

## MILITARY

Admiral hands over SOUTHCOM charge amid regional tension

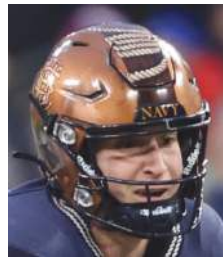
Page 3



## FACES

Documentary shows life and complex legacy of Australian snowboarder

Page 15



## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Horvath to Heidenreich on 4th-and-goal leads No. 22 Navy over Army

Page 24

Troops to see average 4.2% housing allowance boost in 2026 » Page 5

# STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 84 Edition 172 ©SS 2025 MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025

平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)  
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥ 50

50¢/Free to Deployed Areas



TRENTON PALLONE/U.S. Army

A U.S. soldier alongside Syrian partner soldiers watches a U.S. Army squad conduct infantry maneuver training in Syria on April 24. An ambush from a lone gunman killed two U.S. service members and one U.S. civilian in central Syria on Saturday.

## 3 killed in Syria ambush

Trump vows retaliation after 2 service members, 1 civilian attacked

BY LARA KORTE  
Stars and Stripes

Two U.S. service members and one American civilian have been killed and three other service members wounded in an ambush on Saturday by Islamic State in central Syria, U.S. Central Command said.

The attack was carried out by a lone gunman, who was engaged and killed, according to CENTCOM.

Republican Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa said the soldiers were members of the Iowa National

Guard — where she, too, once served. “Our Iowa National Guard family is hurting as we mourn the loss of two of our own and pray for the recovery of the three soldiers wounded,” she said, according to The Associated Press.

CENTCOM said three service members were also wounded in the ambush Saturday. President Donald Trump said the three “seem to be doing pretty well.”

The identities of the service members killed will be withheld by the Department of Defense for 24 hours. Pentagon spokesman Sean Par-

nell said via a post on X that the service members killed were Army soldiers and the civilian was an interpreter.

“The attack occurred as the soldiers were conducting a key leader engagement,” Parnell said.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump vowed that “There will be very serious retaliation.”

“This was an ISIS attack against the U.S., and Syria, in a very dangerous part of Syria,

SEE AMBUSH ON PAGE 6

## Terrorists hit Sydney Hanukkah celebration

BY KRISTEN GELINEAU,  
CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY  
AND ROD MCGUIRK  
Associated Press

SYDNEY — Two gunmen attacked a Hanukkah celebration on a Sydney beach Sunday, killing at least 11 people in what Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese called an act of antisemitism and terrorism.

The massacre at one of Australia’s most popular and iconic beaches followed a wave of anti-semitic attacks that have roiled the country over the past year, although the authorities didn’t suggest those episodes and Sunday’s shooting were connected. It is the deadliest shooting for almost three decades in a country with strict gun control laws.

One gunman was fatally shot by police and the second, who was arrested, was in critical condition, authorities said. Police said one of the gunmen was known to the security services, but that there had been no specific threat.

At least 29 people were confirmed wounded, including two police officers, said Mal Lanyon, the police commissioner for New South Wales state, where Sydney is located.

Police said officers were examining a number of suspicious items, including several improvised explosive devices found in one of the suspect’s cars.

SEE GUNMEN ON PAGE 12

## RELATED

Deadly shooting at Brown University; person in custody  
Page 8



BUSINESS/WEATHER

Jury awards \$40M to cancer patients in talcum powder suit

*Associated Press*

A Los Angeles jury awarded \$40 million on Friday to two women who claimed that talcum powder made by Johnson & Johnson caused their ovarian cancer.

The company said it would appeal the jury's verdict and compensatory damages.

The verdict is the latest development in a long-standing legal battle over claims that talc in Johnson's Baby Powder and Shower to Shower body power was connected to ovarian cancer and mesothelioma, a

cancer that strikes the lungs and other organs. Johnson & Johnson stopped selling powder made with talc worldwide in 2023.

In October, another California jury ordered J&J to pay \$966 million to the family of a woman who died of mesothelioma, claiming she developed the cancer because the baby powder she used was contaminated with the carcinogen asbestos.

In the latest case, the jury awarded \$18 million to Monica Kent and \$22 million to Deborah Schultz and her husband. "The only thing they

did was be loyal to Johnson & Johnson as a customer for only 50 years," said their attorney, Daniel Robinson.

Erik Haas, J&J's worldwide vice president of litigation, said in a statement that the company had won "16 of the 17 ovarian cancer cases it previously tried" and expected to do so again upon appealing Friday's verdict.

Johnson & Johnson replaced the talc in its baby powder sold in most of North America with cornstarch in 2020 after sales declined.

EXCHANGE RATES

| Military rates               |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
|------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------|------------------------------|------|---------------------------|------|--------------|------|--------------|------|
| Euro costs (Dec. 15)         | 0.83    | Switzerland (Franc)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 0.7957     |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| British pound (Dec. 15)      | \$1.30  | Thailand (Baht)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 31.51      |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Japanese yen (Dec. 15)       | 152.00  | Turkey (NewLira)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 42.6911    |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| South Korean won (Dec. 15)   | 1434.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Commercial rates             |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Bahrain (Dinar)              | 0.3727  | <p>(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)</p> <div>INTEREST RATES</div> <table><tr><td>Prime rate</td><td>6.75</td></tr><tr><td>Interest Rates Discount rate</td><td>3.75</td></tr><tr><td>Federal funds market rate</td><td>3.62</td></tr><tr><td>3-month bill</td><td>3.62</td></tr><tr><td>30-year bond</td><td>4.85</td></tr></table> | Prime rate | 6.75 | Interest Rates Discount rate | 3.75 | Federal funds market rate | 3.62 | 3-month bill | 3.62 | 30-year bond | 4.85 |
| Prime rate                   | 6.75    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Interest Rates Discount rate | 3.75    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Federal funds market rate    | 3.62    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| 3-month bill                 | 3.62    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| 30-year bond                 | 4.85    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Britain (Pound)              | 1.337   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Canada (Dollar)              | 1.3778  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| China (Yuan)                 | 7.054   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Denmark (Krone)              | 6.3613  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Egypt (Pound)                | 47.2921 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Euro                         | 0.8513  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Hong Kong (Dollar)           | 7.7798  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Hungary (Forint)             | 327.79  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Israel (Shekel)              | 3.2218  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Japan (Yen)                  | 155.751 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Kuwait (Dinar)               | 0.3062  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Norway (Krone)               | 10.1343 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Philippines (Peso)           | 59.08   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Poland (Zloty)               | 3.5937  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Saudi Arabia (Riyal)         | 3.7480  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| Singapore (Dollar)           | 1.2915  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |
| South Korea (Won)            | 1474.05 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |            |      |                              |      |                           |      |              |      |              |      |

WEATHER OUTLOOK



**TODAY**  
IN STRIPES

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| American Roundup ..... | 14    |
| Classified .....       | 13    |
| Comics .....           | 17    |
| Crossword .....        | 17    |
| Faces .....            | 15    |
| Opinion .....          | 16    |
| Sports .....           | 18-24 |

STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us, wherever you need us.

Mobile • Online • Print

| EUROPE                         |                        | ADVERTISING       |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| CustomerService@stripes.com    | +49 (0) 0631.3615.9111 | DSN: 314.583.9111 |
| MIDDLE EAST                    |                        | ADVERTISING       |
| CustomerService@stripes.com    | +49 (0) 0631.3615.9111 | DSN: 314.583.9111 |
| PACIFIC                        |                        | ADVERTISING       |
| PacificAdvertising@stripes.com | +81 (42) 552.2511      | DSN: 315.227.7310 |

Round-the-world news for America's military.

Stripes.com supplies constant updates, on news of interest — including reports from our overseas military bases in Europe, Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Mideast, and coverage of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill.

Also available on mobile apps for Android and iOS.

## MILITARY

# SOUTHCOM leader retires amid tensions

BY MATTHEW ADAMS  
*Stars and Stripes*

Adm. Alvin Holsey, head of U.S. Southern Command, retired Friday with two years left in his tenure.

"This is a graduation, not a retirement. As somebody who's been there and done that before, I can tell you life on the other side is awesome," Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the audience. Caine presided over the change-of-command ceremony at the command's headquarters in Doral, Fla. Holsey formally handed over command to Air Force Lt. Gen. Evan Pettus, who currently serves as his military deputy commander. Pettus will serve as acting head of SOUTHCOM. President Donald Trump has yet to nominate Holsey's replacement.

The change comes amid rising tensions with Venezuela from seizing an oil tanker Wednesday and more than 20 strikes on alleged drug smuggling boats.

Holsey announced his retirement in October. In a closed-door meeting with senior lawmakers on Tuesday, Holsey insisted his decision is personal and had nothing to do with the operations in his command, according to comments by Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, published in Politico.

In his farewell remarks, Holsey did not address operations or reasons for his retirement. He did

urge his successor to uphold long-standing partnerships in the region by standing firmly behind the shared values of democracy and support for the rule of law.

"I concluded my final commanders conference yesterday, and I was clear with my team to be a trusted partner. We must be credible, present and engaged," Holsey said.

Reuters reported Holsey was pushed out by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth after the secretary had grown frustrated with SOUTHCOM as he sought to flex U.S. military operations and planning in the region.

Spokespeople for Hegseth previously have denied that there was tension between Holsey and Hegseth.

"We extend our deepest gratitude to Admiral Alvin Holsey for his more than 37 years of distinguished service to our nation," Hegseth said in a post on X in October.

Hegseth on Friday traveled to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala., for the relocation of U.S. Space Command Headquarters and a designation ceremony.

Former Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin presided over the SOUTHCOM change-of-command in November 2024.

Holsey is a native of Fort Valley, Ga., and was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps program at Morehouse College in 1988. Before leading U.S. forces in Latin



REBECCA BLACKWELL/AP

**Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, center, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, looks on as Navy Adm. Alvin Holsey, right, shakes hands with Air Force Lt. Gen. Evan Pettus during Holsey's relinquishment of command and retirement ceremony, at U.S. Southern Command headquarters on Friday, in Doral, Fla.**

America, Holsey served as the military deputy commander of SOUTHCOM.

Caine pointed out that Holsey comes from a family with a long line of service. Holsey's father served in active duty during the Korean War and six uncles also served — three in the Navy and three in the Army.

One of his two sons, Joshua, followed his father into the Navy and aviation. He is a lieutenant commander and currently flying Black Hawks off the USS Abraham Lincoln in the Pacific Ocean.

In his office, he kept a letter that had faded through the years that marked the beginning of his Navy career, according to a SOUTHCOM press release. Holsey was told as a college student he could become a Naval officer and a pilot.

"I had never flown or been in an aircraft before, and someone told me I could be a pilot, and I believed," Holsey said.

Holsey recorded 4,000 hours of flying, an amount the chairman said he is "incredibly jealous of."

Pettus earned his commission from the Air Force Academy in 1994. Pettus is a command pilot with more than 2,700 hours, according to his service record. He has flown combat missions in operations Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Allied Force, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Inherent Resolve.

The U.S. military has steadily amassed troops, naval and air assets in the Caribbean Sea to strike alleged drug traffickers.

Hegseth in October announced the deployment of the Ford Carrier Strike Group. The USS Gerald R. Ford, along with accompanying ships USS Mahan, USS Bainbridge and USS Winston S. Churchill arrived last month, concentrating nearly 20% of the Navy's deployed warships in the region.

The strike group joined other ships in the Caribbean, including

the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group and its embarked Marine expeditionary unit. Also patrolling the region are guided missile cruisers USS Gettysburg and USS Lake Erie.

The U.S. has conducted 22 strikes since Sept. 2 and killed at least 87 people.

Shortly after taking office, Trump designated several drug cartels as terrorist organizations, including Venezuela's Tren de Aragua. His administration has asserted that the U.S. is in an "armed conflict" with cartels and will treat their members as "unlawful combatants."

Hegseth has fired a number of senior military officials since taking office in January. Some of the firings include Air Force Gen. Charles "CQ" Brown, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Adm. Lisa Franchetti, the chief of naval operations; and the judge advocates general for the Army, Navy and Air Force.

## Top military lawyer to be summoned in House's boat strike inquiry

BY NOAH ROBERTSON  
*The Washington Post*

A top House Republican plans to summon the senior military lawyer present during a controversial U.S. strike that killed the survivors of an initial attack on their alleged drug smuggling boat in the waters off Venezuela.

Rep. Mike D. Rogers, R-Ala., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said in a short interview at the Capitol that he wants Adm. Frank M. Bradley, the commander who oversaw the Sept. 2 operation, to return to Washington next week and provide a briefing for all committee members.

"I want the lawyer there, too,"

Rogers said.

The request to hear from another official involved in the operation suggests Rogers wants the committee to have a firsthand picture of the legal considerations that preceded Bradley's order to strike the boat again despite the presence of survivors. The admiral spent about eight hours on Capitol Hill last week meeting with select lawmakers, Rogers among them. The Washington Post on Thursday published a detailed account of the revelations that emerged from those classified discussions.

Earlier last week, Rogers had signaled that he planned to end his committee's probe, one of two un-

derway in Congress, telling reporters he was satisfied with the information he had been provided. He had previously expressed a desire for Bradley to return to Capitol Hill so more lawmakers could hear directly from the admiral and see video footage of the operation.

A spokesperson for Rogers said the committee was working to schedule the next briefing.

A spokesperson for U.S. Special Operations Command, where Bradley is the top officer, could not confirm whether there would be another briefing or if a request had been made for the military lawyer to attend.

The Sept. 2 operation killed 11

people, including the two survivors. After The Post reported late last month that Bradley ordered the follow-on attack, lawmakers and legal experts have questioned whether the law of armed conflict had been violated by killing defenseless targets. The House and Senate Armed Services committees quickly opened separate inquiries.

The military lawyer who advised Bradley during the operation, whom The Post is not identifying because they serve in a secretive unit, has emerged as a key figure as members of Congress seek to understand Bradley's state of mind at the time of the strike. During such operations, military

lawyers are expected to advise their commanders on the law of armed conflict, particularly in moments of uncertainty.

It is not clear what legal advice Bradley was given before he decided to strike the boat wreckage again, though the admiral told lawmakers he did consult with the lawyer on whether the men qualified as "shipwrecked," or out of the fight, making them unlawful targets, The Post has reported.

Democrats and some Republicans have demanded the public release of a video documenting the operation. Hegseth, who has sought to distance himself from the fallout, has not committed to doing so.



PACIFIC

# USFJ: ‘Mistake’ made in arrest of US civilian

## Video captured American detained by military police on Okinawa streets

**By BRIAN McELHINEY**  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — U.S. Forces Japan has acknowledged that military police on patrol on an Okinawa street made a “mistake” when they aggressively detained a U.S. civilian last month in an incident captured on video that went viral.

Two videos posted online show a U.S. military police officer lifting and slamming Kareem El to the pavement along Gate 2 Street in Okinawa city early Nov. 22. The incident ignited a social media backlash.

“While the investigation is still ongoing, it is clear that the detention of Mr. El was a mistake on the part of the patrol, who approached him solely because they believed he was a U.S. servicemember,” USFJ spokesman Col. John Severns said Friday.

The Washington Post first reported Severns’ statement on Thursday in Washington, where El is from. El has said he was on Okinawa on a business trip.

USFJ commander Air Force Lt. Gen. Stephen Jost halted unilateral patrols by the U.S. military on Okinawa and ordered an investigation into the incident, Severns said Nov. 26. El is not connected to the military and was detained by a liberty patrol consisting only of U.S. military police, Severns said.

U.S. military police continue joint patrols in Okinawa city with Okinawa Prefectural Police, most recently on Dec. 6 on Gate 2 Street, a popular nightlife district outside Kadena Air Base.

USFJ instituted the joint patrols in April to enforce an order prohibiting service members from drinking alcohol off base between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. The order stemmed in part from a rash of sexual assault allegations that arose in December 2023 and have so far yielded two convictions.

The U.S. military began its own patrols in September in Okinawa city and in November in Chanan town and Naha city, Okinawa’s capital.

El, 32 and a former Marine captain, told Stars and Stripes in an interview Nov. 28 that he was detained without provocation in front of Star Bar around 2 a.m. on Nov. 22.

Civil rights attorney Lee Merritt, who is representing El, in a statement Nov. 29 said he suffered a head injury, wrist lacerations, cuts and abrasions and “significant psychological trauma.”

In a Dec. 4 video call with Merritt and Stars and Stripes, El said he was dropped from three feet onto concrete, injuring his face and the left side of his body. He said the slam injured his knees, and his wrists were lacerated from being handcuffed.

Merritt said his office has opened its own investigation and is exploring possible civil claims against the individual police officers involved in the incident and the U.S. military.

Merritt said he has spoken to U.S. and Japanese citizens who claim to “have suffered similar injuries or harassment.” He did not say how many he interviewed.



PHOTOS BY JANIQUEA ROBINSON/Stars and Stripes

**Lt. Cmdr. Frank “Philly” Goldstein, of Strike Fighter Squadron 102, has a quiet moment after his return from a deployment with Carrier Air Wing 5.**

# USS George Washington air wing unit back in Japan after sea tour

**By JANIQUEA ROBINSON**  
*Stars and Stripes*

The men and women that keep Navy fighters, tiltrotors and helicopters flying from the aircraft carrier USS George Washington returned home Thursday after six months at sea.

The engine mechanics, ordnance technicians, clerks and other personnel of Carrier Air Wing 5 arrived in waves aboard several aircraft at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, the wing’s home base when not deployed.

The George Washington returned the same day to its pier at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, nearly 450 miles to the northeast.

During its deployment the carrier and its escorts operated throughout the Western Pacific, worked alongside military forces from Japan, Australia, South Korea and other countries, and made port calls in the Philippines, Guam and South Korea, according to carrier strike group spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Spencer Marion.

Approximately 65 families,



**Service members from the Airborne Command and Control Squadron wait with treats for members of their unit returning to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, after a six-month deployment Thursday.**

friends and coworkers waited at a hangar with homemade signs, and tables laden with food — pizza, tacos and 7-Eleven snacks — for the returning service members.

The first contingent arrived around 4 p.m., the last wasn’t ex-

pected for another four hours.

Many of the pilots and aircraft from the wing’s flying squadrons, ranging from F/A-18 Super Hornets, F-35C Lightning IIs, Sea Hawk helicopters and CMV-22B Ospreys, had already returned to the air base.

# US sailor may face charges in fatal motorcycle crash in Japan

**By HANA KUSUMOTO AND ALEX WILSON**  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA, Japan — Japanese police on Tuesday forwarded to prosecutors their case against a U.S. sailor involved in a deadly motorcycle collision earlier this year.

Police allege the sailor was driving negligently April 27 when he made a right turn in Yokosuka’s Heisei neighborhood and collided

with a Japanese motorcyclist, Shinji Takahashi, 47, in the intersection.

Takahashi was pronounced dead less than an hour later at a nearby hospital.

Police on Tuesday recommended that prosecutors charge the sailor, who is stationed at Yokosuka Naval Base, a Yokosuka city police spokesman said Friday.

Prosecutors, not police, decide formal charges under Japan’s

criminal justice system.

Stars and Stripes is withholding the service member’s identity until formal charges are filed.

If convicted, he could face up to seven years imprisonment and a maximum fine of about \$6,000, according to the Japan Legal Support Center website.

Takahashi’s family filed a civil lawsuit against the sailor earlier this month seeking roughly \$772,000, according to their attorney,

Masahiko Goto.

The lawsuit lists Takahashi’s three sons, his mother, two brothers and his partner as plaintiffs.

Their suit alleges serious negligence and seeks compensation for the loss of a family member, according to a copy of the filing provided by Goto.

The family filed suit ahead of criminal charges to ensure their suit could be served before he can leave Japan, Goto said.

Goto also represents the family of Tsubasa Ito, who died after a 2024 collision with another Yokosuka sailor, Petty Officer 2nd Class Jaden Edwin Llanos. He was convicted in May of negligent driving causing death and received a suspended 1½-year sentence.

Llanos has since left Japan, preventing a civil suit from moving forward because the court cannot serve him with the documents, Goto said.



MILITARY

# Troops to see housing allowance increase

**BY COREY DICKSTEIN**  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Pentagon will boost housing allowance rates for service members by an average of 4.2% on Jan. 1, the Defense Department announced Thursday.

Troops can expect to see basic allowance for housing increases in the range of \$93 to \$212 per month in 2026, depending on factors including their pay grade, family size and location, according to a Pentagon news release. The Defense Department estimates it will pay about \$29.2 billion in BAH to about 1 million service members in 2026.

“The Department collects rental housing cost data annually for 299 military housing areas in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. The basic allowance for housing rate-setting process relies on a wide variety of data sources to obtain high-quality, accurate, current-year housing cost data,” ac-

cording to the Pentagon announcement. “... While average basic allowance for housing rates increased, various rental markets may experience different market trends, and the 2026 rates reflect those geographic market condition differences.”

The Pentagon pays BAH based on six housing profiles for its service members that range from a one-bedroom apartment profile for an E-4 — a specialist or corporal in the Army — up to a four-bedroom, single-family home for an O-5 — a lieutenant colonel in the Army — or higher rank with dependents. It sets BAH rates annually based on a complex methodology meant to estimate the local median rental places in locations near military installations.

The funds are meant to cover about 95% of average housing expenses — including utilities such as electricity and water — for the

housing profile in each location, according to the Defense Department.

Actual out-of-pocket expenses might be higher or lower than the prescribed rate based on a service member’s housing choice. Urban regions usually offer higher BAH rates than rural areas due to the generally higher cost of housing. Rental prices typically change between 2% and 5% from year to year, according to the Defense Department. Troops saw an about 5% average boost in BAH rates in 2025.

Service members who remain at their current location are also protected from having their payments decreased if BAH rates in their area are reduced in 2026, the Pentagon said.

“No matter what happens to housing costs — including the out-of-pocket expense adjustment — an individual service member who maintains uninterrupted basic al-

lowance for housing eligibility at a given location will not see a rate decrease,” according to the news release. “This ensures that service members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract are not penalized if the area’s housing costs decrease.”

A watchdog report ordered by the Defense Department this year suggested that the Pentagon should rework its BAH rate calculations to protect troops from rapid housing market changes, such as were seen during the 2020 and 2021 coronavirus pandemic, and to better reflect the housing choices service members have been making. Troops in recent years have typically chosen to rent or purchase larger housing units than their BAH profiles suggested they live in, the RAND Corp. study found.

That study found the Pentagon’s

BAH algorithm, unchanged since 1998, could not account for sudden, large spikes in rental prices. Some locations around military bases in 2020 and 2021 saw increases of more than 10% in rental prices in just a few months, RAND analysts found.

It was not clear Thursday if the department had taken RAND’s suggestions since the report’s release in January. Pentagon officials did not immediately respond to an inquiry about the study’s findings.

The latest BAH rates “are part of a robust military compensation package,” according to the DOD release.

Service members can calculate their housing allowance by using the Basic Allowance for Housing calculator at: <https://www.travel.dod.mil/Allowances/Basic-Allowance-for-Housing/BAH-Rate-Lookup/>

## Marines certify 12 attack drone operators at 2-week competition

**BY BRIAN McELHINEY**  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP SCHWAB, Okinawa — The Marine Corps certified Okinawa’s first 12 attack drone operators during a two-week competition this month, creating the means to make precision strikes while keeping Marines out of harm’s way.

The competition began Dec. 1 and culminated Thursday with a kinetic strike at Schwab’s Range 10, where Marines piloted and detonated two drones carrying C-4 explosives over a rusted-out tank more than half a mile downrange.

About 50 Marines and sailors, including Lt. Gen. Roger Turner, commander of the III Marine Expeditionary Force, and Vice Adm. Pat Hannifin, commander of U.S. 7th Fleet, witnessed the strike.

The exercise goal was to “defend this piece of terrain from some type of enemy that has some type of armored vehicles,” Col.

Scott Cuomo, commander of the Weapons Training Battalion in Quantico, Va., told reporters before the strike.

The Marine Corps in March announced formation of the Attack Drone Team in response to the “rapid proliferation” of armed, first-person view drone technology in modern conflicts, especially in Eastern Europe. The drones have emerged as a critical weapon on the battlefield in Ukraine.

Drones provide a way to keep Marines safe while striking the enemy, 3rd Marine Division spokeswoman Lt. Col. Diann Rosenfeld told Stars and Stripes before the exercise.

“It just extends our reach into the battlefield,” she said. “We have the Marines operating here, and if the target’s over there, let’s keep our Marines safe in the defensive position and launch a drone to hopefully eliminate that target.”

The attack drone “100% sup-

ports the expeditionary advanced base operations concept,” Cuomo said.

The concept is a key tenet of the Corps’ Force Design reorganization that calls for small, mobile groups of Marines to disperse within the range of enemy missiles to seize and hold islands and sink enemy vessels.

“The beauty of this thing ... I can put it in my backpack, I can go run up the mountain if I need to, and if I have to protect you, I can use this capability,” he said.

The competition at Schwab is the third since the team’s formation, Cuomo said. Three more are planned around the world.

“Our relationship is critically important with the Japanese Ground Self-Defense,” he said. “Certifying Marines to make sure that we can train on all the installations here in Okinawa and do it safely is critically important.”

The 12 certified Marines are



RYAN M. BREEDEN/Stars and Stripes

**Col. Scott Cuomo speaks about drone technology at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, on Thursday.**

with units across the III Marine Expeditionary Force.

Additionally, five attack drone instructors, two payload specialists and two payload specialist instructors were certified during the event.

On Thursday, a team of about 10 Marines pulled pins to activate the two explosive-laden drones, then ran about 300 feet back, the “minimum safe distance,” Cuomo said.

Drone operators at the control station about 950 feet away then flew the drones downrange and detonated them over the tank.

The drones and their payloads cost about \$3,600 each, Cuomo said. They have a range of about 12 miles.

“Normally with weapons that shoot this far and that are this precise, they cost so much more money,” he said.

## Probe launched after 3 USAF F-16 pilots complain of laser incidents

**BY JENNIFER H. SVAN**  
*Stars and Stripes*

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — German authorities have launched a criminal investigation into apparent laser beam attacks earlier this month on pilots of American F-16s at Spangdahlem Air Base.

Three fighter pilots reported encountering what they described as a blue laser beam while on approach to Spangdahlem, the Trier criminal investigation department said in a

statement Friday. The department is part of the Rheinland-Pfalz police agency.

Two of the incidents occurred on Dec. 2, and another a week later, on Dec. 9, while the aircraft were only a few kilometers away from the base, the statement said.

In all three cases, which occurred between 8 and 8:30 p.m., the pilots landed safely, German authorities said.

Laser attacks pose a high risk to pilots, as they can cause temporary

blindness and disorientation as well as eye injuries, according to Air Force investigators.

The 52nd Fighter Wing at Spangdahlem is tracking the incidents in the Trier police report, said Master Sgt. Alex Riedel, the wing spokesman, on Friday.

“In all instances, the aircraft landed safely,” Riedel said. “Our pilots are well-trained for these scenarios and report the laser source’s location to the U.S. law enforcement and German police, with whom we

are fully cooperating. Further details are pending investigation.”

The source of the laser beams is unknown, and anyone who witnessed the incidents or has information about them is asked to come forward, Trier investigators said Friday.

In 2023, the Air Force reported a surge in incidents involving laser pointers, describing the effect of a laser beam on pilots as being like a camera flash in a pitch-black car at night, according to an Air Force

statement.

Even seemingly harmless beams, such as those used for classroom presentations or amusing a house cat, can be dangerous to pilots, it said.

The Air Force is upgrading eyewear for aircrews to provide combined laser and ballistic protection capability for the first time, according to Air Force Life Cycle Management Center. The initial plans called for more than 42,000 devices to be fielded to units by 2027.



MIDEAST

Ambush: Three killed

**FROM PAGE 1**  
that is not fully controlled by them,” he said in the post.  
He also included in the post that Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa was “devastated by what happened.”  
Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth also posted on X to condemn the attack.  
The attack on U.S. troops in Syria is the first to inflict casualties since the fall of President Bashar Assad’s regime a year ago.  
The attack occurred during a joint field tour with Syrian forces near Palmyra, according to a Saturday report from SANA, the state-owned news agency in Syria.  
U.S. helicopters intervened to evacuate injured personnel to the Al-Tanf base in the southeast part of the country, near the border with Iraq and Jordan, according to SANA.  
An earlier report by the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the attacker was a member of the Syrian security force.  
Syria’s Interior Ministry spokesman Nour al-Din al-Baba said the man had joined Syria’s internal security forces as a base security guard two months earlier

and was recently reassigned amid suspicions that he might be affiliated with ISIS.  
Al-Baba said that Syria’s new authorities had faced shortages in security personnel and had to recruit rapidly after the unexpected success of a rebel offensive last year that intended to capture the northern city of Aleppo but ended up overthrowing the government of Assad.  
Al-Baba added in an interview with state TV that some 5,000 members have joined Internal Security forces in the desert and they get evaluated on a weekly basis. He added that three days ago, an evaluation was made for the attacker and it turned out that he might have extreme ideology and a decision was expected to be issued regarding him on Sunday but “the attack occurred on a Saturday which is a day off for state institutions.”  
The U.S. maintains about 1,000 troops in Syria, primarily as part of its anti-ISIS efforts. After the fall of longtime dictator Assad last year, the new government in Damascus pledged to work with the U.S.-led coalition to counter ISIS in Syria.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.



BERNAT ARMANGUE/AP

A U.S. military convoy drives along a road in northeastern Syria’s Hasakeh province in January.

What to know about US military’s role in Syria after deadly ISIS attack

**By ABBY SEWELL**  
*Associated Press*  
BEIRUT — The death of two U.S. service members and one American civilian in an attack in Syria by an alleged member of the Islamic State has drawn new attention to the presence of American forces in the country.  
Saturday’s attack was the first with fatalities since the fall of Syrian President Bashar Assad a year ago.  
The United States has had troops on the ground in Syria for over a decade, with a stated mission of fighting ISIS. While not part of its official mission, the U.S. presence has also been seen as a means to hinder the flow of Iranian and Iran-backed fighters and weapons into Syria from neighboring Iraq.  
The number of U.S. troops in the country has fluctuated and currently stands at around 900. They are mainly posted in the Kurdish-controlled northeast and at the al-Tanf base in the southeastern desert near the borders with Iraq and Jordan.  
In 2011, mass protests in Syria against the Assad government were met by a brutal crackdown and spiraled into a civil war that

lasted nearly 14 years before he was ousted in December 2024.  
Wary of getting bogged down in another costly and politically unpopular war in the Middle East after its experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, Washington sent support to rebel groups but at first avoided direct military intervention.  
That changed after the rise of ISIS, which carried out sporadic attacks in the U.S. and Europe, while in Iraq and Syria, it seized territory that was at one point half the size of the United Kingdom. In the areas the group controlled, it was notorious for its brutality against religious minorities, as well as Muslims whom it considered to be apostates.  
In 2014, the administration of then-President Barack Obama launched an air campaign against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. The following year, the first U.S. ground troops entered Syria, where they partnered with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in the country’s northeast.  
By 2019, ISIS had lost control of all the territory it once held, but sleeper cells have continued to launch attacks.

Before Assad’s ouster, Washington had no diplomatic relations with Damascus and the U.S. military did not work directly with the Syrian army.  
That has changed over the past year. Ties have warmed between the administrations of President Donald Trump and Syrian interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa, the former leader of an Islamist insurgent group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham that used to be listed by Washington as a terrorist organization.  
In November, al-Sharaa became the first Syrian president to visit Washington since the country’s independence in 1946. During his visit, Syria announced its entry into the global coalition against the Islamic State, joining 89 other countries that have committed to combating the group.  
While the entry into the coalition signals a move toward greater coordination between the Syrian and U.S. militaries, the Syrian security forces have not officially joined Operation Inherent Resolve, the U.S.-led military mission against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, which has for years partnered with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in northeast Syria.



NOGA AMI-RAV/Stars and Stripes

Hamas confirms death of a top commander in Gaza after Israeli strike

*Associated Press*  
JERUSALEM — Hamas on Sunday confirmed the death of a top commander in Gaza, a day after Israel said it had killed Raed Saad in a strike outside Gaza City.  
The Hamas statement described Saad as the commander of its military manufacturing unit. Israel had described him as an architect of the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that sparked the war in Gaza, and asserted that he had been “engaged in rebuilding the terrorist organization” in a violation

of the ceasefire that took effect two months ago.  
Israel said it killed Saad after an explosive device detonated and wounded two soldiers in the territory’s south.  
Hamas also said it had named a new commander but did not give details.  
Saturday’s strike west of Gaza City killed four people, according to an Associated Press journalist who saw their bodies arrive at Shifa Hospital. Another three were wounded,

according to Al-Awda hospital. Hamas in its initial statement described the vehicle struck as a civilian one.  
Israel and Hamas have repeatedly accused each other of truce violations.  
Israeli airstrikes and shootings in Gaza have killed at least 391 Palestinians since the ceasefire took hold, according to Palestinian health officials. Israel has said recent strikes are in retaliation for militant attacks against its soldiers, and that troops

have fired on Palestinians who approached the “Yellow Line” between the Israeli-controlled majority of Gaza and the rest of the territory.  
Israel has demanded that Palestinian militants return the remains of the final hostage, Ran Gvili, from Gaza and called it a condition of moving to the second and more complicated phase of the ceasefire. That lays out a vision for ending Hamas’ rule and seeing the rebuilding of a demilitarized Gaza under interna-

tional supervision.  
The initial Hamas-led 2023 attack on southern Israel killed around 1,200 people and took 251 hostages. Almost all hostages or their remains have been returned in ceasefires or other deals.  
Israel’s two-year campaign in Gaza has killed more than 70,660 Palestinians, roughly half of them women and children, according to the territory’s Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between militants and civilians in its count.



# Soldier charged in Fort Stewart shooting will face court-martial

Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the military's legal system, attempted crimes can carry the same amount of punishment as crimes that were committed, apart from the death penalty.

# US sets new Air Force One delivery date for mid-2028

The capability allows the presidential jet "to keep pace with mission requirements that have evolved since the program baseline was established," the service said.



# Person of interest held in campus shooting

## Incident at Brown University classroom killed 2, wounded 9

By **KIMBERLEE KRUESI**  
AND **JENNIFER McDERMOTT**  
*Associated Press*

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Police in Rhode Island said early Sunday that they had a person of interest in custody after a shooting that rocked the Brown University campus during final exams, leaving two people dead and nine others wounded.

Col. Oscar Perez, the Providence police chief, said that the person in custody was in their 20s and that no one has been charged yet. He declined to say whether the detained person had any connection to Brown. The person was taken into custody at a Hampton Inn hotel in Coventry, Rhode Island, about 20 miles from Providence, where police officers and FBI agents remained Sunday, blocking off a hallway with crime scene tape as they searched the area.

The shooting occurred during one of the busiest moments of the academic calendar, as final exams were underway. Brown canceled all remaining classes, exams, papers and projects for the semester and told students they

were free to leave campus, underscoring the scale of the disruption and the gravity of the attack.

The gunman opened fire inside a classroom in the university's engineering building, firing more than 40 rounds from a 9 mm handgun, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press. Two handguns were recovered when the person of interest was taken into custody and authorities also found two loaded 30-round magazines, the official said. The official was not authorized to discuss the investigation publicly and spoke to AP on the condition of anonymity.

"Everybody's reeling, and we have a lot of recovery ahead of us," Brown University President Christina Paxson said at a news conference. "Our community's strong and we'll get through it, but it's devastating."

As of Sunday morning, one student had been released from the hospital, said Paxson. Seven others were in critical but stable condition and one was in critical condition.

Providence leaders warned



LILY SPEREDELOZZI, THE (ATTLEBORO, MASS.) SUN CHRONICLE/AP

**SWAT team members gather inside Brown University's Sciences Library after a shooting Saturday at the Ivy League school in Providence, R.I. Police said Sunday that they had a person of interest in custody.**

that residents will notice a heavier police presence on Sunday. Many local businesses announced they would remain closed and expressed shock and heartbreak as the community continued to process the news of the shooting.

Surveillance video released by police showed a suspect, dressed in black, calmly walking away

from the scene.

Earlier, Paxson said she was told 10 people who were shot were students. Another person was injured by fragments from the shooting but it was not clear if the victim was a student, she said.

The search for the shooter paralyzed the campus, the nearby neighborhoods filled with stately brick homes and the downtown in

Rhode Island's capital city until a shelter-in-place order was lifted early Sunday.

Investigators were not immediately sure how the shooter got inside the first-floor classroom. Outer doors of the building were unlocked but rooms being used for final exams required badge access, Providence Mayor Brett Smiley said.

## Affordable Care Act enrollees assert expiring subsidies will hit them hard

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — For one Wisconsin couple, the loss of government-sponsored health subsidies next year means choosing a lower-quality insurance plan with a higher deductible.

For a single mom in Nevada, the spiking costs mean fewer Christmas gifts this year. She is stretching her budget already while she waits to see if Congress will act.

Less than three weeks remain until the expiration of COVID-era enhanced tax credits that have helped millions of Americans pay their monthly fees for Affordable Care Act coverage for the past four years.

The Senate on Thursday rejected two proposals to address the problem and an emerging health care package from House Republicans does not include an extension, all but guaranteeing that many Americans will see much higher insurance costs in 2026.

Chad Bruns comes from a family of savers. That came in handy when the 58-year-old military veteran had to leave his firefighting career early because of arm and back injuries he incurred on the job.

He and his wife, Kelley, 60, both

retirees, cut their own firewood to reduce their electricity costs in their home in Sawyer County, Wis. They rarely eat out and hardly ever buy groceries unless they are on sale.

But to the extent that they have always been frugal, they will be forced to be even more so now, Bruns said. That is because their coverage under the health law enacted under former President Barack Obama is getting more expensive — and for worse coverage.

This year, the Brunses were paying \$2 per month for a top-tier gold-level plan with less than a \$4,000 deductible. Their income was low enough to help them qualify for a lot of financial assistance. But in 2026, that same plan is rising to an unattainable \$1,600 per month, forcing them to downgrade to a bronze plan with a \$15,000 deductible.

Kelley Bruns said she is concerned that if something happens to their health in the next year, they could go bankrupt. While their monthly fees are low at about \$25, their new out-of-pocket maximum at \$21,000 amounts to nearly half their joint income.

"We have to pray that we don't have to have surgery or don't have to

have some medical procedure done that we're not aware of," she said. "It would be very devastating."

If you ask Katelin Provost, the American middle class has gone from experiencing a squeeze to a "full suffocation."

The 37-year-old social worker in Henderson, Nev., counts herself in that category. As a single mom, she already keeps a tight budget to cover housing, groceries and day care for her 4-year-old daughter.

Next year, that is going to be even tougher.

The monthly fee on her plan is going up from \$85 to nearly \$750. She decided she is going to pay that higher cost for January and reevaluate afterward, depending on whether lawmakers extend the subsidies.

If Congress does not act, she will drop herself off the health insurance and keep it only for her daughter because she cannot afford the higher fee for the two of them over the long term.

The strain of one month alone is enough to have an impact.

"I'm going to have to reprioritize the next couple of months to rebalance that budget," Provost said. "Christmas will be much smaller."

## Judges: Trump may no longer deploy Calif. Guard in LA

By **SHARON BERNSTEIN**  
*The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The Trump administration must temporarily halt deploying the California National Guard in Los Angeles, a federal appeals panel ruled late Friday, granting a partial victory to Gov. Gavin Newsom in his effort to regain state control of the troops.

A three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco upheld a lower judge's order temporarily barring the administration from actively using the soldiers in Los Angeles, but put on hold a key portion of the same ruling that would have required President Donald Trump to cede control of the California Guard altogether.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta characterized the ruling as a victory for the state, which has fought to restore control of its Guard since June, when Trump assumed authority over the troops amid violent protests in LA over the federal government's aggressive tactics during immigration arrests.

"For the first time in six months, there will be no military deployed on the streets of Los Angeles," Bonta said in a statement. "While this decision is not final, it is a gratifying and

hard-fought step in the right direction."

The ruling grew out of months of legal wrangling over control of the guard. Newsom, who opposed the initial federalization as well as its extension in August, sued in June to stop Trump from federalizing the state's troops. The case, which is mirrored in other states, has provided a roller-coaster of rulings and counter-rulings, as lower court judges have issued orders that are then modified, overturned or paused by appellate courts.

Last Monday, in response to arguments by the state that there was no longer any need for troops in LA and that their deployment had been extended illegally, U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer ordered Trump to relinquish control of the Guard and stop sending soldiers to Los Angeles. The Trump administration filed an emergency appeal on Friday, arguing that Trump had the right to retain control of the Guard for as long as he deemed necessary.

In its order issued after hours on Friday, the panel of the 9th Circuit said that its decision had not been made on the merits of the case, but rather to preserve the status quo while the appeal was considered.



NATION



STEPHANIE SCARBROUGH/AP

Kilmar Abrego García waits to enter the building for a mandatory check at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in Baltimore on Friday.

Judge bars ICE from rearresting Kilmar Abrego García at check-in

The Washington Post

A federal judge on Friday barred U.S. immigration authorities from re-detaining Kilmar Abrego García, acting on fears raised by his lawyers that officials intended to take him into custody less than a full day after he was ordered released. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement had ordered Abrego García to present himself to its office in Baltimore, leaving open the possibility that agents could arrest him after U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis ruled Thursday that the agency had been unlawfully detaining him for months. But Abrego García walked out of the mandatory check-in with ICE freely and headed to join his family in Maryland. “Everyone is extremely, extremely happy about this,” said Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg, one of his lawyers. “Obviously everyone knows that it’s not the end of the story. That, as long as the govern-

ment keeps coming after him, we’re going to keep having to defend him.” Abrego García, a 30-year-old undocumented immigrant and longtime Maryland resident, became a flash point in the Trump administration’s efforts to crack down on illegal immigration when he was illegally deported to his native El Salvador and then jailed in that country’s notorious Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT. Government lawyers conceded that Abrego García’s deportation had been an “administrative error” but doubled down on its argument that he should be removed and resisted court orders to have him flown back. The White House repeatedly called him a smuggler and “a proven gang member.” Though the Supreme Court affirmed a ruling by Xinis that the Trump administration had illegally deported him and must facilitate his return, Abrego García was only brought back to the U.S. after the

Justice Department secured an indictment charging him in a years-old human smuggling case. After a brief stint inside a Tennessee jail on the still-pending human smuggling charges, he was again taken into ICE custody following an August check-in at the agency’s Baltimore office. The agency repeatedly threatened since then to deport him to a series of countries in Africa, all while resisting Abrego García’s suggestion of Costa Rica, a Central American nation that has said it would welcome him should the U.S. send him there. In her ruling Thursday, Xinis said Justice Department lawyers and ICE witnesses had “misled” the court at a hearing last month when they said Costa Rica had reneged on that offer. The judge, citing reporting by The Washington Post and other media outlets, noted that Costa Rica had “never wavered” in its commitment to accept Abrego García.

Appeals court asked to block contempt inquiry

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department asked an appeals court Friday to block a contempt investigation of the Trump administration for failing to turn around planes carrying Venezuelan migrants to El Salvador in March. The department also is seeking Chief Judge James Boasberg’s removal from the case, accusing him of a “radical, retaliatory, unconstitutional campaign” against the Trump administration. It marks a dramatic escalation in the Justice Department’s lengthy feud with the judge appointed to the bench by Democratic President Barack Obama, setting the stage for a showdown over the judiciary’s power to serve as a check on an administration that has pushed the boundaries of court orders. The department asked the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to rule on its requests before Monday, when Boasberg is scheduled to hear testimony from a former government attorney who filed a whistleblower complaint. A three-judge panel from the appeals court agreed to temporarily suspend Boasberg’s contempt-related order. The panel, composed of two judges nominated by Trump and one nominated by Democratic President Joe Biden, said its administrative stay isn’t a ruling on the merits of the government’s requests. But it casts some doubt on whether Monday’s hearing will proceed as planned. Department officials claim Boasberg is biased and creating “a circus that threatens the separation of powers and the attorney-cli-

ent privilege alike.” “The forthcoming hearing has every appearance of an endless fishing expedition aimed at an ever-widening list of witnesses and prolonged testimony. That spectacle is not a genuine effort to uncover any relevant facts,” they wrote. Boasberg has said that a recent ruling by the appeals court gave him the authority to proceed with the contempt inquiry. The judge is trying to determine if there is sufficient evidence to refer the matter for prosecution. Boasberg, who has been chief judge of the district court in Washington, D.C., since March 2023, has said the Trump administration may have “acted in bad faith” by trying to rush Venezuelan migrants out of the country in defiance of his order blocking their deportations to El Salvador. In an April 16 order, the judge said he gave the administration “ample opportunity to rectify or explain their actions” but concluded that “none of their responses has been satisfactory.” “The Constitution does not tolerate willful disobedience of judicial orders—especially by officials of a coordinate branch who have sworn an oath to uphold it,” Boasberg wrote. The Trump administration has denied any violation, saying the judge’s March 15 directive to return the planes was made verbally in court but not included in his written order. Trump called for impeaching Boasberg in March. In July, the Justice Department filed a misconduct complaint accusing Boasberg of making improper public comments about Trump and his administration.

Lawmakers say VA employees targeted in ‘mass deportation scheme’

By LINDA F. HERSEY  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Democratic lawmakers on Friday demanded answers from President Donald Trump’s administration on how it plans to use a report the Department of Veterans Affairs is compiling on noncitizens employed by or affiliated with the agency. More than 55 lawmakers signed a letter accusing Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Veterans Affairs Secretary Doug Collins of stoking fear among noncitizens who are VA workers or have

other connections with the agency. “For the past year, the Trump Administration has shown a complete disregard for individuals’ immigration statuses, including those of veterans,” according to the letter. Veterans represent a quarter of the VA workforce, which numbers about 440,000, according to VA figures. The letter-writing campaign was organized by members of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs committees. They are Rep. Delia Ramirez, D-Ill.; Rep. Mark

Takano, D-Calif.; and Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn. Takano and Blumenthal are the top Democrats on their respective committees. “It is deplorable that this administration has brought veterans and veteran care into its misguided mass deportation and detention scheme. Not only is VA targeting its own employees, but it’s casting an even wider net to include those ‘affiliated with VA,’” Takano said Friday. The lawmakers were responding to a VA directive instructing agency leaders to identify nonciti-

zens employed by or affiliated with the agency for further investigation. Any adverse findings will be sent to agencies that handle immigration enforcement, the VA said. The Democratic lawmakers said in the letter Friday that the data collection on noncitizens shows a lack of understanding about how “foreign-born individuals are serving our veterans.” Peter Kasperowicz, the VA press secretary, said Friday the VA will respond to the lawmakers directly. “VA is required by federal law to continuously vet all employees and

affiliates, such as unpaid researchers and others who may have access to VA data or systems, to ensure they meet the federal government’s trusted workforce standards,” Kasperowicz said. “As part of this continuous process, VA on Nov. 25 directed undersecretaries, assistant secretaries and other key officials to provide a report on all non-United States citizens who are employed by or affiliated with VA. This will not affect veterans seeking care or services at VA, or the delivery of care and services,” he said.



NATION

# Flooding continues in Pacific Northwest

**By MARTHA BELLISLE**  
*Associated Press*

MONROE, Wash. — A blast of arctic air swept south from Canada and spread into parts of the northern U.S. on Saturday, while residents of the Pacific Northwest braced for possible mudslides and levee failures from floodwaters that are expected to be slow to recede.

The catastrophic flooding forced thousands of people to evacuate, including Eddie Wicks and his wife, who live amid sunflowers and Christmas trees on a Washington state farm next to the Snoqualmie River. As they moved their two donkeys to higher ground and their eight goats to their outdoor kitchen, the water began to rise much quicker than anything they had experienced before.

As the water engulfed their home Thursday afternoon, deputies from the King County Sheriff's Office marine rescue dive unit were able to rescue them and their dog, taking them on a boat the half-mile across their field, which had been transformed into a lake.

Another round of rain and wind is in store for the region as early as late Sunday, forecasters said.



The view from a flooded home Thursday in Duvall, Wash.

LORA LEE WICKS/AP

“Bottom line at this point in time is we’re not done despite the sunny conditions that we have across western Washington at this point,” said Reid Wolcott, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Seattle.

“There is yet more still to come in terms of in terms of wind, in terms of rain, in terms in terms of

flooding,” he said. “And Washingtonians need to be prepared for additional impacts, additional flooding, tree damage, power outages, etc.”

High winds expected at the end of the weekend and into the first part of week are a concern because the ground is extremely saturated, putting trees at risk of top-

pling, he said.

In Snohomish County, Wash., north of Seattle, emergency officials on Saturday led federal, state and local officials on a tour of the devastation.

As the Pacific Northwest begins to recover from the deluge, a separate weather system already brought dangerous wind-chill val-

ues — the combination of cold air temperatures and wind — to parts of the Upper Midwest.

Shortly before noon Saturday, it was minus 12 degrees in Grand Forks, N.D., where the wind-chill value meant that it felt like minus 33 degree, the National Weather Service said.

For big cities like Minneapolis and Chicago, the coldest temperatures were expected late Saturday night into Sunday morning. In the Minneapolis area, low temperatures were expected to drop to around minus 15 degrees, by early Sunday morning. Lows in the Chicago area are projected to be around 1 degree by early Sunday, the weather service said.

The Arctic air mass was expected to continue pushing south and east over the weekend, expanding into Southern states by Sunday.

The National Weather Service on Saturday issued cold weather advisories that stretched as far south as the Alabama state capital city of Montgomery, where temperatures late Sunday night into Monday morning were expected to plummet to around 22 degrees. To the east, lows in Savannah, Ga., were expected to drop to around 24 degrees during the same time period.

## Dems release photos of Trump, Clinton, Andrew from Epstein

**By STEPHEN GROVES**  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — House Democrats released a selection of photos from the estate of Jeffrey Epstein on Friday, including some of Donald Trump, Bill Clinton and the former Prince Andrew.

The dozens of photos initially released by Democratic lawmakers on the House Oversight Committee were a small part of more than 95,000 they received from the estate of Epstein. The photos released Friday were separate from the case files that the Department of Justice is now under compulsion to release, but anticipation is growing as the Trump administration faces a deadline next week to produce the Epstein files that have been the source of conspiracy theories and speculation for years.

The photos were released without captions or context and included a black-and-white image of Trump alongside six women whose faces were blacked out.

The president said he hadn’t seen the photos from Epstein’s estate released Friday, but they were “no big deal.”

Trump said Epstein was “all over Palm Beach” and had “photos with everybody.”



AP

A photo from the estate of Jeffrey Epstein shows former President Bill Clinton, Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein, with Clinton's signature at the top.

Rep. Robert Garcia, the top Democrat on the House Oversight Committee, did not say whether any of the women in the photos was a victim of abuse, but he added, “Our commitment from day one has been to redact any photo, any information that could lead to any sort of harm to any of the victims.”

White House spokesperson Abigail Jackson accused Democrats of “selectively releasing cherry-picked photos with random redac-

tions to try and create a false narrative” and called it part of a “Democrat hoax against President Trump.”

Many of the photos have already circulated in the public. Democrats pledged to continue to release photos in the days and weeks ahead, as they look to pressure Trump over his Republican administration’s earlier refusal to release documents in the Epstein probe.

## Trump sued by group seeking oversight for ballroom construction

**By BILL BARROW**  
*Associated Press*

President Donald Trump was sued on Friday by preservationists asking a federal court to halt his White House ballroom project until it goes through multiple independent reviews and wins approval from Congress.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately funded group, is asking the U.S. District Court to block Trump’s White House ballroom addition, which already has involved razing the East Wing, until it goes through comprehensive design reviews, environmental assessments, public comments and congressional debate and ratification.

The project has prompted criticism in the historic preservation and architectural communities, and among his political adversaries, but the lawsuit is the most tangible effort thus far to alter or stop the president’s plans for an addition that itself would be nearly twice the size of the White House before the East Wing’s demolition.

“No president is legally allowed to tear down portions of the White House without any review what-

soever — not President Trump, not President Biden, and not anyone else,” the lawsuit states. “And no president is legally allowed to construct a ballroom on public property without giving the public the opportunity to weigh in.”

Additionally, the Trust wants the court to declare that Trump, by fast-tracking the project, has committed multiple violations of the Administrative Procedures Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, while also exceeding his constitutional authority by not consulting lawmakers.

No more work should be done, the Trust argues, until administration officials “complete the required reviews — reviews that should have taken place before the Defendants demolished the East Wing, and before they began construction of the Ballroom.”

Asked questions about the lawsuit, White House spokesman David Ingles responded with a blanket assertion that Trump is within his “full legal authority to modernize, renovate and beautify the White House — just like all of his predecessors did.”



## NATION



GODOFREDO A. VÁSQUEZ/AP

**Yuka Iwashita, right, interacts with a robotic hand at the Alt-Bionics table during the Humanoids Summit, Thursday, in Mountain View, Calif. The commercial boom in artificial intelligence has lit a spark under long-simmering visions to build humanoid robots that can move their mechanical bodies like humans.**

## Humanoid robots are featured at summit, but skepticism remains

BY MATT O'BRIEN  
Associated Press

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. — Robots have long been seen as a bad bet for Silicon Valley investors—too complicated, capital-intensive and “boring, honestly,” says venture capitalist Modar Alaoui.

But the commercial boom in artificial intelligence has lit a spark under long-simmering visions to build humanoid robots that can move their mechanical bodies like humans and do things that people do.

Alaoui, founder of the Humanoids Summit, gathered more than 2,000 people last week, including top robotics engineers from Disney, Google and dozens of startups, to showcase their technology and debate what it will take to accelerate a nascent industry.

Alaoui says many researchers now believe humanoids or some other kind of physical embodiment of AI are “going to become the norm.”

“The question is really just how long it will take,” he said.

Disney’s contribution to the field, a walking robotic version of “Frozen” character Olaf, will be roaming on its own through Disneyland theme parks in Hong Kong and Paris early next year. Entertaining and highly complex robots that resemble a human—or a snowman—are already here, but the timeline for “general purpose” robots that are a productive member of a workplace or household is farther away.

Even at a conference designed to build enthusiasm for the technology, held at a Computer History Museum that’s a temple to Silicon Valley’s previous breakthroughs, skepticism remained high that truly humanlike robots will take root anytime soon.

“The humanoid space has a very, very big hill to climb,” said Cosima du Pasquier, founder and CEO of Haptica Robotics, which works to give robots a sense of touch. “There’s a lot of research

that still needs to be solved.”

The Stanford University postdoctoral researcher came to the conference in Mountain View, Calif., just a week after incorporating her startup.

“The first customers are really the people here,” she said.

Researchers at the consultancy McKinsey & Co. have counted about 50 companies around the world that have raised at least \$100 million to develop humanoids, led by about 20 in China and 15 in North America.

One of the most prominent skeptics is robotics pioneer Rodney Brooks, a co-founder of Roomba vacuum maker iRobot who wrote in September that “today’s humanoid robots will not learn how to be dexterous despite the hundreds of millions, or perhaps many billions of dollars, being donated by VCs and major tech companies to pay for their training.” Brooks didn’t attend but his essay was frequently mentioned.

## Disney invests \$1B in OpenAI to bring characters to tool

BY KELVIN CHAN  
Associated Press

Disney is investing \$1 billion in OpenAI and will bring characters such as Mickey Mouse, Cinderella and Luke Skywalker to the AI company’s Sora video generation tool, in a licensing deal that the two companies announced on Thursday.

At the same time, Disney went after Google, demanding the tech company stop exploiting its copyrighted characters to train its AI systems.

The OpenAI agreement makes the Walt Disney Co. the first major content licensing partner for Sora, which uses generative artificial intelligence to create short videos.

Under the three-year licensing deal, fans will be able to use Sora to generate and share videos based on more than 200 Disney, Marvel, Pixar and Star Wars characters.

AI video generators like Sora have wowed with their ability to quickly create realistic clips based merely on text prompts. But a flood of such videos on social media, including clips depicting celebrities and deceased public figures, has raised worries about “AI slop” crowding out human-created work alongside concerns about misinformation, deepfakes and copyright.

Disney and OpenAI said they are committed to responsible use of AI that protects the safety of users and the rights of creators.

“This agreement shows how AI companies and creative leaders can work together responsibly to promote innovation that benefits society, respect the importance of creativity, and help works reach vast new audiences,” OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said.

Disney CEO Robert Iger said the deal will “extend the reach of

our storytelling through generative AI, while respecting and protecting creators and their works.”

As part of the deal, some user-generated Sora videos will be made available on the Disney+ streaming service.

Disney will also become a “major customer” of OpenAI and use its technology to build new products, tools, and services. It will also roll out ChatGPT for employees.

Children’s advocates, however, criticized the move. Josh Golin, executive director of Fairplay, said Disney’s decision to partner with OpenAI “is a betrayal of countless children around the world who adore Mickey Mouse, Frozen, and Toy Story. OpenAI claims children are prohibited from using Sora, yet here they are luring young kids to their platform using some of their favorite characters.” Disney, he added, is “aiding and abetting OpenAI’s efforts to addict young children to its unsafe platform and products.”

Also Thursday, Disney sent Google a cease and desist letter, demanding that the tech company stop using Disney content without permission to feed and train its AI models, including its Veo video generator and Imagen and Nano Banana image generators.

It has previously issued similar cease and desist letters to Meta and Character.AI and has filed litigation with NBCUniversal and Warner Bros. Discovery against AI image generator Midjourney and AI company Minimax.

Disney said Google hasn’t taken any measures to mitigate the problem even though it has been raising the concerns for months. “Google’s mass infringement of Disney’s copyrighted works must stop,” the letter said.

Google did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

## Scientists decry US in pulling out last Antarctica research ship

BY KASHA PATEL  
The Washington Post

Alison Murray and her colleagues were all set to dive in Antarctica. They planned to build on their earlier finding that sea squirts—sponge-like invertebrates on the seafloor—host a microbe that produces a molecule that could be used to fight skin cancer.

Then Murray’s team got word that the U.S. government was pulling its only research ship out of Antarctica.

The U.S. Antarctic Program has

had at least one dedicated research vessel in the Southern Ocean for almost six decades—mapping currents, tracking melt under ice shelves, studying marine food webs and more.

But the National Science Foundation said in its 2026 budget request that it would be terminating the lease of the Nathaniel B. Palmer icebreaker. The ship returned to Louisiana last month without a replacement lined up.

Scientists who spoke to The Washington Post said the loss of the

icebreaker hinders their work, takes away important field opportunities for young scientists and diminishes America’s leading presence on the continent.

The NSF said it would continue to support all marine cruise projects, like Murray’s, for the upcoming field season, as well as the three U.S. research stations in Antarctica.

“We remain committed to enabling world-leading scientific research in Antarctica and are actively reviewing potential vessels and partnerships,” said NSF spokesper-

son Cassandra Eichner. But the agency said development of a new vessel had been paused, with further assessment to come in Fiscal Year 2026.

Scientists who spoke to The Post estimated that a new vessel could take years to build—even longer if the work remains paused for an extended period. In the interim, while in some cases it may be possible for U.S. researchers to get spots on other boats, the overall number of researchers able to explore the frozen continent could be reduced.

“It’s not just that next year we’re not going to have a ship. It’s what’s going to happen if we don’t have a ship for five years,” said Amy Leverter, an Antarctic researcher at Colgate University. “It’s heart-breaking.”

Last year, the NSF retired its other Antarctic research vessel, the Laurence M. Gould, citing a limited budget and rising costs.

The Palmer was also nearing the end of its lifespan, but the goal was to keep it operating until a new vessel could be built to replace it.



WORLD

# Zelenskyy offers to drop NATO bid for security

By Stefanie Dazio and Claudia Ciobanu  
Associated Press

BERLIN — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday voiced readiness to drop his country's bid to join NATO in exchange for Western security guarantees but rejected the U.S. push for ceding territory to Russia as he held talks with U.S. envoys on ending the war.

Zelenskyy sat down with U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner. The Ukrainian leader posted pictures of the negotiating table with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz sitting next to him facing the U.S. delegation.

Responding to journalists' questions in audio clips on a WhatsApp group chat before the talks, Zelenskyy said that since the U.S. and some European nations had rejected Ukraine's push to join NATO, Kyiv expects the West to offer a set of guarantees similar to those offered to the alliance members.

"These security guarantees are an opportunity to prevent another wave of Russian aggression," he said. "And this is already a compromise on our part."

Russian President Vladimir Putin has cast Ukraine's bid to join NATO as a major threat to Moscow's security and a reason for launching the full-scale invasion in February 2022. The Kremlin has demanded that Ukraine re-

nounce the bid for the alliance membership as part of any prospective peace settlement.

Zelenskyy emphasized that any security assurances would need to be legally binding and supported by the U.S. Congress, adding that he expected an update from his team following a meeting between Ukrainian and U.S. military officials in Stuttgart, Germany.

Washington has tried for months to navigate the demands of each side as Trump presses for a swift end to Russia's war and grows increasingly exasperated by delays.

The search for possible compromises has run into major obstacles, including control of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region,

which is mostly occupied by Russian forces.

Putin wants Ukraine to withdraw its forces from the part of the Donetsk region still under its control among the key conditions for peace, a demand rejected by Kyiv.

Zelenskyy said that the U.S. had floated an idea for Ukraine to withdraw from the Donetsk and create a demilitarized free economic zone there, a proposal he rejected as unworkable.

"I do not consider this fair, because who will manage this economic zone?" he said. "If we are talking about some buffer zone along the line of contact, if we are talking about some economic zone and we believe that only a police mission should be there and

troops should withdraw, then the question is very simple. If Ukrainian troops withdraw 5-10 kilometers, for example, then why do Russian troops not withdraw deeper into the occupied territories by the same distance?"

Zelenskyy described the issue as "very sensitive" and insisted on a freeze along the line of contact, saying that "today a fair possible option is we stand where we stand."

Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov told the business daily Kommersant that Russian police and national guard would stay in parts of the Donetsk region even if they become a demilitarized zone under a prospective peace plan.

# Gunmen: Fatal attack follows rise in antisemitism in Australia

FROM PAGE 1

"This attack was designed to target Sydney's Jewish community," the state's premier, Chris Minns, said.

The violence erupted at the end of a summer day when thousands had flocked to Bondi Beach, including hundreds gathered for the Chanukah by the Sea event celebrating the start of the eight-day Hanukkah festival.

Chabad, an Orthodox Jewish movement that runs outreach around the world and sponsors public events during major Jewish holidays, identified one of the dead as Rabbi Eli Schlanger, assistant rabbi at Chabad of Bondi and an organizer of the event.

Israel's Foreign Ministry confirmed the death of an Israeli citizen, but gave no further details.

Police said emergency services were called to Campbell Parade in Bondi about 6:45 p.m. responding to reports of shots being fired.

Video filmed by onlookers showed people in bathing suits running from the water as shots rang out. Separate footage showed two men in black shirts firing with long guns from a footbridge leading to the beach, as sirens wailed and people cried out in the background.

One dramatic clip broadcast on Australian television showed a man appearing to tackle and disarm one of the gunmen, before pointing the man's weapon at him, then setting the gun on the ground.

Minns called the man a "genuine hero."

Lachlan Moran, 32, from Melbourne, told The Associated Press he was waiting for his family nearby when he heard shots.

He dropped the beer he was carrying for his brother and ran.

"You heard a few pops, and I freaked out and ran away. ... I started sprinting. I just had that in-



MARK BAKER/AP

Police cordon off an area at Bondi Beach after a reported shooting Sunday in Sydney.

tuition. I sprinted as quickly as I could," Moran said. He said he heard shooting off and on for about five minutes.

"Everyone just dropped all their possessions and everything and were running and people were crying and it was just horrible," Moran said.

"It was the most perfect day and then this happened," said local resident Catherine Merchant.

"Everyone was just running and there were bullets and there were so many of them and we were really scared," she told Australia's ABC News.

Albanese told reporters in the Australian capital, Canberra, that he was "devastated" by the mas-

sacre.

"This is a targeted attack on Jewish Australians on the first day of Hanukkah, which should be a day of joy, a celebration of faith. An act of evil, antisemitism, terrorism that has struck the heart of our nation," Albanese said.

"Amidst this vile act of violence and hate will emerge a moment of national unity where Australians across the board will embrace their fellow Australians of Jewish faith," he said.

World leaders expressed condolences.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned the "ghastly terrorist attack" and offered his condolences to the families who

lost their loved ones.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he was being updated on the "appalling attack." Police in London said they would step up security at Jewish sites.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a post on X that "The United States strongly condemns the terrorist attack in Australia targeting a Jewish celebration. Antisemitism has no place in this world."

Australia, a country of 28 million people, is home to about 117,000 Jews, according to official figures.

Antisemitic incidents, including assaults, vandalism, threats and intimidation, surged more

than threefold in the country during the year after Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, and Israel launched a war on Hamas in Gaza in response, the government's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism Jillian Segal reported in July.

Throughout last summer, the country was rocked by spate of antisemitic attacks in Sydney and Melbourne. Synagogues and cars were torched, businesses and homes painted with graffiti and Jews attacked in those cities, where 85% of the nation's Jewish population live.

Albanese in August blamed Iran for two of the attacks and cut diplomatic ties to Tehran. The authorities didn't make such claims about Sunday's massacre.

Israel urged Australia's government to address crimes targeting Jews.

"The heart of the entire nation of Israel misses a beat at this very moment," Israeli President Isaac Herzog said. "We repeat our alerts time and time again to the Australian government to seek action and fight against the enormous wave of antisemitism which is plaguing Australian society."

Mass shootings in Australia are extremely rare.

A 1996 massacre in the Tasmanian town of Port Arthur, where a lone gunman killed 35 people, prompted the government to drastically tighten gun laws and made it much more difficult for Australians to acquire firearms.

Significant mass shootings this century included two murder-suicides with death tolls of five people in 2014, and seven in 2018, in which gunmen killed their own families and themselves.

In 2022, six people were killed in a shootout between police and Christian extremists at a rural property in Queensland state.



## PACIFIC

# Thailand: Cambodian rocket caused civilian death

By TIAN MACLEOD JI  
AND JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI  
*Associated Press*

KANTHARALAK, Thailand — Thailand's government said a rocket attack from Cambodia on Sunday killed a 63-year-old villager, its first civilian death reported as a direct result of combat over the past week along the border of the two Southeast Asian nations.

Both countries confirmed that large-scale fighting, which was set off by a skirmish on Dec. 7 that wounded two Thai soldiers, continued Sunday.

The two sides are battling over longstanding competing claims to patches of frontier land, some of which contain centuries-old temple ruins.

More than two dozen people on both sides of the border have officially been reported killed in the past week's fighting, while more than half a million have been dis-

placed.

Reporters from The Associated Press arrived at the scene of Sunday's rocket impact in Sisaket province's Kantharalak District about 10 minutes after it hit.

They witnessed the body of a man totally wrapped in bandages being put on a stretcher that was taken to an ambulance.

A house a couple of hundred yards away was in flames, with village volunteers attempting to put out the fire with buckets of water. A piece of shrapnel believed to be from the same rocket was embedded nearby in the road.

The victim, identified as Don Patchapan, was killed in the heart of a residential area near a school, according to a Thai army statement. Thai government spokesperson Siripong Angkasakulkiat condemned Cambodia for deliberately firing into civilian areas, saying that such an action was

"cruel and inhumane."

Thailand earlier reported civilian deaths during the renewed conflict, but most of them already had underlying health issues and died during an evacuation.

Cambodia has deployed truck-mounted BM-21 rocket launchers with a range of 19-25 miles.

Each can fire up to 40 rockets at a time but cannot be precisely targeted.

They have landed largely in areas from where most people have already been evacuated.

Thai authorities say Cambodia has launched thousands of the rockets on virtually a daily basis. Thailand, meanwhile, has been carrying out airstrikes with its fighter planes, with Cambodia saying the bombing continued on Sunday.

Both sides have employed drones for surveillance and delivering bombs.



SAKCHAI LALIT/AP

**A damaged house is seen after what Thai soldiers said was a Cambodian artillery strike in the area in Sisaket province, on Sunday. Both countries confirmed that large-scale fighting continued Sunday.**

## Hong Kong's pro-democracy party to disband after over 30 years

*Associated Press*

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's biggest pro-democracy party voted Sunday to dissolve after more than 30 years of activism, marking the end of an era of the Chinese semiautonomous city's once-diverse political landscape.

Democratic Party chairperson Lo Kin-hei said the political environment was "one important point" among the factors they considered, and about 97% of members' ballots were in support of its liquidation.

Party veterans had earlier said

some members were warned of consequences if the party didn't shut down.

Its demise reflects the dwindling freedoms promised to the former British colony when it returned to China's rule in 1997.

China imposed a national security law in June 2020, following massive anti-government protests the year before, saying it was necessary for the city's stability. Under the law, many leading activists, including the Democratic Party's former chairs Albert Ho and Wu Chi-wai and other former

lawmakers, were arrested.

Jimmy Lai, founder of the pro-democracy Apple Daily newspaper, was also charged under the law. Lai will hear his verdict on Monday. Apple Daily was one of the vocal independent outlets shut down over the past five years.

Dozens of civil society groups have also closed, including the second-largest pro-democracy party, Civic Party and a group that organized annual vigils commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown.

In June, the League of Social

Democrats, which had remained active in holding tiny street protests in recent years, announced its closure, citing immense political pressure.

The Democratic Party, founded in 1994, was a moderate opposition party that pushed for universal suffrage in electing the city's leader for decades. Prominent party members include Martin Lee, nicknamed the city's "father of democracy," Ho, former leader of the group that organized Tiananmen vigils, and journalist-turned-activist Emily Lau.

It once held multiple legislative seats and amassed dozens of directly elected district councillors who helped residents with issues in their households and municipal matters. Some of its former members joined the government as senior officials.

Its willingness to negotiate with Beijing led to its proposal being included in a 2010 political reform package — a move that drew harsh criticism from some members and other democracy advocates who wanted more sweeping changes.

# STARS AND STRIPES

## SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market

Transportation

944

### VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

- International Shipping
- Import & Export
- Inland trucking (U.S. & Europe)
- Door to door pick-up/delivery service
- Customs clearance
- All Risk Marine Insurance
- Auto Insurance (Germany only)

**For Further Information Please Contact**

|                   |                               |                           |                           |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Phone:</b>     | GERMANY                       | UNITED KINGDOM            | U.S.A.                    |
| <b>Toll-free:</b> | +49-(0)6134-2592730           | +44-(0)1638-515714        | +1-972-602-1670 Ext. 1701 |
| <b>E-Mail:</b>    | 0800-CARSHIP (Germany only)   |                           | +1-800-264-8167 (US only) |
| <b>WEB:</b>       | info@transglobal-logistics.de | enquiries@carshipuk.co.uk | info@tgal.us              |
|                   | www.transglobal-logistics.de  | www.carshipuk.co.uk       | www.tgal.us               |

**For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations**

**Trans Global**  
LOGISTICS EUROPE GMBH



Are you in the picture?



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

**STARS AND STRIPES**  
However you read us, wherever you need us.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Woman gives birth in Waymo self-driving taxi

**CA** SAN FRANCISCO — Self-driving Waymo taxis have gone viral for negative reasons involving the death of a beloved San Francisco bodega cat and pulling an illegal U-turn in front of police who were unable to issue a ticket to a nonexistent driver.

But the self-driving taxis are the bearer of happier news after a San Francisco woman gave birth in a Waymo.

The mother was on her way to the University of California, San Francisco medical center when she delivered inside the robotaxi, said a Waymo spokesperson in a statement. The company said its rider support team detected “unusual activity” inside the vehicle and called to check on the rider as well as alert 911.

Waymo, which is owned by Alphabet, declined to elaborate on how the vehicle knew something was amiss.

The company has said it has cameras and microphones inside as well as outside the cars.

Waymo said the vehicle was taken out of service for cleaning after the ride. While still rare, this was not the first baby delivered in one of its taxis, the company said.

## James Patterson gives \$500 to 600 booksellers

**NY** NEW YORK — Melanie Moore, who runs the Ohio-based Cincy Book Bus, is one of hundreds of booksellers who received a pleasant surprise for the holidays: a check for \$500 from author James Patterson.

“I’ve never taken a salary. All profits from the bookstore go to buy books for kids in need,” Moore said in a statement released through Patterson’s publisher, Little, Brown & Co., which announced the bonuses. “This gift from James Patterson will be my very first paycheck!”

Over the past 20 years, Patterson has donated millions of dollars to schools, libraries, literacy programs and others in the book community. For the past several years, he has made a tradition out of sending \$500 checks to 600 independent booksellers who have been recommended by peers or patrons.

## Student dies during stabbing at high school

**NC** WINSTON-SALEM — A stabbing at a central North Carolina high school left one student dead and another injured, authorities said.

Forsyth County Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough said officers at North Forsyth High School in Winston-Salem sought assistance shortly after 11 a.m.

“We responded to an altercation between two students,” Kimbrough said at a news conference, adding that “there was a loss of



AMY HARRIS, INVISION/AP

# We all have the blues

Terry “Harmonica” Bean performs at EE Bass Cultural Arts Center in Greenville, Miss.

life.”

Sheriff’s office spokesperson Krista Karcher said the injured person was treated at a hospital and released.

## Ex-‘Real Housewives’ star sent from jail to program

**TX** BRYAN — Jennifer Shah, a former star on “The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City,” has been moved from a federal prison into a community confinement program after serving less than half of her sentence for defrauding thousands of people.

A Bureau of Prisons spokesperson confirmed that Shah was transferred from the Federal Prison Camp in Bryan, Texas, to the program overseen by the Phoenix Residential Reentry Management Office. The transfer means that Shah is either being held in home confinement or in a halfway house. Her projected release date is Aug. 30, 2026.

Shah, 52, was sentenced in 2023 to 6½ years in prison for defrauding people in a telemarketing scam that stretched nearly a decade.

## Judge won’t step aside in ex-Trump attorney case

**WI** MADISON — A Wisconsin judge refused to step aside as requested by Presi-

dent Donald Trump’s former attorney, who faces felony forgery charges related to the 2020 election in the battleground state.

The judge also refused to cancel a preliminary hearing for Trump’s former attorney, who also previously worked as a judge in the same county where he is being prosecuted, and two other former Trump associates.

The three former Trump aides face 11 felony charges each in relation to their roles in the 2020 fake elector scheme. They are: Jim Troupis, who was Trump’s attorney in Wisconsin in the 2020 election; Kenneth Chesebro, an attorney who advised Trump’s campaign; and Mike Roman, Trump’s director of Election Day operations in 2020.

Troupis, joined by the other two defendants, argued that all of the judges in Dane County were biased against him. Troupis was a judge in the county for one year from 2015 to 2016.

## Judge: Continue hormone therapy for trans inmates

**GA** ATLANTA — A federal judge has permanently ordered Georgia’s prison system to keep providing some kinds of gender-affirming care for transgender prisoners, although the state plans to appeal.

U.S. District Judge Victoria Marie Calvert ruled that a new state

law denying hormone therapy to inmates violated their protection against cruel and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

She ordered the state to keep providing hormones to inmates who had been receiving therapy and to allow others medically diagnosed as needing hormone therapy to begin receiving treatment.

“The court finds that there is no genuine dispute of fact that gender dysphoria is a serious medical need,” Calvert wrote in her order. “Plaintiffs, through their experts, have presented evidence that a blanket ban on hormone therapy constitutes grossly inadequate care for gender dysphoria and risks imminent injury.”

## Lumbee Tribe poised to gain recognition in NDAA

**DC** WASHINGTON — After decades of political maneuvering through Congress and government agencies, the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina may finally achieve federal recognition through the National Defense Authorization Act.

The Lumbee’s efforts to gain federal recognition — which would come with federal funding, access to resources like the Indian Health Service and the ability to take land into trust — have been controversial for many years both

in Indian Country and in Washington. But their cause has been championed by President Donald Trump, who promised on the campaign trail last year to acknowledge the Lumbee as a tribal nation.

## Inspector, assisted-living owner cast blame for fire

**MA** FALL RIVER — A safety inspection company and the owner of a Massachusetts assisted-living facility that was the site of a fire in July that killed 10 people are blaming each other for failing to address a faulty sprinkler system.

Inspector Fire Systems Inc. sued Gabriel House owner Dennis Etzkorn, claiming it notified the facility months before the fire about recalled sprinklers that needed to be replaced.

Etzkorn filed a cross-claim alleging that Fire Systems Inc. had failed for years to properly inspect and test the sprinklers at Gabriel House.

The fire in Fall River was the state’s deadliest in more than four decades. Documents obtained by The Associated Press showed a history of troubles at the facility, including a period in which it was barred from accepting new residents until it corrected problems with resident mistreatment.



## FACES

## Heavy medals

Australian snowboarder Scotty James reveals the price he's paid and what's still missing in upcoming Netflix documentary 'Pipe Dreams'

By EDDIE PELLs  
Associated Press

Scotty James met his billionaire-heiress wife shortly after a chance encounter with her brother in a bathroom. He lives in Monaco and has spent his life jet-setting across the world piling up fame and fortune.

Yet any inkling that everything Australia's best snowboarder touches turns to gold is dismissed mere seconds into his new autobiographical documentary "Scotty James: Pipe Dream."

There's "an elephant in the room," James says — a still-missing Olympic gold medal — and if he doesn't get it this winter at the games in Italy, well, life will still be fine, but "is it ever going to happen? And I feel that pressure every day."

"Pipe Dream," which comes out Friday on Netflix, uses decades' worth of home and handheld footage to take us on the heartfelt road James traveled to become one of the best in his sport.

It's also a fitting preview for the upcoming Olympics, bringing the once-every-four-years fans up to date with where this sport has been, where it's going and where, exactly, the 31-year-old James — a seven-time Winter X Games champ who has Olympic silver and bronze — fits into all that.

This documentary weaves two tales. The first is about James — his life and his career. The tears he sheds while recounting the heart-wrenching decision to leave Aus-

tralia at age 12 to go bigger in America are real, James said in an Associated Press interview, because not until making this movie did he fully understand what a gut punch that was to his family, too.

"I felt like when I got on the plane, I was the only one that was really upset and crying," James said. "When I now hear the story from my family's side, it was really eye-opening and emotional for me because it was the first time I really heard how they felt about it."

Taken under wing by Australia's first great snowboarder, Olympic gold medalist Torah Bright and her brother, Ben, Scotty's career turned out fine, as we all know now.

The twists and turns and inside looks at what happened between ages 12 and 31 are what form the sports part of this story — namely, how the sacrifices James has made over the years have set him up for his upcoming challenge.

Whether or not he wins snowboarding gold next year in Italy, James will leave a complex legacy.

Three-time Olympic champion Shaun White gets most of the credit for teaching all the shredder dudes that it was OK to go out and try to make a living doing this, but James embraced that attitude, too.

In current-day men's halfpipe riding, a trick called the triple cork — three head-over-heels flips above the halfpipe that is the



AP

Australia's Scotty James celebrates his men's halfpipe silver medal during an ceremony Feb. 11, 2022, at the Winter Olympics in Zhangjiakou, China. James has yet to win a snowboarding gold medal.

most dangerous in a sport filled with life-and-death decisions at every turn — defines the contours of the debate.

White, reigning Olympic champion Ayumu Hirano of Japan and a stable of Japanese riders practiced it for years, with Hirano finally using it in China in 2022 to edge out James for the gold.

James didn't ignore it, but then again, he never set out to be the sport's highest flier.

He does tricks going backward and forward, while twisting clock-

wise and counterclockwise. They don't send him as high as some riders but some of them are, by most accounts, even trickier than the triple cork. It's a skill set two-time Olympic champion Chloe Kim sums up nicely in the doc.

In other words, James is a technical master and appreciated by insiders in a game that — fortunately or not, depending on your view — is usually won by those who power their way to the biggest jumps.

By the end of the documentary,

James realizes that, too.

His willingness to capture the perspectives of White and Hirano — his biggest rivals and, some might say, tormentors — is a window into what makes this documentary something better than just a treacly highlight reel of James' career.

"I think it's really important to hear my side of the story because, yes, it's about me, but it's not just about me," James said. "It's about everyone that's been part of that competitive journey."

## Oscar-nominated 'Black Box Diaries' finally premieres in Japan

By MARI YAMAGUCHI  
Associated Press

"Black Box Diaries," a documentary in which Japanese journalist Shiori Ito investigates her own sexual assault case and the barriers she faced in pursuing justice, has been screened widely abroad since its 2024 festival debut and earned an Oscar nomination early this year.

It finally premiered in Japan on Dec. 12, a long-delayed domestic release that began with a single-theater run.

In Japan, sexual assault victims are often stigmatized and silenced. But the barrier to the film's release at home was largely the result of a legal dispute over her use of some interviews and footage of witnesses and involved parties without their consent.

The 102-minute film was screened to a full house at the T. Joy Prince Shinagawa, a large cinema complex in downtown Tokyo.

Ito expressed relief that she could finally share her story with an audience in her home country.

"Until last night, I was afraid if the film is going to come out or not," she said after the screening. "The reason I made this film is because I want to talk about this issue openly in Japan. It's been like my little love letter to Japan, so I'm just so happy that this day came finally."



Ito

Ito, who went public with what she says happened to her in 2015, has become the face of Japan's slow-moving #MeToo movement. She is the first Japanese director to be nominated for an Oscar in the category of documentary feature film. The film is based on a 2017 book she wrote, "Black Box."

As an intern in 2015, Ito was seeking a position at private TBS Television and met one of its senior journalists, Noriyuki Yamaguchi, who became her alleged assailant. She has said in her book and film that she be-

came dizzy during a dinner they had together and passed out in a restroom. She said Yamaguchi took her to his hotel room and raped her while she was incapacitated, and continued the assault even when she woke up in pain and told him to stop.

Ito filed a criminal complaint with police, but it took weeks to persuade them to start investigating. Prosecutors eventually dropped the case, without telling her why. In the film, a police investigator tells her a planned arrest was halted by higher-ups.

Hotel security camera footage showed a man recognizable as Yamaguchi pulling Ito out of a taxi and dragging her into the hotel as she struggled to walk — key evidence to get a police investigation started, Ito said.

The film is an emotional chronicle of her battle against the authorities and the larger society. Not only was the alleged assailant's expected arrest dropped, but documents she requested were blacked out, she said.

"It really was a black box," she said.

That led to suspicions by Ito and her sup-

porters that powerful people exerted influence. In 2017, Ito filed a complaint against prosecutors, then filed a suit against Yamaguchi seeking 11 million yen (\$70,530) in damages.

In 2022, the Supreme Court ruled that Ito was forced to have non-consensual sex and ordered Yamaguchi to pay her 3.3 million yen (\$21,290). Yamaguchi denied the allegation, saying the sex was consensual. He filed a counter suit demanding Ito pay him 13 million yen (\$83,350) for allegedly damaging his reputation, but that case was dismissed.

Ito said she wrote the book to shed light on the taboo surrounding sexual assault, and that her journalistic pursuit of evidence helped her keep some distance from her own trauma. She then made the film to tell a more personal story. It was challenging but the process helped her heal, she said.

Ito and distributor Toei Agency say they hope a positive audience reception would help the film to be shown at more theaters.





Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher  
 Laura Law, Chief Operating Officer  
 Lt. Col. Daniel “DQ” Quinlan, Europe commander  
 John Rodriguez, Europe chief of staff  
 Lt. Col. Lucas Crouch, Pacific commander  
 John Albaugh, Pacific chief of staff

EDITORIAL

Erik Slavin, Editor in Chief  
 slavin.erik@stripes.com  
 Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation  
 moores.sean@stripes.com  
 Ann Pinson, Digital Managing Editor  
 pinson.ann@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

**Europe/Mideast**  
 +49(0)631.3615.9324; DSN (314)583.9324  
**Pacific**  
 Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief  
 kidd.aaron@stripes.com  
 +81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

**Washington**  
 Joe Fleming and Sean Moores,  
 Washington Bureau Chiefs (acting)  
 fleming.joe@stripes.com  
 moores.sean@stripes.com  
 Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News  
 bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

**Mideast**  
 David Schultz, District Manager  
 schultz.david@stripes.com  
 xsscirculation@stripes.com  
 +49(0)152.5672.5036; DSN (314)583-9111  
**Europe**  
 Carlo Aquino, Circulation Manager  
 aquino.carlo@stripes.com  
 memberservices@stripes.com  
 +49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583.9136

**Pacific**  
 Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com  
 +81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)229.3171

CONTACT US

**Washington**  
 tel: (+1)202.886.0003  
 633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

**Reader letters**  
 letters@stripes.com

**Additional contacts**  
 stripes.com/contactus

OMBUDSMAN

Jacqueline Smith

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information, reporting any attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper’s independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at ombudsman@stripes.com, or by phone at 202.886.0003.

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) published daily (except Saturday, Sunday, 25 December and 1 January) for 50 cents (Monday through Thursday) and one dollar on Friday by Stars and Stripes Pacific, OPC 706 BOX 7, APO AP 96301-9001. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, OPC 706 BOX 7, AP 96301-9001.  
 The Stars and Stripes newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense (DoD) for the overseas U.S. military community. As an authorized newspaper, Stars and Stripes publications may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DoD personnel are located. The content printed in this newspaper is not classified as command information and is neither endorsed by nor represents the official views of the U.S. government.  
 The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense, Stars and Stripes, and or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

OPINION

Australia acts to protect kids online. Where’s the US?

BY KATHLEEN PARKER  
*The Washington Post*  
 Australia’s approach to protecting children from the potential dangers of popular social media platforms — blocking access to kids younger than 16 — may seem ham-fisted to critics, but it sure beats what some elected leaders in D.C. are doing, which is slightly north of nothing.  
 The ban, which went into effect Wednesday, was partly prompted by the suicide of 14-year-old Ollie Hughes, who was bullied on social media. Algorithms, which are programmed to engage children for as long as possible including by providing increasingly toxic material, flooded his feed with body-shaming videos and tips on extreme dieting. Ollie’s weight dropped significantly.  
 He was diagnosed with anorexia just before Christmas in 2023 and took his life on Jan. 9, 2024. His mom, Mia Bannister, launched a crusade, testifying before Australia’s lawmakers.  
 Mia’s mission is familiar to thousands of American parents waging the same war. In California, hundreds of personal injury lawsuits have been consolidated against companies such as ByteDance, Google, Meta and Snap. Most have been filed on behalf of children who developed addiction, anxiety or eating disorders, or who attempted or died by suicide. Lawsuits are also popping up from school districts and state attorneys general in what is seen as one of the most important mass tort cases of the decade.  
 As fast as these cases stack up, Big Tech companies continue to drop millions of dollars into campaign coffers and congressional committees, while lawmakers considering solu-

tions argue about potential privacy violations and impact on industry innovation. Two of the top lobbying spenders so far this year are Meta at just shy of \$20 million and Alphabet, Google’s parent company, at roughly \$12 million, according to the research group OpenSecrets.  
 Surely there’s a way to protect children without sending tech billionaires to the bread line. Ample scientific research shows social media, mobile phones and video games can lead to childhood addictions. The consequences for mental health range from low self-esteem and depression to self-harm and suicide. A study published in June by JAMA followed more than 4,000 children for four years. It found that addictive social media and phone use was associated with higher risks of suicidal thoughts.  
 Nevertheless, a House subcommittee last week gutted the duty-of-care clause in the proposed Kids Online Safety Act that would have held platforms liable for addictive algorithms that can encourage cyberbullying, sexual behavior, drugs and suicide. The Senate passed the measure in a 91-3 vote in July 2024.  
 Maurine Molak’s son, David, died by suicide in 2016 in San Antonio at age 16 after brutal cyberbullying. Maurine is in D.C. on her 16th trip to speak to legislators and told me David’s heartbreaking story. An Eagle Scout who loved to hunt and fish, he turned to online gaming while recovering from an injury and became addicted. When a classmate posted insults online, a mob quickly formed. Hundreds of people David didn’t know piled on, his mother said, telling him he looked like a monkey and should be in a coffin. Despite the pain these hits caused, David couldn’t look away. “He knew he had a problem, but he was ad-

dicted,” his mom said. Even after changing schools, the mob pursued him. Finally, David sought refuge in death.  
 Since finding her lifeless son in her backyard, Maurine has relentlessly pursued legislative action in Texas and D.C. to protect young children and teens. A self-described conservative Republican, she said she can’t understand what’s going on in Congress. “What they’re doing doesn’t align with my values,” she said about the legislative inaction. She and other parents hope to meet with House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., before Congress adjourns for the year. Thus far, no luck.  
 And President Donald Trump? Nada. But he did take time Thursday to sign an executive order placing a moratorium on state regulation of artificial intelligence — a big, beautiful Christmas gift for the tech industry.  
 Meanwhile, Congress has an opportunity to do something important and hugely popular. Pew Research Center found in October that 81% of American adults support requiring parental consent for kids under 18 to create social media accounts. Fifty-eight percent support an Australia-style ban, according to a survey by the Family Online Safety Institute.  
 Given public sentiment, it’s a wonder Republicans aren’t galloping en masse to the White House for the president’s signature on the online safety bill, which Democrats support. If they don’t do it soon, House Republicans will pay dearly when parents hit the polls next fall. What a tragedy, meanwhile, that more children may die because of their dereliction of duty — to care.  
 Ramesh Ponnuru, a contributing columnist for The Washington Post, is the editor of National Review and a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Fate of birthright citizenship order hinges on 5 words

BY RAMESH PONNURU  
*Special to The Washington Post*  
 Through the magic of the law, all the passion of immigration politics is about to come to bear on the phrase “subject to the jurisdiction thereof.” That’s because on the first day of his second term, President Donald Trump issued an executive order aiming to deny citizenship to any children born in the United States to illegal immigrants. The Supreme Court has just agreed to hear a case challenging that order, and the legal dispute turns on the meaning of those five words.  
 The 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868, says that “all persons born” in the U.S. and subject to its jurisdiction are citizens. That has generally been taken to include illegal immigrants’ children: U.S. courts can prosecute them and U.S. police often protect them from crime. On this view, the exceptions — the reason the contested “jurisdiction” phrase is there — were Native Americans on tribal lands (Congress later made them citizens) and the children of diplomats and of invading soldiers.  
 The contrary theory, advanced in a bill sponsored by several Republican senators, led by Tom Cotton of Arkansas, holds that the phrase grants birthright citizenship only to the children of people who have “allegiance and obedience” to our government — which illegal immigrants don’t have. Supporters of this theory say the people who drafted and ratified the 14th Amendment were trying to ensure citizenship for Black Americans, not the children of illegal immigrants.  
 They are surely correct about that. Nobody

was thinking about illegal immigrants at the time, when the U.S. didn’t have immigration restrictions. They’re right, too, that the Supreme Court has never issued a ruling directly affirming birthright citizenship for illegal immigrants. And they also have a point when they say the policy has some serious costs. It creates an incentive for unlawfully coming to the U.S. and then impedes deportation.  
 The president and his allies are, however, wrong about the Constitution. The meaning of a law is, in the first place, not limited to what its authors mainly had in mind. The equal protection clause, also in the 14th Amendment, was motivated principally to ensure that state governments protected ex-slaves. Because it was written in general language, though, it extends to other groups and it doesn’t apply only to racial discrimination.  
 “Subject to the jurisdiction thereof” is a legal term of art that requires some historical research to unpack. Cotton’s theory that it required “allegiance and obedience” is based on an English case from 1608. But that case affirmed that even if a foreigner were in England only temporarily, he would have a duty of obedience while he was there — and any child he had there would be “a natural born subject” of the king.  
 In 1854, Secretary of State William Marcy wrote that birthright citizenship “is presumed” except for children born in “foreign legations.” The Supreme Court disturbed that understanding when, in the 1857 Dred Scott case, it excluded all Black people too. But the 14th Amendment restored the earlier understanding, and by 1871 Secretary of State Ha-

milton Fish was writing that the five words now in dispute were “probably intended to exclude the children of foreign ministers.”  
 Political scientist Matthew J. Franck points out a powerfully suggestive absence in the historical record: There’s no law in U.S. history that created a naturalization process for the U.S.-born children of immigrants. It was assumed that they were already citizens because they were born here.  
 Trump’s executive order raises another issue: If the children of illegal immigrants aren’t citizens, what about the children of legal immigrants? The order already blurs that distinction, going beyond the Cotton bill by excluding from citizenship any children born in the U.S. to people here on temporary visas.  
 The good news is that while applying birthright citizenship to the children of illegal immigrants hinders the enforcement of immigration laws, the problem can be overcome. The country has had periods of low illegal immigration while following this policy. The Trump administration is shrinking the illegal population today, and thus reducing the number of illegal immigrants’ children who automatically become citizens tomorrow, all while birthright citizenship remains in effect. And there are more steps the government could take to control immigration.  
 We don’t have to change or distort the Constitution to have a tighter immigration policy, and we shouldn’t.



Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  |    |    | 4  | 5  | 6  |    | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
| 11 |    |    | 12 |    | 13 |    |    |    | 14 |    |    |    |
| 15 |    |    |    |    | 16 |    |    |    | 17 |    |    |    |
| 18 |    |    |    | 19 |    | 20 |    | 21 |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    | 22 |    | 23 |    | 24 |    |    | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 |    |    |    | 31 |    | 32 |    |    |    |    |
| 33 |    |    |    |    | 34 |    | 35 |    | 36 |    |    |    |
| 37 |    |    |    | 38 |    | 39 |    | 40 |    |    |    |    |
| 41 |    |    |    |    | 42 |    | 43 |    |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    | 44 |    |    | 45 |    | 46 |    | 47 | 48 | 49 |
| 50 | 51 | 52 |    |    | 53 |    | 54 |    | 55 |    |    |    |
| 56 |    |    |    |    | 57 |    |    |    | 58 |    |    |    |
| 59 |    |    |    |    | 60 |    |    |    |    | 61 |    |    |

ACROSS

- 1 Jamaican genre  
4 Painter Vermeer  
7 Attire  
11 Body powder  
13 Mode lead-in  
14 Mayberry tyke  
15 Dino in "The Good Dinosaur"  
16 Spider's art  
17 Apple product  
18 "Let's hear it"  
20 Joel or Ethan of Hollywood  
22 Land in la mer  
24 "Show some gratitude!"  
28 Ironer's target  
32 Submit taxes online  
33 Hip-hop's — Yang Twins  
34 Rockies hrs.  
36 Former Laker Lamar  
37 Beige shades  
39 Polish dumplings  
41 Oozed  
43 Dog's "dog"  
44 Manicured thing  
46 Claw  
50 Miami- — County  
53 Pester  
55 Scarce  
56 PlayStation alternative  
57 TV's Longoria  
58 Take a nap

- 59 Fasting period  
60 Squealer  
61 Lawn layer

- 25 Chic beach resort  
26 Sleep like —  
27 Ms. Moore  
28 Penultimate letters  
29 Wedding shower?  
30 Concerning  
31 Mentalist's claim  
35 Gratuity  
38 Salty expanse  
40 "Dig in!"  
42 Site for a bite  
45 Volcanic flow  
47 Asian nation  
48 Italian soup pasta  
49 Must have  
50 Roman 540  
51 Lincoln nickname  
52 Mafia boss  
54 Gangster's gun

DOWN

- 1 RBI, for one  
2 "The Art of Memoir" author Mary —  
3 Friend  
4 Mouth part  
5 Actor Guinness  
6 Bigwig  
7 From now on  
8 PC program  
9 2016 Olympics city  
10 Garden area  
12 Caption in a TV promo  
19 Caribou kin  
21 Shoe width  
23 Stately tree

Answer to Previous Puzzle

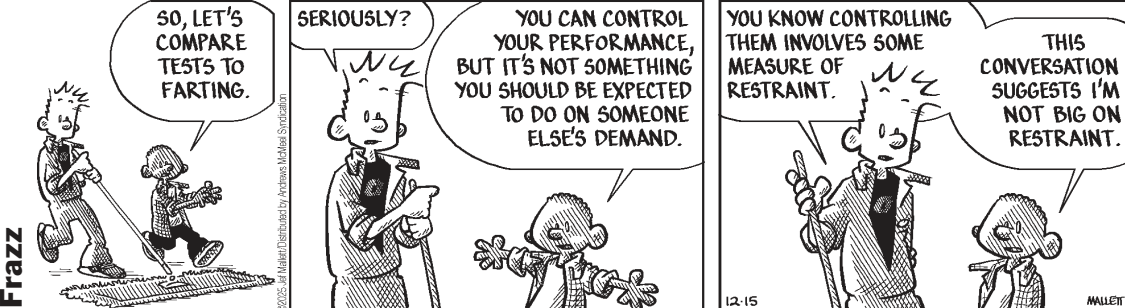
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | B | O | S | C | S |   | S | E | N | D | S |   |   |
| M | E | R | L | O | T |   | I | G | N | I | T | E |   |
| E | N | C | O | D | E |   |   | D | O | W | N | E | R |
| A | T | H |   | E | A | V | E | S |   | E | R | R |   |
| D | O | I | N |   | M | A | C |   | A | R | N | O |   |
| E | N | D | U | P |   | C | A | R | P | O | O | L |   |
|   |   |   | D | E | C |   | R | E | L |   |   |   |   |
| C | A | F | E | C | A | R |   | S | U | M | A | C |   |
| L | E | E | S |   | R | O | B |   | S | O | D | A |   |
| A | R | N |   | S | T | Y | L | E |   | R | E | C |   |
| P | A | N | C | H | O |   |   | O | D | E | S | S | A |
| S | T | E | R | E | O |   |   | C | A | M | E | T | O |
|   | E | L | O | A | N |   |   | S | M | I | L | E |   |

12-15

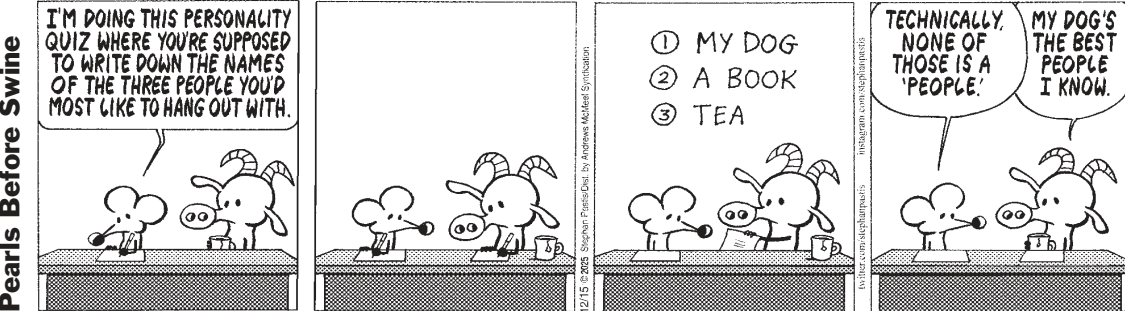
CRYPTOQUIP

IACG IHQTU PHQ FCTT C ORE  
OCE HD AMNWAMP FCZUP  
OCNW GACG EMG WGHTMZ  
OP C GARMD? AHG FAHFHTCGM.  
Saturday's Cryptoquip: STATE THAT HAS  
BECOME THE COUNTRY'S LEADING DEVELOPER  
OF BREATH-FRESHENING PRODUCTS: VERMINT.  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals C

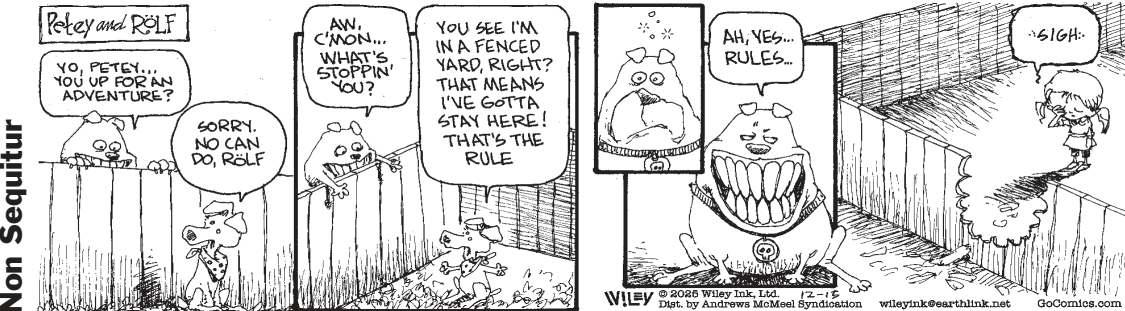
Frazz



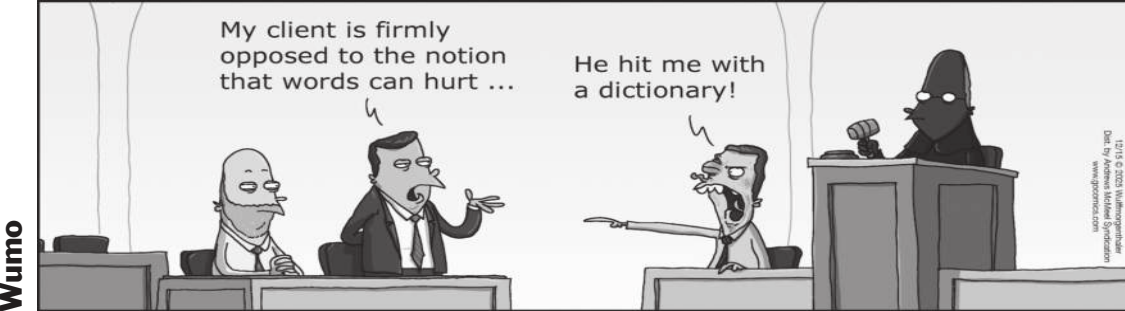
Pearls Before Swine



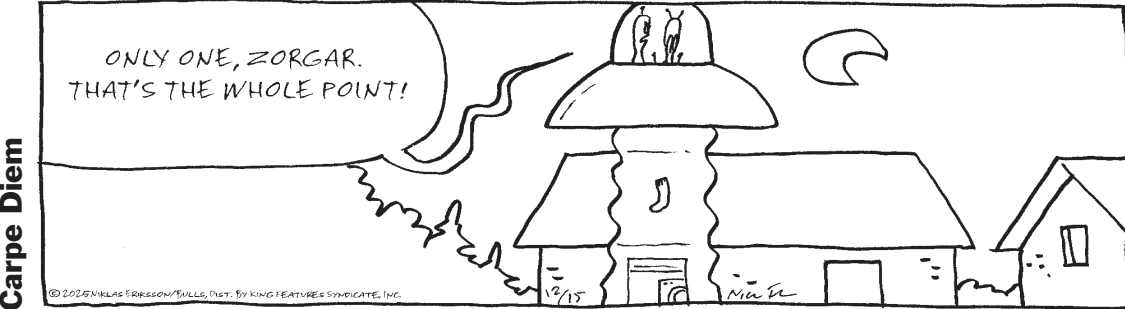
Non Sequitur



Wumo



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey









NHL

Scoreboard

| Eastern Conference                                                                                                                                      |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
| Atlantic Division                                                                                                                                       |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
|                                                                                                                                                         | GP | W  | L  | OT  | Pts | GF  | GA  |  |
| Tampa Bay                                                                                                                                               | 32 | 18 | 11 | 3   | 39  | 104 | 83  |  |
| Detroit                                                                                                                                                 | 33 | 18 | 12 | 3   | 39  | 104 | 109 |  |
| Boston                                                                                                                                                  | 32 | 19 | 13 | 0   | 38  | 107 | 99  |  |
| Montreal                                                                                                                                                | 31 | 16 | 11 | 4   | 36  | 101 | 112 |  |
| Florida                                                                                                                                                 | 31 | 16 | 13 | 2   | 34  | 98  | 99  |  |
| Toronto                                                                                                                                                 | 31 | 14 | 12 | 5   | 33  | 102 | 102 |  |
| Ottawa                                                                                                                                                  | 31 | 14 | 13 | 4   | 32  | 98  | 102 |  |
| Buffalo                                                                                                                                                 | 31 | 13 | 14 | 4   | 30  | 95  | 108 |  |
| Metropolitan Division                                                                                                                                   |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
|                                                                                                                                                         | GP | W  | L  | OT  | Pts | GF  | GA  |  |
| Carolina                                                                                                                                                | 31 | 20 | 9  | 2   | 42  | 105 | 88  |  |
| N.Y. Islanders                                                                                                                                          | 33 | 19 | 11 | 3   | 41  | 100 | 93  |  |
| Washington                                                                                                                                              | 32 | 18 | 10 | 4   | 40  | 106 | 83  |  |
| Philadelphia                                                                                                                                            | 30 | 16 | 9  | 5   | 37  | 90  | 85  |  |
| New Jersey                                                                                                                                              | 32 | 18 | 13 | 1   | 37  | 96  | 101 |  |
| Pittsburgh                                                                                                                                              | 30 | 14 | 8  | 8   | 36  | 95  | 91  |  |
| N.Y. Rangers                                                                                                                                            | 33 | 16 | 13 | 4   | 36  | 88  | 88  |  |
| Columbus                                                                                                                                                | 32 | 13 | 13 | 6   | 32  | 96  | 112 |  |
| Western Conference                                                                                                                                      |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Central Division                                                                                                                                        |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
|                                                                                                                                                         | GP | W  | L  | OT  | Pts | GF  | GA  |  |
| Colorado                                                                                                                                                | 32 | 23 | 2  | 7   | 53  | 128 | 74  |  |
| Dallas                                                                                                                                                  | 33 | 21 | 7  | 5   | 47  | 111 | 89  |  |
| Minnesota                                                                                                                                               | 32 | 18 | 9  | 5   | 41  | 93  | 85  |  |
| Utah                                                                                                                                                    | 33 | 15 | 15 | 3   | 33  | 101 | 97  |  |
| Chicago                                                                                                                                                 | 32 | 13 | 13 | 6   | 32  | 91  | 98  |  |
| Winnipeg                                                                                                                                                | 31 | 15 | 15 | 1   | 31  | 96  | 96  |  |
| St. Louis                                                                                                                                               | 33 | 12 | 14 | 7   | 31  | 84  | 118 |  |
| Nashville                                                                                                                                               | 31 | 12 | 15 | 4   | 28  | 87  | 109 |  |
| Pacific Division                                                                                                                                        |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
|                                                                                                                                                         | GP | W  | L  | OT  | Pts | GF  | GA  |  |
| Vegas                                                                                                                                                   | 31 | 16 | 6  | 9   | 41  | 96  | 90  |  |
| Anaheim                                                                                                                                                 | 32 | 19 | 12 | 1   | 39  | 114 | 107 |  |
| Los Angeles                                                                                                                                             | 30 | 14 | 8  | 8   | 36  | 82  | 80  |  |
| Edmonton                                                                                                                                                | 32 | 15 | 11 | 6   | 36  | 109 | 110 |  |
| San Jose                                                                                                                                                | 33 | 16 | 14 | 3   | 35  | 96  | 110 |  |
| Seattle                                                                                                                                                 | 29 | 12 | 11 | 6   | 30  | 73  | 90  |  |
| Calgary                                                                                                                                                 | 32 | 12 | 16 | 4   | 28  | 82  | 96  |  |
| Vancouver                                                                                                                                               | 31 | 11 | 17 | 3   | 25  | 87  | 111 |  |
| <b>Note:</b> Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs. |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| <b>Friday's games</b>                                                                                                                                   |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| St. Louis 3, Chicago 2                                                                                                                                  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Utah 5, Seattle 3                                                                                                                                       |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| <b>Saturday's games</b>                                                                                                                                 |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| New Jersey 4, Anaheim 1                                                                                                                                 |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| San Jose 6, Pittsburgh 5, OT                                                                                                                            |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Edmonton 6, Toronto 3                                                                                                                                   |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Minnesota 3, Ottawa 2                                                                                                                                   |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Carolina 4, Philadelphia 3, SO                                                                                                                          |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Vegas 3, Columbus 2                                                                                                                                     |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Winnipeg 5, Washington 1                                                                                                                                |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| N.Y. Rangers 5, Montreal 4, OT                                                                                                                          |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Florida 4, Dallas 0                                                                                                                                     |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Colorado 4, Nashville 2                                                                                                                                 |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Calgary 2, Los Angeles 1, OT                                                                                                                            |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| N.Y. Islanders 3, Tampa Bay 2, SO                                                                                                                       |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Detroit 4, Chicago 0                                                                                                                                    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| <b>Sunday's games</b>                                                                                                                                   |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Vancouver at New Jersey                                                                                                                                 |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Utah at Pittsburgh                                                                                                                                      |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Philadelphia at Carolina                                                                                                                                |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Boston at Minnesota                                                                                                                                     |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Edmonton at Montreal                                                                                                                                    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Buffalo at Seattle                                                                                                                                      |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| <b>Monday's games</b>                                                                                                                                   |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Anaheim at N.Y. Rangers                                                                                                                                 |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Florida at Tampa Bay                                                                                                                                    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Ottawa at Winnipeg                                                                                                                                      |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Los Angeles at Dallas                                                                                                                                   |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Nashville at St. Louis                                                                                                                                  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| <b>Tuesday's games</b>                                                                                                                                  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Anaheim at Columbus                                                                                                                                     |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Chicago at Toronto                                                                                                                                      |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| N.Y. Islanders at Detroit                                                                                                                               |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Philadelphia at Montreal                                                                                                                                |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Utah at Boston                                                                                                                                          |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Vancouver at N.Y. Rangers                                                                                                                               |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Edmonton at Pittsburgh                                                                                                                                  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Washington at Minnesota                                                                                                                                 |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Calgary at San Jose                                                                                                                                     |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| Colorado at Seattle                                                                                                                                     |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| <b>Scoring leaders</b>                                                                                                                                  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
| <b>Through Sunday</b>                                                                                                                                   |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |  |
|                                                                                                                                                         | GP | G  | A  | PTS |     |     |     |  |
| Nathan MacKinnon, COL                                                                                                                                   | 32 | 26 | 29 | 55  |     |     |     |  |
| Connor McDavid, EDM                                                                                                                                     | 32 | 18 | 33 | 51  |     |     |     |  |
| Macklin Celebrini, SJ                                                                                                                                   | 33 | 16 | 31 | 47  |     |     |     |  |
| Connor Bedard, CHI                                                                                                                                      | 31 | 19 | 25 | 44  |     |     |     |  |
| Martin Necas, COL                                                                                                                                       | 32 | 14 | 29 | 43  |     |     |     |  |
| Leon Draisaitl, EDM                                                                                                                                     | 32 | 17 | 26 | 43  |     |     |     |  |
| Mikko Rantanen, DAL                                                                                                                                     | 32 | 13 | 29 | 42  |     |     |     |  |
| Nikita Kucherov, TB                                                                                                                                     | 29 | 13 | 29 | 42  |     |     |     |  |
| Jack Eichel, LV                                                                                                                                         | 31 | 12 | 29 | 41  |     |     |     |  |
| Kyle Connor, WPG                                                                                                                                        | 31 | 15 | 25 | 40  |     |     |     |  |
| Mark Scheifele, WPG                                                                                                                                     | 31 | 16 | 24 | 40  |     |     |     |  |
| Leo Carlsson, ANA                                                                                                                                       | 32 | 17 | 23 | 40  |     |     |     |  |
| Jason Robertson, DAL                                                                                                                                    | 33 | 20 | 20 | 40  |     |     |     |  |
| Cale Makar, COL                                                                                                                                         | 32 | 10 | 28 | 38  |     |     |     |  |

ROUNDUP

Devils top Ducks to end losing streak

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Stefan Noesen, Paul Cotter and Cody Glass each scored to help the New Jersey Devils beat the Anaheim Ducks 4-1 on Saturday and snap a five-game home losing streak.

New Jersey started the season 9-0-1 on its home ice before losing five straight at the Prudential Center.

The Devils' third line of Cotter, Juho Lamikko and Noesen combined for five points (two goals, three assists). It was Noesen's first goal in 22 games.

Jake Allen stopped 30 shots for New Jersey for his first win since Nov. 28. Allen had lost three straight.

Troy Terry scored for Anaheim. Lukas Dostal had 18 saves for the Ducks, who failed to convert on four power-play opportunities.

**Sharks 6, Penguins 5 (OT):** John Klingberg capped off a frantic late rally by scoring his second goal of the game 2:57 into overtime to lift visiting San Jose to an improbable victory over Pittsburgh.

Klingberg's seventh of the season off a feed from Macklin Celebrini gave the Sharks their first victory in the franchise's 34-year history when trailing by four goals in the third.

San Jose trailed 5-1 with less than 14 minutes to go. Klingberg and William Eklund scored to get the Sharks back in it, and Celebrini and Tyler Toffoli beat Penguins goalie Arturs Silovs with the goaltender pulled to force overtime.

Sidney Crosby beat Askarov in the first period for his 19th goal of the season and assisted on Bryan Rust's power-play goal in the second to push his career point total to 1,721.

**Oilers 6, Maple Leafs 3:** Connor McDavid had two goals and an assist and Tristan Jarry made 25 saves in his first game for visiting Edmonton, helping the Oilers beat Toronto.

Edmonton is 6-2-1 in its last nine and 15-11-6 overall.

Jarry and defenseman Spencer Stastney made their Oilers debuts. Jarry was acquired from Pittsburgh on Friday in a five-player deal that sent fellow goalie Stuart Skinner and defender Brett Kulak to the Penguins. Stastney was added in a deal with Nashville.

Steven Lorentz, Easton Cowan and Oliver Ekman-Larsson scored for the Maple Leafs. Dennis Hildeby allowed all six goals on 32 shots before getting pulled. Artur Akhtyamov — Toronto's fifth goalie to see action 32 games into the season — made four saves in relief in his first NHL action.

**Wild 3, Senators 2:** Joel Eriksson Ek scored with 23.1 seconds remaining to lift host Minnesota over Ottawa.

Eriksson Ek buried a one-timer from the right circle after a cross-ice pass by Marcus Johansson to stun the Senators, who had rallied from a 2-0 deficit to tie it.

Tyler Pitlick and Ryan Hartman also scored for the Wild, while Jesper Wallstedt made 34 saves.

**Hurricanes 4, Flyers 3 (SO):** Jackson Blake scored in the shootout, and Eastern Conference-leading Carolina beat host Philadelphia to open a home-and-home set.

Seth Jarvis scored his 18th goal, Nikolaj Ehlers and Alexander Nikishin also scored and Shayne Gostisbehere had two assists for the Hurricanes, who have won two consecutive shootouts. Carolina has won three straight and six of eight overall.

Bobby Brink, Trevor Zegras and Carl



ADAM HUNGER/AP

New Jersey center Cody Glass, left, controls the puck past Anaheim left wing Chris Kreider during the first period Saturday in Newark, N.J. The Devils defeated the Ducks 4-1.

Grundstrom scored for the Flyers, who concluded their six-game homestand with a 2-2-2 record.

**Golden Knights 3, Blue Jackets 2:** Ben Hutton and Brayden McNabb scored in the third period, and visiting Vegas continued its strong road run, beating Columbus for its sixth win in seven games.

The Golden Knights have earned nine of a possible 10 points on their five-game road trip and have not lost in regulation this month.

Pavel Dorofeyev also scored for Vegas, Mitch Marner added three assists and Carter Hart made 26 saves.

**Jets 5, Capitals 1:** Connor Hellebuyck made 24 saves in his return from a knee injury, Gabriel Vilardi scored twice and host Winnipeg beat Washington to end a three-game losing streak.

Hellebuyck had arthroscopic surgery three weeks ago. The reigning Hart and Vezina Trophy winner missed 12 games, with the Jets going 2-9-1.

Alex Iafallo had a goal and assist, and Logan Stanley and Morgan Barron also scored for Winnipeg. Adam Lowry, Josh Morrissey, Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele each had two assists.

**Rangers 5, Canadiens 4 (OT):** J.T. Miller scored his second goal of the game on a power play at 2:56 of overtime as host New York rallied to beat Montreal.

Will Cuyille, Noah Laba and Artemi Panarin also scored to help the Rangers snap a three-game skid (0-1-2). Mathew Robertson and Connor Sheary each had two assists, and Igor Shesterkin had 12 saves.

Zach Bolduc, Arber Xhekaj, Jake Evans and Josh Anderson scored for the Canadiens in their third loss in four games (1-2-1). Nick Suzuki and Lane Hutson each had two assists, and Jacob Fowler had 21 saves.

**Panthers 4, Stars 0:** Sergei Bobrovsky made 15 saves for his third shutout this season to continue his mastery of Dallas, and Brad Marchand had two goals and an assist as visiting Florida blanked the Stars.

Anton Lundell had a goal and an assist and Sam Bennett also scored as the Panthers shook off a 6-2 loss at Colorado on Thursday. Sam Reinhart had two assists.

Bobrovsky improved to 21-2-2 against Dallas as Florida won its fifth straight over the Stars, including in a shootout at home Nov. 1.

**Avalanche 4, Predators 2:** Nathan MacKinnon scored his NHL-leading 26th goal and added an assist, and Colorado beat Nashville for its 11th straight home win.

MacKinnon, who has scored in six straight home games, leads the league with 55 points.

Jack Drury, Victor Olofsson and Valeri Nichushkin also scored for the Avalanche, who are 13-0-2 on home ice this season. The 11 straight wins matches the second-longest in franchise history, previously accomplished Jan. 31-March 27 of last season.

**Flames 2, Kings 1 (OT):** Morgan Frost scored in overtime and Blake Coleman had a short-handed goal in visiting Calgary's victory over Los Angeles.

Dustin Wolf made 20 saves for the surging Flames. They have won eight of their past 12 games, with Wolf winning his last four starts.

Adrian Kempe scored for the Kings, and Darcy Kuemper made 36 saves. Los Angeles played its 14th game decided in overtime or a shootout out of 21 total one-goal contests this season.

**Islanders 3, Lightning 2 (SO):** Emil Heinemann and Mathew Barzal scored in the shootout, and host New York defeated Tampa Bay.

Matthew Schaefer and Cal Ritchie scored in the first period for the Islanders, with Anthony Duclair assisting on both, and New York extended its winning streak to three games. Ilya Sorokin made 32 saves and stopped two of three Lightning attempts in the shootout.

**Red Wings 4, Blackhawks 0:** Alex DeBrincat scored twice and had an assist, John Gibson earned his second shutout in three starts, and visiting Detroit beat Chicago.

Patrick Kane had a goal and an assist and Emmitt Finnie also scored for the Red Wings, who have won four of five.



# Wemby returns, Spurs make Cup final

**By TIM REYNOLDS**  
*Associated Press*

LAS VEGAS — Here’s how much the NBA Cup semifinals against Oklahoma City meant to San Antonio’s Victor Wembanyama: He grabbed the ball after a missed Thunder shot in the final moments, squeezed it and screamed in delight.

Technically, it was just another game.

It sure didn’t seem that way. Welcome back, Victor. The Spurs are headed to the NBA Cup championship game against New York, after knocking off defending NBA champion Oklahoma City 111-109 on Saturday night in the tournament semifinals — just the second loss for the Thunder in 26 games this season.

“This is not a typical regular-season game,” Wembanyama said. “We knew if that if we lose, we’re out. And you know, some people are built for these moments. Some aren’t. But we definitely are.”

The win came in Wembanyama’s return from a 12-game absence caused by a left calf strain. He finished with 22 points and nine rebounds in 21 minutes — coming off the bench for the first time in his NBA career.

There won’t be too many more times when he doesn’t start. Wembanyama wondered aloud after the game if someone can win Sixth Man and MVP in the same season, with a big smile across his face.

“As soon as Vic came in, he had the impact that we needed,” San Antonio’s Devin Vassell said.

There were plenty of signs of emotion in the final minutes from Wembanyama, indicating that this indeed wasn’t just another game.

A fallaway that turned into a falling-down shot by Wembanyama put the Spurs up by six with 9:49 left. He got fouled by OKC’s Cason Wallace the next time down the floor in one of those intention-



San Antonio Spurs forward Victor Wembanyama shoots the ball near Oklahoma City Thunder guard Jalen Williams in the second half of an NBA Cup semifinals game on Saturday in Las Vegas.

al, but not flagrant, don’t-give-up-a-dunk fouls, and flexed his arms toward Wallace after the play.

The San Antonio bench roared in delight — again, not the sort of scene typically associated with a regular-season contest in December.

“It is one of 82, but to your point, there are always circumstances and contexts,” Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said. “And that doesn’t mean that everybody quantifies them the same, but I do think that our guys have been excited about the Cup. I think our guys are excited to play really good teams. ... When you play the Oklahoma City Thunder, you’re getting the league’s best. And we are a competitive group and we want to con-

tinue to challenge ourselves to continue to get better. There’s no better way to do that but to play the best.”

Wembanyama scored in the lane with 2:32 left to put San Antonio up for good, then helped finish off the win by going 4 for 6 from the foul line in the final 78 seconds.

His impact on the game was immediate. The Thunder led 31-20 after the first quarter, but Wembanyama checked in for the first time to open the second quarter and everything quickly changed.

He got an offensive rebound and scored on his opening possession. By the end of his first minute, he had grabbed two more rebounds and had an assist to set up a 3-pointer. There was one play

where he lost his dribble and then sent his 7-foot-4 frame sprawling to the floor to dive on the ball, which he gathered and then passed to Julian Champagnie for another 3-pointer.

He played 7:19 of the first half. In that time, the Spurs outscored Oklahoma City by 20 points — 9-2 in his first stint, 15-2 in his second stint, 24-4 combined. That’s right, a 24-1 record entering the night, outscored teams by a record average last season and are on pace to smash that record this season.

But those minutes set a new tone and gave San Antonio a chance. Now, it’ll be back in Las Vegas on Tuesday with a chance at winning the NBA Cup.

## Scoreboard

| Eastern Conference                                    |    |    |      |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Atlantic Division                                     |    |    |      |     |
|                                                       | W  | L  | Pct  | GB  |
| New York                                              | 18 | 7  | .720 | —   |
| Boston                                                | 15 | 10 | .600 | 3   |
| Philadelphia                                          | 14 | 10 | .583 | 3½  |
| Toronto                                               | 15 | 11 | .577 | 3½  |
| Brooklyn                                              | 6  | 18 | .250 | 11½ |
| Southeast Division                                    |    |    |      |     |
|                                                       | W  | L  | Pct  | GB  |
| Orlando                                               | 15 | 11 | .577 | —   |
| Miami                                                 | 14 | 11 | .560 | ½   |
| Atlanta                                               | 14 | 12 | .538 | 1   |
| Charlotte                                             | 7  | 18 | .280 | 7½  |
| Washington                                            | 3  | 20 | .130 | 10½ |
| Central Division                                      |    |    |      |     |
|                                                       | W  | L  | Pct  | GB  |
| Detroit                                               | 20 | 5  | .800 | —   |
| Cleveland                                             | 15 | 11 | .577 | 5½  |
| Milwaukee                                             | 11 | 15 | .423 | 9½  |
| Chicago                                               | 10 | 14 | .417 | 9½  |
| Indiana                                               | 6  | 19 | .240 | 14  |
| Western Conference                                    |    |    |      |     |
| Southwest Division                                    |    |    |      |     |
|                                                       | W  | L  | Pct  | GB  |
| Houston                                               | 16 | 6  | .727 | ½   |
| San Antonio                                           | 18 | 7  | .720 | —   |
| Memphis                                               | 11 | 14 | .440 | 7   |
| Dallas                                                | 10 | 16 | .385 | 8½  |
| New Orleans                                           | 4  | 22 | .154 | 14½ |
| Northwest Division                                    |    |    |      |     |
|                                                       | W  | L  | Pct  | GB  |
| Oklahoma City                                         | 24 | 2  | .923 | —   |
| Denver                                                | 18 | 6  | .750 | 5   |
| Minnesota                                             | 16 | 9  | .640 | 7½  |
| Utah                                                  | 9  | 15 | .375 | 14  |
| Portland                                              | 9  | 16 | .360 | 14½ |
| Pacific Division                                      |    |    |      |     |
|                                                       | W  | L  | Pct  | GB  |
| L.A. Lakers                                           | 17 | 7  | .708 | —   |
| Phoenix                                               | 14 | 11 | .560 | 3½  |
| Golden State                                          | 13 | 13 | .500 | 5   |
| Sacramento                                            | 6  | 19 | .240 | 11½ |
| L.A. Clippers                                         | 6  | 19 | .240 | 11½ |
| Friday's games                                        |    |    |      |     |
| Detroit 142, Atlanta 115                              |    |    |      |     |
| Chicago 129, Charlotte 126                            |    |    |      |     |
| Philadelphia 115, Indiana 105                         |    |    |      |     |
| Cleveland 130, Washington 126                         |    |    |      |     |
| Utah 130, Memphis 126                                 |    |    |      |     |
| Dallas 119, Brooklyn 111                              |    |    |      |     |
| Minnesota 127, Golden State 120                       |    |    |      |     |
| Saturday's games                                      |    |    |      |     |
| New York 132, Orlando 120 (Semifinal Game 1)          |    |    |      |     |
| San Antonio 111, Oklahoma City 109 (Semifinal Game 2) |    |    |      |     |
| Sunday's games                                        |    |    |      |     |
| Washington at Indiana                                 |    |    |      |     |
| Charlotte at Cleveland                                |    |    |      |     |
| Milwaukee at Brooklyn                                 |    |    |      |     |
| Philadelphia at Atlanta                               |    |    |      |     |
| New Orleans at Chicago                                |    |    |      |     |
| Sacramento at Minnesota                               |    |    |      |     |
| L.A. Lakers at Phoenix                                |    |    |      |     |
| Golden State at Portland                              |    |    |      |     |
| Monday's games                                        |    |    |      |     |
| Detroit at Boston                                     |    |    |      |     |
| Toronto at Miami                                      |    |    |      |     |
| Dallas at Utah                                        |    |    |      |     |
| Houston at Denver                                     |    |    |      |     |
| Memphis at L.A. Clippers                              |    |    |      |     |

# Brunson backs up Knicks’ arguments of MVP consideration

**By TIM REYNOLDS**  
*Associated Press*

LAS VEGAS — Josh Hart got asked a question Saturday night after the New York Knicks reached the NBA Cup championship game about where Jalen Brunson ranks as a scorer. Hart smiled. Brunson cringed.

And then, as typically happens when those two share a postgame podium, comedy happened.

“He’s barely a 6-foot guard,” Hart began, with Brunson sitting about two feet to his left. “Not physically impressive, not athletic, but he’s able to manipulate defenses. Big head, so he has a big brain. He’s able to figure out those angles and find himself in position to be successful. So, inch for inch, I think he’s probably the best one.”

Brunson — listed at 6-foot-2, perhaps a bit



Brunson

generously — tried to interject a few times during Hart’s answer, to no avail. Hart couldn’t stop talking, much in the same way that Brunson couldn’t stop scoring. He had a game-and season-high 40 points in New York’s 132-120 win over Orlando in the NBA Cup semifinals, giving the Knicks a shot at the title on Tuesday against Victor Wembanyama and San Antonio.

Hart’s point, in his own way, was clear: Brunson is playing at an elite level right now. And New York coach Mike Brown was more direct, walking into the postgame interview room Saturday and hammering home a specific point he’s been making in recent weeks — that Brunson, even this

early in the season, belongs in the MVP conversation.

“He makes the game easier for everybody,” Brown said. “That’s what MVPs are supposed to do, and he definitely did that tonight. ... At the end of the day, he carries you home. It’s beautiful to be able to see him do what he’s more than capable of doing on a national stage like this, in an environment like this. Hopefully you guys as media and the fans out there can continue talking about him as an MVP of this league, because that’s exactly what he is.”

Brown later made this clear: He’s not campaigning. The way he sees it, he’s just offering facts. And if Brunson — now averaging 28.8 points per game — keeps playing this way, the MVP case is going to get even more compelling.

This is also clear: Brunson isn’t going to

lobby for individual honors. And he has his reasons, starting with his parents — one of whom is a Knicks assistant coach.

“Sandra and Rick Brunson, first and foremost, how they raised me,” Brunson said when asked why he doesn’t outwardly seek recognition. “My family, my wife, my inner circle, everybody that I have been involved with. My inner circle keeps me humble, and I wouldn’t want it any other way.”

He was 16-for-27 from the field on Saturday, adding eight assists to the 40 points. Brunson and Magic guard Jalen Suggs both had 25 points at halftime; Suggs was slowed by a nagging hip injury and had only one point in the second half. The game was tied at 90-90 late in the third, and New York went ahead for good with a 9-2 run — Brunson scoring seven of those points and getting the assist on the other basket.



COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Purdue's Smith reaches rare D-I milestone

By MICHAEL MAROT  
Associated Press

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Purdue guard Braden Smith figures he'll have time to reflect on his many milestones later.

For now, it's all the work that still needs to be done.

On Saturday, Smith helped the sixth-ranked Boilermakers pull away for a 79-59 victory over Marquette by finishing with seven points, 10 assists and five rebounds to join D.J. Cooper of Ohio as the only Division I men's basketball players to record 1,500 points, 850 assists and 550 rebounds in their careers.

Cooper finished his career with 2,075 points, 934 assists and 620 rebounds from 2009-13. Smith now has 1,515 points, a school record 859 assists and 579 rebounds as he closes in on the Big Ten's career assist record of 890 held by Michigan State guard Cassius Winston.

Smith needed only 12 seconds to find his longtime backcourt mate, Fletcher Loyer, for a 3-pointer to join the club, but Smith quickly brushed aside the significance of what this moment meant.

"Nothing," he said. "We have favorite goals that we want to achieve, and I think that's the reason we came back was because



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Purdue guard Braden Smith, right, drives under Marquette guard Zaide Lowery during the second half in West Lafayette, Ind., on Saturday. Purdue beat Marquette 79-59.

those are the goals — not have all these small little steps that we're achieving as a group or individually. For me, my main thing is to win it all, and if that happens then all these things will add up and probably

mean something when I'm older and done playing basketball."

At least Smith saw the Boilermakers (10-1, 2-0 Big Ten) take a couple big steps toward that end this week after last Satur-

day's embarrassing 23-point home loss to then No. 10 Iowa State.

Since then, the defense has picked up, the dominant stretches have increased and Purdue walked away with two routs — thanks in large part to Smith, the Big Ten's preseason player of the year.

Purdue also is starting to revert to its more traditional form with Smith and Loyer finding ways to exploit the Boilermakers size advantage. Oscar Cluff, the 6-foot-11 transfer from South Dakota State, made all nine of his shots Saturday, finished with a season-high 22 points and added 11 rebounds for his second straight double-double as he starts rounding into form.

Smith senses it, too. He was around two years ago when he and two-time national player of the year Zach Edey teamed up to take the Boilermakers to the national championship game.

He also was there last year when the Boilermakers fell just short of reaching the Elite Eight, losing to national runner-up Houston in Indianapolis. And now with Smith and Loyer back for their fourth and final season together, they're trying to recreate the kind of combination that could lead to far more memorable moments later this season.

TOP 25 ROUNDUP

No. 1 Arizona pushes past No. 12 Alabama in second half

Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Brayden Burries scored 28 points, 20 of those coming during a 14-minute second-half flurry, and No. 1 Arizona roared back from its first halftime deficit of the season to beat No. 12 Alabama 96-75.

The Wildcats (9-0) trailed by two points at halftime before seizing command with a 14-1 run, highlighted by Burries making three consecutive baskets. Burries was 5-for-10 from 3-point range, mitigating a quiet night for fellow freshman Koa Peat, who was saddled by foul trouble and scored six points — far off his 15.9 points-per-game average.

Labaron Philon Jr. scored 24 points, including a twisting pullup in the lane that gave Alabama (7-3) a 41-39 lead at the half. That was the final highlight for the Tide, which couldn't match Arizona's intensity over the final 20 minutes.

Motiejus Krivas, Arizona's 7-foot-2 Lithuanian center, finished with 14 points and 14 rebounds. Point guard Jaden Bradley added 14 points and seven assists, haunting the former Crimson Tide program that he helped earn the top overall seed in the 2023 NCAA Tournament.

Latrell Wrightsell Jr. scored 21 for Alabama. Aiden Sherrell blocked eight shots but had little help from the Tide's frontcourt.

**No. 2 Michigan 101, Maryland 83:** Yaxel Lendeborg had 29

points, a career-best nine assists and eight rebounds, and visiting Michigan rallied from a nine-point deficit Saturday night to defeat Maryland.

Aday Mara scored 18 points for the Wolverines (10-0, 2-0 Big Ten), who overcame a halftime deficit for the second time this season and the first since they beat TCU on Nov. 14.

**No. 7 Houston 99, New Orleans 57:** Kingston Flemings, Chris Cenac Jr., Chase McCarty and Mercy Miller each scored 15 points, and the host Cougars won their fourth straight.

Flemings and Cenac, both freshmen, combined to shoot 11-for-19 from the field for Houston (10-1).

**No. 8 Gonzaga 82, No. 25 UCLA 72:** Graham Ike had 25 points and five assists and the host Bulldogs improved to 9-1.

Tyler Bilodeau led UCLA (7-3) with 22 points. He was 4-for-6 from 3-point range.

**No. 9 Michigan St. 76, Penn St. 72:** Divine Ugochukwu scored a career-high 23 points and the visiting Spartans overcame a sloppy performance to beat the Nittany Lions.

Jaxon Kohler posted his fifth double-double of the season with 10 points and 12 rebounds while Carson Cooper added 10 points for the Spartans (9-1, 2-0 Big Ten), who committed a season-high 17 turnovers and trailed for long stretches in both halves.



VASHA HUNT/AP

Arizona forward Tobe Awaka, left, grabs a rebound in the first half against Alabama on Saturday in Birmingham, Ala.

**No. 10 BYU 100, UC Riverside 53:** AJ Dybantsa had 26 points, eight rebounds, and seven assists to lead the host Cougars.

Andrew Henderson led UC Riverside (5-6) with 14 points and BJ Kolly added 12.

**No. 11 Louisville 99, Memphis 73:** Ryan Conwell had 17 points and reserve Adrian Wooley scored 15 as he and Kasean Pryor alternated making six of the Cardinals' seven consecutive 3-pointers during a first-half surge that rocketed host Louisville past Memphis.

The Cardinals (9-1) converted

18 of 35 attempts from long range, second to their 20 made 3s against NJIT on Nov. 26.

**No. 23 Nebraska 83, No. 13 Illinois 80:** Jamarques Lawrence hit a 3-point shot with less than a second remaining Saturday to give the Cornhuskers a road win.

Undefeated Nebraska (11-0, 2-0 Big Ten) is off to the best start in program history.

**No. 14 North Carolina 80, USC-Upstate 62:** Caleb Wilson had 20 points and 11 rebounds to lead the host Tar Heels past USC Upstate.

**No. 15 Vanderbilt 83, Central**

**Arkansas 72:** Tyler Nickel scored a career-high 30 points and the host Commodores beat Central Arkansas.

Tyler Tanner had 12 points, nine rebounds and seven assists for Vanderbilt, and Jalen Washington added 12 points and seven rebounds.

**No. 17 Arkansas 93, No. 16 Texas Tech 86:** Trevon Brazile scored 18 of his 24 points after halftime and finished with 10 rebounds as the visiting Razorbacks overcame the Red Raiders in a rematch of a Sweet 16 game in last season's NCAA Tournament.

Arkansas (8-2), which trailed by as many as 10 points before halftime, went ahead for good on Brazile's driving layup that made it 78-77 with 5:20 left.

**No. 18 Florida 80, George Washington 70:** Xaivian Lee scored 24 points to lead the host Gators over George Washington in the second game of the Orange Bowl Basketball Classic.

**No. 19 Kansas 77, NC State 76 (OT):** Melvin Council Jr. had career highs of 36 points and nine made 3-pointers to help the visiting Jayhawks edge the Wolfpack.

**No. 22 St. John's 91, Iona 64:** Oziyah Sellers scored 16 of his 19 points in the second half, Zubu Ejiofor tied a career-high by blocking eight shots for the second straight game and host St. John's survived a difficult start and pulled away for a victory over Iona.



## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# Indiana's Mendoza wins Heisman

QB first Hoosier to claim award, and margin was emphatic with 643 first-place votes

By EVERETT MERRILL  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Fernando Mendoza, the enthusiastic quarterback of No. 1 Indiana, won the Heisman Trophy on Saturday night, becoming the first Hoosier to win college football's most prestigious award since its inception in 1935.

Mendoza claimed 2,362 points, including 643 first-place votes. He beat Vanderbilt quarterback Diego Pavia (1,435 points), Notre Dame running back Jeremiyah Love (719 points) and Ohio State quarterback Julian Sayin (432 points).

Mendoza's Heisman win was emphatic. He finished first in all six Heisman regions, the first to do so since Caleb Williams in 2022. He was named on 95.16% of all ballots, tying him with Marcus Mariota in 2014 for the second highest in the award's history and he received 84.6% of total possible points, which is the seventh highest in Heisman history.

"I haven't seen the numbers yet," said Mendoza, "but it's such an honor to be mentioned with these guys (Pavia, Love and Sayin). It's really a credit to our team. It's a team award."

Mendoza guided the Hoosiers to their first No. 1 ranking and the top seed in the 12-team College Football bracket, throwing for 2,980 yards and a national-best 33 touchdown passes while also running for six scores. Indiana, the last unbeaten team in major college football, will play a College Football Playoff quarterfinal game in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1.

Mendoza, the Hoosiers' first-year starter after transferring from California, is the triggerman for an offense that surpassed program records for touchdowns and points set during last season's surprise run to the CFP.

A redshirt junior, the once lightly recruited Miami native is the second Heisman finalist in school history, joining 1989 runner-up Anthony Thompson. Mendoza is the seventh Indiana player to earn a top-10 finish in Heisman balloting and it marks another first in program history — having back-to-back players in the top 10. Hoosiers quarterback Kurtis Rourke was ninth last year.

With his teammates chanting "HeismanDoza" as he addressed the media, he said there felt like a realistic chance of winning the Heisman when the Hoosiers routed then No. 19 Illinois 63-10 on Sept. 20.

"At that point my boys (teammates) said we might make it to



TODD VAN EMST/AP

**Indiana NCAA college football quarterback Fernando Mendoza celebrates his Heisman Trophy achievement in New York on Saturday. Mendoza is the first Hoosier to win the Heisman trophy.**

New York (for the award ceremony)," he said. "It was lighthearted at the time, but that's when it started. "Quarterbacks have won the Heisman four of the last five years, with two-way player Travis Hunter of Colorado ending the run last season.

Mendoza is the 43rd quarterback to win the Heisman and the second winner of Latin American descent to claim the trophy. Stanford's Jim Plunkett was the first in 1970.

"Although I grew up in America, my four grandparents are all from Cuba," he said. "I had the opportunity to go there and that was important to me. I credit the love to my grandparents and the Hispanic community."

The Heisman Trophy presentation came after a number of accolades were already awarded. Mendoza was named The Associated Press player of the year earlier this week and picked up the Maxwell and Davey O'Brien awards Friday night while Love won the Doak Walker Award.

Mendoza and Pavia clearly exemplify the changing landscape of using the transfer portal in college football. Mendoza is the seventh transfer to win the award in the last nine years. Vanderbilt is Pavia's third school.

## Confident Commodore

Pavia finished second with 189 first-place votes. He threw for a school-record 3,192 yards and 27 touchdowns for the Commodores, who were pushing for a CFP berth all the way to the bracket announcement. He is the first Heisman finalist in Vanderbilt history.

Pavia led Vanderbilt to its first 10-win season along with six wins against Southeastern Conference foes. That includes four wins over ranked programs as Vandy reached No. 9, its highest ranking in The Associated Press Top 25 since 1937.

Pavia went from being unrecruited out of high school to junior college, New Mexico State and finally Vanderbilt in 2024 through the transfer portal. Vandy next plays in the ReliaQuest Bowl against Iowa on Dec. 31.

## Irish Love

The last running back to win the Heisman was Alabama's Derrick Henry in 2015. Love put himself in the mix with an outstanding season for Notre Dame. He finished with 46 first-place votes.

The junior from St. Louis was fourth in the Bowl Subdivision in yards rushing (1,372), fifth in per-game average (114.3) and third

with 18 rushing touchdowns for the Fighting Irish.

He was the first player in Notre Dame's storied history to produce multiple TD runs of 90 or more yards, a 98-yarder against Indiana in the first round of last year's playoffs and a 94-yarder against Boston College earlier this season.

## Buckeyes' leader

Sayin led the Buckeyes to a No. 1 ranking for most of the season, throwing for 3,329 yards while tying for second in the country with 31 TD passes ahead of their CFP quarterfinal at the Cotton Bowl on Dec. 31.

The sophomore from Carlsbad, Calif., arrived at Ohio State after initially committing to Alabama and entering the transfer portal following a coaching change. He led the Buckeyes to a 14-7 win in the opener against preseason No. 1 Texas and kept the team atop the AP Top 25 for 13 straight weeks, tying its second-longest run.

Sayin follows a strong lineage of Ohio State quarterbacks since coach Ryan Day arrived in 2017. Dwayne Haskins (2018), Justin Fields (2019), C.J. Stroud (2021), and Kyle McCord (2023) averaged 3,927 passing yards, 40 TDs, and six interceptions, along with a 68.9% completion rate during their first seasons.



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

**Michigan is hoping to interview Arizona State head coach Kenny Dillingham for its vacancy.**

## Drinkwitz, Dillingham on short list for Michigan

By LARRY LAGE  
Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — The firm hired by Michigan to search for a football coach to replace Sherrone Moore has contacted representatives for Arizona State's Kenny Dillingham and Missouri's Eli Drinkwitz, according to a person familiar with the situation.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Saturday because they were not authorized to share details of the search.

Moore was fired on Wednesday, when the school said an investigation uncovered his inappropriate relationship with a staffer. Two days later, Moore was charged with three crimes after prosecutors said he "barged his way" into the apartment of a woman he'd been having an affair with and threatened to kill himself.

College football's winningest program suddenly needs a coach.

After the 35-year-old Dillingham was linked to numerous open jobs last month, he said he was not leaving his alma mater.

Two weeks ago, Drinkwitz agreed to a six-year contract that increases his average compensation to \$10.75 million annually.

Michigan is hoping to hire a coach this month, helping its chances of retaining recruits and keeping key players out of the transfer portal in January.

Dillingham, who is from Scottsdale, Ariz., graduated from Arizona State in 2013 and started his coaching career as an assistant for the Sun Devils. After coaching at Memphis, he was the offensive coordinator for Auburn, Florida State and Oregon before returning to Arizona State.

The 42-year-old Drinkwitz is 46-28 in six seasons at Missouri after going 12-1 in a year at Appalachian State.



COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Washington routs Boise State in LA Bowl

By GREG BEACHAM  
Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Demond Williams Jr. threw three of his four touchdown passes in the second quarter, and Washington had five interceptions as the Huskies kicked off bowl season with a 38-10 victory over Boise State in the LA Bowl on Saturday night.

Denzel Boston made a 78-yard TD catch for Washington's first score before Dezmen Roebuck, Raiden Vines-Bright and Quentin Moore caught TD passes for the Huskies (9-4) in the school's fourth victory in its last five bowl games.

Washington had no players opt out of bowl participation from its solid Big Ten roster, and it showed in its overwhelming performance against the Mountain West champion Broncos (9-5). The Huskies scored 38 consecutive points after yielding a field goal on Boise State's opening drive.

"They treated the game as we asked them to, which is a championship game, a championship opportunity," coach Jedd Fisch said. "As we're sitting here with nine wins, really proud of our players, and tonight was a great football game."

Jonah Coleman rushed for 86 yards and a TD in his final game at Washington, while Boston had six catches for 125 yards in what might be the junior star's farewell. The Huskies scored four touchdowns in a stretch of less than 13 minutes spanning halftime, blow-



KYUSUNG GONG/AP

Washington quarterback Demond Williams Jr. holds up the championship belt after beating Boise State in the LA Bowl on Saturday in Inglewood, Calif. Williams made four touchdown passes in the Huskies' 38-10 win.

ing it open.

"We knew what they were going to play on defense, so that second quarter was just a mentality thing," Williams said.

Washington dominated its LA Bowl debut in the fifth and possibly final edition of the postseason game created in tandem with SoFi Stadium, which opened in 2020 for the city's two NFL teams. Bowl officials haven't confirmed reports the game won't be played next year.

Maddux Madsen threw two in-

terceptions in a 51-yard first half before sitting down for Boise State, which dropped to 0-3 in the bowl games following its three straight conference titles under coach Spencer Danielson.

Madsen wore a protective boot while watching the second half of his second game back from a month's absence with a lower leg injury.

"A lesser competitor wouldn't have even tried to play in this game," Danielson said of Madsen. "That's our quarterback. Do we

need to get better? Do we need to improve? Are we going to compete? All yes, but I'm unwavering in the fact that I believe in Maddux Madsen."

Max Cutforth did little better, throwing three more interceptions — including two on consecutive plays — before finishing with 202 yards passing and a late TD.

The Broncos also lost the LA Bowl to UCLA in 2023, but made the College Football Playoff last season.

Williams passed for 214 yards while throwing four TD passes in a bowl game for the second time. Williams also did it last December in the Sun Bowl, and he finished a solid sophomore season with one dynamic throw after another.

Washington broke out midway through the second when Boise State's secondary left its best receiver running alone down the middle. Boston went untouched for his 11th receiving TD and the 20th of his career, the eighth Huskies receiver to hit that mark.

"Once I turned around and I saw there was no safeties and my guy running free, I was just trying to make it as catchable as possible," Williams said.

Two snaps after Williams hit Roebuck for a 6-yard TD, Madsen threw an atrocious interception to Rahshawn Clark. Williams found Vines-Bright for the freshman's first TD with 1:17 left.

On Washington's first drive after halftime, Moore fought off a defender to catch a 32-yarder for the tight end's second TD in four seasons — although an official flagged Moore for unsportsmanlike conduct when he celebrated with a powerful Gronk Spike in a bowl game hosted by tight end Rob Gronkowski.

Cutforth threw an end-zone interception to Leroy Bryant in the fourth quarter, and 295-pound edge rusher Deshaun Lynch returned another interception 57 yards on Boise State's next snap.

Navy: Defense shines on both sides as Midshipmen break through late

FROM PAGE 24

"That's probably the last thing you want to see on the 1-yard line is you turn around and the ball is just bouncing behind you," Heidenreich said. "I was blocking down. I thought he had pushed in, and kind of out of my peripheral I saw it going behind me."

On the next play, Horvath was nearly sacked, but he was able to throw the ball toward Tecza as he went down. The ball fell incomplete instead of being caught around the 15, which was just as well for Navy because it made going for it on fourth down a more viable option.

"I kind of felt like we had to," Midshipmen coach Brian Newberry said. "The nature of what they do offensively, despite how well we played in the second half, you may not get the ball back."

Even after Heidenreich's touchdown and a Black Knights punt, Navy still had to escape one more near-turnover. On third-

and-3 from the Army 43, the ball popped loose on a run by Horvath, but he was able to catch it out of the air. It came loose again and the Black Knights recovered, but after a review, Horvath was ruled down before the second fumble — a yard short of the line to gain.

Tecza then ran for the first down that enabled the Midshipmen to kneel out the clock, and Horvath appeared to wave goodbye at the Army sideline. There was a bit of a ruckus near midfield after the final kneel-down before things eventually calmed down for the traditional singing of the alma maters.

"They want to talk all their crap during the game and act like they're so tough," Horvath said. "The excuse last year was that they played a conference championship game before us. This year, we'll see what it is."

The Black Knights were trying to turn the tables on Navy after a

ranked Army team — which had just won the American Conference title — lost to the Midshipmen last year.

The teams traded touchdown drives to start the game, each lasting 13 plays, 75 yards and over seven minutes. Horvath had a 5-yard scoring run, and Black Knights quarterback Cale Hellums answered with a 2-yarder. Army's first drive didn't end until 5 seconds into the second quarter.

Then it was a while before anyone reached the end zone again. With the Black Knights up 10-7 late in the second quarter, the ball slipped out of Horvath's hand while he was looking to pass. Army recovered the fumble at its own 45 with 20 seconds to play and moved into range for a 45-yard field goal by Dawson Jones.

Navy's defense stiffened in the second half, but the Midshipmen still flirted with disaster. Horvath threw an interception in the third quarter that was initially re-



DANIEL KUCIN JR./AP

Navy quarterback Blake Horvath runs with the ball during the first half against Army on Saturday in Baltimore, Md.

turned to the end zone — before a replay showed the Black Knights' Justin Weaver had a knee down when he picked off the pass at the Navy 32. Army had to settle for three — Dawson connected on a career-long 48-yard kick.

The Midshipmen's Wing-T offense has been explosive this season. They entered the day with an FBS-high 10 plays of at least 60

yards. The Black Knights mostly kept them contained, but Horvath slipped free for a 37-yard run that set up a third-quarter field goal that made it 16-10.

After Hellums' underthrown pass was intercepted by Phillip Hamilton, giving Navy the ball at the 50 with 11:19 to play, Tecza's 24-yard run made it first-and-goal from the 5.



# SPORTS



**Historic victory**  
Indiana QB Mendoza becomes 1st Hoosier to win Heisman » **College football, Page 23**



Navy running back Eli Heidenreich catches a touchdown pass during the second half against Army on Saturday in Baltimore, Md. The Midshipmen beat the Black Knights 17-16.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# Coming through

## Horvath to Heidenreich on 4th-and-goal leads No. 22 Navy over Army

By Noah Trister  
*Associated Press*

BALTIMORE — Blake Horvath to Eli Heidenreich. That’s the connection that led Navy to such a memorable season — and the two of them came through again on the biggest play of the biggest game.

Horvath threw an 8-yard touchdown pass to Heidenreich with 6:32 remaining — on fourth-and-goal — and the No. 22 Midshipmen rallied to beat Army 17-16 on Saturday. Heidenreich, the career and single-season franchise leader in yards receiving, caught six of Horvath’s seven completions on the day.

“Who wouldn’t go to him?” Horvath said. “Talk about an all-time Navy legend. You’re going to be talking about Eli Heidenreich for years and years and years.”

Although it was clearly a passing situation, and Heidenreich was the Midshipmen’s top target, he was single covered over the middle.

“Tried to bring some pressure on them,” Black Knights coach Jeff Monken said. “Good throw and good catch.”

With President Donald Trump in attendance, Navy (10-2) got its second straight victory over Army (6-6), and the Midshipmen won the Commander In Chief’s Trophy for a second straight season. The Black Knights have not beaten a Navy team that was ranked by the AP since 1955.

Horvath was fortunate to have the chance to throw that decisive touchdown pass. On second-and-goal from the 1, he lost the ball while attempting a tush push. Army linebacker Eric Ford had a chance to scoop it up, but Midshipmen running back Alex Tecza lunged over to prevent that, and Heidenreich eventually fell on the ball back at the 8.

SEE NAVY ON PAGE 23

Spurs set to take on Knicks in NBA Cup final » Page 20

