Esper eyes an ‘enduring’ presence for unit in Europe

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army’s 2nd Cavalry Regiment might retain an “enduring” presence in Eastern Europe even after the unit’s soldiers leave Germany, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Tuesday.

Esper said he is close to or has reached agreements with defense officials in several Eastern European nations to host rotations of American forces as the United States works to withdraw about 12,000 troops from Germany. In July, the defense secretary announced the plan to move troops out of Germany, saying the 2nd Cavalry Regiment — now the only brigade-sized U.S. ground combat unit stationed full time in Europe — would be relocated to the continental United States.

“Since that announcement, as well as the signing of the defense cooperation agreement with Poland, my recent meetings with defense ministers from Romania and Bulgaria, and correspondence received from Baltic states, there is now the real opportunity of keeping the 2nd Cavalry Regiment forward in some of these countries on an enduring basis,” Esper said in a speech at the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based think tank.

Esper’s initial force restructuring plan was announced July 29 as President Donald Trump ordered the Pentagon to remove troops from Germany, speeding up a long-planned review of the

SEE EUROPE ON PAGE 5

RELATED
10 NATO members now meet 2% defense spending benchmark Page 5

Women on the watch

BY DAVE RESS
Daily Press (Newport News, Va.)

Women have been serving on Navy ships for a quarter-century, although the deck department — especially the bridge watch sections responsible for steering the ship and keeping a lookout for hazards — have remained a mainly male preserve.

That changed with USS Gerald R. Ford’s underway last month — all the deck department sailors assigned to the boatswain’s mates bridge watch teams were women. They call themselves the Iron 9.

“They did great. If there’s a grade higher than ‘A,’ that’s what I’d give them,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Faeline Matthews, the boatswain’s mate who leads the team and whose job is to make sure the relatively young sailors in a bridge watch section are qualified to do the work. “I think it shows what we can do.”

While one of the Iron 9, Seaman Adriyanna Jones, thinks the group’s achievement will influence how female sailors are seen for years to come, she believes they also showed something about the deck department.

“Since we’re on an aircraft carrier, a lot of people focus on flight deck operations and aircraft maneuvering,” she said. “Sometimes deck department is overlooked as an essential asset, but recently there’s been a lot more acknowledgement towards

SEE WOMEN ON PAGE 5
GM’s Tenn. factory to become electric vehicle plant

Associated Press

DETROIT — General Motors plans to spend $2 billion to convert its Spring Hill, Tenn., assembly plant into a third U.S. site to build future electric vehicles.

The Detroit automaker also says it will spend another $153 million to upgrade five Michigan factories for future vehicles.

The company will build the Cadillac Lyriq, a small electric SUV, at the Spring Hill factory. Gasoline-powered Cadillac SUVs will continue to be built at the plant, and it will also get additional unspecified electric vehicles, GM said in a statement Tuesday.

“We’re investing in U.S. manufacturing to ensure that GM can build the vehicles that customers love today as well as transition to an all-electric future,” Gerald Johnson, GM’s executive vice president of global manufacturing, said during an online announcement. “We want to put everyone in an electric vehicle.”

The Lyriq is due in showrooms sometime late in 2022. GM also is expected to announce details of an all-electric GMC Hummer pickup truck this week. They’re among 20 electric models the company plans to sell globally by 2023.

The Spring Hill facility employs about 3,400 hourly workers who make the Cadillac XT5 and XT6 gas-powered SUVs as well as Cadillac XT4 and XT6 electric vehicles. GM also makes four engines that go into GM trucks and SUVs.

Renovation of the plant will begin immediately, GM said.

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GM plans to spend $2 billion to convert its Spring Hill, Tenn., assembly plant into a third U.S. site to build future electric vehicles. The Cadillac Lyriq, a small electric SUV, is set to go into production at the Spring Hill factory in 2022.

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Army rules Vanessa Guillén’s death as ‘in line of duty,’ grants benefits

By Heathen Osbourne
Austin (Texas) American-Statesman

AUSTIN, Texas — Fort Hood officials on Tuesday said the family of U.S. Army Spc. Vanessa Guillén received word that the Army classified the soldier’s death as “in line of duty.”

Army officials spoke with the Guillén family of Houston, saying the new classification would allow them to receive Army benefits on behalf of the 20-year-old who is thought to have been killed by a fellow soldier on post in April 2020.

Guillén had been charged with larceny, conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and of damaging nonmilitary property. She pleaded guilty to being absent without leave.

The family notified the Army in September that Guillén was killed by a fellow soldier who used her cell phone to post explicit photos of Guillén online.

The one-day trial in Kaiserslautern depicted a chaplain struggling with life, who was unable to let go of his marriage of more than 26 years and who had lost the confidence of his supervisors after a string of misconduct over the past 18 months.

The theft occurred when Wood, a Full Gospel chaplain, drove off from the Ramstein Air Base shop- pete in May 2019 without paying for $39 in fuel. The next day, on Mother’s Day, female military police were called to escort Wood from Macaroni Grill on Ramstein after he drank five blood-orange cosmopolitan cocktails and passed out, according to testimony from the bartender who served him.

When Wood woke, he was seen by a security camera with a female subordinate in the rear window of her car. He had shown up at her home unannounced one evening, yelled profanities and banged on her apartment door before breaking the car window, her witness testified.

Wood was also found note- writing of stalking his wife, on a charge related to that night and another incident last spring involving text messages with a subordinate.

Wood pleaded guilty to being absent without leave from his job on Panzer Kaserne for U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart, where he was a resource manager in the garri- son’s religious support office.

Wood admitted in court to ign- oring an email from his supervi- sor in late March 2020 revoking his leave authority and having him report back to work. Mil- itary police picked him up about two days later at his home in Kaiserslautern.

“I was distraught due to life circumstances,” Wood told the military judge, Col. Christopher Fredrikson. “I am so sorry to my supervisors and the Army.”

Government prosecutors said that Wood “acted with impurity,” arguing that “his emotional pain” didn’t excuse or justify his mis- conduct and that as a chaplain, he can’t help others if he can’t han- dle his own affairs. They asked that he be dismissed from the service and sentenced to a com- bined four months in jail.

In asking for a reprimand and forfeiture in pay as punishment, noted that Wood stood to lose some $1.2 million in benefits when he becomes eli- gible to retire in 2024.

This is a time to look at a chaplain as a human being…as a person who doesn’t have all the answers in this world,” defense counsel Capt. Daniel Franco- Santiago said.

Fredrikson gave Wood jail time that added up to three months but made the terms cumulative, so Wood will only have to spend a month at the Army’s regional cor- rec tional facility in Sembach.

By Jennifer H. Swan
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germa- ny — A series of bad decisions, from punching his fiancee in the face to living in a window of his estranged wife’s car, has landed an Army chaplain assigned to Stuttgart in jail for a month.

Chaplain (Maj.) Donald V. Wood, who has been separated from his wife since May 2019 without paying child support, is said to have lost the confidence of his supervi- sors and the Army. They asked Fredrikson to dispose of the case with no more than a reprimand and forfeiture in pay, noting that Wood “acted with impurity,” arguing that “his emotional pain” didn’t excuse or justify his mis- conduct and that as a chaplain, he can’t help others if he can’t han- dle his own affairs. They asked that he be dismissed from the service and sentenced to a com- bined four months in jail.

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An F-22 Raptor from the North American Aerospace Defense Command intercepts a Russian Tu-95 “Bear” bomber in international airspace near Alaska on Monday.

US jets intercept Russian bombers off Alaskan coast for 14th time this year

By Corey Dickstein
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — F-22 Rapor stealth fighter jets scrambled late Monday to intercept Russian long-range bombers and fighter- jets flying off Alaska’s coast, the North American Aerospace De- fense Command said Tuesday.

The fighters intercepted a for- mation of two Tu-95 Bear bomb- ers, two Su-35 Flanker fighter jets and an A-50 airborne early warning aircraft, according to a NORAD statement.

The Russian aircraft flew within 30 nautical miles of Alaskan shores and “loitered” within the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone for about 90 minutes.

The zone is a stretch of mostly international airspace some 200 nautical miles off the Alaskan coast where American officials expect aircraft to iden- tify themselves in the interest of national security.

“NORAD forces remain on alert 24/7/365 to respond to potential threats to Canada and the Unit- ed States,” said Air Force Gen. Glen VanHerck, the commander NORAD and U.S. Northern Com- mand. “The agility and readiness of our personnel ensures we are successful in addressing potential aerospace threats with the appropriate response at the right time.”

The intercepts Monday were categorized as routine. It was the 14th such incident off Alaska’s coast in 2020, said Air Force Capt. Cameron Hillier, a NORAD spokesman. He said NORAD has averaged about six or seven in- cidents near Alaska since 2007, when Russia restarted its long- range aviation program.

In a statement Tuesday on Twitter, Russia’s military said the bomber formations flew the scheduled 12-hour training flight over “neutral waters of the seas of Bering, Okhotsk, as well as Chukchi and Beaufort seas.”

It acknowledged they were inter- cepted by F-22s for a portion of the flights.

Just as the U.S. regularly inter- cepts Russian aircraft near its borders, Russian aircraft in- tercept American flights near its airspace, including several in recent months.

In one such intercept in August, NATO said a Russian Su-27 fight- er jet entered Danish airspace during an intercept of a U.S. B-52 bomber over the Baltic Sea.

The U.S. also accused two Russian fighter jets of conducting an “un- safe and unprofessional” inter- cept of another B-52 in June over the Black Sea, flying within about 100 feet of the bomber.
WASHINGTON — The University of Pittsburgh is conducting a study to help the Marines address gender integration at its boot camps. The study comes as the Marine Corps faces a looming deadline for the Marine Corps to approach gender-blind standards and implement a non-Defense Department study by a non-Defense Department entity will ensure that the findings of the study are unbiased and that actionable recommendations are grounded in evidence. Vetting of the findings through the peer-review process will further substantiate the results,” Nindl said.

The study will include interviews, focus-group surveys, physical performance data collection, saliva samples for cortisol — a marker for stress, and injury surveillance, according to Nindl. One goal of the study is to look at “best practices” from the other military services and see how they can be adapted to the Marine Corps, he said.

The study will specifically address “the sociological effects to increased gender integration, and consider training models which maintain the same level of discipline, physical fitness, attention to detail, and camaraderie,” according to the Marine Corps statement.

Last month, Marine Commandant Gen. David Berger said the Marine Corps faces two challenges with fully integrating the boot camps: finding enough female Marines to be drill instructors and working with female Marines at the company level at Parris Island, it is only done when there are smaller numbers of female recruits during the slower training months.

Senators seek to delay, study Army’s new fitness test

WASHINGTON — Democratic senators appealed Tuesday for support of a legislative proposal that would suspend implementation of the Army’s new fitness test, arguing the high-profile initiative to increase soldier readiness is based on faulty data and could undermine the goal of creating a diverse force. In an Oct. 20 letter to the chairman and ranking members of the House and Senate Armed Services committees, Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., called the rollout of the Army Combat Fitness Test “premature” and said the exam could damage some soldiers’ professional prospects.

“We have considerable concerns regarding the negative impact [the test] may already be having on so many careers,” they said in the letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Post. “It is imperative that we pause implementation until all questions and concerns are answered. Soldiers’ careers depend on it and the continued lethality of our force requires it.”

The senators asked the command to carry out a review that would suspend rollout of the test until an independent study can be conducted and is included in the final version of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, an annual defense bill. The

 provision appeared in the Senate-passed version of the bill, but not in the House version.

Lawmakers are expected to convene to reconcile the two versions of the bill after the Nov. 3 presidential election.

The test has become a charged urgent desire to rectify the military’s legacy of racial and gender inequity, issues that have long plagued the force but were given new prominence when race-related unrest gripped the nation this summer.

The test consists of six events, including a dead lift, weighted ball throw and, most problematically for women who have taken part in early testing groups, among other problems.

Army officials say the test is designed to develop the Army's new fitness test for 18 months, beginning in the winter by sending a group of female drill instructors to Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego to see how the service can train female recruits at the base for the first time, Berger said last month.

Despite the challenges, Berger said in five years he would like to see as many companies as possible training platoons composed of men and women.

Senators seek to delay, study Army’s new fitness test
Europe: Pentagon plan to reorganize troops could face obstacles in Congress

The Pentagon’s plan to reorganize troops in Europe could face obstacles in Congress, where some Democrats and Republicans have questioned the move. The House-passed version of the fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act includes a provision that would halt the withdrawal of forces from Germany.

While that initial plan called for returning the regiment’s 4,500 soldiers and 2,000 other troops to the United States, Esper said he would also work to position troops closer to Russian borders to better reassure allies closest to the rival nation.

“We need to move a little bit further east [because] it helps us with the time and distance challenges, if you will, in case there is some type of really aggressive action by the Russians,” he said Tuesday.

Esper’s initial plan envisioned the 2nd Cavalry Regiment and other U.S.-based Stryker brigade combat teams conducting heal-to-toe rotations to train with NATO partners primarily in the Black Sea region. Now, Esper said he wants troops constantly training in those countries, as well as Poland and the Baltic states Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. He indicated Tuesday that the role could permanently belong to the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, however Pentagon officials said later Tuesday that was not the current plan.

For now, the Pentagon is continuing with the plan to move the 2nd Cavalry Regiment to a new home station in the United States, said Army Lt. Col. Thomas Campbell, a Pentagon spokesman. However, it remains unclear when the unit could leave its current home station in Vilseck, Germany, or where it will be stationed.

“The planning process for the projected moves continues, which includes consultations with our allies and partners in the region, as well as members of Congress,” Campbell said.

Women: Ford’s bridge watch team is all female

All deck department sailors assigned to the boatswain’s mates bridge watch teams on the USS Gerald R. Ford are women. They call themselves the Iron 9.

The Senate-passed version of the defense authorization bill includes a provision that would require the Navy to examine the plans, Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., said Pentagon officials had not been transparent about their planning. Smith, the committee’s chairman, added he did not think the final plan was particularly well thought out.

Esper has long defended the plan, which Trump said was in retaliation for what the president has characterized as insufficient defense spending by Germany.

On Tuesday, Esper called on NATO countries to spend more money on defense. In 2014, when allies agreed that all members of the alliance’s nations set a target for defense spending up for sixth year

NATO members’ military spending up for 6th year

STUTTGART, Germany — Military spending among the U.S.’s allies in Europe and Canada increased for the sixth consecutive year in 2020 as one-third of member states reached a key alliance benchmark, a NATO report released Wednesday said.

But Germany, which has been accused by President Donald Trump of not spending enough on defense, spent only 1.57% of gross domestic product on its military, the report said.

Germany’s defense spending was cited by Trump as a reason for issuing a directive to pull nearly 12,000 U.S. troops out of the country, although a plan to do so is still being developed by the Pentagon and it is unclear when a withdrawal would happen.

Ten of NATO’s 30 members were estimated to be spending at least 2% of their GDP on their militaries, up from only three in 2014, the report said.

“We expect this trend to continue,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters.

NATO members have been under intense pressure to ramp up defense spending by the Trump administration. It increased by 4.3% among European allies and Canada for the year, Stoltenberg said.

Collectively, NATO members including the U.S. spent roughly $1.03 trillion on defense for 2020, said the report, which was released a day ahead of a meeting of NATO defense ministers, including U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper, where spending will be on the agenda, Stoltenberg said.

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### Tricare enrollment fees set to rise for many

**By Steve Beynon**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Thousands of Tricare beneficiaries will be required to pay new enrollment fees in 2021.

“Tricare Select group A retirees will be required to pay new fees starting Jan. 1, 2021. An individual’s monthly enrollment fee will be $12.90 or $15.00 annually. Monthly family fees will be $25 or $300 annually. There are 407,431 beneficiaries of Tricare Select, according to 2019 data from the Defense Department. The new fees were mandated by the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act’s reorganization of Tricare, the health care program for service members, retirees and their families. Any service member who joined the military before Jan. 1, 2018, is in Select Group A. Select Group B are those who enlisted or commissioned after Jan. 1, 2018, and have already been paying enrollment fees. The Defense Health Agency said there are no changes to Group B. Beneficiaries will need to contact their Tricare regional contractors and set up their enrollment payments.”

The Tricare regions are: Humana Military in the eastern United States, Health Net Federal Services in the west, and International SOS Government Services overseas.

“In order to maintain health coverage unless waived by law, Tricare Select Group A retired beneficiaries must take action and pay their Tricare Select enrollment fees,” according to a statement from the Defense Health Agency, which oversees health care for the military.

### Soldier dies while in training

**By Kim Gamel**
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — A South Korea-based American soldier who was being responsive in the water off a beach in Georgia where he was participating in routine aviation training, the military said Wednesday.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Craig W. Mulder, 39, was found in the water about 12:10 a.m. Sunday at Tybee Island and later pronounced dead by the Chatham County coroner, according to a press release.

“The case remains under investigation, but all indications are that he drowned,” said Maj. Gen. Mahlon H. Reed, 2nd Infantry Division since November 2018.

The Hubertus, Wis., native was in Georgia for routine training at Hunter Army Airfield, the 2nd ID said.

Brigade commander Col. Aaron Martin said the “Talon team is deeply saddened by the loss of our friend and teammate” and expressed deepest condolences to his friends and loved ones.

“It was an honor to serve with a trusted professional like Craig. During his time here, he served with distinction. Craig’s ability to brighten someone’s day with a joke was unparalleled,” Martin said.

“He was an optimist who believed in constantly moving forward. His efforts will have a lasting impact on the soldiers he served alongside and taught?”

Martin added.

Mulder completed two deployments to Iraq.

### Super Hornet pilot ejects safely as jet crashes in Calif.

**By Caitlin M. Kenney**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A fighter pilot ejected safely Tuesday as the F/A-18E Super Hornet that the pilot was flying crashed in California.

“At about 10:10 a.m. local time when it ‘experienced a malfunction,’ Cmdr. Zach Harrell, a spokesman for Naval Air Forces, said in a statement issued Tuesday.

NAS China Lake is located in the western Mojave Desert in California, a few hundred miles southwest of NAS Lemoore. The pilot was able to eject safely and was taken to a local medical facility to be examined, Harrell said. Navy and local authorities are investigating the incident.

No other information was provided Tuesday. The pilot was able to eject safely and was taken to a local medical facility to be examined, Harrell said. Navy and local authorities are investigating the incident.

No other information was provided Tuesday.

### Space Force swears in its first recruits

**By Steve Beynon**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The first seven recruits for Space Force, the military’s newest service branch, were sworn in Tuesday by Gen. David Thompson, the vice chief of space operations.

“Space Force has roughly 2,000 ‘space professionals’ serving today. Until now, all the branch’s members were transfers from the Air Force. This new batch of recruits are the first service members to enlist directly into Space Force. Today is an important milestone as we stand up the Space Force,” Thompson said in a statement. “Until now, we’ve been focused on building our initial ranks with transfers from the Air Force. With these new recruits, we begin to look to the future of our force by bringing in the right people directly to realize our aspirations of building a tech-savvy service that’s reflective of the nation we serve.”

The new recruits all hold the 1C6 military occupation specialty — space systems operations, according to a service statement. Among the recruits, two are women and five are men, and two are Black and five are white. They are from Colorado, Maryland, and Virginia, and range in age from 18 to 31.

All seven are bound for seven and a half weeks of basic training at Air Force basic training, which is located at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio.

There are no Space Force recruiting stations yet. Kirby said the Air Force is recruiting for both branches. Space Force hopes to recruit 300 enlisted service members in 2021 and have 6,500 members overall in a year. Most will come from Air Force transfers.

“We’re excited to see this happen,” said Chief Master Sgt. Roger A. Towberman, senior enlisted adviser for Space Force. “The Air Force team at basic military training has been outstanding and deserves most of the credit for making this happen quickly. To watch these first Space Force recruits take their oath for the first time is something I will never forget. They are the future, and it’s incredible to be in their service!”
Marines, sailors home after helping quell Calif. wildfires

By Wyatt Olson
Stars and Stripes

The roughly 250 Marines and sailors who spent the past month assisting wildfire firefighting operations in California returned to Camp Pendleton on Tuesday, the U.S. Army said in a news release. The troops, from the 7th Engineer Support Battalion, helped suppress the Creek Fire in Central California and the August Complex in Northern California. Their mission began Sept. 21.

The battalion was one of two active-duty units that trained to become wildland firefighters this fire season, the Army said.

The 14th Brigade Engineer Battalion from Joint Base Lewis-McCord, Wash., supported efforts to combat the August Complex from Sept. 3-27, the Army said. The active-duty military firefighting operations were overseen by Northern Command's Joint Force Land Component Command, which is the Defense Department's primary organization for coordinating with civil authorities in responding to natural disasters.

The National Interagency Fire Center had requested military assistance in quelling California wildfires, which have blazed through almost 1.9 million acres. The fires, fueled by dry, windy conditions, destroyed almost 1,000 homes and killed at least three people.

The Creek Fire, which charred an estimated 350,000 acres, was the largest single blaze in California's history. The August Complex, which burned more than 1 million acres, was the largest complex fire the state has ever seen.

"I am so very proud of the young men and women who supported our local, state, and federal partners during this record-breaking wildland fire season," Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, commander of U.S. Army North, said in the news release. "The Soldiers, Sailors and Marines learned and adapted quickly to wildland firefighting while maintaining a focus on their own safety and their crew's safety in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic."

troopsincalifornia.com
Twitter: @WyattWOlson

SIGAR: US lost $19B in decade in Afghanistan

By Phillip Walter Wellman
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Nearly $19 billion of U.S. money was lost in a decade of war in Afghanistan to fraud, waste and abuse, a government watchdog report has said.

Most of the losses were attributed to failed counter narcotics and stabilization programs, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction said in a report published Tuesday.

Over $3 billion was lost in the last two years alone, the report said. That, on top of some $15.5 billion that was lost between 2009 and 2017, represents nearly a third of all the expenditures SIGAR has reviewed in the years since it was created in 2008 to track U.S. taxpayer dollars in Afghanistan.

Ninety percent of the losses were caused by waste, which the report defined as "the act of using or expending resources carelessly, extravagantly, or to no purpose."

Examples of waste given in the report were books supplied for education programs that sat unused because principals and teachers said they were in poor condition, or a sports stadium that sat idle because "it was not designed correctly to host football (soccer) games and did not have a functioning irrigation system."

"SIGAR also found clear indications of poor workmanship and a lack of maintenance, including falling ceiling tiles, broken drainage grate systems, and unlevelled playing surfaces with incomplete water systems protruding from the football field," the report said.

Fraud, including bribery, theft, corruption and bogus contracts, accounted for around 9% of the losses, and abuse of power by officials the remaining 1%.

In one case, a contract between the U.S. Agency for International Development and an Afghan mining development program fell through because Afghan government officials didn't want to pass a law legalizing miners because their or their families controlled illegal extraction operations, the report said.

Congress has appropriated over $130 billion for reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan since the U.S. invaded the country in 2001 to dismantle al-Qaeda and overthrow the Taliban. International donors provide around three-quarters of Afghanistan's total expenditures, and the World Bank has estimated that the country will need more than $8 billion in foreign aid each year until at least 2024 — three years after all foreign troops are expected to have left the country if the U.S. and Taliban uphold all the terms of a deal they signed in February.

The report was released just over a month into peace talks in Qatar between the Taliban and the Afghan government, and as the U.S. continued to draw down troop numbers.

Kabul's failure to curb corruption and violence could hinder the U.S. and Taliban uphold all the terms of a deal they signed in February.

The companies say Chill Out is a "next-generation relaxation drink," according to an Aug. 5 statement from Coca-Cola Japan.

"Information overload and stress are increasing these days," the statement said. "What you need is not 'energy' but 'relaxation.'"

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Troops in Japan warned not to try ‘instant relaxation drink’

By Caitlin Doornbos
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — American troops in Japan are barred from trying a new “instant relaxation drink” because one of its ingredients is off-limits to U.S. service members, according to a Naval Criminal Investigative Service statement posted to Facebook on Wednesday.

Chill Out, a product of Coca-Cola Japan sold alongside soda and energy drinks in the country, contains hemp seed extract, which the Department of Defense prohibits service members from consuming.

Hemp is a strain of the Cannabis sativa plant, the same plant from which marijuana is harvested. It contains less than 0.3% concentration of tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the chemical that gives users the high associated with marijuana, according to the Federal Drug Administration.

The 2018 Agriculture Improvement Act excluded hemp products from the definition of marijuana because 0.3% THC is considered too low to impart a psychoactive effect.

While legal in both the United States and Japan, consumption of hemp products, such as cannabidiol, or CBD, by U.S. military members is prohibited by the DOD because they may cause false positive results in drug tests, according to a Feb. 26 DOD memorandum.

"It is not possible to differentiate between THC-derived from legal hemp products and illicit marijuana," then-acting under-secretary of defense for personnel and readiness Matthew Donovan wrote in the memo. "The use of hemp products could effectively undermine the Department's ability to identify illicit THC use."

Chill Out is marketed by En-dian, a limited liability company with ownership stakes held by I-n-e, a marketing firm, and Coca-Cola Japan. The beverage is available at the 7-Eleven convenience store at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, according to a post on the base Facebook page. It’s also been spotted in “at least one vending machine in the vicinity of the Yokosuka base, according to NCIS, as well as a 7-Eleven.

The only English on the 6.2-ounce silver can is the product's name, making it easy for a U.S. service member to purchase without knowing its ingredients.

Aside from hemp oil, Chill Out also contains L-Theanine, hemp extract and gamma-aminobutyric acid, which the company on its website says, "supports relaxing tension and improved sleep.

L-Theanine is an amino acid found in tea and some mushrooms, according to WebMD.com.

Although L-Theanine is used to improve mental function and relieve anxiety, mental impairment and stress, “there is no good scientific evidence to support these uses,” the website states.

Gamma-aminobutyric acid, or GABA, is a chemical made in the brain and is shown to be effective for relieving high blood pressure and motion sickness, according to WebMD, and some research studies may relieve symptoms of stress.

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“Information overload and stress are increasing these days,” the statement said. “What you need is not ‘energy’ but ‘relaxation.’"

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Kadena says another base worker has tested positive for coronavirus

By Joseph Ditzler and Awa Ichihashi

TOKYO — A food-service worker at Kadena Air Base has tested positive for the coronavirus, the third case this month involving a base employee, the installation announced Wednesday.

Okinawa prefecture confirmed the report, but a public health official declined to provide further information.

The employee worked at the Kazoku Place restaurant inside Rocker Enlisted Club and contracted the virus from a family member who also tested positive, according to a Facebook post by Kadena.

Four close contacts of the employee were also quarantined, and the Rocker was closed for deep cleaning, the post said. The Rocker and Kazoku Place restaurant will reopen at 6 a.m. Thursday.

The employee complied with all standard prevention measures “to include proper handwashing and mask wear while at work,” according to Kadena. The base referred to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which states that no evidence exists to show people can get the virus by eating or handling food.

“An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting from 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person has any symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19,” the Kadena post said. COVID-19 is the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus.

The infected employee “did not work the two days prior to symptom onset,” according to Kadena.

Two other base employees, both Japaneese civilians, tested positive on Oct. 10 and 13. The first, a man in his 50s from Okinawa city, works at the base arts and crafts shop, the second, a man in his 40s from Naha city, works at the base Pizza Hut. Neither had contact with customers, the base said in earlier statements.

Kadena announced four other cases on Monday, all members of the same family that arrived Oct. 3. They tested positive over the weekend in a test required by U.S. Forces Japan prior to exiting quarantine.

The four had been isolated since their arrival in Japan, the base reported.

Okinawa prefecture reported one death and 37 new cases Wednesday, which brought the pandemic total to 3,013 cases, according to the public health official.

In southern Japan, Sasebo Naval Base on Wednesday announced it cleared three people of the virus, leaving the base with one active case.

The base commander, Capt. David Adams, on Oct. 7 reimposed tight travel restrictions as four, and ultimately five, new cases appeared at Sasebo. He lifted those restrictions four days later, in time for his command to take advantage of the Columba Day holiday.

USFJ now has about 20 active coronavirus cases at any one time, Command Chief Master Sgt. Richard Vinegardner Jr. said during a Facebook Live question-and-answer session with American Forces Network on Wednesday.

“Way better, really, really well,” he said from Yokota Air Base, USFJ headquarters in western Tokyo.

In response to questions, Vinegardner said local responders and a way to help a lot of election officials fill some of the gaps they may have,” Ichihashi said, noting that guardsmen also have provided an “extra layer of support” on cybersecurity in many states.
Trump tends to his electoral map, Biden eyes Obama boost

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is hopping from one must-win stop to the electoral map to the next in the leadup to a final presidential debate that may be his last, best chance to alter the trajectory of the 2020 campaign.

As Democrat Joe Biden holds up debate prep in advance of Thursday’s faceoff in Nashville, Tenn., he’s hoping for a boost from former President Barack Obama, who will be holding his first in-person campaign event for Biden on Wednesday in Philadelphia, Obama, who has become increasingly critical of Trump over the three-and-a-half years since he left office, will address a drive-in rally, where supporters will listen to him over the radio inside their cars.

It comes a day after Trump, trailing in polls in many battleground states, stopped in Pennsylvania to call to be “FAKE and BIASED,” and with CBS’ “60 Minutes” that appeared in the United States.

But Trump will probably need to run up the score by more than that time around, as his prospects have slipped since 2016 in vote-rich suburban Philadelphia, where he has underperformed by past Republican measures. This raises the stakes for his campaign’s more aggressive outreach to new suburban and small-town voters across the industrial north.

His aides worry that his opponent is uniquely situated to prevent that, as Biden not only hails from Scranton, but has also built his political persona as a representative of the middle and working classes.

“This is an election between a Trump super recovery and a Biden depression,” the president said in Erie, Pa. “You will have a depression the likes of which you have never seen.” He added: “If you want depression, doom and despair, vote for Sleepy Joe. And boredom.”

But civil rights lawyers and a venerable TV newsmagazine while suggesting that the country was tired of talking about a virus that has killed more than 221,000 people in the United States.

Before leaving the White House for Pennsylvania on Sunday, Trump taped part of an interview with CBS’ “60 Minutes” that apparently ended acrimoniously: On Twitter, the president declared his interview with Lesley Stahl to be “FAKE and BIASED,” and he threatened to release a White House edit of it before its Sunday airing.

Also trailing in fundraising for campaign ads, Trump is increasingly relying on his signature campaign rallies to maximize turnout among GOP base. His trip to Pennsylvania on Tuesday was one of what is expected to be several visits to the state in the next two weeks.

“If we win Pennsylvania, we win the whole thing,” Trump said in Erie.

Erie County, which includes the aging industrial city in the state’s northwest corner, went for Obama by 5 percentage points in 2012, but broke for Trump in 2016. That swing, fueled by Trump’s success with white, working-class, non-college-educated voters, was replicated in small cities, towns and rural areas, and helped him overcome Hillary Clinton’s victories in the state’s big cities.

Bush v. Gore to argue that the Supreme Court should get involved in the case because the state court had improperly taken powers given by the U.S. Constitution to state lawmakers when it certified presidential elections. The court ruled for Bush on other grounds, that ballots were being handled differently across the state in violation of the Constitution’s guaranty of equal protection.

“The last time that happened was in 2000, when the court effectively decided the presidential election in favor of George W. Bush by a 5-4 vote.”

If nothing else, the split vote Monday strongly suggested there likely would not be the requisite five votes to upend a federal appeals court order that has blocked a six-day extension of the time to receive and count absentee ballots in Wisconsin. That case is pending at the Supreme Court.

The court’s conservatives, Roberts included, have regularly sided with state officials who object when a federal court relaxes election rules, even if the changes arise from the coronavirus pandemic.

During the Trump-Biden debate last month, Trump again attacked the president, saying that he should lead the response to the pandemic. Biden retorted that Trump’s response “was a disaster.”

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The Supreme Court has never cited Bush v. Gore in an opinion on any issue that would have jeopardized voter access,” said Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. The group opposes Barrett’s confirmation.

The justices on Monday provided no written explanation of their votes, so it is impossible to say exactly why Justices Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Thomas would have granted the Republican request or why the other half of the shorthanded court didn’t.

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At the same time, the Supreme Court generally won’t disturb state court rulings that are rooted in state law.

But civil rights lawyers and election law experts said the vote in the Pennsylvania case indicates that at least four conservatives may be willing to look at state court election-related decisions in a way that calls to mind Bush v. Gore.

Pennsylvania Republicans relied in part on an opinion from Justice Clarence Thomas and two other conservative justices in the present circumstances.”

But two lawyers who worked for Bush’s cause in 2000, Roberts and Kavanaugh, now sit on the court. And they soon could be joined by a third, Barrett.

A worker processes mail-in ballots at the Bucks County Board of Elections office prior to the primary election in Doylestown, Pa.

Democrats: Justices’ 4-4 tie in election case is ominous sign

By Mark Sherman

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With Amy Coney Barrett expected to join the Supreme Court as early as next week, the court’s action in a Pennsylvania voting case has heightened fears among Democrats about the court being asked to decide a post-election dispute over the White House.

The justices split 4-4 Monday over a Republican plea to undo a state court order and force elections officials to ignore absentee ballots received after Election Day, Nov. 3. The tie vote left the Pennsylvania court order in effect and allows mailed ballots to be counted if they are received by Nov. 6. Chief Justice John Roberts and his three liberal colleagues voted to leave the court order in place.

The four conservative members of the court who would have granted the GOP’s request are likely to be joined by soon to be Barrett. That’s a potential majority, even without Roberts, in any election-related dispute, whether from Pennsylvania or any other battleground state where mailed-in ballots or a recount fight could decide the winner.

“One more vote, provided by a hard-right, Trump-nominated justice, could be the difference between voting rights and voter suppression,” Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York said Tuesday.

President Donald Trump has already signaled that one reason for Barrett’s speedy nomination, just eight days after Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s death, was to have her confirmed and installed on the court in time for any election lawsuit that might reach the justices.

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There have been heightened fears among Democrats: Justices’ 4-4 tie in election case is ominous sign
Parents of 545 kids separated at border still can’t be found

By Elliot Spagat
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Court-appointed lawyers said Tuesday that they have been unable to find parents of 545 children who were separated at the U.S. border with Mexico early in the Trump administration.

The children were separated between July 1, 2017, and June 26, 2018, when a federal judge in San Diego ordered that children in government custody be reunited with their parents.

Children from that period are difficult to find because the government had inadequate tracking systems. Volunteers have searched for them and their parents by going door-to-door in Guatemala and Honduras.

More than 2,700 children were separated from their parents in June 2018 when U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw ordered an end to the practice under a “zero-tolerance” policy to criminally prosecute every adult who entered the country illegally from Mexico. The administration sparked an international outcry when parents couldn’t find their children.

While those families were reunited under court order, authorities later discovered that up to 1,556 children were separated under the policy going back to the summer of 2017, including hundreds during an initial run at family separation in El Paso, Texas, from July to November 2017 that was not publicly disclosed at the time.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which sued over the practice, said a court-appointed steering committee located parents of 485 children, up 47 from August. That leaves 545 still unaccounted for among the 1,030 children for whom the steering committee had telephone numbers from U.S. authorities.

About two-thirds of parents of those 545 children are believed to be in their countries of origin, the ACLU said.

Volunteers have “engaged in time-consuming and arduous on-the-ground searches for parents in their respective countries of origin,” the ACLU said in a court filing. Those searches were suspended after the coronavirus outbreak but have resumed in a limited way.

The steering committee has also promoted toll-free phone numbers in Spanish to reach those families.

The judge has scheduled a hearing on Thursday to discuss status of reunification efforts.

Spacecraft grabs rubble from asteroid

By Marcia Dunn
Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A NASA spacecraft descended to an asteroid Tuesday and, dodging boulders the size of buildings, momentarily touched the surface to collect a handful of cosmic rubble for return to Earth.

It was a first for the United States — only Japan has scored asteroid samples.

“Touchdown declared,” a flight controller announced to cheers and applause. “Sampling is in progress.”

Confirmation came from the Osiris-Rex spacecraft as it made contact with the surface of the asteroid Bennu more than 200 million miles away. But it could be a week before scientists know how much, if much of anything, was grabbed and whether another try will be needed. If successful, Osiris-Rex will return the samples in 2023.

“I can’t believe we actually pulled this off,” said lead scientist Dante Lauretta of the University of Arizona. “The spacecraft did everything it was supposed to do.”

Osiris-Rex took 4½ hours to make its way down from its tight orbit around Bennu, following commands sent well in advance by ground controllers near Denver.

Bennu’s gravity was too low for the spacecraft to land — the asteroid is just 1,670 feet across. As a result, it had to reach out with its 11-foot robot arm and attempt to grab at least 2 ounces of Bennu.

Tuesday’s operation was considered the most harrowing part of the mission, which began with a launch from Cape Canaveral back in 2016.

A van-sized spacecraft with an Egyptian-inspired name, Osiris-Rex aimed for a spot equivalent to a few parking spaces on Earth in the middle of the asteroid’s Nightingale Crater. After nearly two years orbiting the boulder-packed Bennu, the spacecraft found this location to have the biggest patch of particles small enough to be swallowed up.

The spacecraft was programmed to shoot out pressurized nitrogen gas to stir up the surface, then suck up any loose pebbles or dust, before backing away.

By the time flight controllers heard back from Osiris-Rex, the action already happened 18½ minutes earlier, the time it takes radio signals to travel each way between Bennu and Earth.

“We’re going to be looking at a whole series of images as we descended down to the surface, made contact, fired that gas bottle, and I really want to know how that surface responded,” Lauretta said. “We haven’t done this before, so this is new territory for us.”

Pictures taken during the operation will give team members a general idea of the amount of loot; they will put the spacecraft through a series of spins Saturday for a more accurate measure.

Osiris-Rex could make two more touch-and-go maneuvers if Tuesday’s sample comes up short. Regardless of how many tries it takes, the samples won’t return to Earth until 2023 to close out the $800-plus million quest. The sample capsule will parachute into the Utah desert.

10th hurricane of busy season moves toward Bermuda

MIAMI — Hurricane Epsilon, the 10th of this very busy Atlantic season, was moving toward Bermuda on Wednesday.

Epsilon is expected to make its closest approach to the island on Thursday night, and there is a risk of a direct impact, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

A tropical storm watch is in effect for Bermuda and residents have been urged to closely monitor the storm.

Large swells generated by Epsilon are already affecting Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Greater Antilles, and the Leeward Islands, and are expected to cause life-threatening surf and rip current conditions along the coast of New England and Atlantic Canada during the next couple of days.

The Miami-based hurricane center said Epsilon had maximum sustained winds of 85 mph Wednesday morning. The storm was located about 450 miles east-southeast of Bermuda, and was moving north-northwest at 14 mph.

This year’s hurricane season has had so many storms that the Hurricane Center has turned to the Greek alphabet for storm names after running out of official names.

Epsilon also represents a record for the earliest 26th named storm, arriving more than a month before a storm on Nov. 22 in 2005, according to Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.
McConnell still resistant as relief talks inch ahead

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Negotiations on a huge COVID-19 relief bill have taken a modest step forward, though time is running out and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Donald Trump's most powerful Senate ally, is pressing the White House not to move ahead.

McConnell told fellow Republicans that he has warned the White House not to divide Republicans by sealing a $2 trillion relief deal with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi before the election — even as he publicly said he'd slate any such agreement for a vote.

Pelosi's office said talks with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on Tuesday were productive, but other veteran lawmakers said there is still too much work to do and not enough time to do it to enact a relief bill by Election Day.

McConnell appears worried that an agreement between Pelosi and Mnuchin would drive a wedge between Republicans, forcing them to choose whether to support a Pelosi-blessed deal with Trump that would violate conservative positions they've stuck with for months.

California

SACRAMENTO — California will let fans back in outdoor stadiums for pro sports games in counties with low coronavirus infection rates, but isn’t ready to allow Disneyland and other major theme parks to reopen, the top health official said Tuesday.

San Francisco and neighboring Alameda and Santa Clara are the only counties that meet the threshold for pro sports. Immediately after the announcement, however, officials in Santa Clara, home to the San Francisco 49ers, issued a statement saying they weren’t prepared to allow even a limited number of fans into Levi’s Stadium.

Major theme parks, on the other hand, strongly objected to the state’s restrictions, saying they could safely operate even with thousands of people in attendance.

As many as 14,000 people could attend Levi’s Stadium events under the state’s guidance, setting up the chance of devastating “superspreader” events, said Dr. Jeff Smith, Santa Clara County’s executive officer.

Louisiana

BATON ROUGE — Republican Louisiana lawmakers voted Tuesday to give themselves more authority to curb Gov. John Bel Edwards’ coronavirus restrictions and emergency powers, under a deal brokered between House and Senate GOP leaders that ended a standoff and marked the major issue of the special session.

After days of negotiations behind closed doors, the agreement was included in a bill by Covington Republican Rep. Mark Wright. The final language won support Tuesday in a 23-13 vote, followed by House backing in a 54-30 vote.

The measure heads next to the governor’s desk, where Edwards could choose to veto it. He’s repeatedly said he doesn’t support any attempts to lessen his emergency authority.

The House doesn’t have enough Republican members to override a gubernatorial veto. That raises questions about whether lawmakers will return home without a permanent law change to the governor’s emergency powers and legislative oversight — the major disagreement between GOP lawmakers and the Democratic governor that prompted the special session.

North Carolina

CHARLOTTE — Health officials in a North Carolina county said Tuesday evening they are investigating at least 50 confirmed cases of COVID-19 connected to an event at a church, according to TV station WBTV.

Mecklenburg County urged all people who attended convocation events at the United House of Prayer for All People on Oct. 10 and 11 to get tested, The Charlotte Observer reported Monday. By the time, the county linked at least nine cases of COVID-19 to the weekend event.

Mecklenburg County Deputy Health Director Raymond Washington said the number has nearly tripled. Washington said the church made an effort to ensure masks were worn and that those attending practiced social distancing, but he said people didn’t always comply.

Nevada

CARSON CITY — Nevada’s rate of coronavirus infections is steadily rising again. But state officials are reluctant to blame relaxed guidelines and say there is no reason yet to consider stricter measures.

Gov. Steve Sisolak and state health officials pointed to national and worldwide trends rather than the easing of state guidelines as the cause of the spikes, and said adherence to prevention measures could curb the spread of the virus and prevent reimplementation of restrictions.

Nevada’s rate of infections has been increasing since Sisolak, a Democrat, relaxed restrictions on the size of public gatherings earlier this summer. The state’s emergency order, which allowed restaurants, bars and other businesses to reopen, expired Aug. 24.

New Hampshire

CONCORD — The attorney general’s office has fined a New Hampshire restaurant where at least 18 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in an outbreak.

Fat Katz Food and Drink restaurant has been fined $2,000 for violating emergency orders related to the coronavirus after it moved a karaoke night. The Hudson restaurant told authorities that it moved the event inside after receiving noise complaints and due to colder weather.

In issuing the fine, the state in a letter to the restaurant said the decision to move the event inside after being told it wasn’t allowed indoors and allowing individuals to participate without bringing their own equipment not only violated the state’s emergency order, but also was “reckless.”

The cases linked to Fat Katz include a person who went to the restaurant while aware of their COVID-19 diagnosis when they were supposed to be in isolation, and a second person who went there when they were knowingly supposed to be in quarantine.

Tennessee

MEMPHIS — Three employees of a Tennessee tax service have been charged with filing over $1 million in false claims for coronavirus-related federal loans, federal prosecutors said.

Brandy Scaife, Janisha Jones and Sharika Carpenter have been charged with filing false claims to the U.S. Small Business Administration loans made available to businesses that suffered losses from the COVID-19 pandemic, prosecutors allege.

The loans added up to about $1.1 million, prosecutors said. Each defendant faces up to 30 years in federal prison if convicted. Carpenter’s lawyer, Arthur Horn, said Tuesday that he was gathering information about the case but his client plans to fight the charges.

Washington

SEATTLE — Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee will now require colleges and universities to provide quarantine facilities for all students if they are exposed to COVID-19.

The governor on Tuesday issued more restrictions for higher education campuses as the University of Washington struggles to contain an outbreak among its fraternities and sororities. There have been outbreaks in Whitman County, home of Washington State University, as well.

Also Tuesday, state health officials warned of an upcoming “fall surge” in coronavirus infections, noting that western Washington counties are hitting near or above previous peaks in the rate of infections.

The new higher education guidelines now require the colleges to provide isolation and quarantine facilities for Greek system houses, communal off-campus homes, and students and workers who live on campus if they don't have a place to go.

Colleges without dorms or residential facilities must create a plan on how to address student and staff needs for isolation and quarantine in the event that they are exposed.
Purdue Pharma pleads guilty in settlement

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department announced Wednesday that it reached an $8.3 billion settlement with OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma as a result of criminal and civil investigations by federal prosecutors into the company’s marketing of opioid painkillers.

Purdue Pharma agreed to plead guilty in federal court in New Jersey to three felony counts for defrauding the United States and violating the anti-kickback statute from 2009 to 2017 in what the Justice Department said was “the largest penalties ever levied against a pharmaceutical manufacturer.”

Federal prosecutors said the company, which manufactured millions of opioid pills during the height of the epidemic, paid two millions of opioid pills during the company, which manufactured

The settlement does not include jail time for top executives or the owners, the wealthy Sackler family. But the resolution does not mean any executives or the Sacklers are immune to potential future criminal charges, according to the Justice Department.

The $8.3 billion global settlement includes a criminal fine of $3.544 billion, criminal forfeiture of $2 billion and a civil settlement of $2.8 billion. The Sackler family separately agreed to pay $225 million in damages to resolve a civil False Claims Act case.

The $8 billion figure is largely symbolic — the bankrupt drugmaker is already indebted to states, communities and other creditors. The company is among several drugmakers and distributors embroiled in litigation over the deaths and economic devastation inflicted by the opioid epidemic. Critics of the Sacklers and Purdue blame OxyContin for fueling the epidemic and have sought harsher penalties. The company and family still face scores of lawsuits. A representative for the family denied that any members were in a management role during the time the company paid the doctors or software company — an assertion that has been disputed by state attorneys general and other civil plaintiffs.

By Nikki Wentling
Stars and Stripes
WASHINGTON — White employees who applied for management positions at the Department of Veterans Affairs were promoted at twice the rate of Black workers, according to VA data released last week.

Of the Black employees who applied for promotions, 2.5% were selected in 2019 and 2020. White workers were selected at nearly twice that rate: 4.7% in 2019 and 4.4% so far in 2020. The data was obtained by the American Federation of Government Employees, a union representing hundreds of thousands of VA workers. AFGE and the VA have sparred in recent months over the agency’s treatment of Black workers, and the union says this latest data points to an underlying bias at the VA against Black employees.

“The troubling statistics … validate the complaints our members have shared regarding the systemic racism they face every day while simply trying to serve our nation’s veterans and war heroes,” said Everett Kelley, the national president of AFGE. “These troubling statistics …

Officer: Taylor ‘didn’t deserve to die’

Associated Press
LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A Louis ville police officer who shot Bre onna Taylor after he was wounded by her boyfriend fired a gun that she “didn’t deserve to die.”

Sgt. Jonathan Mattingly said Taylor, a 26-year-old emergency medical worker who was roused from her bed by police serv ing a narcotics warrant, “didn’t do anything to deserve a death sentence.”

Mattingly spoke to ABC News and the Louisville Courier Journal, his first media interviews on the shooting that sparked weeks of protests in the city. He said he and his fellow officers had gone to Taylor’s apartment to serve a warrant in a drug case that target ed her ex-boyfriend, and had to defend themselves once they were fired upon.

“You want to do the right thing,” Mattingly said. “You want to be the one who is protecting, not up here looking to do any damage to anybody’s family. That’s not anybody’s desire that I’ve worked with.”

Mattingly and another officer, Myles Cosgrove, fired into the apartment’s front entry after Taylor’s then-boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, shot Mattingly in the leg. Walker said he thought an intruder had come through the door.

VA, union spar over race, promotion rates

BY NIKKI WENTLING
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“The VA didn’t deny the accu racy of the data but argued that AFGE leaders were trying to dis tract from their own workplace problems. VA press secretary Christina Noel referenced allega tions against the union’s former president, J. David Cox, saying he used racial slurs and sexually abused and harassed employees.

Cox was forced to resign in February. Union employees and members filed a lawsuit in June that accuses Kelley and other officials of shielding Cox from scrutiny.

“Unlike AFGE, VA does not toler ate harassment or discriminatio n in any form,” Noel said.

75 stripes.com
Stars and Stripes
LAGOS, Nigeria — Nigerian protesters demanding an end to police brutality defied a curfew as gunfire rang out where they were setting up a blockade Wednesday, a day after shots were fired into a crowd of demonstrators singing the country’s national anthem.

That disturbing turn drew global outrage.

It’s not clear if any protesters were killed in Tuesday night’s shooting at the Lekki toll plaza in the West African country’s sprawling commercial capital.

Lagos’ governor said more than 20 were injured but no one was killed, but Amnesty International had earlier said there were fatalities and that it had “credible but disturbing evidence” that security forces were responsible.

Gunfire reverberated across Lagos on Wednesday, including at the Lekki toll plaza, where young demonstrators were rallying again despite an order for everyone to stay off the streets.

Police fired tear gas at one point, and smoke could be seen billowing from several areas in the city’s center. Two private TV stations were forced off the air at least temporarily as their offices were burned.

Demonstrations and gunfire were also reported in several other Nigerian cities, including the capital city, Abuja.

Young people have taken to the streets for more than two weeks after anger over heavy-handed policing flared in response to a video of a man being beaten, apparently by officers with the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, known as SARS.

In response to the #EndSARS movement, the government announced it would disband the unit. But that has failed to satisfy demonstrators, who are now demanding more widespread reforms to end human rights abuses committed by security forces and pervasive government corruption.

Gunfire erupts as Nigerians protest

Associated Press

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TALLAHASSEE — Flying squirrels were being trapped in Florida, driven to Chicago and shipped to South Korea, Florida wildlife officials said while announcing charges against seven people they say ran an illegal wildlife trafficking operation.

Poachers captured as many as 3,600 flying squirrels over a three-year period. They sold the squirrels to a licensed wildlife dealer who claimed they were bred in captivity, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission said. Flying squirrels are a protected species.

The seven people charged face a total of 25 felonies, including racketeering, money laundering and scheming to defraud.

FL

A lack of camouflage.

a hard time surviving because of turtle conservation group, said after months of delay Plastic bag ban starts SC

found on beach IA

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Policemen said Ward and another man fought with Scott Plumley, 44, of Dubuque and that Ward bit Plumley’s nose, “biting the majority of it off.” Plumley was taken by ambulance to a local hospital and later transported to an Iowa City hospital for specialized surgery to reconstruct his nose.

Man accused of biting off nose of another man IA

DUBUQUE—A Dubuque man faces charges after police say he bit off the nose of another man during a fight. Blayre Ward, 24, of Dubuque was arrested on suspicion of willful injury, assault causing injury, harassment and other counts, the Telegraph Herald reported.

Police documents said Ward and another man fought with Scott Plumley, 44, of Dubuque and that Ward bit Plumley’s nose, “biting the majority of it off.” Plumley was taken by ambulance to a local hospital and later transported to an Iowa City hospital for specialized surgery to reconstruct his nose.

Rare white sea turtle found on beach SC

The town of Kiawah Island posted on its Facebook page that the Kiawah Island Turtle Patrol was investigating sea turtle nests on a South Carolina beach came upon a rare sight: a white sea turtle hatching crawling across the sand.

Photos show a tiny turtle that’s a creamy white color rather than the more typical gray or green of a sea turtle.

The Olive Ridley Project, a sea turtle conservation group, said sea turtles with the genetic condition called leucism typically have a hard time surviving because of a lack of camouflage.

Plastic bag ban starts after months of delay NY

ALBANY — New York’s long-delayed ban on single-use plastic bags went into effect this week.

The state law bans supermarkets, department stores and other types of businesses from distributing the thin plastic bags that have been clogging up landfills, getting tangled in trees and accumulating in lakes and seas. Single-use paper bags are still allowed, but counties have the option of imposing a 5 cent fee.

The law was supposed to go into effect March 1, but state environmental officials delayed enforcement after a lawsuit was brought by a plastic bag manufacturer and convenience store owners. A judge upheld key parts of the law this summer.

Backyard camera shows illegal entry into US VT

DERBY — The Border Patrol was investigating a man’s property on the U.S.-Canadian border recorded a minimum illegally entering Vermont from Quebec.

The video showed three men trying unsuccessfully to move a granite block that marks the border in the backyard of a man named De La Bruere, of Derby.

De La Bruere told MyNBC5.com that most of the blocks are fixed in place, but the men managed to move one of the blocks at the edge of his yard and drive into the United States. The car was later found abandoned in a Walmart parking lot in Derby.

Teacher reports break-in at students’ home CA

SACRAMENTO — A California teacher alerted police to a break-in at a home where her students were participating in an online class.

A man entered the home in Galt through a window and ran through the house and then out a back door before going over a fence, KOVR-TV reported.

Teacher Jennifer Petersen realized something was wrong when the teenagers did not log off at the end of the lesson. The approximate worth of two Australian lace monitor lizards that were recovered after being stolen last year. The Long Beach, Calif., Police Department said that the lizards were stolen from JTK Reptiles in Long Beach in November, The Los Angeles Times reported. Police tracked the lizards, which can grow to be more than 6 feet long, to a Panorama City house. Jose Luis Macias Jr., 30, and Kassandra Marie Duenas, 27, were arrested and charged with second-degree robbery. Department spokesman Brandon Fahey declined to say how detectives found the reptiles.

Follow the tentacled road

Dylan Wassner, 5, rides his bike on the newly painted Haulover Beach Park Skate Park and Pump Track in Miami Beach, Fla. The mural by artist Roy Jaffet resembles octopus tentacles, and was commissioned by “SkateSafe,” a program of the KidZ Neuroscience Center at the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, University of Miami Health System.

THE CENSUS

$75K in jail time, $15,000 fine Nevada and left behind the rest of the animal.

Brayden Norton of Washington, Utah, was arrested in May 2019 after new information developed in the killing of the deer near Caliente in November 2016, Nevada Department of Wildlife officials said.

Norton pleaded guilty in Lincoln County to unlawful possession of big game and wasting edible portions of a deer.

In addition to the fine, he must complete 290 hours of community service and 12 months probation.

Police find more than 200 animals in home WA

SEATTLE — Authorities have a person in custody after finding more than 200 animals in a West Seattle home and many others dead in an ongoing animal cruelty investigation.

KOMO-TV reported the Seattle Police Department and Seattle Animal Shelter found 200 animals inside a home, with many dead animals found in a second home on the property.

Authorities said dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs and chinchillas in the home were moved to the Seattle Animal Shelter for evaluation and care.

Investigators are working to determine the exact amount of animals found.

From wire reports
COURT-PACKING IS DANGEROUS

By Kathleen Parker

WASHINGTON Post Writers Group

Washington Post

Court-packing is suddenly all the rage these days. It’s a novel way of calling attention else growing around in the zeitgeist.

But, when it comes to the terms of court-packing, it is meaningful. The most meaningful thing means that Republicans are getting to pick too many Supreme Court justices. What court-packing means, at least in demono- menic, is expanding the number of justices by some arbitrary number in order to de-politicize the court and make its composition more balanced. Theoretically.

What really means is that Democrats want to pack the court in the expectation that a liberal-dominated Supreme Court will change the court’s left-leaning composition.

Democrats believe that adding justices would further undermine what is already in danger of looking like just another branch of government riven by politics.

Indeed, adding members to the high court will create an even more politicized judiciary and further diminish public trust in our institutions.

Both parties bear responsibility for this trend. Their roots lie with the Democrats’ and Republicans’ rejection in 1987 of Robert Bork to the high court in a viciously partisan melee.

Adding members to the high court in a partisan debate doesn’t mean that Republicans—likewise—will add three—however many—and so on. Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., who last week was on the table, once told a joke about a future grandchild asking him, “Granddad, why do we have 151 people on the Supreme Court?”

The best argument against adding more justices is: Where does it stop? If Democrats added three justices, Republicans will add three, and so on. The court-packing narrative is on the table, once.

The question now is whether Biden will stick to his view if he wins or give in to the gravitational pull of a younger generation of Democrats who want a liberal court, by hook, crook or wrecking ball. That tug will be greater if the Democrats win the White House in two weeks. During the past several appearances, Biden has refused to say where he stands, observing correctly that no matter what he says, his answer would become the focus of the campaign’s final days.

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They’re still alive

Pearl Jam parks tour bus, but band remains political

By Dan Gelston
Associated Press

S

tone Gossard made serious promises this campaign season. Pearl Jam fans who answered FaceTime calls from the rhythm guitarist got something extra for taking a vote-by-mail pledge — the latest offering from the band in a career full of activism and advocacy for political causes.

Gossard offered free tickets to the next Pearl Jam show in their person’s city.

“They were really happy when I told them I’d get them into the show,” Gossard, 54, said with a laugh.

The band postponed its 2020 tour that was set to promote its latest album, “Gigaton,” and it just released the single “Get It Back” on streaming services. There are tentative start dates for a 2021 tour that includes a European leg, but any true kickoff for a band rocking into its fourth decade still remains unknown in the pandemic.

“We’re mostly just thankful that we can actually stop for a year or two and everything’s going to be OK,” Gossard said. “For the majority of people out there, that reality is not the same. We’re going back to touring. We’re going back to making records; we’re going to keep playing ‘Gigaton’ live. We’re going to make more records and eat club sandwiches on the road. We just want to do that when it makes sense. It might still be a little bit of time.”

Gossard and Pearl Jam lead guitarist Mike McCready told The Associated Press on a recent Zoom that tour rehearsals off the band’s first studio album in seven years were completed.

“We put the record out a while ago and then just kind of went, OK, now what do we do?” McCready said. “We’re going to keep going. We’re going to keep moving forward, hopefully.”

The band, which signs up fans for a voting pledge by texting a five-digit number, hoped the tour would wind through swing states like Pennsylvania closer to the Nov. 3 election where they could push from their stage their PJ Votes campaign — vote by mail, recruit three friends and don’t wait.

Frontman Eddie Vedder posted step-by-step photos on his Instagram page on how to vote by mail. Vedder has been a critic of President Donald Trump, cursing out during shows and on “Gigaton” live. “We definitely have grown to be more active, for sure, and it’s become part of our identity,” Gossard said. “Everybody in the band plays a role in this at the point, for sure. We find each other. When one of us is successful in terms of raising awareness or generosity and really doing something that’s really helpful, it really inspires all of us to continue that tradition and support that across the band.”

Pearl Jam played its first show 30 years ago on October 22, 1990, and the hiatus crimped an anniversary celebration.

Pearl Jam plans to satiate fans with the release Thursday of an April 29, 2016, show from Philadelphia when it played for only the second time its debut album, “Ten,” from beginning to end on a night a banner was raised to the rafters celebrating 10 South Philadelphia sellouts.

The stream is available Thursday for the newly mixed 32-song, three-hour-set available on nugs.net for $14.99, with a portion of each ticket going to support the work of Pearl Jam’s Vitalogy Foundation.

McCready and Gossard said Philadelphia has long been one of Pearl Jam’s most fervent supporters.

“The level of engagement we get from our fans there is kind of unprecedented,” Gossard said. “To talk to folks that took the pledge and are really into it and really strategic about their own votes and how they’re doing it and why they’re doing it has been inspiring.”

The band targeted Pennsylvania because the battleground state plays a central role in the contest between Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden.

Gossard says his campaign promise of a few free tickets will be kept — as long their fans take the pledge.

“We want to make sure that everybody participates, really,” he said. “I’m hoping for a shift in the national direction.”

Altered photo shows Ice Cube, 50 Cent in ‘Trump 2020’ hats

From wire reports

An altered photo of rappers Ice Cube and 50 Cent in hats that appear to show support for President Donald Trump circulated widely on social media Tuesday, fueled in part by a tweet by Eric Trump.

“Two great, courageous Americans,” Trump’s son tweeted.

He removed the tweet with a photo of the two rappers in hats saying “Trump 2020” after being called out by Ice Cube on Twitter.

In the original photo, both entertainers were wearing baseball caps with sports logos. Ice Cube’s hat says “Big3,” a reference to a 3-on-3 basketball league he co-founded, and 50 Cent wears one with the New York Yankees logo. Ice Cube shared the original photo on his Twitter account July 6 with a birthday message to 50 Cent.

“Happy birthday to the homie @50cent,” he tweeted with the photo.

The manipulated image was shared thousands of times on Twitter and Facebook since it began gaining attention on Monday.

Ice Cube, whose real name is O’Shea Jackson, has come under fire for appearing to work with the Trump administration on his “Contract with Black America,” which calls for a new dynamic for how the country is run to address racial issues. In a recent interview with CNN, he said both the Trump campaign and Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden’s campaign reached out to him about his contract.

“One campaign said ‘we love what you have but let’s really dig into it after the election,’ and one campaign said we love what you have, ‘do you mind talking to us about it’ and that’s what I did,” he said on CNN. “The Trump campaign came to me and asked me to explain to them some of the Contract with Black America.”

Ice Cube clarified that he has not endorsed either campaign.

“Whoever is in power I am going to work with,” he said on CNN.

On Monday, 50 Cent, whose real name is Curtis James Jackson III, took to Instagram to say “Vote for Trump.”

Director Daldry exits ‘Wicked’ film adaptation

The long-gestating film adaptation of the Broadway hit “Wicked” has hit another snag. Director Stephen Daldry is exiting the project, a studio representative confirmed Tuesday.

The industry trade website Deadline first reported the news.

“The Billy Elliot” director has been associated with the adaptation since 2012. Writer Winnie Holzman, who wrote the musical, wrote the script with “Wicked” composer and lyricist Stephen Schwartz.

At one point, the film was supposed to hit theaters in Dec. 2019.

Universal Pictures this year removed “Wicked” from its release schedule. It was last slated for a Dec. 22, 2021, theatrical launch.

No cast has been officially announced.

In addition to directing the stage and movie versions of “Billy Elliot,” Dalder’s Broadway credits include “An Inspector Calls,” “Sky�ght” and he just got a Tony Award nomination for “The Inheritance.” He has won two Tonys.

“Gimme Some Lovin’ rock star Spencer Davis died at 81

Spencer Davis, a British guitarist and bandleader whose eponymous rock group had 1960s hits including “Gimme Some Lovin’” and “I’m a Man,” has died at 81.

Davis’ agent, Bob Birk, said Tuesday that he died in a hospital while being treated for pneumonia. He didn’t give a location, but British media reported that Davis lived in California.

Influenced by the burgeoning British blues and skiffle scenes, he formed the Spencer Davis Group in 1963, with a teenage Steve Winwood on keyboards and guitar, his brother Muff Winwood on bass and Pete York on drums.

With Steve Winwood as lead vocalist, the band had two No. 1 U.K. singles — “Keep on Running” in 1965 and “Somebody Help Me” in 1966 — and seven British top 40 hits before Steve Winwood’s departure in 1967.

Other news

• Tom Petty’s peers and admirers will celebrate what would’ve been the rock icon’s 70th birthday with a virtual festival Friday. Set to stream on Petty’s website and on Amazon Music’s Twitch channel, “Tom Petty’s 70th Birthday Bash” will feature performances and appearances by Stevie Nicks, Beck, Adam Sandler, Brandi Carlile, Chris Stapleton, Eddie Vedder, the Foo Fighters, Jackson Browne, Margo Price and Post Malone, among many others. Mike Campbell and Benmont Tench, both of Petty’s long-running band the Heartbreakers, are set to perform as well. The show comes three years after Petty’s death from an accidental overdose in 2017.
Pacers hire Toronto assistant as coach

BY MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana wanted its next coach to take the franchise in a new direction.

The Pacers were sending one person who could communicate with today's players, who was open to a new offensive philosophy and who could win some postseason games.

On Tuesday, president of basketball operations Kevin Pritchard found his man in Toronto assistant Nate Bjorgren.

"He comes from a winning background, has experience with championship success, is innovative and his communication skills along with his positivity will be a great fit," Pritchard said in a statement released by the team.

"He understands the importance of the playoffs and the team's expectations of winning a championship," Pritchard added.

Bjorgren is expected to be introduced Wednesday on a Zoom call.

"This is something I have prepared for during my career," Bjorgren said in a statement, thanking those involved in the search. "I want to thank Nick Nurse for giving me my first professional coaching job 14 years ago. I'm looking forward to working with this great team to achieve our goal as NBA champions.

"I understand the importance of the playoffs and the team's expectations of winning a championship," Bjorgren added.

The Pacers and the Raptors just completed the fourth round of a series after winning the first three games.

Despite making five straight playoff appearances, the Pacers have not been able to win a playoff series since 2014.

The Pacers have won at least one playoff game in 14 of the past 15 seasons.

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Talented WRs have Tide in good hands

By John Zenor
Associated Press

If it wasn’t Jaylen Waddle out-running the Georgia defense, it was DeVonta Smith winning a fight for the ball in the back of the end zone or slipping free on a wheel route.

Not even No. 4 Georgia’s vaunted defense could contain No. 2 Alabama’s speedy, crafty, sure-handed receivers Saturday night. The question now: Who can?

“Trying to cover outstanding receivers is really a difficult task,” Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban said. “You have to have a really, really good secondary, you have to have really good guys to match up. That’s been an advantage for us. It was a huge advantage for us last year, and it’s an advantage for us this year.”

Smith and Waddle each delivered another huge game in a 41-24 victory over the Bulldogs, who have the best defense Alabama has faced this season.

It’s one thing to do it against Mississippi, and another altogether to victimize Georgia.

“They made a couple big throws,” Bulldogs coach Kirby Smart said. “They beat us on some bubble plays and a double move with Waddle. They made a lot of big plays on 50-50 balls. Smith and Waddle had some big catches.”

What else is new?
Smith and Waddle rank among the nation’s top seven receivers in yards per game. And John Metchie III had 181 yards and two touchdowns against Texas A&M.

Waddle had a 90-yard touchdown against Georgia and has at least 120 receiving yards in all four games.

Smith has 24 catches for 231 yards and three touchdowns in the past two games, displaying his strong connection with quarterback Mac Jones.

“That’s just us in practice just getting chemistry down and really Mac just believing in me,” Smith said. “I always tell Mac: ‘You believe in me, I believe in you. I will never let you down.’”

Jones, whose three consecutive 400-yard passing games matches Tua Tagovailoa’s career total, said the trust is mutual and that Smith has the confidence to say, “Throw it to me.”

“He says, ‘I don’t care if I’m triple covered, throw it to me,’” Jones said. “It’s hard to turn that down. He’s a (Michael) Jordan-level competitor.

“If you can get him the ball, then he’ll make the play.”

Same goes for Waddle, a dangerous open-field runner who is also a threat as a punt returner. And Metchie, when he gets the chance.

The Tide also displayed their power running game with Najee Harris, who ran 31 times for 152 yards and a touchdown.

“They’re big, they’re physical, they lean on and wear you out and they’ve got a great back,” Bulldog safety Richard LeCounte said.

“The passing game they use is really creative. They run a lot of the same plays from different formations and they did a good job disguising them with motions.”

Better late than never: Big Ten gets underway

By Eric Olson
Associated Press

The wait is almost over for the Big Ten. The ACC, Big 12 and SEC have been playing anywhere from three to five weeks amid the pandemic, and all the players and coaches around the Big Ten could do is watch.

“Most of it’s been torture, just not being able to actually get out there,” Ohio State coach Ryan Day said. “There’s been a part of it I’ve actually enjoyed, but for the most part it’s been hard and I just want to be playing, get these guys on the field and get rolling.”

The eight-game conference-only schedule begins Friday with Illinois visiting No. 14 Wisconsin. The rest of the league gets started Saturday. Every team plays every week through Dec. 12 barring cancellations because of outbreaks of COVID-19.

No. 5 Ohio State is favored to win a fourth straight league title and return to the College Football Playoff. Buckeyes quarterback Justin Fields, with his wide array of weapons around him, is among the Heisman Trophy front-runners after finishing third in last year’s voting.

Defending West champion Wisconsin, at Northwestern, vs. No. 8 Penn State.

Nebraska got the toughest schedule, with three of its first four games against Top 25 opponents (at No. 5 Ohio State, vs. No. 14 Wisconsin, at Northwestern, vs. No. 8 Penn State). Northwestern has the easiest cross-over games, with their opener at home against Maryland and a trip to Michigan State on Nov. 28.

2 new head coaches
Mel Tucker takes over at Michigan State for Mark Dantonio, who retired after 13 years, and Greg Schiano returns to Rutgers to replace Chris Ash, who was fired four games into last season.

Tucker was 5-7 in his only year at Colorado before he bolted for Michigan State. He was a graduate assistant there under Nick Saban in the 1990s.

Schiano returned to Rutgers after eight years. He led the Scarlet Knights to a 68-67 record and six bowl games from 2001-11. He was the Tampa Bay Buccaneers head coach in 2012-13 and Ohio State defensive coordinator from 2016-18.

Streaks and such
Ohio State has the nation’s third-longest active home winning streak at 20 games and second-longest road streak at seven.

Rutgers has dropped 13 in a row on the road and 21 straight conference games.

Nebraska’s NCAA-record 375-game sellout streak, which started in 1962, is on hold.

The Big Ten’s no-fan edict also means Michigan will have fewer than 100,000 fans in the Big House for the first time since 1975.
Dolphins turning to Tua as starter after bye

**By Steven Wise**
Associated Press

MIAMI — Tua Tagovailoa now has a role to match his jersey number. He's the Miami Dolphins' new starter.

The former Alabama star will make his first NFL start next week for the Miami Dolphins, who are turning to him to replace Ryan Fitzpatrick.

The change by coach Brian Flores will come after the Dolphins' bye this week and has been long anticipated, but the timing is surprising because the team won its past two games to improve to 3-3. Tagovailoa will start at home against the Los Angeles Rams on Nov. 1.

News of the change leaked Tuesday. Flores says he regrets that his players found out about the switch through social media. I don't think that's fair to us. It's not the way I or we want to do business. Unfortunately, it's kind of the way of the world right now.

"I'm trying to protect that at all times. I do want to address that to the team, and really apologize to them that they had to find out through social media. I don't think that's fair to them."

And Flores says the decision to bench popular veteran Fitzpatrick was difficult.

"Fitz has done a great job," Flores said Wednesday. "He has been productive. His leadership has been great. But we felt like for the team, now, moving forward, this is a move we need to make.

Tagovailoa made his pro debut in mop-up duty at the end of Miami's 24-0 victory Sunday over the New York Jets. He will become the 22nd quarterback to start for the team now, moving forward, this is a move we need to make.

Tagovailoa made his pro debut in mop-up duty at the end of Miami's 24-0 victory Sunday over the New York Jets. He will become the 22nd quarterback to start for the team now, moving forward, this is a move we need to make.

"He has been thrown into a very difficult situation in that he didn't have any pre-season, he didn't have a real off-season," Dolphins offensive coordinator Chan Gailey said Tuesday, shortly before the news of Tagovailoa's promotion broke.

Fitzpatrick, 37, described himself during training camp as a placeholder. He is being benched even though he ranks fifth in the NFL in completion percentage, and Miami is on pace for its highest-scoring season since 1986 at 26.7 points per game.

Tagovailoa went 2-for-2 for 9 yards against the Jets.

"Under duress he made an accurate throw," Gailey said. "Then he sat in the pocket on third and made a throw for a first down. For a guy that didn't play a snap there, "he's got more comfortable."

"He has gotten more comfortable," Flores said. "Accuracy, decision-making, all those things have been good in practice. Practice is very different from games, but we're comfortable and confident he'll be able to be competitive."

### Solid place-kicker McManus still 'McMoney' for Broncos

**By Pat Graham**
Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — Brandon McManus and his powerful right leg were benched for the New England Game — in quite a few fantasy football leagues.

The Denver Broncos kickei took notice, too.

McManus couldn't resist a playful jab on Twitter after his franchise-best, six field goal-performance against the Eagles.

"If I miss that, they get the ball at midfield and they can call what we feel like and call what we want. "Out shoot to the 4.5% who ride or die with me."

From about midfield in, the Broncos (2-3) certainly have total confidence in "McMoney" McManus, which he was jokingly called after recently inking a new deal. The reliable McManus has become a safety net for an injury-riddled offensive line who's trying to get on track with QB Drew Lock back at the helm.

"He definitely allows us to take a deep breath," said Lock, who returned from a sprained right shoulder in a game against Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs. "96% of fantasy tied. "(We) can call what we feel like and call what we want.

That was kind of the game plan."

For McManus, his best New England was a years-in-the-making choice at redemption. He missed a 41-yarder off the right upright inside Gillette Stadium on Nov. 2, 2014.

But the Broncos have not only cut by Denver before being brought back to handle the kickoffs."

"It's a special place for me to kind of come back and perform like that," said McManus, who signed a four-year, $1.7 million extension in September. "It's always difficult to kick here in a stadium like this. McManus made it look like a breeze."

He connected from 48, 49, 52, 54 and 56 yards. It's the fifth time he's made multiple field goals of 50 or more yards in a game, which ties Baltimore's Justin Tucker for most in NFL history.

McManus had a cracker at a 57-yarder early in the fourth quarter, but the team elected to pass leading 19-3.

A calculated decision in the estimation of McManus."

"If I miss that, they get the ball at midfield and they can call what we feel like and call what we want. "Out shoot to the 4.5% who ride or die with me."

That's in contrast to last season, when McManus had a sideline outburst after coach Vic Fangio called him back as he was preparing to attempt an NFL record-breaking 65- yarder at altitude.

But that decision by Fangio has only served to fuel McManus. He is 12 of 13 on field goals this season, including a 53-yarder to put the Broncos up for good late in the fourth quarter on the New York Jets on Oct. 1. That
Stars: Dodgers trying to focus on task at hand

From Back Page

at Globe Life Field, the new $1.2 billion home of the Texas Rangers, marked the billion home of the Texas Rangers, marked the
ball’s top event in 111 years.

Los Angeles hopes to go home with a title that has eluded the Dodgers since 1988 but tried to guard against focusing ahead.

“It’s hard not to think about winning. It’s hard not to think about what that might be like,” Kershaw said. “Constantly keeping the eye on the prize. Win tomorrow, win tomorrow, win tomorrow. And then you do that three more times, and you can think about it all you want.”

A regular-season star with an erratic postseason history, Kershaw looked like the ace who so often stars on midsummer evenings with the San Gabriel Mountains behind him at Dodger Stadium. With these games shifted, the 32-year-old left-hander wound up pitching not far from his offseason home in Dallas.

The three-time Cy Young Award winner allowed one run and two hits, struck out six and walked one. He induced 19 swings and misses among his 78 pitches through the first three innings.

“You can appreciate and totally see why he’s heading to the Hall of Fame one day whenever he’s done,” Rays manager Kevin Cash said.

Kershaw threw nine balls in the first, when he stranded a pair of runners, then threw just nine more over the next three innings.

“He had a game plan to try to really quiet down things from there and he executed,” said Kevin Kiermaier, who ended up walking twice. “Kershaw’s streak of 13 retired in a row with a fifth-inning homer on his 13th pitch that cut the Rays’ deficit to 2-1.

Kershaw, a five-time ERA champ, improved to 2-2 in the World Series and 12-12 in postseason play, a shadow of his 175-76 regular-season record. Dodgers manager Dave Roberts did not pitch him after Game 4 of the NL Championship Series last Thursday.

“I think we were going to stay away from him in Game 7 just for this particular reason,” Roberts said.

Game 2 is Wednesday night. The Dodgers, who posted the best record in the majors during the shortened season and showed off all their stars in Game 1, plan to throw a collection of pitchers started by Tony Gonsolin against Rays ace Blake Snell.

Bellinger, the 2019 NL MVP who began the opener with a career .144 batting average in 12 World Series games, had put the Dodgers ahead in the fourth with a two-run homer off Glasnow, having no trouble driving a 98 mph pitch into the Dodgers bullpen in right-center.

Bellinger, whose seventh-inning homer put the Dodgers ahead in Game 7 of the NL Championship on Sunday, shuffled his feet, tapping gently as he crossed the plate and celebrated by toe tapping teammates while dancing back to the dugout, a sign he remembered popping his right shoulder during raucous revelry two nights earlier.

Bellinger capped his evening by leaping at the 6-foot center field wall in the ninth, robbing Austin Meadows of a possible home run.

“I said it today before the game: If I hit one I’m not touching anybody’s arm,” Bellinger said. “I’m going straight foot, and it was pretty funny.”

After a regular season played without fans, MLB resumed selling tickets with a limited amount for the NLCS at Globe Life and kept that up by allowing about 28% of capacity to be filled at the 40,318-seat ballpark, where the roof was open. The crowd was widely dispersed throughout and was the smallest for the Series since 1935 attended Game 6 between the Pirates and Tigers at Detroit’s Bennett Park in 1909, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

THE TAMPA BAY RAYS’ KEVIN KIERMAIER CELEBRATES IN THE DUGOUT TUESDAY AFTER HITTING A HOME RUN AGAINST THE LOS ANGELES DODGERS DURING THE FIFTH INNING OF GAME 1 OF THE WORLD SERIES.

BY SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

Tampa Rays starting pitcher Tyler Glasnow surrenders six runs on three hits during Game 1 of the World Series on Tuesday in Arlington, Texas. He walked six and struck out eight over 4 1⁄3 innings.

ARLINGTON, Texas — Tampa Bay Rays manager Kevin Cash might have waited a smidge too long to go to his bullpen in the seventh inning.

Cash had to make the adjustment I think in that third inning and started to feel pretty good,” Glasnow said. “As the game went on, I think I was just getting on the side of it, getting a little rushed, going forward just a bit too quick. Too many walks, not executing well enough.

Glasnow, who struck out eight, started the fifth with consecutive walks to Mookie Betts and Seager, but Cash stayed with him long enough to give up Muncy’s run-scoring fielder’s choice after a double steal by Betts and Seager, and Will Smith’s soft single to center.

“He had plenty of stuff to keep us right there,” Cash said. “The walks are definitely not ideal. Glasnow would be the first to recognize that. We didn’t do a good job holding the runners on. We can’t let them get the double steal right there.”

Cash said he stuck with Glasnow against Muncy because he thought that was the best chance for a strikeout with runners at second and third. Muncy hit a sharp grounder to first baseman Yandy Diaz, who lunged toward second to make the stop but had to throw across his body. Betts beat the throw with a headfirst slide.

The six runs were the most Glasnow has allowed in seven postseason starts. The six walks and 112 pitches were career highs for the 27-year-old right-hander.

When he finally pulled Glasnow, Cash was boxed in because he needed lefty reliever Ryan Yarbrough to face the left-handed Bellinger, who popped out.

Yarbrough had to stay because of the three-batter minimum, and right-hitting Chris Taylor had an RBI single before Kiké Hernández pinch-hit for the lefty Joc Pederson and singled in another run.

Glasnow, one of the shrewd moves that helped the Rays get this far when he was acquired for ace Chris Archer at the trading deadline two years ago, had to pitch the opener because Tampa Bay struggled to close out Houston after winning the first three games in the AL Championship Series.

Aces Blake Snell and Charlie Morton had to pitch Games 6 and 7, with Morton winning as the Rays avoided joining the New York Yankees (2004 ALCS against Boston) as the only teams to blow 3-0 leads in the postseason.

One of the 11,388 fans allowed in Globe Life Park watches during the seventh inning.

The Tampa Bay Rays’ Kevin Kiermaier celebrates in the dugout Tuesday after hitting a home run against the Los Angeles Dodgers during the fifth inning of Game 1 of the World Series.

THE TAMPA BAY RAYS’ KEVIN KIERMAIER CELEBRATES IN THE DUGOUT TUESDAY AFTER HITTING A HOME RUN AGAINST THE LOS ANGELES DODGERS DURING THE FIFTH INNING OF GAME 1 OF THE WORLD SERIES.
**Dugout**

The Los Angeles Dodgers' Mookie Betts homered during the sixth inning of the Dodgers' 8-3 defeat of the Tampa Bay Rays in Game 1 of the World Series on Tuesday in Arlington, Texas.

Betts, a three-time All-Star, joined the Dodgers during the season with a trade that also brought right fielder Cody Bellinger and left-hander David Price.

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Mookie Betts slid headfirst across home plate, then popped up and did a double pump with his right fist.

An inning later, he got to trot around the bases after going deep.

That big commitment to Betts is already paying off for the Los Angeles Dodgers this postseason.

After run-saving catches in three consecutive potential elimination games to get the Dodgers this far, Betts put his speed, instincts and power on display in Game 1 of the World Series. There was a Ruth-like journey around the bases to score — and that was even before his solo homer in an 8-3 win over the Tampa Bay Rays on Tuesday night.

"Mookie is pretty special," said teammate Clayton Kershaw, who pitched six strong innings for the win. "He does things on a baseball field that not many people can do and he does it pretty consistently, which separates him from a lot of guys."

"You might see one game and not really appreciate Mookie to his full potential," Betts said.

Betts led off the Los Angeles fifth with a walk and stole second base. After NL Championship Series MVP Corey Seager drew a walk behind him, they pulled off a double steal.

"That's just another element that Mookie brings. He does a lot of studying to be able to create stress," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

Then, with the Rays infield playing in, Max Muncy hit a bouncer to first baseman Yandy Diaz, who threw on the run after Betts broke quickly for the plate. He slid past the attempted tag for a 3-1 lead.

"It's just all practice," Betts said. "In BP, I run the bases. In spring training, we're running bases, constantly putting in this work for this time."

The only other player with a walk and multiple stolen bases in an inning during a World Series game was Babe Ruth in 1921.

"Stolen bases are a thing for me. That's how I create runs and create havoc on the bases," Betts said.

"Once you get on the bases, you're not a hitter anymore — you run the bases. When you're in the outfield, you're on defense. I'm able to focus on the task at hand."

When Betts led off the sixth with an opposite-field homer, it was his second career postseason homer — the other came in the 2018 World Series for Boston in a five-game series win over Los Angeles.

That made Betts the first player to have a home run, two stolen bases and two runs scored in a World Series game.

"I did a good job but my main responsibility is to win a World Series," Betts said. "That's all I'm trying to do.

The Dodgers, who won their last World Series title in 1988, acquired the four-time All-Star and four-time Gold Glove winner from the Red Sox in February, even agreeing to pay Boston $48 million over three years as part of the deal. It also brought Los Angeles left-hander David Price, who opted out of playing this season because of the pandemic.

Al ready signed to a $27 million, one-year deal that would have made the star right fielder eligible for free agency this offseason, the 28-year-old Betts agreed in July to a $365 million, 12-year contract that includes a $65 million signing bonus guaranteed against work stoppages and shortened seasons such as this one.

"It's so fun to watch and we're so lucky to have him on our team," starter Dodgers sluggers Cody Bellinger, who also homered.

Scoreboard

**World Series (Best-of-seven)**

x—necessary

**Los Angeles Dodgers 1, Tampa Bay 0**

Tuesday: 1. Dodgers 9, Tampa Bay 3

Tampa Bay 3, Los Angeles 9. 2B—Wendle (6).

Los Angeles: Kershaw W, 1-0 6 2 1 1 1 8

Diaz 1b 4 0 1 0 Betts rf 4 2 2 1

Mallex sh 3 0 0 Smith sh 5 1 1

Addams ss 2 0 0 Pederson f 2 0 0

Choi dh 1 0 0 Hinojosa Ph-n 4 0 0

Kemp of 3 1 2

Jumbo c 1 0 0

Totals 32 3 3 2 2 1 2

Tampa Bay: Curtiss 1 3 0 0 0 1

Diaz 1b 2 0 0 Betts rf 4 2 2 1

Addams ss 2 0 0 Pederson f 2 0 0

Choi dh 1 0 0 Hinojosa Ph-n 4 0 0

Kemp of 3 1 2

Jumbo c 1 0 0

Totals 32 3 3 2 2 1 2

Los Angeles: May 3 0 0.

Addams ss 2 0 0 Pederson f 2 0 0

Choi dh 1 0 0 Hinojosa Ph-n 4 0 0

Kemp of 3 1 2

Jumbo c 1 0 0

Totals 32 3 3 2 2 1 2

**Scoreboard**

WORLD SERIES

By JAKE SEINNER
 Associated Press

Winning Game 1 was a sweet way to start the World Series for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

They won on top of all the big arms left on ice.

Kenley Jansen, Blake Treinen and Brusdar Graterol should be fresh for Wednesday after watching the Dodgers' 8-3 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays in Game 1.

Clayton Kershaw provided six tidy innings, and Los Angeles closed it out without exhausting the back of its bullpen.

The pitching-savvy Dodgers couldn't have scripted a better start. They pushed their top arms hard in the NL Championship Series, which came down to a Game 7 on Sunday. Starting pitchers Walker Buehler, Julio Urias, Tony Gonsolin and Dustin May each took the mound during an all-hands-on-deck effort to close out the series over the weekend.

Aces of October past — like Bob Gibson or Tom Seaver — might have rushed back on short rest for the World Series. Manager Dave Roberts is being more cautious with his No. 1 starter, keeping Buehler on regular rest for Game 3.

That leaves a hole for Game 2, where nobody figures to be fresh enough for a starter's workload.

The Dodgers announced after Game 1 that Gonsolin would pitch first, but the right-hander should be on a short leash after throwing 61 pitches Sunday. A 26-year-old NL Rookie of the Year contender, Gonsolin's best pitch is a hard-diving splitter that's equally effective against righties and lefties — advantageous against the Rays' balanced lineup.

"We just like him in this spot," Roberts said.

Coming into the World Series, the Dodgers' relievers had thrown 48 of the team's 89 postseason innings.

**By JAKE SEINNER**

Associated Press

May could cover multiple innings after throwing just 18 pitches Sunday. Roberts said Urias also would be available, although L.A. would surely like to save him for a potential start in Game 4.

With a day off Thursday, everyone else will be available. The biggest spots will undoubtedly go to Jansen, Treinen and Graterol.

Jansen is trying to shake post-season demons recent and past. He has blown more saves (three) than he has converted (two) in two previous World Series visits, including consecutive botched chances against Boston in Games 3 and 4 of the 2018 Series.

The three-time All-Star lost the zip on his cutter down the stretch this season, and Roberts removed him from the closer's role after a lousy outing against San Diego during the Division Series.

Jansen got a week off between outings, corrected his mechanics and delivered three perfect outs against Atlanta, including a save in Game 6.

"You know once it clicked, everything is going to come with it," Jansen said afterward.

The Rays have 2018 Cy Young Award winner Blake Snell tabbed for Game 2. Manager Kevin Cash — uncharacteristically slow to pull starter Tyler Glasnow in Game 1 — also has fresh arms in the bullpen after riding mop-up lefty Josh Fleming to cover the late innings Tuesday.

**Scoreboard**

Los Angeles Dodgers' Mookie Betts hits a solo home run in the sixth inning of the Dodgers' 8-3 defeat of the Tampa Bay Rays in Game 1 of the World Series on Tuesday in Arlington, Texas.
Shining stars
Big players lift Dodgers in Game 1

By Ronald Blum  
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Clayton Kershaw, Cody Bellinger, Mookie Betts — the Los Angeles Dodgers stars all shined.

Nothing out of the ordinary there, even if the setting was surreal.

Baseball’s best team during the pandemic-shortened season showed off its many talents in the first World Series game played at a neutral site, beating the Tampa Bay Rays 8-3 Tuesday night.

With the seats mostly empty, Kershaw dominated for six innings, Bellinger and Betts homered and the Dodgers chased a wild Tyler Glasnow in the fifth inning and coasted home in the opener.

A crowd limited by the coronavirus to 11,388

SEE STARS ON PAGE 22

Both Mookie Betts, left, and Cody Bellinger homered Tuesday for the Los Angeles Dodgers during their 8-3 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays in Game 1 of the World Series in Arlington, Texas.

Eric Gay, left, and Tony Gutierrez, below/AP

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- Betts paying off for LA in playoffs, Page 23
- Rays’ Glasnow wilts in 5th inning, Page 22

Indiana hires Toronto assistant as coach  » NBA, Page 19