Diego State (8-2) 10; Princeton (9-1) 8; Southern California (5-4) 8; Grand Canyon (8-1) 5; New Mexico (9-1) 5; Utah (7-2) 3; Cincinnati (7-1) 2; Drake (9-1) 1; Indiana (7-2) 1.

Monday's men's scores

EAST	
Columbia 87, Fairleigh Dickinson 83	
Delaware 73, Robert Morris 69	
New Hampshire 75, Stonehill 62	
Penn 78, Howard 68	
Yale 73, Quinnipiac 66	
SOUTH	
Gardner-Webb 79, North Greenville 60	
Hampton 100, Mary Baldwin 53	
Longwood 92, Gallaudet 61	
SC State 86, Jacksonville 85, OT	
Samford 118, Alabama A&M 91	
SOUTHWEST	
Texas A&M Commerce 101, N. Colorado 99, 2OT	
Texas St. 107, Jarvis Christian 58	
FAR WEST	
CS Northridge 80, Utah Tech 75	
Gonzaga 78, MVSU 40	
San Francisco 85, New Orleans 72	

Men's Top 25 schedule

Wednesday's games	
No. 8 Creighton vs. UNLV at Henderson, Nev.	
No. 15 FAU vs. FIU	

No. 18 BYU vs. Denver
No. 24 Northwestern vs. Chicago St.
Thursday's games

No. 7 Marquette vs. St. Thomas (MN)
No. 22 Wisconsin vs. Jacksonville St.
Friday's game

No. 5 UConn at No. 10 Gonzaga
Saturday's games

No. 1 Arizona vs. No. 3 Purdue at Indianapolis
No. 2 Kansas at Indiana
No. 4 Houston vs. Texas A&M at Houston
No. 6 Baylor vs. Michigan St. at Detroit
No. 8 Creighton vs. Alabama
No. 9 North Carolina vs. No. 14 Kentucky at Atlanta
No. 11 Oklahoma vs. Green Bay
No. 12 Tennessee vs. NC State at San Antonio
No. 13 Clemson at Memphis
No. 15 FAU vs. St. Bonaventure at Springfield, Mass.
No. 18 BYU vs. Georgia St.
No. 19 Texas vs. LSU at Houston
No. 20 James Madison at Hampton
No. 23 Miami vs. La Salle
No. 24 Northwestern at DePaul
Sunday's games

No. 16 Illinois vs. Colgate
No. 17 Colorado St. vs. CSU-Pueblo

Women's AP Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking:

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. South Carolina (36)	9-0	900	1
2. UCLA	9-0	861	2
3. NC State	10-0	800	3
4. Iowa	10-1	754	4
5. Texas	10-0	732	5
6. Southern Cal	8-0	697	6
7. LSU	9-1	679	7
8. Colorado	9-1	651	8
9. Stanford	8-1	608	9
10. Baylor	7-0	572	10
11. Utah	8-2	498	11
12. Kansas St	9-1	488	13
12. Ohio St.	8-1	488	12
14. Notre Dame	7-1	459	14
15. Indiana	8-1	396	16
16. Virginia Tech	7-2	391	15
17. UConn	6-3	343	17
18. Louisville	9-1	314	18
19. Marquette	9-0	252	19
20. Creighton	7-1	171	22
21. Gonzaga	10-2	165	23
22. Florida St.	7-3	113	20
23. UNLV	9-0	103	—
24. Miami	8-0	100	—
25. North Carolina	6-4	37	24

Others receiving votes: Washington 25, Washington St 23, TCU 22, West Virginia 21, Texas A&M 10, Texas Tech 8, Penn St. 3, Mississippi 2, Green Bay 3, Davidson 3, Minnesota 2, Oregon St. 1, Mississippi 1, Michigan St. 1, Colorado St. 1, Nebraska 1.

Monday's women's scores

EAST	
Marshall 115, Salem International 56	
Monmouth (NJ) 68, Lafayette 47	
Princeton 61, Villanova 58	
Seton Hall 67, Fairleigh Dickinson 27	
Stony Brook 85, Longwood 49	
SOUTH	
Coll. of Charleston 69, Jacksonville St. 58	
Grambling St. 109, Wiley 41	
Jacksonville 70, NC Central 67	
Mississippi St. 91, Kennesaw St. 50	
Morehead St. 53, Wheeling Jesuit 49	
UCF 72, New Orleans 45	
VCU 64, Delaware 55	
MIDWEST	
Georgia Southern 111, Chicago St. 67	
Lindenwood (Mo.) 99, Harris-Stowe 54	
SOUTHWEST	
Abilene Christian 91, McMurry 55	
Oral Roberts 112, Eagles 48	
FAR WEST	
Oregon 67, Southern U. 37	
San Diego St. 69, Seattle 61	

Women's Top 25 schedule

Wednesday's games	
No. 5 Texas at Arizona	
No. 18 Louisville vs. Morehead St.	
No. 19 Marquette vs. No. 20 Creighton	
Thursday's game	
No. 10 Baylor vs. Delaware St.	
Friday's games	
No. 9 Stanford vs. Portland	
No. 12 Ohio St. vs. Grand Valley St.	
No. 25 North Carolina vs. W. Carolina	
Saturday's games	
No. 1 South Carolina vs. Presbyterian	
No. 3 NC State at South Florida	
No. 4 Iowa vs. Cleveland St. at Des Moines, Iowa	
No. 10 Baylor vs. No. 24 Miami at Arlington, Texas	
No. 11 Utah at S. Utah	
No. 12 Kansas St. vs. North Florida	
No. 17 UConn vs. No. 18 Louisville	
No. 23 UNLV at Seton Hall	
Sunday's games	
No. 7 LSU vs. Northwestern St.	
No. 14 Notre Dame vs. Purdue	
No. 16 Virginia Tech at Rutgers	
No. 19 Marquette vs. Appalachian St.	
No. 20 Creighton at Drake	
No. 21 Gonzaga vs. S. Dakota St.	
No. 22 Florida St. at Drexel	

COLLEGE SOCCER

NCAA Men's Tournament

Semifinals
Friday, Dec. 8
At Lynn Family Stadium
Louisville, Ky.
No. 2 Notre Dame 1, Oregon St. 0
No. 9 Clemson 1, No. 5 West Virginia 0
Championship
Monday, Dec. 11
At Lynn Family Stadium
Louisville, Ky.
No. 9 Clemson 2, No. 2 Notre Dame 1

TENNIS

Open BLS De Limoges

Monday
At Palais des Sports de Beaublanc
Limoges, France
Purse: Euro 100,000
Surface: Hardcourt indoor
Women's Singles
Round of 32
Rebecca Peterson (8), Sweden, def. Mona Barthel, Germany, 7-6 (3), 7-5.
Anastasija Sevastova, Latvia, def. Patricia Maria Tig, Romania, 6-4, 6-1.
McCartney Kessler, United States, def. Margaux Rouvroy, France, 4-6, 6-1, 6-0.
Arantxa Rus (3), Netherlands, def. Gabriela Knutson, Czech Republic, 6-3, 6-2.
Harmony Tan, France, def. Fanny Stollar, Hungary, 6-3, 6-1.
Elsa Jacquemot, France, def. Berfu Cengiz, Turkiye, 7-5, 6-1.
Women's Doubles
Quarterfinals
Yana Sizikova, Russia, and Cristina Bucsa, Spain, def. Kristina Mladenovic and Amandine Hesse, France, 4-6, 6-1, 10-7.

DEALS

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Agreed to terms with LHP Will Smith on a one-year contract. Designated RHP Collin Snider for assignment.
National League
CINCINNATI REDS — Agreed to terms with RHP Samuel Perez on a minor league contract.
LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Acquired INF Trey Sweeney from the New York Yankees in exchange for LHP Victor Gonzalez and INF Jarbit Vivas. Agreed to terms with RHP Joe Kelly on a contract. Signed Shohei Ohtani to a 10-year contract.
NEW YORK METS — Agreed to terms with 3B Rylan Bannon on a minor league contract.
FOOTBALL
National Football League
ARIZONA CARDINALS — Re-signed WR Jeff Smith to the practice squad.
CLEVELAND BROWNS — Signed S Grant Delpit to a three-year contract extension.
GREEN BAY PACKERS — Elevated RB Kenyan Drake from the practice squad to the active roster.
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Signed OT Jared Veldheer to the practice squad.
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Signed OL D.J. Fluker.
MIAMI DOLPHINS — Elevated LB Quinton Bell and T Ryan Hayes from the practice squad to the active roster.
NEW YORK GIANTS — Reinstated QB Tyrod Taylor from injured reserve.
TENNESSEE TITANS — Signed RB Jonathan Ward and P Ty Zentner to the practice squad. Elevated DL Marlon Davidson and LB JoJo Domann from the practice squad to the active roster.
WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — Placed LB Jamin Davis on injured reserve.
HOCKEY
National Hockey League
BUFFALO SABRES — Recalled LW Brett Murray from Rochester (AHL). Loaned C Isak Rosen to Rochester.
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Assigned G Jet Greaves to Cleveland (AHL). Recalled G Daniil Tarasov from Cleveland.
DETROIT RED WINGS — Recalled F Zach Aston-Reese, Jonatan Berggren and Austin Czarnik from Grand Rapids (AHL).
LOS ANGELES KINGS — Returned D Jacob Moverare to Ontario (AHL).
NEW YORK ISLANDERS — Returned D Grant Hutton to Bridgeport (AHL).
ST. LOUIS BLUES — Reassigned G Will Cranley from Springfield (AHL) to Utah (ECHL).
TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING — Reassigned F Cole Koepke to Syracuse (AHL).
TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS — Reassigned RW Ty Voit from Newfoundland (ECHL) to Toronto (AHL).
SOCCER
Major League Soccer
NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION — Acquired D Nick Lima from Austin FC in exchange for \$275,000 in 2024 general allocation money (GAM).
NEW YORK RED BULLS — Traded M Dru Yearwood to Nashville SC in exchange for \$75,000 in 2024 general allocation money (GAM) and \$75,000 in 2025 GAM if certain contractual conditions are met.
ORLANDO CITY SC — Exercised contract options on Fs Jack Lynn and Duncan McGuire, M Felipe Martins and Ds Mikey Halliday, Robin Jansson, Luca Petrasso, Abdi Salim and Kyle Smith. Declined contract options on F Wilfredo Rivera and M Junior Urso.
COLLEGE
RHODE ISLAND — Named Cody Kauffman head baseball coach.

Clemson captures NCAA title

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Seniors Brandon Parrish and Ousmane Sylla each scored, and No. 9 Clemson held off No. 2 Notre Dame 2-1 on Monday night to claim the program's second national championship in three seasons.

Clemson (15-3-5), making its sixth championship game appearance in school history and second

in three seasons, has won titles in 1984, 1987 and 2021. The Tigers also knocked off Notre Dame in the 2021 semifinals.



Notre Dame Parrish (13-3-6) was seeking its second championship in program history after winning the College Cup in 2013.

Parrish scored his eighth goal of the season for a 1-0 lead in the 27th minute. Parrish chested a clearing attempt and sent a deflected shot from distance past a diving Bryan Dowd.

Clemson improved to 11-0-1 when leading at the half this season.

Parrish also cleared the ball off the goal line in the 58th to maintain a 1-0 lead.

Sylla, named the offensive most outstanding player, scored his 13th goal of the season, to go with 10 assists, in the 70th for a 2-0 lead. Sylla played it out wide near the midfield circle to Alex Meinhard, who dribbled in space to get into the box for a cross to the penalty spot for a wide-open finish.

Joseph Andema nearly recorded his fifth straight shutout in the NCAA Tournament until Tyler Trimnal was whistled for a handball in the 89th minute and Paddy Burns converted the penalty kick.

Burns also had a good scoring chance in the 56th when he was left wide open at the back post, but his off-balance shot went off the crossbar.

Andema made three saves for Clemson, which allowed 18 goals in its first 18 games of the season and just one in the last five. The Tigers went 449 minutes without giving up a goal in the tournament — nearly becoming the sixth champion to not allow a postseason goal.

The Tigers and Irish played earlier this season, with Notre Dame winning 3-2 on Sept. 9. Parrish also scored in that game, tying it at 2-all before Notre Dame's Daniel Russo scored the winner off a free kick in the 50th.

NHL/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

NHL scoreboard

NHL ROUNDUP

Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	26	18	5	3	39	87	65
Florida	27	17	8	2	36	85	69
Toronto	25	14	6	5	33	87	81
Detroit	27	14	9	4	32	100	88
Tampa Bay	29	13	11	5	31	95	102
Montreal	28	12	13	3	27	76	97
Buffalo	29	12	14	3	27	84	96
Ottawa	22	11	11	0	22	78	70
Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Rangers	26	19	6	1	39	86	71
N.Y. Islanders	27	13	7	7	33	83	87
Philadelphia	27	15	10	2	32	83	73
Washington	25	14	8	3	31	64	72
New Jersey	26	14	11	1	29	92	95
Carolina	27	14	12	1	29	88	90
Pittsburgh	26	11	12	3	25	75	69
Columbus	30	9	16	5	23	87	106
Western Conference							
Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	28	17	9	2	36	103	91
Dallas	27	16	8	3	35	95	84
Winnipeg	26	16	8	2	34	85	70
Nashville	28	15	13	0	30	87	86
Arizona	27	13	12	2	28	88	82
St. Louis	27	13	13	1	27	76	88
Minnesota	26	10	12	4	24	81	88
Chicago	27	9	17	1	19	65	94
Pacific Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	29	19	5	5	43	100	69
Vancouver	28	18	9	1	37	107	73
Los Angeles	25	16	5	4	36	92	60
Edmonton	25	12	12	1	25	88	84
Calgary	28	11	14	3	25	87	102
Seattle	29	8	14	7	23	74	101
Anaheim	27	10	17	0	20	71	92
San Jose	28	8	17	3	19	62	116

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Monday's games
 N.Y. Islanders 4, Toronto 3, OT
 Colorado 6, Calgary 5
 Dallas 6, Detroit 3
 Buffalo 5, Arizona 2

Tuesday's games
 Arizona at Pittsburgh
 Carolina at Ottawa
 Toronto at N.Y. Rangers
 Detroit at St. Louis
 Philadelphia at Nashville
 Calgary at Vegas
 Chicago at Edmonton
 Florida at Seattle
 Tampa Bay at Vancouver
 Winnipeg at San Jose

Wednesday's games
 Boston at New Jersey
 Pittsburgh at Montreal
 Anaheim at N.Y. Islanders
 Buffalo at Colorado
 Winnipeg at Los Angeles

Horvat leads Isles over Leafs in OT

Associated Press
 NEW YORK — Bo Horvat scored 46 seconds into overtime as the New York Islanders recovered after giving up a two-goal lead and beat the Toronto Maple Leafs 4-3 on Monday night.

Brock Nelson and Kyle Palmieri each had a goal and an assist, and Casey Cizikas also scored to help the Islanders win their third straight game. Noah Dobson had three assists and Ilya Sorokin finished with 36 saves.

In the extra period, Horvat scored on a feed from Mathew Barzal to push the Islanders ahead of Philadelphia into second place in the Metropolitan Division — trailing only the rival New York Rangers.

“You are trying to skate as hard as you can to make a clear-cut two-on-one,” Horvat said after the Islanders improved to 8-1-2 in their last 11 games. “With a saucer pass like that you don’t want to just whack at it and hope for the best. You kind of got to let it sit a little bit and pick your spot. You are trying to think of that in a matter of half a second and thankfully it worked.”

John Tavares had a goal and an assist to reach 1,000 career points, and Auston Matthews and Morgan Rielly also scored as Toronto snapped a two-game winning streak. William Nylander had two assists and Ilya Samsonov made 27 saves.

The Islanders led 3-1 before Tavares pulled the Maple Leafs within one as he redirected a shot from defenseman Conor Timmins at 7:43 of the second period.

Rielly tied it with 7 seconds remaining in regulation. Nylander fired a puck toward the net that bounced off Tavares and Rielly



JOHN MUNSON/AP

Islanders center Bo Horvat, right, celebrates after his game-winning goal with teammate Noah Dobson during overtime against the Toronto Maple Leafs on Monday in New York.

controlled the loose puck.

Avalanche 6, Flames 5: Nathan MacKinnon scored with 4:30 remaining to complete host Colorado’s rally from two goals down in the third period.

Trailing 5-3 entering the final period, Ross Colton scored with 8:40 remaining and Mikko Rantanen tied it up with 6:29 left. MacKinnon scored the winner on a breakaway after Rantanen delivered a long pass to Valeri Nichushkin, who dished it over to MacKinnon in stride.

Tomas Tatar scored his first goal in a Colorado sweater after being signed in September.

Calgary’s Nazem Kadri had a goal, assist and a roughing penalty

against his former team.

Stars 6, Red Wings 3: Miro Heiskanen scored two goals, captain Jamie Benn recorded his 500th career assist and host Dallas beat short-handed Detroit.

Jason Robertson and Esa Lindell each had a goal and an assist, and Matt Duchene and Joe Pavelski also scored to help the Stars win their 11th consecutive home game over the Red Wings since January 2017. Jake Oettinger had 27 saves.

Daniel Sprong, Jonatan Berggren and Joe Veleno scored for Detroit.

The Red Wings were without injured captain Dylan Larkin and suspended forward David Perron. Perron was suspended six games

without pay by the NHL on Monday for his retaliatory cross-check against Ottawa’s Artem Zub in the aftermath of Larkin being knocked unconscious when cross-checked in the back of the head and neck.

Sabres 5, Coyotes 2: Kyle Okposo and Eric Robinson each had a goal and two assists as host Buffalo won for the second time in three games.

JJ Peterka, Peyton Krebs, and Rasmus Dahlin also scored, and Connor Clifton had two assists for the Sabres.

Michael Kesselring and Michael Carcone scored for the Coyotes, who have lost three straight following a five-game winning streak.

Gonzaga wins 11th straight at home

BY HENRY KRUEGER
Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Braden Huff scored 17 points, Graham Ike added 13 points and eight rebounds, and No. 10 Gonzaga cruised to a 78-40 victory over Mississippi Valley State on Monday night.

The Bulldogs (8-2) earned their 11th straight home win and bounced back from a 78-73 loss at Washington on Saturday.

“Nobody was too happy with how things went (against Washington), so to get that bad taste out of our mouths and play 48 hours later was nice for us to kind of get this one done,” Huff said.

Ben Gregg added 11 points and four rebounds off the bench for the Bulldogs. Anton Watson had eight points, four rebounds and

three assists.

Mississippi Valley State (0-10) was led by Rayquan Brown, who finished with 19 points and nine rebounds. No other Delta Devils player scored more than five.

The Bulldogs opened the game on a 14-2 run, making six of their first nine shots. Gonzaga went on another spree midway through the first half, scoring 11 straight points to expand its lead to 18, and led 38-18 at halftime.

Huff and Gregg had nine points each in the second half to help the Bulldogs go on several more scoring runs, including an 11-0 stretch to go up by 31 with 13 minutes left. Gonzaga led by as many as 41.

Gonzaga scored 36 points in the paint, but was just 5-for-24 from 3-point range.

“We’re taking the right shots,”

coach Mark Few said. “It’s just shooting — you’ve got to take the right shots, do your prep and get your reps in.”

Mississippi Valley State shot 29.1% overall.

Rematch

Gonzaga returns to action Friday for a neutral-site game against UConn in Seattle. It will be the first matchup between the programs since the Huskies rolled to an 82-54 win in the Elite Eight of last season’s NCAA Tournament.

“You come to a school like (Gonzaga) to play big games like that,” Huff said. “It’s going to be a fun one. I’m excited to play them in Seattle in front of what should be a lot of our fans and hopefully we get a good crowd and come out with a lot of energy.”



YOUNG KWAK/AP

Gonzaga forward Anton Watson dunks over Mississippi Valley State guard Chidi Umeh during the first half on Monday in Spokane, Wash.

NBA

ROUNDUP

Pacers send Pistons to 20th straight loss

Associated Press

DETROIT — Benedict Mathurin scored 30 points and the Indiana Pacers handed the Detroit Pistons their 20th straight loss, winning 131-123 on Monday night.

Tyrese Haliburton had 14 points and 16 assists for Indiana in its first game since Saturday's 123-109 loss to the Los Angeles Lakers in the NBA In-Season Tournament final.

"This is one of the most difficult games you can have, coming off the emotions of last week, the game on Saturday, the travel and everything else," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. "I just thought our guys did a great job of staying together, keeping their composure and their aggression."

"Detroit is in an all-out attack mode because of their situation."

Detroit's losing streak is the longest single-season slide in franchise history and matches the NBA's longest since the Houston Rockets lost 20 straight in 2020-21. Detroit lost 21 straight between the end of the 1979-80 season and the start of 1980-81.

"As much as this losing hurts us, and it hurts like you can't believe, I see a lot of growth," Pistons coach Monty Williams said. "I'm encouraged by some of the things we saw tonight. We just need to build on them."

Miles Turner added 23 points for Indiana.

"This was fun, especially coming off a loss in the tournament," said Mathurin, who added a career-high eight assists. "I don't think it is about points for me. It's about how I impact the game."

Cade Cunningham scored 23 points and Ausar Thompson had 20 for the Pistons, who have dropped 44 of their last 48 games dating to last season's trade deadline.

Rockets 93, Spurs 82: Tari Eason had a season-high 18 points and 14 rebounds off the bench as host Houston dealt San Antonio its franchise-record 17th consecutive loss.

Top overall pick Victor Wembanyama had 15 points, 18 rebounds and five blocks, along with an overpowering dunk over Houston's Alperen Sengun in the third period, but it wasn't enough to get the Spurs back in the win column. San Antonio hasn't won since a 132-121 victory over Phoenix on Nov. 2. The Rockets won their 10th straight home game and third in a row overall.

76ers 146, Wizards 101: Tyrese Maxey made three 3-pointers in a game-opening 14-0 run that helped host Philadelphia to a 29-point lead at halftime, and Joel Embiid added 34 points and 10 rebounds in a lopsided win



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Indiana Pacers forward Obi Toppin is defended by Detroit Pistons guard Cade Cunningham on Monday in Detroit. The Pistons lost their 20th game in a row, one short of the longest losing streak in franchise history.

over Washington.

The hapless Wizards (3-19) had seen this before. The 76ers led 75-46 at halftime Monday night, the second time this season they scored 75 points by the break. The other came on Nov. 6 against the Wizards.

Maxey made five 3s and scored 24 points. Kyle Kuzma led Washington with 21 points.

Heat 116, Hornets 114: Duncan Robinson had five 3-pointers and scored 24 points, Kevin Love provided a big boost off the bench with a season-high 19 points and visiting Miami overcame a huge game from Charlotte's Terry Rozier for the win.

Jimmy Butler added 23 points and eight assists and Caleb Martin had 20 points and nine rebounds for Miami, which entered the game having lost five of its last seven. Jaime Jaquez chipped in with 18 points before fouling out late.

Rozier scored 34 points with eight 3-pointers for the Hornets, but his half-court heave at the final buzzer hit the backboard and bounced away.

Bucks 133, Bulls 129 (OT): Giannis Antetokounmpo had 32 points and 12 rebounds to lead host Milwaukee past Chicago in overtime.

Brook Lopez and Malik Beasley each had 19 points and Bobby Portis scored 17 for the Bucks.

DeMar DeRozan had 41 points

and Coby White scored 33 for Chicago, which had won four straight.

Magic 104, Cavaliers 94: Paolo Banchero scored 20 points and Franz Wagner added 19 for host Orlando as Cleveland failed to recover from a dismal third quarter.

Darius Garland scored 36 points for the Cavaliers, who made only two of 17 shots in the third and scored 15 points. Donovan Mitchell added 22 points for the Cavaliers, who had won four straight on the road.

Goga Bitadze had 15 points for the Magic, who have won 11 of 13 with one of the losses coming at Cleveland last Wednesday, when they shot 2-for-23 from 3-point range. They shot 7-for-26 Monday night.

Knicks 136, Raptors 130: Julius Randle scored 34 points, Quentin Grimes had a season-high 19 and host New York shook off some bad injury news to beat Toronto.

RJ Barrett added 27 points and Jalen Brunson had 21 points and nine assists for the Knicks, who had a new starting center for the first time this season after Mitchell Robinson sustained a stress fracture in his left ankle. The injury will require surgery for the NBA leader in offensive rebounds and a recovery of at least two months.

Nuggets 129, Hawks 122: Jamal Murray scored 29 points, Nikola Jokic added 25 and visiting Denver held off Atlanta to end a

three-game skid.

Bogdan Bogdanovic set career highs with 40 points and 10 3-pointers in the Hawks' fourth consecutive loss.

Kings 131, Nets 118: DeAaron Fox had 28 points and nine assists, and host Sacramento set a franchise record for 3-pointers with 25 in a victory over Brooklyn.

Sacramento shot 25-for-45 from 3-point range (55.6%), breaking the previous Kings record of 23.

Clippers 132, Trail Blazers 127: Kawhi Leonard scored 34 points and host Los Angeles beat short-handed Portland for its fourth straight win.

Portland was without Deandre Ayton, who missed his third straight game, and Malcolm Brogdon, who sat out his second in a row. Both have right knee soreness.

Pelicans 121, Timberwolves 107: Zion Williamson scored a season-high 36 points, CJ McCollum added nine of his 23 points in the fourth quarter on three timely 3-pointers and host New Orleans beat NBA-leading Minnesota.

Mavericks 120, Grizzlies 113: Luka Doncic scored 35 points, Dereck Lively II added 16 points and 16 rebounds, and visiting Dallas beat Memphis to extend its winning streak to three games.

Thunder 134, Jazz 120: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 30 points in three quarters and host Oklahoma City defeated Utah.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	16	5	.762	—
Philadelphia	15	7	.682	1½
New York	13	9	.591	3½
Brooklyn	12	10	.545	4½
Toronto	9	14	.391	8

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	16	7	.696	—
Miami	13	10	.565	3
Atlanta	9	13	.409	6½
Charlotte	7	14	.333	8
Washington	3	19	.136	12½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	16	7	.696	—
Indiana	13	8	.619	2
Cleveland	13	10	.565	3
Chicago	9	15	.375	7½
Detroit	2	21	.087	14

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	14	8	.636	—
Houston	11	9	.550	2
New Orleans	13	11	.542	2
Memphis	6	16	.273	8
San Antonio	3	19	.136	11

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	17	5	.773	—
Oklahoma City	15	7	.682	2
Denver	15	9	.625	3
Utah	7	16	.304	10½
Portland	6	16	.273	11

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Sacramento	13	8	.619	—
L.A. Lakers	14	9	.609	—
L.A. Clippers	12	10	.545	1½
Phoenix	12	10	.545	1½
Golden State	10	12	.455	3½

Monday's games

Indiana 131, Detroit 123
Houston 93, San Antonio 82
Philadelphia 146, Washington 101
Miami 116, Charlotte 114
Milwaukee 133, Chicago 129, OT
Orlando 104, Cleveland 94
New York 136, Toronto 130
Denver 129, Atlanta 122
Sacramento 131, Brooklyn 118
L.A. Clippers 132, Portland 127
New Orleans 121, Minnesota 107
Dallas 120, Memphis 113
Oklahoma City 134, Utah 120

Tuesday's games

Cleveland at Boston
L.A. Lakers at Dallas
Denver at Chicago
Golden State at Phoenix
Sacramento at L.A. Clippers

Wednesday's games

New Orleans at Washington
Philadelphia at Detroit
Atlanta at Toronto
Charlotte at Miami
Indiana at Milwaukee
L.A. Lakers at San Antonio
Memphis at Houston
Brooklyn at Phoenix
New York at Utah

Scoring leaders

Through Monday

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Embiid, PHI	19	210	193	634	33.4
Doncic, DAL	21	228	133	672	32.0
Durant, PHO	19	202	141	589	31.0
Antetokounmpo, MIL	22	256	152	673	30.6
Fox, SAC	16	171	95	487	30.4
Gil-Alex., OKC	21	236	144	639	30.4
Curry, GS	20	179	128	588	29.4
Jokic, DEN	23	254	112	649	28.2
Tatum, BOS	21	202	109	577	27.5
Mitchell, CLE	18	168	102	491	27.3

COLLEGE FOOTBALL/NBA

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BRIEFS

Maye declares for draft, won't play in bowl game

Associated Press

North Carolina star quarterback Drake Maye is entering the NFL Draft and won't play in the Duke's Mayo Bowl for the Tar Heels against West Virginia.

Maye announced his decision in a social media post Monday, ending his UNC career that included two years as the starter putting up prolific numbers and making himself one of the most sought-after potential prospects for the NFL.

The 6-foot-4, 230-pound third-year sophomore closed his career in a lopsided loss at rival North Carolina State, which included Maye suffering an ankle injury. But Maye returned to grind out one more drive despite clearly being hobbled while walking the sideline, saying afterward he wanted to "get back out with the guys and not leave them out there."

Maye was named The Associated Press offensive player of the year for the Atlantic Coast Conference in 2022 in his first full season as a starter, throwing for 4,321 yards and 38 touchdowns while running for 698 yards and seven additional scores. He led UNC to the ACC title game that year.

Things didn't come quite as easily this year, though Maye still

ranked second in the Bowl Subdivision in total offense (338.1) and eighth in passing (300.7).

The move means Conner Harrell is set to take over at quarterback for UNC against West Virginia, with the redshirt freshman making four appearances in relief — including in that N.C. State loss — behind Maye.

Former Duke QB Leonard headed to Notre Dame

Notre Dame is going from one talented ACC quarterback to another after Duke's Riley Leonard committed to the Fighting Irish on Tuesday.

Leonard, who helped the Blue Devils start the season with a stunning 28-7 victory over then-No. 9 Clemson, entered the transfer portal after his team's 7-5 season.

He announced his intention to play for Notre Dame on social media, writing "A dream come true. Go Irish," with a shamrock image at the end.

Riley is expected to take over the starting job that ex-Wake Forest quarterback Sam Hartman had for the Fighting Irish this season. Hartman joined Notre Dame this past season after five seasons

with the Demon Deacons.

Leonard played in 27 games for Duke the past three seasons, throwing for 4,450 yards, 24 touchdowns and 10 interceptions. He played in just seven games this season after sustaining an injury late in a 21-14 loss to Notre Dame on Sept. 30.

Texas Tech RB Brooks will return for 2024

LUBBOCK, Texas — Texas Tech senior running back Tahj Brooks revealed Monday that he plans to use his final season of eligibility and return to play again with the Red Raiders in 2024.

Brooks, a first-team AP All-Big 12 pick, is fourth nationally and second in the Big 12 with 1,443 yards rushing (120.3 yards per game). He ran for at least 100 yards in eight of the last 10 games, and in the two games he didn't had 98 and 95 yards.

Brooks announced his decision to return in a social media post. He has 2,957 yards rushing and 27 touchdowns over 44 games in his career at Texas Tech, which began as a freshman during the pandemic-impacted 2020 season that didn't count against the eligibility of any players.



ERIK VERDUZCO/AP

North Carolina quarterback Drake Maye, a 6-foot-4, 230-pound third-year sophomore, ranked second in the Bowl Subdivision this season in total offense (338.1) and eighth in passing (300.7).

"This is an exciting day for our program with Tahj announcing his return for next season," Tech coach Joey McGuire said. "From our conversations in recent weeks, it was clear that Tahj wants to leave a legacy here at Texas Tech and that a return for

next season would help him do just that. Not only is Tahj one of the nation's top running backs, but he is a phenomenal teammate and leader of this program."

The Red Raiders (6-6) play California (6-6) in the Independence Bowl on Saturday night.

Relevant: Young Magic are one of league's top defensive teams



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Guard Jalen Suggs says the Magic have made a commitment to playing great defense. "We have fun playing defense. Everyone does it and everyone's buying into it."

FROM PAGE 24

past, there's no megastar like Howard or Shaquille O'Neal. But Orlando did have the No. 1 pick in the draft in 2022 and took Paolo Banchero of Duke, who won Rookie of the Year honors. This season, the 6-foot-10 forward is averaging 20.7 points per game, narrowly edging out Franz Wagner — the No. 8 pick in the 2021 draft — for the team lead.

Suggs was the No. 5 pick in 2021. Guard Anthony Black, the No. 6 pick this year, has made 17 starts as a rookie.

This collection of youth has, to this point, formed one of the league's top defensive teams in 2023-24.

"We have fun playing defense," Suggs said. "Everyone does it and everyone's buying into it."

Third-year coach Jamahl Mosley's team is third in the league in defensive rating. The Magic's big winning streak began when they held Chicago under 100 points in back-to-back games. That's a feat they repeated in their most recent two games, when they beat Detroit 123-91 and then held Cleveland to 94 points.

The Cavaliers led at halftime before being held to 15 points in the third quarter.

Orlando's winning streak equaled the

longest in franchise history and helped Mosley win Eastern Conference Coach of the Month honors. The Magic have taken advantage of games against the league's weakest teams. The last three wins of their streak were against Charlotte and Washington.

But before that, Orlando beat defending champion Denver 124-119, then topped Boston 113-96.

The victory over the Celtics gave the Magic a 3-1 record in the NBA In-Season Tournament, but that wasn't enough to advance from the group stage. Boston ultimately beat out Orlando with superior point differential.

Also included on the Magic's résumé are wins over the Lakers, Bucks and Pacers. Now Orlando faces the Celtics again, on a two-game trip to Boston that seemed at the beginning of the season like a couple of routine wins for the home team but now is shaping up as a bit of a litmus test for one of the NBA's most surprising teams.

The plan for the Magic is the same as it's been throughout the season so far.

"I think you continue to preach exactly what you know travels, which is defense," Mosley said. "That's who we are, and that's what we'll continue to be about."

NFL

Stroud uncertain due to concussion

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
Associated Press

HOUSTON — C.J. Stroud had the worst game of his young career in Sunday's loss to the New York Jets before leaving with a concussion.

Now the Texans must wait and see if the star rookie quarterback can return this week or if they'll have to start Davis Mills against the Titans.

"We'll see how he progresses," coach DeMeco Ryans said. "Not many guys have returned the following week from a concussion. It's more about the long-term health than the excitement of the game. We care about their long-term health."

Stroud and the rest of the Texans (7-6) struggled to do much of anything right in the 30-6 loss to the Jets, who entered the game having lost five in a row.

Both teams were scoreless in the first half before New York took the game over after halftime.

Stroud came into Sunday leading the NFL with 3,540 yards passing and had averaged 348 yards a

game in his previous five games. But he had a season-low 91 yards Sunday playing in wet and windy conditions before leaving with about 6½ minutes left after hitting his head on the turf.

"They made plays, and we didn't," Ryans said. "You go out and you play that way, you don't make plays, you don't deserve to win the football game. So, we didn't show up and make enough plays to win and when you play like that, that's what will happen."

Despite the messy conditions, Ryans wouldn't blame the weather for the struggles in the passing game.

"The weather wasn't bad enough where you couldn't throw the football," he said. "It wasn't that bad of a rain, we had some (opportunities) there, we just didn't make the plays."

Stroud completed 10 of 23 passes Sunday for his lowest completion percentage of the season. It was the first time he hadn't reached 100 yards passing and just the third time where he didn't throw for at least 240 yards.



SETH WENIG/AP

New York Giants place kicker Randy Bullock kicks the game-winning field goal against the Green Bay Packers with one second remaining during the fourth quarter Monday in East Rutherford, N.J.

DeVito, Bullock come up big to lift Giants over Packers

By TOM CANAVAN
Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The New York Giants had the ball late in the game, with a chance to rally for an improbable win.

That's when Tommy DeVito delivered — again.

DeVito threw a 32-yard pass to Wan'Dale Robinson to set up Randy Bullock's 37-yard field goal as time expired, and the Giants beat Green Bay 24-22 on Monday night to hand the Packers their first December loss since Matt LaFleur took over as coach in 2019.

The 25-year-old DeVito added another moment to his unlikely rookie season as an undrafted free agent. Making his fourth straight start because of injuries to Daniel Jones and Tyrod Taylor, the New Jersey native directed New York to its third consecutive win.

The Giants (5-8) went 57 yards in eight plays after Jordan Love threw a 6-yard touchdown pass to Malik Heath with 1:33 to play. Green Bay then tried a 2-point conversion but Jayden Reed was stopped by linebacker Bobby Okereke. The go-ahead TD was set up by a Saquon Barkley fumble.

DeVito rushed for 71 yards and threw an 8-yard TD pass to Isaiah Hodgins while leading four scoring drives, two of them capped by Barkley runs of 5 and 1 yards. The Giants defense forced three turnovers.

It was DeVito's first fourth-quarter comeback.

"I know it's probably not easy for him being that he's from around here," Giants coach Brian Daboll said. "I kind of know how that goes. So there's a lot on your plate and you got to keep the main thing, the main thing which is football. He had four games. I'm proud of him. He's put a lot of work in since really since he got here."

Reed scored on a 16-yard run and Anders Carlson kicked field goals of 36, 32 and 48 yards for the Packers (6-7), who had won three in a row. Green Bay dropped to 16-1 in December under LaFleur.

"It's definitely disappointing," said Love, who finished 25-for-39 for 218 yards. "Just look at what we got in front of us but we have to take it one week at a time. We had plenty of opportunities to win that game. We didn't execute good enough. It's disappointing for sure."

Defensive lineman Kenny Clark refused to say this was a trap game for the Packers, who were coming off a win over the defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs.

"I'm not going to disrespect them like that," Clark said of the Giants. "They showed up and they made plays. We're in the NFL. You don't play your best ball, I don't care who you're going against, you're going to lose. Cred-

it to the Giants. They made some great plays today and they showed up and we didn't."

The Packers were outgained 367 yards to 326 and limited to 5 of 14 on third down. New York also shredded the Green Bay defense for 209 yards rushing.

"A lot of times we had flybys right by the quarterback," LaFleur said. "For whatever reason, we just missed the quarterback."

The Packers led 10-7 at halftime on Carlson's 36-yarder with 13 seconds left. The drive was kept alive by a 27-yard pass interference against Cor'Dale Flott.

The Giants went in front on Barkley's 1-yard TD early in the third quarter after New York recovered a Keisean Nixon fumble on a punt return. DeVito had a 26-yard run before Barkley scored.

After Carlson responded with a 32-yard FG, DeVito capped a 75-yard drive with his pass to Hodgins for a 21-13 lead. Robinson also caught a flea-flicker on the drive.

Green Bay and New York scored touchdowns on consecutive series early in the game.

Wide receiver Reed scored on a 16-yard sweep late in the first quarter. It came one play after Love hit running back AJ Dillon on a 35-yard pass play.

Barkley's 5-yard scoring run came one play after the running back took a direct snap and handed off to Robinson for a 32-yard run.



BRYAN WOOLSTON/AP

Houston Texans quarterback C.J. Stroud walks off the field after being injured against the New York Jets on Sunday in East Rutherford, N.J.

NFL

Scoreboard

American Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Miami	9	4	0	.692	411	294
Buffalo	7	6	0	.538	348	244
N.Y. Jets	5	8	0	.385	201	257
e-New England	3	10	0	.231	169	272

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Jacksonville	8	5	0	.615	312	290
Houston	7	6	0	.538	287	279
Indianapolis	7	6	0	.538	314	330
Tennessee	5	8	0	.385	241	282

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	10	3	0	.769	361	218
Cleveland	8	5	0	.615	289	272
Cincinnati	7	6	0	.538	280	287
Pittsburgh	7	6	0	.538	210	250

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	8	5	0	.615	292	228
Denver	7	6	0	.538	287	309
L.A. Chargers	5	8	0	.385	282	282
Las Vegas	5	8	0	.385	202	259

National Conference

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	10	3	0	.769	421	233
Philadelphia	10	3	0	.769	342	321
N.Y. Giants	5	8	0	.385	183	314
Washington	4	9	0	.308	261	395

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	6	7	0	.462	251	269
New Orleans	6	7	0	.462	285	261
Tampa Bay	6	7	0	.462	262	270
e-Carolina	1	12	0	.077	197	341

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Detroit	9	4	0	.692	340	314
Minnesota	7	6	0	.538	266	242
Green Bay	6	7	0	.462	280	267
Chicago	5	8	0	.385	270	309

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
San Francisco	10	3	0	.769	380	205
L.A. Rams	6	7	0	.462	299	290
Seattle	6	7	0	.462	280	318
Arizona	3	10	0	.231	230	331

e-Eliminated from playoffs

Thursday's game

New England 21, Pittsburgh 18

Sunday's games

Baltimore 37, L.A. Rams 31, OT
 Chicago 28, Detroit 13
 Cincinnati 34, Indianapolis 14
 Cleveland 31, Jacksonville 27
 N.Y. Jets 30, Houston 6
 New Orleans 28, Carolina 6
 Tampa Bay 29, Atlanta 25
 Minnesota 3, Las Vegas 0
 San Francisco 28, Seattle 16
 Buffalo 20, Kansas City 17
 Denver 24, L.A. Chargers 7
 Dallas 33, Philadelphia 13
Open: Arizona, Washington

Monday's games

N.Y. Giants 24, Green Bay 22
Tennessee 28, Miami 27

Thursday, Dec. 14

L.A. Chargers at Las Vegas

Saturday, Dec. 16

Minnesota at Cincinnati
Pittsburgh at Indianapolis
Denver at Detroit

Sunday, Dec. 17

Atlanta at Carolina
 Chicago at Cleveland
 Houston at Tennessee
 Kansas City at New England
 N.Y. Giants at New Orleans
 N.Y. Jets at Miami
 Tampa Bay at Green Bay
 San Francisco at Arizona
 Washington at L.A. Rams
 Dallas at Buffalo
 Baltimore at Jacksonville

Monday, Dec. 18

Philadelphia at Seattle

Thursday, Dec. 21

New Orleans at L.A. Rams

Saturday, Dec. 23

Cincinnati at Pittsburgh
Buffalo at L.A. Chargers

Titans rally for win over Dolphins

By ALANIS THAMES
Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Will Levis knew he couldn't get too caught up on his mistake. The Tennessee Titans' rookie made a bad pitch to running back Derrick Henry in the fourth quarter against the Miami Dolphins, resulting in a fumble that eventually allowed Miami to take a 14-point lead.

But Levis put the play behind him and directed two touchdown drives in the final 4½ minutes, and Tennessee rallied to stun Miami 28-27 on Monday night, knocking the Dolphins out of the top spot in the AFC.

"That was a nightmare," Levis said of the turnover. "No one wanted to look at me. No one wanted to talk to me. I didn't want to talk to anybody after that. I just wanted to move on — be ready to attack that next two-minute drive that I knew we'd be able to get."

The Titans (5-8) held Tua Tagovailoa and Miami's explosive offense in check for most of the game but still fell behind by two touchdowns in the fourth thanks to critical mistakes that gave short fields to the Dolphins (9-4). Raheem Mostert ran for TDs of 3 and 5 yards to put Miami ahead 27-13.

Levis, a second-round draft pick making his sixth career start, led a nine-play, 75-yard drive that took 1:54, capping it with a 3-yard touchdown pass to DeAndre Hopkins and a 2-point conversion throw to Nick Westbrook-Ikhine.

The Titans got a stop and Levis hit Hopkins for 28 yards and Chigoziem Okonkwo for 16 yards to get into scoring position. Derrick Henry scored on a 3-yard run and the extra point gave the Titans a one-point lead.

Levis ripped off his helmet, screamed for joy and embraced coach Mike Vrabel on the sideline.

The Dolphins took over with no timeouts left and got to their own 45, but Harold Landry III sacked



LYNNE SLADKY/AP

Tennessee Titans tight ends, from left, Kevin Rader, Trevon Wesco and Chigoziem Okonkwo celebrate their comeback 28-27 win over the Dolphins on Monday in Miami.

Tagovailoa to put the game away. Miami lost at home for the first time this season, and its three-game winning streak was snapped. Baltimore now has a one-game lead for the best record in the conference.

It was the first win by a team down 14 with under three minutes left since 2016.

"Everybody thought this was going to be another Miami-Broncos 70 points put on us," said Titans linebacker Arden Key. "But we don't care about the outside noise."

Miami played much of the game without star receiver Tyreek Hill, who sat out the second quarter and the majority of the third after injuring his ankle in the first quarter. He returned and caught passes of 23 and 25 yards to set up Jason Sanders' 31-yard field goal that tied it at 13 at the beginning of the fourth. Hill, who

leads the NFL in receiving yards, was in and out of the game from there and finished with 61 yards.

Tagovailoa was 23-for-33 for 240 yards and had his streak of 21 consecutive games with a touchdown pass snapped.

Levis went 23-for-38 with a touchdown pass and an interception. Hopkins had seven catches for 124 yards, and Henry ran for two scores.

A grind-it-out game took a wild turn in the fourth quarter, beginning when Tennessee's Eric Gar-ror tried to field a bouncing punt with the game tied at 13-all with 6:16 remaining. The ball caromed off his hands and Elijah Campbell recovered for the Dolphins at the 7.

Mostert punched it in, then scored again after the Titans fumbled on their next possession on a botched pitch by Levis to Henry. Mostert leads the NFL with 16

touchdowns rushing.

Henry, who finished with 34 yards, moved to 15th in NFL history in rushing yards when he scored his 87th career rushing TD in the first quarter that tied the game at 7 going into the half.

Miami's top-ranked offense was held scoreless in the first half against a Titans defense that has given up the fewest red zone touchdowns in the NFL. The Dolphins were 2-for-5 in the red zone and lost a fumble at the Titans 2 on a bad quarterback-center exchange on their first possession.

"I think there's a lot of people that are going to be — it's going to be tough to go to sleep tonight, including myself," Miami coach Mike McDaniell said. "That's not something that you can do and expect to win football games. It's a hard, hard lesson, but no lead is safe. I think that's one of the tougher parts about it."

Dolphins' Hill sidelined with ankle injury

Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Tyreek Hill sat out a big portion of Miami's 28-27 loss to the Tennessee Titans Monday night after he landed awkwardly on his ankle while being tackled in the first quarter.

The star Dolphins receiver returned late in the third quarter as fans chanted "MVP!" but was in and out of the game from there and finished with 61 yards receiving. Hill entered the game as the NFL's leader in receiving yards with 1,481 and was on pace for the first 2,000-yard receiving season in league history.

Hill said after the game that he was in a lot of pain and could not cut and change directions like he normally would.

"When it happened, my first reaction was 'My ankle gone,'" Hill said. "Then my adrenaline kicked in, and I ran off the field. Then I sat



Hill

for a while and it got stiff."

Hill got hurt when he was tackled on a catch that went for a 6-yard loss. He went down briefly and grabbed at his left leg. He began limping off the field, then ran off. Hill stood on the sideline with his helmet in his hand as the second quarter started and did not return until there were about six minutes left in the third quarter.

"I just made up my mind that it's gonna hurt, it's gonna suck tonight and tomorrow morning, but I just went back in the game," Hill said.

Hill came in and immediately caught passes of 23 and 25 yards to set up Jason Sanders' 31-yard field goal that tied it at 13 at the beginning of the fourth, but he wasn't on the field much as

the Dolphins tried to rally in the closing minutes after blowing a late 14-point lead.

Miami's offense was out of sync for much of the game, but coach Mike McDaniell didn't want to use the excuse of not having its leading receiver.

"There's a good amount of offense that goes through him," McDaniell said. "It wasn't the reason for the lack of first-half or really first three-quarter points. I think there were just critical times that we would be off a hair on first or second down and you're put in a third down situation, and our protection wasn't exactly what maybe we'd be used to on a play or two.

"Obviously a player of Tyreek's caliber, it hurts when he's not in. However, I think there was plenty of offense to be had and we've got a lot of guys that I trust to do that."

SPORTS



Late comeback

Titans rally from 14 down in last five minutes to stun Dolphins » **NFL, Page 23**

NBA

Making themselves relevant

Youthful Magic off to impressive start thanks to defense

BY NOAH TRISTER
Associated Press

Two of the top teams in the Eastern Conference standings will face off this week when the Boston Celtics host a pair of games against the ...

Orlando Magic?

No, that's not a misprint.

After a 104-94 win over Cleveland on Monday night, the Magic are tied for second place in the East with Milwaukee, just a game behind the Celtics. Orlando announced its presence with a nine-game winning streak that began in mid-November — a run that included wins over Denver and

Boston — and now the Magic will take on the Celtics again Friday and Sunday.

“We don’t want to be the doormat anymore.”

Jalen Suggs
Orlando guard

“We don’t want to be the doormat anymore, and a team that people talk about as, ‘It’s just the Orlando Magic,’” guard Jalen Suggs said. “We want to be that tough team, and you’ve got to scout

and bring full mental energy and physicality when you come play us.”

Orlando hasn’t made the playoffs since 2020, and even that doesn’t totally tell the story of the franchise’s recent futility. The Magic haven’t won a playoff series since 2010, when Dwight Howard led them back to the conference finals a year after Orlando reached the NBA Finals for the second time in franchise history.

Since Howard left in 2012, the Magic have managed only one winning season, when they went 42-40 in 2018-19.

There were some positive signs a season ago, when they went 34-48 for a 12-game improvement. That still wasn’t enough for even a spot in the play-in round, but Orlando has taken another big step with a young core of players that continues to grow together.

The team’s starting lineup includes four players age 22 or younger. All were recent first-round draft picks.

Unlike successful Magic teams in the



Forward Paolo Banchero, the No. 1 draft pick in 2022 out of Duke, won Rookie of the Year honors last year and is averaging 20.7 points per game this season. He’s one of four starters for the Magic who are age 22 or younger.

JOHN RAOUX/AP

SEE RELEVANT ON PAGE 21

Pacers hand Pistons 20th consecutive loss » **NBA, Page 20**

