Hitting the hotspots

Virus forces US military police to expand off-base patrols of Korean establishments

BY MATTHEW KEELER
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Routine U.S. military police patrols into the entertainment district outside Camp Humphreys took on new meaning when coronavirus cases, seemingly curbed in South Korea, resurfaced with the loosening of social-distancing measures.

Just a week ago, new cases were being re-
ported in the single digits. That number has grown nearly eight-fold following an out-
break in Seoul’s popular nightlife district in Itaewon. Anyone who visited clubs and bars there between April 30 and May 6 is likely to have been exposed to the virus, according to the Korean Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

Courtesy patrols by military police have been standard practice for years. Police routinely visit drinking establishments out-
side the gates of nearly every U.S. military

SEE PATROLS ON PAGE 5

RAHMAT GUL/NW

A man is consoled after an attack in a maternity hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Tuesday.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

After attacks, Afghan forces resume effort against Taliban

BY J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan security forces resumed operations against the Taliban on Wednesday, a day after attacks against a hospital in Kabul and a funeral in Nangarhar province claimed the lives of at least 40 people, officials said.

“Our offensive operations are started today all over Afghanistan, based on President [Ashraf] Ghani’s order,” Afghan Defense Ministry deputy spokesman Fawad Aman said.

Ghani ordered the military to resume operations against the Taliban in a televised speech Tuesday night, citing increased levels of violence by the insurgent group.

NATO’s Resolute Support command said Wednesday that international forces would continue “defensive strikes” against the Taliban if they attack Afghan forces but will not shift to an of-

ensive posture.

Ghani’s order came the same day Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called for the Afghan government and Taliban to work together to find the perpetrators of two deadly attacks Tuesday in different parts of Afghanistan.

SEE ATTACKS ON PAGE 4

Online: Get the latest on the virus outbreak

stripes.com/coronavirus

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STARS AND STRIPES

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THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020

50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Spc. Jacob Kincer and Spc. Nicholas Woznick, investigators with the 557th Military Police Company, patrol outside the gates of Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on May 1.
Dispute over Tesla reopening coming to an end

By Tom Krisher
Associated Press

DETROIT — It appears the dispute between Tesla and San Francisco Bay Area authorities over the reopening of a factory in the face of shutdown orders is coming to an end.

The Alameda County Public Health Department announced on Twitter early Wednesday that the Fremont, Calif., plant will be able to go beyond basic operations this week and start making vehicles next Monday — as long as it delivers on the worker safety precautions that it agreed to.

It wasn’t clear from a press release whether Tesla would face any punishment for reopening in defiance of county orders.

The Health Department said Monday it warned the company was operating in violation of the county health order, and hoped Tesla will “comply without further enforcement measures” until the county approves a site-specific plan required by the state.

State law allows a fine of up to $1,000 a day or up to 90 days in jail for operating in violation of health orders.

The plant in Fremont, a city of more than 230,000 people south of San Francisco, had been closed since March 23. It employs about 10,000 workers.

Tesla released a plan to maintain worker safety, including the wearing of gloves and masks, installing barriers between workers and maintaining social distancing.

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**MILITARY**

Army to resume drills in Europe with precautions

By John Vandiver

STUTTGART, Germany — Thousands of U.S. and Polish soldiers will participate in drills next month, marking the first time since the coronavirus crisis began that American troops will assemble for a large-scale exercise in Europe.

“All COVID-19 precautionary measures will be taken to ensure the health and protection of participating armed forces and the local population,” U.S. Army Europe said in a statement Wednesday.

Called Allied Spirit, the drill is connected to the scaled-down version of Defender-Europe 20, a series of events that was intended to be among the largest Army training efforts on the Continent since the Cold War.

USAREUR said Allied Spirit, which was originally scheduled for May, will be held at Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area in Poland from June 5 to June 19.

About 6,000 U.S. and Polish soldiers will take part in the exercise, which will involve a Polish airborne operation and a U.S.-Polish division-sized river crossing, USAREUR said.

Soldiers of the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division at Konotop Range, Drawsko-Pomorskie Training Area, Poland, on April 18. Soldiers from 3rd ID will be among the 6,000 troops training in Poland in the Allied Spirit exercise scheduled for next month.

Roughly 4,000 U.S. soldiers will come from the 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters (Forward), the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team and the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

Some 2,000 Polish soldiers will come from airborne, cavalry and mechanized units.

In March, the Pentagon ordered a halt to deployments for Defender-Europe 20 because of coronavirus concerns. Major parts of the exercise were eliminated, including an operation that involved paratroopers dropping into the Republic of Georgia and the Baltics.

Defender, originally intended to include 20,000 U.S.-based troops, was designed to demonstrate the military’s ability to mobilize large numbers of forces for missions in Europe. Such capabilities have become a priority amid concerns about a more aggressive Russia.

The Army had already deployed 6,000 troops, including a division headquarters and an armored combat unit, when the decision was made to reduce the exercise. About 90% of the equipment also had already been loaded on ships or aircraft.

Many strategic objectives were met despite the cancellations, USAREUR said. However, the Army is planning exercises over the next few months that will aim to achieve some of Defender’s previous goals, including drawing from Army pre-positioned weapons stocks around Europe.

Also, the 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command and the 41st Field Artillery Brigade are expected to participate in exercises in the Baltic region, while the Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade is planning airborne operations in the Balkans and Black Sea regions.

Vet pilots see first survey data on how many have cancer

By Tara Copp

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Last fall, the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association asked its 3,400 members, all current or former military pilots, to respond to a survey about whether they had been diagnosed with cancer. The response was “astonishing,” a leader of the group said.

A total of 894 association members, known as “River Rats,” responded to the seven-question survey which asked, “Have you ever been diagnosed with cancer?” The results of the survey were shared exclusively with the Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade is planning airborne operations in the Balkans and Black Sea regions.

**Correction**

A May 13 story on the Aviano 1Idol competition should have identified one of the judges as Master Sgt. Nathan Parry. The shows will appear on the 31st Force Support Squadron’s Facebook page.

**‘500 of them, 56% of them, said ‘Yes, I am disclosing a personal cancer.’ That was astonishing. I wasn’t prepared for that.’**

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retired Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle pilot

By John Vandiver

Stars and Stripes

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How many of its former members had died of cancer.

It also didn’t track what type of aircraft the pilot flew or age at diagnosis. Alcazar said the association kept the questions limited in order to get the most responses possible, and avoid any privacy concerns.

The association plans to approach Congress with this initial data to seek legislation for a more exhaustive scientific study, conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to review the medical records of all pilots, living and deceased, for the last several decades to determine how many have had cancer.

“Now I’ve got a narrative to take to lawmakers on Capitol Hill,” Alcazar said. “It’s just not four or five or 10 or 20 or 100 emails’ of personal stories of pilot cancers, he said. “It’s a large organization that took the time to do a well thought-out survey. And the results say, ‘It’s worth a look, folks.’”

The association would like to see a congressionally mandated study of all military pilots and aircrews for all types of military aircraft. The Air Force is conducting such a study of all its former aviators going back to 1970.

Several lawmakers, including Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., have introduced legislation to look at aspects of military pilot cancers.

An investigation by McClatchy last fall found that the rate of treatment at VA health care facilities for various types of cancers across the services had skyrocketed over the last two decades. For example, prostate cancer treatment rates among Air Force veterans rose 44% from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2018.

Alcazar said the River Rats have shared their initial survey findings with Air Force leadership.

Even though the association’s 3,400 aviator membership is large, it is a small sliver of the total number of retired Air Force and Navy aviators who have served as pilots or crew on fighter, surveillance, ground attack, transport or other aircraft.

For example, between 800 and 1,000 Navy pilots or aircrew left the military each year between the fiscal year 1999 and fiscal year 2018, according to data provided to McClatchy by the Navy.

The Air Force did not immediately provide the numbers of how many of the approximately 19,000 currently serving aviators leave military service each year.

Getting actual numbers on the likelihood of cancer among pilots could help the military medical community save lives, Alcazar said.

“You walk into a VA hospital for the first time. They go ‘Oh, you flew F-18s in the Marine Corps.’ Or, ‘You flew F-16s in the United States Air Force.’ There’s a whole bunch of certain kinds of cancers that have been found to be a little bit more common in these groups of pilots than they are in the mainstream population,” he said.

“So we’re going to start looking at indicators. We’re going to start screening for those.”
3D mammograms accessible soon for Tricare users

BY NIKKI WENTLING Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department will add 3D breast cancer screenings to its Tricare coverage after female veterans in Congress pushed the Pentagon to make it available to active-duty service members, retirees and their families.

The permanent change will take effect May 29, according to a Pentagon policy memorandum issued last month. Tricare users over age 30 will be eligible for digital breast tomosynthesis, a 3D mammogram said to better detect breast cancer.

“This is a major victory for our female service members and veterans covered under TRI-CARE,” Sen. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., said Tuesday in a statement. “Women in our Armed Forces now have access to the best preventative breast cancer screenings. I’m glad the Defense Department heard our repeated calls for change and implemented this commonsense policy.”

The Pentagon first made 3D mammogram available under Tricare starting Jan. 1, 2020, but only on a temporary basis. Tricare offered DBT in some instances for diagnosing patients but not for routine screenings.

Thomas McCaffery, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said in December he could not approve the addition of DBT for screenings permanent because the United States Preventative Services Task Force doesn’t recommend the technology. It wasn’t immediately clear Tuesday what caused the Pentagon to make the change permanent starting May 29.

Digital breast tomosynthesis builds a three-dimensional image of a breast to better detect and diagnose cancer, especially for women with dense tissue. The technology is available to women who use Medicare or the Department of Veterans Affairs for their health care. Tricare, though, covered only mammograms with two-dimensional images, which McSally and other lawmakers contended was a suboptimal standard of care.

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer for women, with one in eight women developing it in their lifetimes, according to the American Cancer Society. DBT has been found to help radiologists detect breast cancer and to reduce the need for biopsies.

3D mammograms accessible soon for Tricare users

Warship spills 4K gallons of fuel into river

Associated Press

YORKTOWN, Va. — A large warship spilled 4,000 gallons of fuel into a Virginia river late last week, the U.S. Navy has confirmed.

The USS Philippine Sea, a guided-missile cruiser, spilled the diesel fuel into the York River on Thursday morning, news outlets reported.

The ship was at a pier at the Naval Weapons Station in Yorktown at the time, according to Ted Brown, a spokesperson for the Navy. Cleanup efforts began immediately using a fuel vacuum truck and fuel-absorbing materials, Brown added.

Attacks: Intensity, barbarity of attacks puts pressure on Afghanistan’s leader to respond

FROM FRONT PAGE

At least 24 people were killed, including two newborns, in an attack on a maternity clinic run by international medical organization Doctors Without Borders at a hospital in Kabul, the Afghan public health ministry said, revising the death toll upward. No one has claimed responsibility for that attack.

A separate attack on the funeral of a police commander in eastern Nangarhar province, which killed at least 25 people and wounded at least 66, has been claimed by Islamic State.

The Taliban have denied involvement in both attacks.

Pompeo called the attacks “heinous” and “particularly appalling” in a statement Tuesday. But noting that the Taliban have said they were not involved in either assault, he called on the insurgent group and the Afghan government to work together “to bring the perpetrators to justice.”

That statement “does not signal encouragement for a re-escalation of conflict,” said Andrew Watkins, a senior Afghanistan analyst at the Brussels-based International Crisis Group think tank.

Afghan security forces adopted a defensive posture before the Taliban and U.S. signed a deal on Feb. 29 that was meant to lead to a negotiated end of nearly 20 years of war. The deal says that if the Taliban keep terrorists from operating in Afghanistan, stop attacking the U.S. and its allies, and hold intra-Afghan peace talks with the government, foreign forces would begin a phased withdrawal and be out of the country by early summer next year.

But the Taliban relaunched attacks on Afghan troops almost immediately after the deal was reached and violence across the country has continued.

Although Ghani’s office refused to comment on whether Tuesday’s attacks led him to order troops back onto the offensive, the public reaction to the violence may have forced him to take action, Watkins said.

“The intensity of many Kabul residents’ responses to the barbarity of Tuesday’s attacks seemed to put immediate political pressure on Ghani,” he said.

However, Ghani’s announcement doesn’t necessarily represent the end of the tempestuous peace process, Watkins said.

“No party wants to be seen as the reason this process fails — even when posturing or acting in ways that make it more difficult,” he said.

Twitter: @jplawrence3

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Islamic State militants hide in sparsely populated farmlands in Iraq from where they stage attacks on Iraqi forces scrambling to curb the spread of the coronavirus in the country, the head of the 70-man Norwegian contingent in this Mideast nation was quoted as saying Wednesday.

Iraq is not just facing the global pandemic but also a resurgence of attacks by the Islamic State group and a financial crunch as oil prices plummet to historic lows — a crisis for a nation depending on crude exports to fund 90% of its state expenditures.

The militants “reside in agricultural areas and are thus not particularly susceptible to the virus infection,” Lt. Col. Stein Grongstad told Norway’s VG newspaper. In recent weeks, they have been targeting Iraqi forces “that are not currently coordinated to the same extent as before the virus struck.”

Gronstad described the situation as a “paradox,” that at a time when the world is grappling with the pandemic, ISIS attacks are on the rise.

“The Islamic State group has been moving the fighting from Syria to Iraq ... (and) is strengthening, both financially and militarily,” he said.

Since 2017, a Norwegian contingent has been based in western Iraq’s vast and mostly desert Anbar province, where it trains and advises Iraqi security forces. Iraq has reported more than 2,700 cases of coronavirus infections, including 109 deaths.

Virus helps ISIS, says top Norwegian military official

Associated Press

Did you know?

- Female breast cancer represents 15.2% of all new cancer cases in the U.S.
- 62% of breast cancer cases are diagnosed at a localized stage, for which the 5-year survival rate is 99%.

Marines outline prioritized PCS schedule

Plan groups those moving to new duty stations into 3 tiers

BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON Stars and Stripes

Marines whose moves are now in limbo, along with others planning to move this year, will be grouped into three different scheduling tiers as the Transportation Command battles a permanent change of station backlog throughout the military.

The service outlined its prioritized PCS scheduling in a memo Tuesday, based on an expected June 30 expiration date for the Defense Department’s “stop move,” and to help TRANSCOM and the Distribution Management Office manage the spread of the coronavirus.

Among the service’s recommendations was that the third tier of moves, expected to begin in September and complete by the end of November, include others moving to or from assignments in the continental United States and Hawaii.

The tiers do not apply to moves within 50 miles or changes of assignment at the same duty station. But it is possible that the service plans to use such moves as much as possible — or do not affect full do-it-yourself moves, also known as “DITY moves,” which must be approved by Marine chains of command. Other exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, the memo said.

Marines with orders should try to schedule their goods shipments “without delay” to help ease the burden on the transportation system, the memo stated.

Commanders can approve shipments to begin as soon as this month, with the Marine’s travel slated for July or later, but doing so may incur higher lodging costs that won’t be covered by added temporary allowances or entitlements.

Marines may also extend tours, but will need to submit requests to Headquarters Marine Corps with command approval.

Installation members are behaving.

distribution management office

The adjusted plan is designed to help TRANSCOM and the Distribution Management Office grapple with a four-month delay in household goods shipments.

The service outlined its prioritized PCS scheduling in a memo Tuesday, based on an expected June 30 expiration date for the Defense Department’s “stop move,” which had been ordered to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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Patrols:

Teams are usually accompanied by local police officers

FROM FRONT PAGE

Installation in the country to ensure service members are behaving.

Now, because of the declaration of a public health emergency by U.S. Forces Korea commander Gen. Robert Abrams, military police are also peering inside restaurants and bars to ensure U.S. personnel are complying with health protection condition restrictions.

USFK personnel must avoid gatherings of more than 15 people. Off-base activities such as dining at restaurants and visiting barbershops, bars, movie theaters and amusement parks remain prohibited.

“We need to stop the virus,” said Sgt. 1st Class Alex Reyes, the provost sergeant for Area III, which encompasses Camp Humphreys. “The way we can do it as law enforcement professionals is by actually visiting the hotspots and making sure everyone is complying with [restrictions]."

The Camp Humphreys task force consists of a noncommissioned officer, three soldiers and three South Korean troops serving as Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army, or KATUSAs.

“We have the backup,” Reyes said. “When we go out on town patrols, we meet up with our Korean national police counterparts. They have primary jurisdiction off post.”

Anyone who refuses to identify themselves to South Korean authorities may be taken into custody and turned over to military authorities, Reyes explained.

Violators are escorted back on post and their chain of command or supervisors are notified of the violation.

Several service members have been released in rank and Defense Department civilians barred from all U.S. installations in South Korea for breaching the public health regulations.

The virus outbreak has proven to be an unexpected adversary for junior law enforcement.

“China’s efforts to target these sectors comes amid heightened tensions between the two countries over the source of the outbreak and Trump administration complaints that China did not adequately alert the world to the danger posed by the novel coronavirus.”

The warning also echoes long-standing U.S. complaints that China has engaged in the wholesale theft of technology and trade secrets to build its economy.

Institutions which have received media attention for their efforts related to COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, should assume that they would be targeted and should take precautions, the Department of Justice said.

The potential theft of this information jeopardizes the delivery of secure, effective, and efficient treatment options,” it said.

The FBI and the cybersecurity agency said they were issuing the alert to raise public awareness of the potential threat and said additional technical details would be released in the coming days.

US: Chinese hackers likely targeting virus researchers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Organizations conducting research into COVID-19 may be targeted by computer hackers linked to the Chinese government, according to the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security.

Neither agency cited any specific examples Wednesday, but they warned that institutions and companies involved in work on vaccines, treatments and testing for the novel coronavirus should take additional security measures to protect data and be aware of the potential threat.

“China’s efforts to target these sectors pose a significant threat to our nation’s response to COVID-19," said a statement from the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. “This announcement is intended to raise awareness for research institutions and the American public and provide resources and guidance for those who may be targeted.”

It comes amid heightened tensions between the two countries over the source of the outbreak and Trump administration complaints that China did not adequately alert the world to the danger posed by the new coronavirus.

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Commanders turn to social media to inform

BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — The commander in charge of Sasebo Naval Base in southwestern Japan began a recent Q&A session on Facebook Live with a sweeping update on the coronavirus pandemic.

Capt. Brad Stallings put the number of American lives the disease had claimed in terms of the war: the country has waged: 24 times more than the Afghan War, 11 times the Iraq conflict, twice as many as the American Revolution and nearly the same number of American service members killed in Vietnam.

“That’s sobering, and that’s in under two months,” he said April 23. “Our country is hurting.”

During the pandemic, service members have been listening to their leaders in more relaxed settings via social media instead of morning formations or auditorium assemblies.

Commanding officers around bases in Japan are increasingly using Facebook Live, for example, to update base restrictions, quell rumors, uphold rule breakers and inspire their troops to stay the course.

The exchange is two-way, as leaders like Stallings respond to questions coming at them, although often filtered by public affairs officers, in real time. Service members, their families and civilian employees meanwhile take in the show anonymously on their home screens, tapping out questions and hitting emoji buttons.

At Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, base commander Col. Lance Lewis said his team began preparing for the coronavirus in January.

Lewis said he quickly realized the pandemic would not just be a Marine Corps concern, it would affect 13,500 people within his responsibility — Marines, sailors, their families and civilian employees, including Japanese citizens, working on base.

He needed to communicate rapidly across 30 tenant commands, including a Marine air group and Navy and Japanese air wings.

Lewis focused on a social media campaign using the air station’s own social media accounts to counter misinformation while providing frequent updates of timely, accurate information.

He borrowed a technique from U.S. military commanders in Korea and Europe who were first to confront the virus on U.S. installations, Lewis said during a May 1 interview with Stars and Stripes. He personally penned Facebook updates nearly every day during the first six weeks of the Defense Department’s response to the pandemic.

Lewis employed a Marine Corps Communications Strategy and Operations team to produce his messaging. The shop employs public relations specialists, photographers, broadcasters and videographers.

Lewis said his priority was providing accurate information from credible, trustworthy sources right from the get-go.

Initially, Navy doctors at the base’s Branch Health Clinic provided medical information, Lewis said. He said he used direct quotes from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to refute rumors circulating on social media.

“We were very open and honest with our procedures, and the ‘why’ behind things,” he said. “Instead of saying, ‘Wear masks!’ full stop. It was ‘We need to wear masks because …’”

In some cases, commanders used social media to disprove rumors. Stallings used the base Facebook page May 4 to announce that some sailors had violated movement restrictions over a previous weekend.

In other sessions, he, like other commanders, connected with his troops in more personal ways. During a livestream last month, Stallings shared that he had lost a cousin to the coronavirus and would be unable to attend the funeral.

“It’s frustrating in so many ways to be stuck at home,” he said.

Spontaneously or on cue, commanders also displayed flashes of wit.

Lewis, for example, in an April 20 post explained that the city of Hiroshima is off limits, take-out allowed and face coverings are required indoors.

“Finally, to put one of the longest standing arguments known to man to rest, ‘The Empire Strikes Back’ is and has always been the best Star Wars movie,” he concluded.

Lewis said that just as the Marine Corps developed its communications strategy units from lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, the pandemic has added its own page to that story.

Disseminating accurate information and crushing misinformation is now a focus of military leaders, he said. Responding to coronavirus is teaching leaders up and down the chain of command how to do it with compassion, humor, and gravity to reach the widest possible audience.

Air Force band covers ‘Cowboy Bebop’ theme with Japanese musicians

BY THERON GODBOLD
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Air Force musicians teamed up with Japanese troops and a local high school band to record a music video intended to lift people’s spirits during the coronavirus pandemic.

The project yielded a version of “Tank!,” the theme song for the popular Japanese anime TV series “Cowboy Bebop.” The Air Force Band of the Pacific-Asia used social distancing to produce the project with a Tachikawa city FM radio station, Hamura city high-schoolers and Japan Air Self-Defense Force musicians.

“What makes this project so great is its collaboration with our host nation,” band leader and saxophonist Master Sgt. Jeremiah True told Stars and Stripes on May 8. “It was a no-brainer in my opinion.”

In April, the Air Force band’s community relations specialist, Masato Yagi, contacted FM Tachikawa president Noriaki Kaji with an idea: have the band and the station work together on something to entertain listeners staying home due to the coronavirus outbreak, Kaji said by phone Tuesday.

A plan came together with support from the JASDF Central Band, which practices at Camp Higashi in Tachikawa, and the Daichi Junior/Senior High School band.

The song was chosen April 23 and FM Tachikawa obtained the rights to record it.

About 90 people, including more than 30 musicians, worked at a distance to plan, record and edit the project. The resulting 4-minute video has received thousands of “likes” on the JASDF band’s Facebook page and nearly 6,000 views on the radio station’s YouTube channel since it was posted May 6.

A coveted solo went to Senior Airman Derrick Newbold, a veteran saxophonist from Miami who joined the Air Force four years ago and has been stationed at Yokota his entire career.

“It was just a great opportunity to experience and play in a new setting and learn,” he said. “I also really like the song ‘Tank!’; it’s fun to play.”

“Cowboy Bebop” is the futuristic misadventures and tragedies of an easygoing bounty hunter and his partners, according to IMDb.com. “Tank!,” was composed by Yoko Kanno and performed by the Seatbelts, according to cowboybebop.fandom.com, a fan website.

“It is a big band jazz piece that goes by a Latin-infused hard bop style with a rhythm section that mixes a double bass and bongo drums,” the entry states. Offscreen joint productions could be in the works, according to Yagi and FM Tachikawa.

“I didn’t think it would go so smoothly,” said Kaji of FM Tachikawa. “I guess this is what happens when individual players are highly skilled.”
Singapore sees surge in cases

Outbreak could affect US Navy logistics hub

By Seth Robson
Stars and Stripes

More than 24,000 coronavirus cases in Singapore threaten a key Pacific logistics hub for the U.S. Navy, according to a local defense expert.

Outbreaks in dormitories for migrant workers there have catapulted the island from a nation with fewer than 600 cases through the beginning of April to the epicenter of the outbreak in Southeast Asia. Singapore’s Ministry of Health announced 884 new cases Tuesday, taking the island’s count to 24,671, The Straits Times newspaper reported that day.

The outbreak could affect 1,000 service members, civilians and their families in Singapore serving with Task Force 73 and Command Logistics Group Western Pacific — teams that arm, fuel, feed and support 7th Fleet operations in the region and support U.S. littoral combat ships stationed there since 2016.

Of concern are cases among Singapore’s 1 million migrant workers, including 300,000 who live in congested dormitories that have been flagged as disease hot spots, said Jan Chong, an assistant professor in the National University of Singapore’s political science department.

“Migrant workers are employed in shipbuilding and repair facilities used by the U.S. Navy,” he said.

The Sembawang district, home to several shipyards as well as the Task Force 73 headquarters, is frequented by many migrant workers, Chong said.

“The situation with the Roosevelt — a train point for warships challenging Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea — might not get certain kinds of work done or work might be slowed, Chong said.

“If the U.S. wants to continue with deployments it will have to think about it because there are maintenance and other needs,” he said.

Singaporeans have monitored news about the outbreak aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt, which caused that aircraft carrier to divert to Guam on March 26. About a month later, more than 1,150 Roosevelt sailors had tested positive for the virus and many were moved off the ship and isolated in local hospitals.

“The situation with the Roosevelt shows there is some difficulty in maintaining a ship and what to do when there is an outbreak onboard,” he said.

Chong questioned what would happen if a ship arrived in Singapore carrying infected sailors.

“There would definitely be a lot of concern,” he said. “We are trying to fight to prevent our medical system becoming overwhelmed. We are just managing to keep things together. If you had a carrier with 5,000 people that came, it could be very messy diplomatically as well as medically.”

The Navy will not release details of coronavirus cases among its forces in Singapore, Lt. Cmdr. Sean Riordan, a spokesman for Task Force 73 and Command Logistics Group Western Pacific, said in emailed answers to questions Tuesday.

“We won’t be providing updates by specific location or command,” he said.

The outbreak among migrant workers in Singapore has been taking conservative measures such as maximizing telework to prevent the spread of coronavi-

us among its forces there, Riordan said.

“We have also stressed the basics: good hand washing, physical distancing, and taking appropriate action if feeling sick … our personnel here are required to wear masks any time outside their homes, maintain social distancing, and actively monitor themselves for even mild symptoms,” he said.

The Navy is also offering mental health, stress management and religious resources to mitigate potential negative effects of social isolation during stay-home periods, Riordan said.

“This is not business as usual,” he said. “On board our ships, we are enforcing social distancing, minimizing group gatherings, wearing [personal protective equipment], and cleaning extensively.”

Quadriple watchstanders are screening anyone who walks on board Navy ships and referring sailors and civilian mariners with symptoms for medical evaluation, he said.

“For our logistics fleet, we are following U.S. Pacific Fleet’s guidance instructing Navy vessels to remain at sea for at least 14 days in order to monitor Sailors and civilian mariners for any symptoms of the coronavirus,” he said.

All Military Sealift Command ships manned by civilian mariners took early preventive measures enabling the Navy to continue supplying warships at sea, Riordan added.

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Army cancels summer cadet training for ROTC students

By Corey Dickstein
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army will not send ROTC cadets to Fort Knox, Ky., this summer amid the coronavirus pandemic, halting college programs designed to bring them for their fall semesters.

The Army, assessing a variety of concerns and skills including their fitness levels, weapons proficiency, military tactics, and land navigation.

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Cold cases getting colder as pandemic wears on

By Stefanie Dazio
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Cold cases are getting colder. Detectives are struggling to connect with victims through thick masks, and investigators accustomed to wearing plainclothes are digging out their dusty uniforms for patrol duty as the coronavirus pandemic rages.

Police departments nationwide are grappling with changes that the virus has wrought on their investigations, even as law enforcement agencies report major decreases in crime due to stay-at-home orders. Authorities have said that enough wrongdoings abound to keep police busy, and detective work must still be in-person and hands-on, despite COVID-19. Evidence has to be collected, statements must be taken in person and depositions need to be made face-to-face.

“You put on gloves, you put on masks and you’ve still got to go out and do it,” said Los Angeles Police Capt. Jonathan Tippet, head of the elite Robbery-Homicide Division.

Police around the country have put some investigations on hold as they detail detectives to help out with social distance patrols, or cover for their colleagues out sick with COVID-19.

It’s worrisome to former New York Police Department Sgt. Joe Giacalone, who is concerned about criminals across the country who will go undetected in the meantime.

“That becomes a bigger problem down the road,” Giacalone, a former cold case detective now a professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. “Investigators prevent further victimization by getting these guys off the streets.”

Despite fewer detectives in bureaus, police are finding workarounds, and high-profile cases are still getting the necessary attention. The Los Angeles district attorney filed an additional sexual assault charge against disgraced film mogul Harvey Weinstein in April and investigators in New York continue to delve into an unsolved Long Island serial killer case after they revealed new evidence earlier this year.

In some cases, like cyber or financial crime, interviews can be transitioned to the phone to preserve social distancing. But for others, such as sexual abuse, in-person interviews are a necessity.

For traumatized children who need to be comforted, Los Angeles County sheriff’s detectives give “air hugs” and teach the kids phrases like “I love you” in sign language to overcome the impersonal nature of masks and social distancing.

“They do it anything they can to make these kids and these victims feel safe,” said Carlos Marquez, a detective division commander in the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s District.

Detectives elsewhere have been forced to investigate crimes that are outside their normal specialties. In the hardest-hit part of New Jersey, investigators in the Bergen County Prosecutor’s Office have been moved out of their individual squads — such as narcotics or sex crimes — into “one big detective bureau.”

That bureau is now made up of three mixed 35-person platoons, which work from home part of the time. The goal is to avoid an entire specialty squad contracting — or spreading — the virus and leaving the office without an important skill set.

“We can’t have the homicide squad coming in and out of the building left and right, infecting people,” Chief of Detectives Robert Anzilotti said.

The Bergen detectives are trying to limit extra work that would require bringing more people into headquarters. If a crime is caught on video, there’s less of a need to have a specialist analyze the perpetrator’s cellphone in a digital forensic lab as an additional step, Anzilotti said.

“We’re being more than thorough enough to make sure we sustain a conviction,” he said. “If the phone needs to get dumped, it’s getting dumped.”

The coronavirus may also be indirectly responsible for more overdose deaths, investigators say.

One of the main supply chains for the chemicals to make methamphetamine and fentanyl is in Wuhan, China, the epicenter of the global breakout. As a result, police in Suffolk County, N.Y., believe that suppliers are cutting narcotics with agents like fentanyl to make their inventory last longer, according to Gerard Giardino, chief of detectives for the Suffolk County Police.

The county’s nonfatal opioid overdoses spiked 69% between March 15 and April 12, as compared to the same time last year.

In Arkansas, which does not have a stay-at-home order, Cleburne County Sheriff Chris Brown said that his deputies are not responding to lower-level crimes such as theft and property damage. Instead, they’re doing interviews over the phone and asking the victims to document the incident.

“Email me the pictures and we’ll take a report for you,” he’s instructed his deputies to tell residents.

His office is still executing a couple of search warrants a week and conducting raids on suspect homes. If the drug dealers haven’t slowed down, he said, “we feel like we can’t let them run rampant.”

From the start, CDC staffers working on the guidance were uncomfortable tying it specifically to reopening, and voiced their objections to the White House officials tasked with approving the guidance for release, according to a CDC official granted anonymity because they were not cleared to speak to the press.

After The AP reported about the burying of the guidance last week, the White House asked the CDC to revise parts of it, which were cleared for approval, according to emails and interviews.

On Tuesday, CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield said that recommendations would be released “soon,” but provided no further details. Last week, internal emails show that Redfield had repeatedly sought White House approval for CDC’s guidance, starting as early as April 10.

Both the CDC document and the White House’s published plan advocate for reopening, but the White House guidance states that reopening must begin where the communities are at the lowest levels. Even then, the CDC is cautious and advises only a “consideration” of the resumption of nonessential travel after 42 consecutive days of declining cases of COVID-19.

The White House plan, by contrast, recommends that communities “normalize” travel in Phase 1, and that in Phase 2, after 28 consecutive days of decline, “Nonessexsual travel can resume.”

As of Tuesday, CDC’s webpage on travel guidance during the pandemic still linked to the White House plan. The stricter guidance is not there.

Another stark difference in the final White House plan and that designed by CDC officials at the CDC is the latter’s acknowledgment that COVID-19 will likely surge after states reopen, and that local governments need to continuously monitor their communities closely.
The package would establish a $200 billion “Heroes Fund” to provide hazard pay to essential workers, including VA medical staff.

The bill also aims to get homeless veterans into permanent housing. According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, those veterans who received housing vouchers from the government before the coronavirus pandemic but had not yet rented homes have been unable to find housing. Employees at local housing authorities are working from home and are unable to complete the inspections that are required before veterans can move into their rental units. Many landlords have also closed their offices.

The HEROES Act would short-circuit the bureaucratic process of getting veterans into permanent housing during the pandemic. Housing authorities would be allowed to administer vouchers electronically and forgo in-person inspections.

The stimulus package included several other measures for veterans. The VA’s Vet Centers.

The bill would also expand mental health care to members of the National Guard and Reserve who deployed in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Those service members would become eligible for counseling through the VA’s Vet Centers.

The VA would be ordered to suspend any debt collection efforts for 60 days after the end of the national emergency. The agency would also be required to extend deadlines for veterans’ claims and appeals until after the national emergency has ended.

The bill aims to increase the amount of money that goes to housebound veterans to help them pay for in-home assistance. The benefit would increase by up to 25%, and the VA would supply those veterans and caregivers with personal protective equipment.

“The Heroes Act is critical,” said Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., the chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. “By supporting homeless veterans, suspending debt collection, expanding health coverage, and caring for our most vulnerable, we can help ensure that those who have served our country have an opportunity to succeed.”

By Nikki Wentling
Stars and Stripes
WASHINGTON — Support for homeless veterans, hazard pay for Department of Veterans Affairs employees and expanded medical and mental health care for vets and service members are included in a $3 trillion stimulus bill introduced by House Democrats on Tuesday.

The 1,815-page legislation, which at $3 trillion would be the largest relief package in U.S. history, was criticized by House Republicans as a “liberal wish list” that had no chance of becoming law. Some of its central elements are to distribute another round of direct payments to Americans, provide hazard pay to essential workers, including VA medical staff. The Federal American Recovery of Government Employees, which represents thousands of VA workers, criticized the VA on Tuesday for not providing hazard pay.

The department faced a shortage of personal protective equipment for weeks, leading hospitals to ration their supplies of masks. VA nurses across the country openly protested their unsafe working conditions. As of Tuesday, 1,324 employees had contracted the coronavirus and 28 had died from it.

“All front-line employees who have been or could have been exposed to Covid-19 while on the job and were not provided the proper protective equipment — at any point during this pandemic — deserve hazard pay,” the federation’s president, Everett Kelley, said in a statement.

In a statement to ABC News, VA press secretary Christina Noel said, “Hazard pay is to compensate employees when risks cannot be reasonably mitigated and employees cannot be safely protected, and that is the opposite of the current environment at VA.”

In addition to hazard pay, the HEROES Act would ensure VA medical workers receive paid sick leave if they’re exposed to the virus or become infected.

Support for homeless veterans was also included in the bill, which would allocate funding for the VA to provide transportation, food, shelter, phones, clothing, blankets and toiletry items to homeless veterans. Under the legislation, the department would be allowed to establish temporary shelters in the parking lots of VA medical centers.
WASHINGTON — A 39-year-old former investment manager in Georgia was already facing federal charges that he robbed savings through a Ponzi scheme when the rapid spread of COVID-19 presented an opportunity.

Christopher A. Parris started pitching himself as a broker of surgical masks amid the nationwide scramble for protective equipment. In those first few weeks of the outbreak, federal authorities said, Within weeks, Parris was making millions of dollars on sales orders.

Except there were no masks.

Last week, a federal judge said that Parris is part of what they are calling a wave of fraud tied to the outbreak.

Homeland Security Investigations, an arm of the Department of Homeland Security, is leading the nationwide crackdown. It has opened over 370 cases and arrested 11 people so far as part of “Operation Stolen PPE,” the agency announced last month in what federal authorities said was an attempt to secure an order for more than 170,000 N95 respirators for the Department of Veterans Affairs for 125 million face masks and other equipment.

“He was just trying to sell something he didn’t even have,” said Jere T. Miles, the special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigations New Orleans office. “That’s just outright, blatant fraud.”

Parris has not yet entered a plea to fraud charges and his lawyers did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press. Nationwide, investigators have turned up more than false purveyors of PPE. They have uncovered efforts to make surfeit or adulterated products, from COVID-19 test kits and treatments to masks and cleaning products.

In a statement, the department said that Parris is not guilty to fraud in November. As part of the alleged scheme, Parris and the others bought the bogus investments to fraudulent advisers who were retiring and leveraged the trust that those advisers had built over years of pitching bogus investments, with relatively modest returns, to their newly acquired clients.

Florida attorney Scott Silver, who represented some investors who sought to get their money back after the shakedown, said that Parris and the others spent most of it, and there was left little to recover.

He wasn’t surprised that Parris had been arrested in the COVID fraud case.

“I’ve already facing 20 years in prison,” he said. “What’s he worried about?”

Parris, who was charged in the case in January, grew up in Rochester, NY, and worked as an insurance agent, owned a dermatology practice in local politics. He ran unsuccessfully for city council and said that he had been vice president of a local and American Republican committee.

“So many people that know me, you know, trust me,” Parris said in a 2015 hearing with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, which later suspended his broker license.

One of Parris’ alleged victims in the Ponzi scheme, Jane Naylon, said that she was imprisoned for 20 years in Parris’ father, a reverend at a local church, and lost $510,000 in the fraud.

Naylon said that she attended a hearing in federal court in New York this year and was discharged when Parris was released on his own recognizance. When her daughter texted her the news weeks later that Parris had been charged for PPE fraud, she said that she was in complete shock, but also pleased.

“I’m ecstatic,” she said. “I hope he goes to jail for life.”

Parris is now jailed in Atlanta and expected to be transferred to Washington to face charges in the VA case.

By Alan Suderman

Associated Press

In a statement, the department said that it has notified employers to stop garnishing wages from defaulted student loan borrowers, but some have failed to comply. The agency said that it sent letters to nearly 37,500 employers on Monday ordering them to stop, and staff are also calling employers to explain the process.

Congress told the Education Department to halt garnishments through Sept. 30 as part of a coronavirus rescue package that was signed March 27. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos had already called for the measure days earlier and said that borrowers would be getting refunds for any wages taken since March 13.

But a class-action lawsuit filed on April 30 alleged that thousands of workers were still getting up to 15% of their paychecks back because the department had failed to notify employers that they must stop withholding pay. The complaint was filed by consumer and student advocacy groups on behalf of Elizabeth Barber, a New York home health aide, and any other borrowers still facing garnishments. Barber said that she makes $13.50 an hour and has had 12% of her pay held back recently.

One of the groups behind the suit, Student Defense, said Monday’s court filing proves that thousands of workers are still being harmed by the department six weeks after Congress’ rescue package took effect.

“For borrowers already worried about affording rent, groceries and medication, losing part of their paycheck means that garnishment is enough to push them truly dire circumstances,” said Jordan Altiere, senior counsel at Student Defense.

The lawsuit asks the court to order that DeVos halt wage garnishment immediately and notify borrowers when it has actually been stopped. It also demands immediate refunds for any pay that has been withheld since March 13, the day President Donald Trump declared a national emergency.
Kentucky governor says rallies send ‘message of hate’

Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. - Protests upset with the pace of Kentucky’s economic reopening risk accelerating the coronavirus outbreak by flouting health guidelines and sending a “message of hate” by waving Confederate flags at rallies, Gov. Andy Beshear said Tuesday.

The Democratic governor, who has shown a calm response throughout the turmoil, offered some of his harshest criticism yet of his detractors. It came the same day that a group of protesters sued him, arguing his pandemic measures infringed on their right to protest at the state Capitol.

Beshear said he supports the right of every Kentuckian to speak out against his actions, but said protests need to be conducted safely. Rally participants were encouraged to wear protective face masks and to ignore social distancing guidelines meant to contain the virus, he said at his daily briefing.

A recent rally drew hundreds of protesters to the Capitol steps. Protesters held signs calling for Beshear to “unlock Kentucky” and waved U.S. flags. Video from media outlets showed at least two Confederate flags in the crowd.

Kentucky embarked Monday on a wave of business reopenings. Auto and boat dealerships resumed in-person service. Also reopening were manufacturing, construction, food processing facilities, pet grooming and photography businesses.

The state is allowing retail to reopen by May 20, and gyms and public swimming pools will reopen at a third of a capacity starting May 22. Salons and tattoo parlors are also set to reopen May 25, along with fitness centers and movie theaters on June 1.

Arizona

PHOENIX — Gov. Doug Ducey said Tuesday he’ll let gyms and public swimming pools reopen and will allow his stay-at-home order to expire this week as he continues easing the painful restrictions he imposed on businesses and individuals to tamp down the coronavirus outbreak.

Gyms and pools, along with the last remaining facilities that have not been allowed to operate, could open their doors Wednesday if they follow recommendations from health officials. The governor also invited professional sports to resume without fans.

Ducey’s stay-at-home order was set to expire Friday, and he said he won’t renew it.

State health officials reported 20 additional COVID-19 deaths Tuesday, raising the reported total to 562. There have been at least 11,736 recorded cases since the start of the outbreak, though the actual number of people infected is likely much higher because many with mild symptoms did not seek care and were not tested.

As of Monday, 3,160 people in New Hampshire had tested positive for the virus, an increase of 89 from the previous day. There have been 133 coronavirus-related deaths in the state.

California

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom moved to further ease the coronavirus choke-hold on California’s economy Tuesday by allowing businesses to reopen and following through on his promise to swiftly approve his latest extension for the public health order.

Meanwhile, seven rural Northern California counties — El Dorado, Butte, Lassen, Nevada, Placer, Amador and Shasta — that have not had a single virus death were the first to win state permission to reopen their economies more quickly.

The union has called for casinos to publicly release the detailed plans they are submitting to gambling regulators laying out how they plan to safely reopen when Nevada allows it. Gov. Steve Sisolak shuttered the properties in mid-March to stop the spread of the coronavirus. The union wants casinos to reopen as soon as possible and he’s allowing the Nevada Gaming Control Board to have the final say on when casinos can reopen.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board and the Nevada Gaming Commission, which is considered the final authority on regulations and licensing, approved rules that will require casinos to limit customers, keep gamblers spaced apart and disinfect dice, cards and all other surfaces upon reopening.

The union wants more extensive proposals, including testing staff for COVID-19 and screening people, including guests, with temperature checks upon entry.

New Hampshire

CONCORD — Officials in a New Hampshire town near the Massachusetts state line have been considering an ordinance that would make wearing a face mask mandatory indoors in a public space.

The proposed ordinance in Salem would require anyone over age 2 to wear some type of face covering, or face up to a $200 fine.

The board of selectmen discussed the matter during a virtual meeting Monday, but didn’t vote on it.

As of Monday, 3,160 people in New Hampshire had tested positive for the virus, an increase of 89 from the previous day. There have been 133 coronavirus-related deaths in the state.

Oregon

PORTLAND — Oregon workplace safety regulators cited an Oregon food processor for unsafe practices after nearly three dozen of its employees tested positive for the coronavirus.

The $2,000 penalty against Pacific Seafood’s plant in Albany appears to be the first since Gov. Kate Brown ordered businesses to ensure distancing between workers, the Democrat-Herald reported. The food manufacturer had employed employees standing as close as 2 feet apart, rather than 6 feet, as ordered by Brown.

National Frozen Foods has 30 days to appeal the citation. The citation from Oregon OSHA stems from an inspection starting April 20 in response to complaints about the facility.

Additionally, several workers at Pacific Seafood’s plant in Warrenton have tested positive for the coronavirus, the second seafood processor on the northern Oregon coast with an outbreak, the Astorian reported.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania’s top prosecutor has opened criminal investigations into several nursing homes amid a coronavirus outbreak that has killed 2,600 residents of nursing homes and other facilities that care for older adults, more than two-thirds of the state’s deaths as of May 19, his office announced Tuesday.

The attorney general’s office did not say how many facilities it is investigating, or reveal their names or provide any other details about the specific allegations. In general, the attorney general’s office has jurisdiction in manners of criminal neglect.

The virus has sickened about 12,000 residents of 540 nursing and personal care homes, accounting for about one-fifth of the state’s confirmed infections, according to the Health Department.

The National Guard has been deployed to more than a dozen homes with severe outbreaks.

The Pennsylvania National Guard has been deployed to 13 homes personal care homes sick with COVID-19, including those who contracted the virus while deployed.

Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Keith Hickox said his agency has helped 13 long-term care facilities in response to outbreaks.

It’s nearly impossible to know how the Guard troops became sick, he said, describing the total number as relatively low, considering what they have been doing.
BRUSSELS — New coronavirus clusters have popped up as nations struggle to balance reopening economies with preventing a second wave of infections and deaths, while in Europe, a debate erupted Wednesday over the summer travel season.

Authorities in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where the pandemic first began late last year, repeatedly were providing a great boost to the economy by testing Wuhan's residents Wednesday to test all 11 million residents within 10 days after a handful of new infections were found.

In Lebanon, authorities reinstated a nationwide lockdown for four days beginning Wednesday night after a spike in reported infections and complaints from officials that social distancing rules were being ignored.

Despite the risks that loosening restrictions could lead to an infection spike, European nations have been seeking to restart cross-border travel, particularly as the summer holiday season looms for countries whose economies rely on tourism.

The European Union unveiled a plan to help citizens across its 27 nations salvage their summer vacations and resurrect Europe’s badly battered tourism industry after months of coronavirus lockdowns. The pandemic has prompted border closures across Europe and shut down its lifeline of cheap local flights.

The EU’s executive arm, the European Commission, laid out its advice for lifting ID checks on hastily closed borders, helping to get airlines, ferries and buses running while ensuring the safety of passengers and crew, and preparing health measures for hotels to reassure clients.

It’s not clear whether EU nations will follow that advice, since they, not Brussels, have the final say over health and security affairs.

Some European countries have sought bilateral agreements with their neighbors.

Austria said its border with Germany would reopen fully on June 15 and border checks would stop by the end of July, starting Friday. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said Austria was aiming for similar agreements with Switzerland, Liechtenstein and its eastern neighbors “as long as the infection figures allow.”

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said his country would lift a blanket warning against foreign travel to European destinations before other places, such as Asia or North America, but didn’t specify when. Germany’s warning against all non-essential tourist travel abroad ran until June 14.

“It will certainly be possible to lift the travel warning earlier for Europe than for other destinations — so long as the current positive trend in many countries solidifies,” Maas said. “Freedom to travel is part of the foundation of the European project, but in times of corona, Europe must ensure more: the freedom to travel safely.”

The border shutdowns have hit the European travel industry hard. The Germany-based tour and hotel operator TUI said Wednesday it expects to cut thousands of jobs due to the pandemic.

TUI said it was “prepared for a resumption” and its first hotels on the German coast would reopen in the coming days. It also envisioned offering holidays in Spain’s Balearic islands and in the Mediterranean on July 1, according to an Associated Press news agency dpa reported.

As long as new infections remain relatively low, there is “no reason why one shouldn’t be able to travel there,” TUI CEO Fritz Joussen said — but local companies and hotels need to be open.

Norway said Wednesday it was opening its borders to European citizens who have a residence there or have family they want to visit, seasonal workers and people from the U.K., Iceland and Liechtenstein.

The tensions in balancing people’s safety from the virus against the severe economic fallout are playing out across the world. Italy partially lifted lockdown restrictions last week only to see a big jump in confirmed coronavirus cases in its hardest-hit region.

Pakistan reported 2,000 new infections last week only to see a big jump in confirmed coronavirus cases in its hardest-hit region.

People wearing face masks to protect against coronavirus wait to cross a street past a billboard showing a doctor in St.Tobias, Russia, on Wednesday.

France, the first nation to put a large number of citizens under lockdown and the first to ease those restrictions, has been strictly guarding against any resurgence.

In January, it put Wuhan and the surrounding region, home to more than 50 million people, under a strict lockdown. A cluster of six new cases recently emerged, the first local infections in Wuhan since before the lockdown was eased in early April.

Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 4.2 million people and killed 292,000, according to the Johns Hopkins tally. Experts say the actual numbers are likely far higher.

Southern Africa’s tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho confirmed its first COVID-19 case Wednesday, the last African country to report an infection.

Elsewhere, there was progress. New Zealand reported no new cases and is in trial for a five-day consecutive day, and Thailand’s health authorities also reported no new Wuhan-like cases for the first time in more than two months, and no new deaths. Restaurants in Bangkok were allowed to reopen last week under social distancing rules.

Japan was considering partially lifting its nationwide state of emergency ahead of its scheduled May 31 expiry date amid signs of slowing infections.

Prime Minister Abe Shinzo says he will make an announcement after consulting with a panel of experts before his announcement Thursday.

Japanese media said the state of emergency was expected to be lifted in more than 30 prefectures where new cases have decreased. Restrictions will remain in Tokyo and its neighboring areas as well as Osaka, where medical systems are still under pressure.

As Europe reopens, key virus protections are still elusive

ROME — Italy’s virus reopening was supposed to be accompanied by a series of measures to limit infections in the one-time epicenter of Europe’s pandemic: the distribution of millions of inexpensive surgical masks to pharmacies nationwide, a pilot project of 150,000 antibody tests and, eventually, the roll-out of a contact-tracing app.

None of these is in place as Italy experiments with its second week of loosening restrictions and looks ahead to Monday’s reopening of shops and, in some regions, bars and restaurants.

Italy’s commissioner for the emergency, Domenico Arcuri, went on the defensive Tuesday to respond to mounting criticism of his Phase II roll-out.

He insisted “Italians know well what to do” to protect themselves, even if they don’t have the tests, masks, contact-tracing or other measures that public health authorities deemed necessary for Italy to reopen in safety.

“Sometimes I make mistakes for which I accept responsibility and, if necessary, reprimand, from Italians,” Arcuri said. But he directed the blame at others and reinforced that “the data on a government server, with or without the patients’ consent.”

France’s pledge to “protect, test and trace” all those who come into contact with a coronavirus patient is playing out across the world. Italy partially lifted lockdown restrictions last week only to see a big jump in confirmed coronavirus cases in its hardest-hit region.

The court objected to the contact-tracing language and ordered the government to take extreme care in protecting privacy.

The law, which took effect Tuesday, calls for teams of health care workers to trace the contacts of COVID-19 patients and share that data on a government server, with or without the patients’ consent.

French President Emmanuel Macron has repeatedly pledged that France would be able to test up to 700,000 people per week. The national health authorities told The Associated Press on Tuesday that France was averaging around 200,000-270,000 tests per week.

Britain, which has Europe’s highest official death toll at over 32,700, has ramped up its testing from 5,000 a day in March to close to 100,000 a day now. But it abandoned contact tracing after the virus’ spread overwhelmed its capacity. A contact-tracing app is in trial stages and 18,000 people are being recruited to do the tracing legwork now.

Italy was among the hardest-hit countries early on, is still ironing out protocols for contact tracing and has no immediate plans to roll out an app.
WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell is warning of the threat of a prolonged recession resulting from the coronavirus outbreak and is urging Congress and the White House to act further to prevent long-lasting economic damage.

The Fed and Congress have taken far-reaching steps to try to counter what is likely to be a severe downturn resulting from the widespread shutdown of the U.S. economy. But Powell warns that there still could be widespread bankruptcies among small business and unemployment for many people.

“Deeper and longer recessions can leave behind lasting damage to the productive capacity of the economy,” the chairman says in prepared remarks before an online discussion with the Peterson Institute for International Economics. “Avoidable household and business insolvencies can weigh on growth for years to come.”

The U.S. government “ought to do what we can to avoid these outcomes, and that may require additional policy measures,” Powell says. He says the Fed will “continue to use our tools to their fullest” until the viral outbreak subsides but gives no hint of what the Fed’s next steps might be.

Powell repeats his previous warnings that the Fed can lend money to solvent companies to help carry them through the crisis. But a longer downturn could threaten to bankrupt previously healthy companies without more help from the government.

Greater support from government spending or tax policies “could be costly, but worth it if it helps avoid long-term economic damage and leaves us with a stronger recovery,” he says.

WASHINGTON — Paul Manafort, Donald Trump’s one-time presidential campaign chairman who was convicted as part of the special counsel’s Russia investigation, has been released from federal prison to serve the rest of his sentence in home confinement due to concerns about the coronavirus, his lawyer said Wednesday.

Manafort, 71, was released Wednesday morning from FCI Loretto, a low-security prison in Pennsylvania, according to his attorney Todd Blanche. Manafort had been serving more than seven years in prison following his conviction. His lawyers had asked the Bureau of Prisons to release him to home confinement, arguing that he was at high risk for coronavirus because of his age and preexisting medical conditions.

Manafort was hospitalized in December after suffering from a heart-related condition, two people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press at the time. They were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Manafort was among the first people to be charged in special counsel Robert Mueller’s Russia investigation, which examined possible coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia in the 2016 election campaign.

Manafort, who was prosecuted in two federal courts, was convicted by a jury in federal court in Virginia in 2018 and later pleaded guilty in Washington. He was sentenced last March and was immediately hit with state charges in New York that could put him outside the president’s power to pardon. New York prosecutors have accused him of giving false information on a mortgage loan application.

Manafort’s release comes as prison advocates and congressional leaders have been pressing the Justice Department for weeks to release at-risk inmates ahead of a potential outbreak. They argue that the public health guidance to stay 6 feet away from other people is nearly impossible behind bars.

Attorney General William Barr ordered the Bureau of Prisons in March and April to increase the use of home confinement and expedite the release of eligible high-risk inmates, beginning at three prisons identified as coronavirus hot spots. There are no confirmed coronavirus cases at FCI Loretto.

As of Tuesday, 2,818 federal inmates and 262 BOP staff members had positive test results for COVID-19 at federal prisons across the country. Fifty inmates had died.

Manafort released from prison due to virus concerns

By Christopher Rugaber
Associated Press
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**NATION**

**Trump-backed candidate wins in Wis. special vote**

By Scott Bauer  
Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Tom Tiffany, a Republican running against President Donald Trump, easily won a special congressional election Tuesday in a heavily conserva-
tive rural Wisconsin district, 
cheering Republicans even as Democrats argued that the vic-
tory revealed vulnerabilities for 
the president among his base. 

Tiffany’s win over Demo-

crat Tricia Zunker in northern Wisconsin’s 7th District comes 
in the state’s second election 
amid the coronavirus pandemic 
the past five weeks. Tiffany will 
replace former reality TV star 
Sean Duffy, a Republican who 
retired in September. The district 
had been vacant since Duffy’s 
retirement.

In 2016, Trump won Wisconsin by less than a point, but carried the district by 20 points. Tiffany’s win over Zunker was about six 
points less than that, based on 
preliminary results. Tiffany re-


democrats’ argument that Trump’s support was waning.

“Any time you lose by 14 points, I don’t think that’s a moral victo-

y,” Tiffany said. “This is a deci-


sive victory here.”

The win is in a district that Trump will need to once again win big if he hopes to again carry Wisconsin. Tiffany’s big victory also helps to erase the taste of a loss by a conservative Wiscon-
sin Supreme Court justice in last month’s election, a race that boosted Trump’s base.

“The winning was a win for Presi-
dent Trump and Tom Tiffany that 
demonstrates the enthusiasm be-

hind our president across Wis-
consin,” said Trump campaign 
spokeswoman Anna Kelly.

Wisconsin Democratic Party 
spokeswoman Courtney Bayern 
said that the results showed a 
drastic swing for Democrats, 
despite the margin of Zunker’s loss.

“For Trump to win a heavily 
red state has to be put together, 
and that’s a sign that Trump’s core 
are sticking,” Bayern said.

Tiffany’s win, the third by a 
Republican in Wisconsin this 
year, has been a jolt of encouragement for the 
party leadership and a possible harbin-

ger for November elections.

An incomplete tally showed 
Tiffany with about 56% of the vote,


winning a double-
digit lead in the fight for an open 
U.S. House seat north of Los An-
geles, positioning Republicans to 
capture a Democratic-held con-

gressional district in California for 
the first time in over 20 years.

Trump’s support was waning.

By Michael R. Blood  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A former 
Navy combat pilot built a double-
digit lead in the fight for an open 
U.S. House seat north of Los An-
geles, positioning Republicans to 
capture a Democratic-held con-

gressional district in California for 
the first time in over 20 years.

Political rookie Mike Garcia had a 12-point edge Tuesday over 
Democratic Assemblywoman Christy Smith in the special elec-


tion for the swing 25th District.

An unknown number of ballots remained uncounted, and Los An-
geles County, where most of them 
are located, wasn’t expected to up-

date its tally again until Friday.

California routinely counts 
large numbers of votes after elec-
tion day, and mail ballots can 
arrive as late as Friday and still 
be counted as long as they were 
postmarked by Tuesday.

A Garcia win would provide 
a jolt of encouragement for the 
state’s beleaguered GOP, which 
has been drifting toward obscu-

rity in California for years.

The contest took on outsized 
importance as the only competi-
tive House race in the country in 
the midst of the coronavirus cri-

sis. It’s seen nationally as a proxy 
vote on President Donald Trump’s 
leadership and a possible harbinger 
for November elections.

An incomplete tally showed 
Garcia with about 56% of the vote, 


with 143,000 ballots counted.

Virtually all voters were ex-
pected to mail in ballots because of 
the virus outbreak, though a 


a sprinkling of polling places were 
available for those who wanted to vote in person.

Garcia stopped short of claim-
ing victory in a conference call 
with supporters after the polls 
closed, but said that “things are 
looking very encouraging.”

In a statement, Smith thanked 
her supporters and said that she 
was looking forward to seeing 
a thorough counting of the remain-


ing ballots.
Fundraiser started to replace burned teepee

KS LAWRENCE — A fundraiser is underway to replace a teepee that burned on the Haskell Indian Nations University campus in Lawrence.

The Lawrence Journal-World reported that fire had almost completely consumed the teepee’s thatching when fire crews responded. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical Division Chief Dan Fagan said the cause of the fire is still unknown, but arson is a possibility.

Haskell Foundation executive director Aaron Hove said the teepee will cost $2,500 to $3,000 to replace.

Peacock on the prowl falls for officer’s decoy

MA BOSTON — A Boston police officer used an electronic mating call to help capture a peacock that had escaped from a nearby zoo.

An officer lured the curious peacock that had escaped from Franklin Park Zoo into a fenced-in yard while playing a mating call on his cellphone, The Boston Globe reported.

The officers on patrol in the Roxbury area were approached by a concerned citizen, who reported that the bird, named Snowbank, had escaped from the zoo, Boston police said in a statement.

Snowbank was returned to the zoo and is reported to be doing well, according to zoo officials.

Man caught after chase in stolen police Humvee

AZ KINGMAN — A man accused of stealing a police vehicle was arrested in Kingman after leading authorities on a car pursuit.

Kingman police say they received reports that a Humvee was driving erratically and hit another car. Officers tried to pull the driver over, but the vehicle continued.

The Humvee stalled, but the driver refused officers’ request to get out of the vehicle. Authorities say the suspect then got out of the vehicle and fired shots at officers.

The suspect was finally shot and arrested after officers used a stun gun on him.

Police booked Michael Joseph Lapeer, 26, into Mohave County Jail on aggravated assault, burglary, theft of means of transportation and criminal damage.

Man who sought trial by combat found not insane

IA HARLAN — A Kansas man who sought legal permission in Iowa to engage in a sword fight with his ex-wife is not insane but merely sought to end their child custody arrangement, according to a psychological evaluation.

David Ostrom of Paula, Kan., asked in a Jan. 3 court filing to be allowed to fight his former wife, Bridgette Ostrom of Harlan and her attorney, Matthew Hudson, so that he can “rend their souls” from their bodies. The Ostroms have been embroiled in disputes over custody and visitation issues, and property tax payments.

An Iowa judge responded by temporarily suspending David Ostrom’s child visitation and ordering the evaluation. It found he is not troubled, but has “adjustment disorder with mixed emotional features,” Ostrom told the Des Moines Register.

Ostrom has asked the court to order psychological evaluations of his ex-wife and her attorney.

‘Happy cow’ suit against Ben & Jerry’s dismissed

VT BURLINGTON — A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit against Ben & Jerry’s that alleged the ice cream maker and its parent company misled consumers by saying the milk and cream in its products comes from “happy cows.”

In a complaint filed Oct. 29, 2019, in Burlington, where Ben & Jerry’s was founded, environmental advocate James Ehlers said only some of the farms are part of the company’s “Caring Dairy” program.

U.S. District Judge Christina Reves threw out the lawsuit, saying Ben & Jerry’s, owned by the multinational firm Unilever, did not claim that all its milk comes from farms enrolled in Caring Dairy, Vermont Public Radio reported.

She also noted that Ben & Jerry’s no longer uses the “happy” cow label on its ice cream cartons.

Bear paw print makes an impression at beach

NC CAPE LOOKOUT — National Park Service rangers are telling beachgoers at Cape Lookout to be on the lookout for a black bear.

In a Facebook post, Cape Lookout National Seashore said that a park biologist found a bear’s paw print in the sand on South Core Banks, part of the chain of Outer Banks barrier islands.

The park says it’s rare for bears to make their way onto the barrier islands, but they’re excellent swimmers and can generally make their way across inlets to hop from island to island.

Police: Man shot after attacking Publix workers

GA ROSWELL — A Georgia man accused of attacking grocery store workers and officers was shot by police and hospitalized.

Police received a call that Jeffrey Thomas Moore, 22, was attacking employees at a Publix Super Market in Roswell as they came into work, Cobb County Police Spokesman Sgt. Wayne Delk said in a news release reported by news outlets.

Delk said police did not find Moore when they got to the store, but then received additional calls about a man assaulting people in a nearby parking lot.

Moore refused to comply with police requests and managed to run away several times, even after officers used a stun gun on him and shot him with gunfire, Georgia Bureau of Investigations spokeswoman Natalie Ammons said in a statement.

He was taken into custody after investigators found him in a wooded area.

Downed drone had 2 packages of meth

AZ SAN LUIS — A U.S. Border Patrol agent at the Yuma Station recovered a downed drone containing two packages of methamphetamine, authorities said.

They said agents reported a downed drone near the New Canal on the west side of San Luis.

Along with the drone were two packages of a white powdery substance left behind after a recent search.

They said the direction of the drone indicates that it had come from Mexico.

Teen sinks shrimp boat for Eagle Scout project

AL ORANGE BEACH — An Alabama teen earned his Eagle Scout badge by accomplishing an unusual service project: Sinking a shrimp boat in the Gulf of Mexico.

Garrett Ard is the son and grandson of fishing captains in Orange Beach, where multiple boats have been sunk offshore to attract fish for anglers. So Ard raised $25,000 to purchase an old, 50-foot-long steel shrimp boat named Southern Heritage and sink it in 90 feet of water.

Ard said the project was in memory of his late grandfather Glovice Ard, a charter boat captain.

From wire reports

Blessings from above

Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, right, prepares to take part in a flyover of San Antonio with the Tex Hill Wing of the Commemorative Air Force to bless the city and pray for protection from the COVID-19 pandemic in San Antonio. Garcia-Siller flew over the city at 1,000 feet in a World War II-era plane named “Ole’ Yeller” as he blessed San Antonio parishes and offered hope to the city.

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From wire reports
FACES

Cannes empty on what would have been film fest’s first day

By Thomas Adamson
and Daniel Cole
Associated Press

The stars of Cannes Film Festival have stayed home, its prestigious grounds repurposed as a homeless shelter, and the beaches closed.

The French Riviera resort of Cannes that would normally bustle with cinema glitterati on a Tuesday — scheduled as the opening night of the annual festival — but during the time of coronavirus, it was a ghost town.

The world’s biggest film festival was canceled this year for the first time since World War II. A couple of mask-wearing residents sat on the edge of the empty promenade to catch the morning sun, dangling their feet above the sand and next to an “Access and Swimming Prohibited” sign. An elderly group played petanque quietly next to the deserted roads. And on Tuesday, on the iconic billboard reserved for each year’s festival poster, a large message of “THANK YOU” for coronavirus emergency workers was installed symbolically, instead.

“I’m overcome with a great sense of melancholy and nostalgia,” Cannes Delegate General Thierry Frémaux told Screen Daily on the first day of the canceled week. “Cannes has only ever been canceled once, due to the Second World War, and stopped once, in May 68.”

“I could never have imagined something like this. Who could foresee that so many countries around the world would be caught by the epidemic?”

Yet, while the cancellation represents a blow to the movie stars and directors it serves, it has also devastated the legions of businessmen and businesswomen who rely on the festival.

“For us, it’s really a very big blow,” said StudioCanal’s Pierre Dambrine, who was due to present his film “The King” during the festival.

For others, it’s even worse. Pierre Dambrine works building film stands inside the Palais des Festivals, the retro building complex in which the screenings and awards ceremonies take place.

“There is no more work at all. We don’t know at all when things will resume,” Dambrine said.

Since March, the local government repurposed the festival’s building complex as a shelter for homeless. Every day, dozens of the formerly destitute can be seen walking behind a fenced-off area, where journalists were once used to interviewing the likes of Marion Cotillard.

Dambrine said the cancellation of this year’s events won’t stop the festival recognizing 2020’s film talent — and Cannes organizers will announce an Official Selection for this year at the beginning of June.

‘Unhinged’ plan

Russell Crowe movie seeks an audience in July among lingering coronavirus concerns

By Ryan Faughnder
Los Angeles Times

In recent weeks, Hollywood studios and movie theater chains have held out hope that cinemas will be back in business in July, and that audiences will be eager to return.

For many, it’s really a very big blow to the movie stars and directors it serves, it has also devastated the legions of businessmen and businesswomen who rely on the festival.

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Tea party fatigue cramps shutdown protesters

By JOSH ROGIN
The Washington Post

The U.S. government is reportedly set to accuse China’s state-run hacking groups of attacking U.S. pharmaceutical companies to steal new coronavirus research. The Justice Department has indicted Huawei, four of its subsidiaries and six North Korean entities for cybercrime, Treasury Department sanctions against Chinese entities the way it handles drug traffickers in Mexico — and has refused to hand over early virus research institutions and pharmaceutical companies to steal new coronavirus research. In January, it that way. The Chinese leadership knows that stealing research can net huge gains. China isn’t the only country playing this game, but it is by far the worst offender.

That’s why officials and experts are wondering why the U.S. government won’t de- mand more from China to stop cybercrime. Treasury Department sanctions against Chinese entities the way it handles drug traffickers in Mexico — and has refused to hand over early virus research institutions and pharmaceutical companies to steal new coronavirus research. In January, it that way. The Chinese leadership knows that stealing research can net huge gains. China isn’t the only country playing this game, but it is by far the worst offender.

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Brighten your day!

Read letters from kids to deployed servicemembers and their heartwarming responses.

**LETTER FROM EMILY**

Dear Pen pal,
My name is Emily. I live in Germany. Where do you live?

From Emily

**LETTER FROM NICK**

Dear Emily,
My name is Nick. I live in Hawaii. But I used to live in Germany for 3 years. Do you have a pet?

From Nick

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Stars and Stripes
penpal.stripes.com
Poll by union shows support to play, if safe

By Tim Reynolds
Associated Press

MIAMI — A person familiar with the results of a poll of NBA players taken by their union says there would be “overwhelming” support for any plan that has this season resuming in a safe way amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The poll conducted by the National Basketball Players Association was informal but gave a clear sense that players would like to not only get to the playoffs but also resume at least some of the regular season, according to a person who shared details with The Associated Press on Tuesday on the condition of anonymity because it was not to be detailed publicly.

The exact results of the poll were unknown, and the methodology behind the poll — including how many players participated — was unclear.

The NBA sent a letter to agents Tuesday discussing, among other things, the results of the player polling and some details of the call the union and its membership had late last week with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver in that call, Silver talked about the possibility of resuming a season without fans and playing at a centralized site — notions that have been discussed for some time.

There are numerous hurdles to clear to get games back, the need for testing of players and staff when play resumes among them, and what could be viewed as positive signs Tuesday were just that — signs, not absolute indicators that there is a path for a return to play this season.

Golden State coach Steve Kerr, whose team couldn’t be headed to the playoffs and was preparing to play home games in an empty arena because of the virus threat before the league suspended the season, told radio station 95.7 The Game in the Bay Area on Tuesday that he believes the Warriors’ season is over.

“ ‘We’ll be good soldiers. If the league asks us to play more games, we’ll play,’ Kerr said. “I don’t anticipate that happening, but we’ll be ready if it does. And in the meantime, you know, it’s not my decision, it’s in the league’s decision — it’s the NBA’s decision, what to do, when to do it.”

NBA players had somewhat different reactions. Memphis’ Ja Morant, the likely front-runner for rookie of the year, tweeted that he wants to play. And Orlando guard Evan Fournier said international soccer inching toward a return “gives me hope” that the NBA can do the same.

“Everybody in the league, we want to finish this year,” Cleveland’s Larry Nance Jr. said earlier Tuesday. “One, obviously because we love the game, but at the same time, there’s a serious chance of us missing out on, what, 20-plus percent of our contracts, which is for a lot of guys pretty significant.”

The NBA suspended its season on March 11 with 299 regular-season games remaining, or roughly one-fifth of the season.

Players have been paid in full on each of the four paydays that have followed, though that will change Friday when most of the league sees a 25% reduction in their paycheck.

Players stand to lose roughly $850 million in gross salary if the regular season is not resumed and the NBA exercises its right to withhold roughly 1.08% of each player’s salary for any game that is ultimately canceled. On average, that would mean each NBA player stands to lose about 21% of his total salary. No games have been officially canceled yet; the 25% reduction starting with Friday’s check was negotiated between the league and the union with the expectation that the season will eventually be shortened.

A handful of teams have opened their facilities for voluntary workouts, Miami and Orlando were expected to be the next two teams to do so on Wednesday.

Even in the weight room, you pick up a weight, and if I was using 45s (pounds), nobody else that day was allowed to use the 45s until they were cleaned and sterilized, so to me it was so well regimented that I feel pretty safe going.”

Last week, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver spoke with players and presented some plans the league is considering to complete the season. Some of the options include games without fans and games at a centralized location, with Florida among the possibilities.

Nance said he’s cautiously optimistic about a resumption. And while the Cavs aren’t chasing a title — they were 19-46 when the season was shut down — he feels it’s imperative the league crowns a champion.

“We’re not in a position to win a championship this year but if I was, if I was Giannis (Antetokounmpo), if I was LeBron (James), if I was Kawhi (Leonard), if I was on one of those championship caliber teams, I’d be pretty upset about it,” he said. “It’s very rare in this league that a chance like this comes along that’s taken a valuable year off someone’s career.

“Everybody in the league, we want to finish this year. One, obviously because we love the game, but at the same time there’s a serious chance of us missing out on, what, 20-plus percent of our contracts, which is for a lot of guys pretty significant.”

Like many sports fans, Nance has spent part of his quarantine watching “The Last Dance,” the 10- part ESPN documentary on Michael Jordan and his final season with the Chicago Bulls. Nance has a unique perspective since his father, Larry Sr., played against Jordan for many years.

The episodes have turned into weekday one-on-one battles between the Nances.

“Our whole debate while watching the show is just new versus old,” Nance said. “Why Michael could have scored more in today’s NBA, but also why LeBron would have been so dominant in that league. And while it’s been about M.J., we’ve been comparing, contrasting eras and players. It comes on Sunday, but the conversations carry on until next Sunday.”
**Pac-12 coaches want even start**

**Schools push NCAA to set date**

BY RALPH D. RUSSO  
Associated Press

As Pac-12 football coaches pitched an NCAA-mandated unit form start to the season, some of the latest plans to fight the coronavirus in California further muddled how college teams will return to play in the West.

Washington coach Jimmy Lake said Tuesday in a video conference with reporters that he would prefer for all major college teams to begin six weeks of preparation for the sport's start at the Tar Heels.

“I’m of the opinion it would be great if the NCAA made a blanket ruling of where we would start and I understand some states may be less hit by this than most. And I’m sure there’s going to be some different opinions on this,” Lake said. “In my opinion, I believe the NCAA should step in and say, ‘OK, here’s the date when everybody can start.’”

Colorado coach Karl Dorrell and Utah’s Kyle Whittingham backed Lake’s idea. For the season to start on time around Labor Day weekend, when Washington is scheduled to host Michigan, teams would need about six weeks of conditioning and practice in mid-July.

Meanwhile on Tuesday, a Los Angeles Times official said, according to The Los Angeles Times, that the county’s stay-at-home order is likely to extend through July. That could leave Pac-12 members USC and UCLA waiting until at least August before they begin preparing.

Also, the chancellor of the California State University system said he expects the vast majority of classes on the system’s 23 campuses to be taught online in the fall. Shortly after that announcement, the California College Athletic Association, an NCAA Division II conference, suspended its fall sports season.

None of the Pac-12 schools are part of the California State University system, but San Jose State, San Diego State and Fresno State are all FBS schools competing in the Mountain West.

The presidents of those three schools and Mountain West Commissioner Craig Thompson last released a joint statement.

“Certainly, all conversations are led by academics, as well as public health and safety. Within that framework, more determinations are necessary. All three institutions will work closely with the Mountain West. No decisions on athletics have been made.”

Some CSU system schools such as Sacramento State and Cal Poly compete in FCS, Division I’s second tier. Pac-12 schools California and UCLA are part of the University of California system.

College sports leaders, including NCAA President Mark Emmert, have said college athletes can’t return to campuses that are not open to the rest of the student body. What exactly constitutes an open campus has not been determined.

The NCAA doesn’t have much authority over major college football. Conferences are taking the lead when it comes to how and when the season will start, with the Power Five commissioners at the forefront.

Emmert told ESPN on Tuesday the NCAA will not mandate a start date for football season because state and local authorities will be driving those decisions.

Even Emmert has acknowledged that it is probably not realistic to think 13 major college football schools across 41 states — all taking different approaches to fighting COVID-19 — will be in position to start competition at the same time.

Knowing the season could be delayed or disrupted by the pandemic, conferences and schools are looking into all sorts of contingency plans.

USC coach Clay Helton said Monday the Pac-12 has talked about playing an all-conference, 11-game football schedule if necessary, but that decision is still weeks away.

Whether they’re opting to stay closer to home because of the pandemic: More than 50% of verbally committed prospects to Power Five schools who made their decisions on or before March 11 — the day the NBA suspended play to trigger the general shutdown of sports world — chose schools within 300 miles of their hometowns.

Yet, more than half the recruits who committed to Power Five schools since March 11 selected a college more than 300 miles away.

Whether they’re opting to stay near home, prospects are deciding even more. 247Sports reported that 627 players in the 2021 class had committed by May 6 — more than twice the number of 2020 prospects who had announced decisions by that date.

“Kids want to get settled and feel like they’ve got a scholarship locked up,” said Barton Simmons, the 247Sports director of scouting. “On the other side, colleges (see that) with the writing being on the wall that the evaluation period is essentially done, their board is what their board is. They’re feeling a little bit of pressure to go ahead and get guys committed, get some guys locked in and then go from there.”

Many prospects aren’t hesitating to pick a school far away.

Minnesota’s list of 11 verbal commitments since March 11 includes three players from Texas, two from Georgia and one from Arizona. Tennessee’s flurry of 12 verbal commitments since April 10 includes three players from Florida schools or academies, one from Texas and none from the state of Tennessee.

“I feel the pandemic will be over by the time I get to Tennessee,” said De’Shawn Rucker, a defensive back from Tallahassee, Fla.

Rucker at least got a chance to visit Tennessee before the pandemic hit. Defensive back Steven Ortiz of Goodyear, Ariz., committed to Minnesota without having seen the campus.

Ortiz’s father, Steven Ortiz Sr., said his son did get a “virtual tour” of campus from his home.

“They would show us footage of the facility, then a coach would come and speak to us about the program itself. It was definitely a different experience, but most schools — the facilities, the weightlifting and the cafeterias are all state-of-the-art — so you’re not looking at anything (with) too big of a difference in terms of the facilities,” Ortiz Sr. said.

Ortiz Sr. said his son got a sense of the culture of Minnesota’s program through conversations with Gophers coach P.J. Fleck. Rucker said he liked Tennessee in part because Jeremy Pruitt was more active than any other head coach in contacting him.

While some staffs have shown they can draw players from all over the country even during a pandemic, Simmons believes many prospects eventually will decide to stay closer to home.

Part of the reason is the NCAA instituted a recruiting dead period through May 31, preventing programs from getting an up-close look at out-of-state prospects. No wonder 13 of North Carolina’s 14 verbal commitments are in-state.

“Let’s be realistic, they can drive to your campus, come for games, come for camps, so we’ve got enough to really know these kids,” Brown said.

“Some of the ones, we’d surely want them to visit us. If they’re coming to stay, we’re going to be putting an arm around them.”

Simmons predicts there won’t be as many examples of guys going all the way across the country. For example, four of the 247Sports Composite’s top nine 2020 prospects from California signed with Alabama, Georgia or Clemson. Maybe more of those players stay in Pac-12 country this time.

But, if players across the board, I would expect a little bit of a trend of kids staying, not necessarily home, but closer to home,” Simmons said.

**By STEVE MEGARGEE  
Associated Press**

Concerns about the coronavirus are preventing football prospects from visiting campuses this spring and keeping coaches from traveling to evaluate them.

North Carolina coach Mack Brown said he believes this could cause more 2021 recruits to stay closer to home, though that remains up for debate.

“I do think all the kids being at home with their families, there is a little concern,” Brown said. “You love your family, you’re wanting everybody healthy. So I do think that is encouraging people to stay closer to home.”

Getting into a power in the 1990s by making sure North Carolina’s best recruits didn’t leave the state. He’s doing it again in his second stint at Chapel Hill.

Eleven of the top 13 verbally committed 2021 prospects from North Carolina have chosen the Tar Heels, according to composite rankings of recruiting sites compiled by 247Sports.

That same database shows that, so far, recruits are no necessarily sticking closer to home because of the pandemic: More than 60% of verbally committed prospects to Power Five schools who made their decisions on or before March 11 — the day the NBA suspended play to trigger the general shutdown of sports world — chose schools within 300 miles of their hometowns.

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Injuries forced Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Carson Wentz to watch another quarterback lead the Eagles to their first Super Bowl title and sidelined him for playoff games each of the next two seasons.

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

Injuries forced Carson Wentz to take another quarterback lead the Philadelphia Eagles to their first Super Bowl title. It was a line for playoff games each of the next two seasons.

The Eagles didn’t draft Jalen Hurts to compete with Wentz, only to let him sit on the bench because he hadn’t stopped some media and fans from creating a quarterback controversy and interpreting the pick as a slight against Wentz.

Consistent scrutiny and intense criticism are part of the job for NFL quarterbacks. In Philly, it’s loud and consistent.

But Wentz blocks it out. He won’t allow disappointment, frustration or setbacks to bring him down. Nor does he let success — he finished third in NFL MVP voting in 2017 and signed a contract extension with $108 million guaranteed last year — change his approach.

The reason is his strong Christian faith.

“It can be easy to get consumed with the world’s worldly, fleshly train of thought or desires or whatever,” Wentz explained in a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press this week. “But when you look at everything from an internal perspective, from a biblical perspective, and just know that this is so much bigger than just me and my life or where I’m at in my career, football, it’s so much bigger.”

Wentz plans to embrace Hurts the same way he did Nick Foles, who became a Philly hero after earning Super Bowl MVP honors when he led the Eagles over the Patriots in February 2018. Foles and Wentz were close during the two seasons they played together. They share the same faith, went to the same church along with third-string quarterback Nate Sudfeld and spent plenty of time together.

Hursts has similar religious beliefs.

“I believe wholeheartedly that we’re going to hit it off and we’ll be stronger together for the good of the team,” Wentz said of Hurts, who threw for 3,851 yards and 32 touchdowns in Oklahoma in 2019. “It just seems like you instantly connect and you instantly know that person on a deeper level because of the mutual relationship that you share with Christ.”

The Eagles won the NFC East title last season despite numerous injuries on offense because Wentz was excellent down the stretch. He led them to four straight wins in December while throwing to a group of wide receivers who were off the practice squad and waiver wire.

Wentz set a franchise record with 4,039 yards passing and became the first quarterback in NFL history to throw 20 or more touchdowns and seven or fewer interceptions in three straight seasons.

But in the first quarter of his first career playoff game, Wentz was knocked out with a concussion that Jajeveon Clowney hit him in the helmet from behind after he was already going down.

Clowney currently is a free agent and the Eagles have inquired about him. Wentz said he would have no problem welcoming him in the locker room.

“I have the utmost confidence in (management’s) ability to make the team as good as they can to put us in the best situation to win games,” Wentz said.

**Briefly**

**MAC scaling back, shuttering tournaments**

The Mid-American Conference is eliminating postseason tournaments in eight sports, including baseball and softball, and men’s and women’s basketball are among nine sports that will have postseasons scaled back.

The MAC’s announced the cost-cutting move Tuesday in response to the financial crisis being brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

Postseason tournaments will also be discontinued in field hockey, women's lacrosse, men's and women’s tennis, and women’s soccer. Champions in the 12-team conference will be determined by regular-season results in sports without postseason tournaments.

Men’s and women’s basketball tournaments will only include the top eight teams in the final regular-season standings. Regular-season basketball schedules will increase to 20 conference games and opening-round, on-campus tournament games will be eliminated.

Volleyball, men’s and women’s swimming and diving, men’s and women’s indoor and outdoor track and field and men’s and women’s golf will also have some postseasons with fewer participants.

**Source: Coyotes CEO no longer with team**

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Arizona Coyotes president and CEO Aahron Cohen is no longer with the organization, a person familiar with the move told The Associated Press.

The person spoke Tuesday on condition of anonymity because no formal announcement has been made. No other details were provided.

Cohen has been with the Coyotes since being hired in 2015 as chief operating officer and chief legal officer by previous owner Andrew Barroway. Cohen was named president and CEO in 2017 after Steve Patterson stepped back to serve as a consultant and adviser after a year on the job.

**Women’s golf starts up again in South Korea**

SEOUL, South Korea — The KLPGA Championship opening on Thursday, an event that will be played without fans on the course.

Women’s golf in South Korea joins Korea’s professional baseball and soccer leagues, which have already restarted in the wake of coronavirus. The KLPGA event will be played without fans on the course.

The tournament at the Lakewood Country Club located east of the capital Seoul is expected to last 10 days and is the first event to restart in South Korea since the start of the pandemic.

The tournament will feature 58 of the top 100 players in the KLPGA rankings, which is the equivalent of the top 100 in the LPGA.

**Cloudy:** Minor leagues can’t fall back on TV revenue

Minor league baseball teams will be excluded from TV revenue, which is a major source of income for most minor league teams.

The minor leagues won’t be able to count on TV revenue because the deals were based on the assumption that fans would be allowed to attend games.

The minor leagues have been forced to turn to other sources of revenue, such as sponsorships and donations, to make ends meet.

**NFL scoreboard**

**Tuesday’s transactions**

**FOOTBALL**

National Football League

**ARIZONA CARDINALS** — Re-signed CB Kevin Peterson to a one-year contract.

**BALTIMORE RAVENS** — Re-signed OLB Pernell McPhee. Re-signed WR Sean McDermott. Re-signed TE Justice Cheatham.

**INDIANAPOLIS COLTS** — Signed G Dan Feeney from the practice squad. Signed OLB Janoris Jenkins from the injury list. Signed K Rodrigo Blankenship to the practice squad.

**LAS VEGAS RAIDERS** — Agreed to terms with CB Prince Amukamara. Signed RB Darwin Thompson from the practice squad.

**MIAMI DOLPHINS** — Signed QB Tua Tagovailoa, T Roque Von Nattiv, TE Jordan Cyprien, DB Michael Thomas, RB Patrick Laird, LB Deon Lacey, TE Jordan86, LB Blake Ferguson.

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**From Back Page**

MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred estimated a 40% loss of revenue if baseball is played with no fans and Herrick Feinstein sports law group co-chair Irwin Kishen estimated it is probably twice that for minor league sports. As it is, the government doesn’t expect minor league baseball this year, while both the ECHL and the AHL canceled the rest of their hockey seasons.

“Plans for 2020-21 include the grim possibility of empty or near-empty arenas,” Kishen said. “Furthermore, millions of questions that need to be answered,” minor league hockey player Nathan Paetsch said. “What’s next season going to look like? What’s the possibility of starting? What type of season is it going to look like? Is there going to be fans or no fans? Is it going to be the same length of the season?”

Smith College economics professor Andrew Zimbalist agreed the crisis is correct about the situation and economic downturn changing which teams survive. He also pointed to the ill-fated season by the XFL as a cautionary tale.

“How’s it going to get hit? What will the revenue change in the area or -specifically, are going to be more careful about how they spend their free income, their leisure income,” Zimbalist said. “I don’t expect the leagues to really start flourishing again for several years.”
Source: No economic plan yet in early talks

By Ronald Blum
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball did not include an economic proposal during its opening presentation to the players' union on terms to start the coronavirus-delayed season.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker criticized big leaguers for not being willing to cut pay further at a news conference on Tuesday, and Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey said his state is open to games without spectators for all the major sports starting Saturday.

The electronic meeting of MLB and the players' association lasted between three and four hours and consisted of baseball officials explaining their view of the economics, science and logistics of getting the season under way, several people familiar with the session told The Associated Press. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because no details were announced.

Owners gave the go-ahead Monday for a proposal that players receive the percentage of their 2020 salaries based on a 50-50 split of revenues MLB receives during the regular season and postseason, a person familiar with that plan told The AP. That person also spoke on condition of anonymity because the plan was not announced.

The concept would cut the expenses of teams worried about playing in empty ballparks due to the pandemic. The union views revenue sharing as a salary cap, which it has said it will never agree to, and the concept was not presented.

If empty stadiums or neutral sites are used, an agreement with the players' association is needed to play ball.

Opening day was to have been March 26. MLB's plan could lead to the season starting around the Fourth of July with an 82-game regular season, playoffs expanding from 10 teams to 14 and the designated hitter used for the first time in games between National League teams.

MLB officials showed slides during the meeting and the union delegation, which included players, caucused and asked questions. Baseball officials explained how they would use a lab in Utah to give the sport its own testing ability, the people said.

Baseball officials also expressed concern about a second wave of the coronavirus in the fall and their worries it could force cancellation of the postseason. While players are paid their salaries during the regular season, the bulk of MLB's national broadcasting revenue derives from the postseason.

Players agreed March 26 to a deal in which they would be paid prorated shares of salaries based on the portion of the 162-game regular-season schedule that is played. As part of that agreement, if no games are played, they would be paid service time for 2020 matching what they earned last year.

I realize that the players have the right to haggle over their salaries, but we do live in a moment where the people of Illinois and the people of the United States deserve to get their pastime back, to watch, anyway on television," Pritzker said in response to the last question of his news conference.

COVID-19 provides Royals more time to know Matheny

By Dave Skretta
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — When the Kansas City Royals learned that spring training was over and they were headed home, with questions swirling around if and when they might start the season, Mike Matheny sent them each a copy of a book called "Legacy."

Author James Kerr tells the story of the All Blacks, the famed New Zealand rugby team that has won more than 75% of its matches going back a century. Kerr breaks down the Kiwis’ success and teases out lessons for individuals and teams that have to do with accountability, leadership and developing a winning culture.

It’s something that Matheny, who was hired this past offseason to replace the retired Ned Yost, wouldn’t have been able to do during the regular season, when the daily grind chews up everybody’s free time than they’ve had since a year mostly focused on himself.

But with the coronavirus pandemic giving his players more free time than they’ve had since most of them were kids, Matheny decided to take advantage by giving them a little bit of homework — and in doing so, giving them a little insight into what makes him tick, too.

“I think we’re all pretty pumped to play for Mike,” said pitcher Brad Keller, who has finished the book while trying to stay in shape in Arizona. “The intensity he brought when we were in spring training was bar none. The entire spring had a different vibe, a different attitude. Everybody was over losing. We were excited to get back to winning.”

There is still nobody quite sure when baseball will resume. But when it does, Keller thinks Matheny’s meetings the past few weeks will have been useful. Matheny’s meetings the past few weeks have “brought when we were in spring training to get to know Matheny,” Keller said with a laugh.

Above: Kansas City Royals manager Mike Matheny, back left, watches as pitcher Jesse Hahn throws during spring training in Surprise, Ariz., on Feb. 16. The Royals had an offseason and most of spring training to get to know Matheny. Below: One unintended consequence of the coronavirus pandemic is they’ve gotten to know their new manager better than they could ever have imagined.

He’s definitely reached out. It’s about the only thing he can do, honestly, reach out and sit and talk with us,” Keller said. “We go over some books — the ‘Legacy’ book he asked us to read. He sits with the pitchers in their meetings. Just keeping us active and keeping our minds engaged and keeping us loose. That’s about the only thing he can do.”

It’s not surprising that Matheny would recommend a book centered on self-improvement.

After he was fired by the St. Louis Cardinals, where one of the biggest gripe among players was that Matheny was unable to reach them on a personal level, he spent a year mostly focused on himself. Sure, he was spending time as an adviser to the Royals, but Matheny also took classes in communication and read books about leadership and positive thinking.

“If we were in a normal routine, Matheny said, “we’d try to connect on a normal basis, but our minds are always just so locked into baseball. But right now we have a chance to jump in and we’re hearing a lot of different stories.”

Kind of like a summer camp where everybody would be sitting around a campfire swapping tales. Only it’s virtual.

“We have a trivia night to get everyone on and it was a catastrophe,” Matheny said with a laugh. “We have some guys with no real connection to baseball and they’re just having fun. They’re trying to keep it in a community. Because I think our clubhouse is a microcosm of the whole world right now.”

The stay-at-home orders that are beginning to be lifted across the country gave Matheny a unique chance to learn about the lives of each of them outside baseball, an opportunity that he probably wouldn’t have during any sense of normalcy.

Now, he hopes that creates a more tightly bonded team when the Royals gather again.

“They’re trying everything possible to get us out to play. So stay ready,” Matheny said. “But this is reality. This is a shot not just to baseball but to the world, and there are some ramifications that are coming to this change and issues we’re finding ourselves in, so let’s be prepared when we do come back. Let’s realize it doesn’t necessarily need to look a certain way. Let’s do what we do and understand that everyone and everything is going to look a little bit different.”

PHOTOS BY CHARLIE RIEDEL/0P
Landscape for minor leagues could be altered by pandemic

BY STEPHEN WHYN
Associated Press

A
as North America’s pro football, basketball, baseball and hockey leagues try to play again in a pandemic, minor league sports face a more treacherous climb to return.

While the NFL, NBA or Major League Baseball can run on television revenue, it’s virtually impossible for many minor leagues to survive with empty stadiums. The possibility of no games in 2020 could put some teams in jeopardy and change the landscape for attendance-driven sports in the short- and long-term future.

“There’s no future for minor league sports with empty stadiums. There’s zero,” said Gary Green, who owns Triple-A and Double-A baseball teams and an expansion franchise in the United Soccer League that plays in suburban Omaha, Neb. “If some of the teams don’t have deep-pocketed ownership groups or owners, I don’t know how they’re going to pay their bills.”

It is by far the most pressing question facing Minor League Baseball, the American Hockey League, ECHL, USL and others. The minors are deeply baked into the North American sports landscape as talent developers for the majors and cheap, family-friendly entertainment in towns big and small. Experts are divided on how they will survive and how soon they can bounce back.

SEE CLOUDY ON PAGE 22