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STARS AND STRIPES®

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GETTING IN THE GAME

Air Force jumps into esports arena with new series on Twitch

By **STEVE BEYNON**
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force is the latest branch jumping into esports, where service members livestream themselves playing video games, as the Pentagon increasingly looks to the gaming community as an outreach and retention tool. On Saturday, the service will launch

Command Clash, a six-part esports series on Twitch that pits 29 airmen, male and female, across multiple bases in competition playing Call of Duty: Modern Warfare. The series will also feature celebrities such as NFL free agent Clay Matthews and former NFL running back Ahman Green. Jeff Leach, the voice actor for the Call of Duty character Ghost, commentates on each match. In the final episode, one base will be declared the champion.

Unlike the Army, the Air Force does not have big recruiting goals with esports as a core component. They are also not in a hurry to mold gaming into a high-profile recreation or sport, such as Navy football, Army Combatives or the Marine Corps Band. Richard Cooper, a civilian spokesman for the Command Clash series, said the branch is putting its toes in the water.

SEE ESPORTS ON PAGE 4

A competitor clicks his mouse during the Schriever Air Force Base League of Legends Championship Intra-mural Finals in Colorado Springs, Colo., in 2018. The game requires constant input from the player in order to keep their character responsive.

WILLIAM TRACY/U.S. Air Force

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Students to return to Navy base school in Bahrain

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

U.S. military and school officials on Bahrain plan to resume classes Sunday for elementary and middle school students, despite teacher concerns that the health risk is still too high for in-person learning.

Bahrain School has been closed since February, when the coronavirus pandemic first hit the small island kingdom, home to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and 5th Fleet headquarters.

The school, which houses kindergarten through 12th grade, was one of a handful overseen by Department of Defense Education Activity-Europe to start the fall with remote learning.

About one-third of students are enrolled in virtual school and aren't expected to return to class until the second semester, at the earliest.

High school students in grades 9 to 12 will continue remote learning for the time being, said Stephen Smith, a DODEA-Europe spokesman. Some high school teachers are still in the U.S. and some new hires have had their permanent change-of-station moves delayed, he said.

The decision to reopen "was made in direct consultation with the installation and public health officials," Smith said.

The base recently eased its coronavirus risk level from Health Protection Condition Charlie to HPCON Bravo. Charlie indicates sustained community transmission while Bravo specifies a risk of increased transmission.

The change comes as Bahraini authorities recently decided to postpone allowing indoor dining at restaurants until Oct. 24 and delay in-person classes at public schools until Oct. 11, due to a rise in cases.

SEE BAHRAIN ON PAGE 8

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Tesla's next big bet rides on better batteries

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AND TOM KRISHER
Associated Press

SAN RAMON, Calif. — Tesla is working on new battery technology that CEO Elon Musk said will enable the company to make sleeker, more affordable cars that can travel dramatically longer distances on a single charge within the next three years.

But the battery breakthroughs that Musk unveiled Tuesday at a highly anticipated event didn't

impress investors. They were hoping Tesla's technology would mark an even bigger leap forward and propel the company's soaring stock to even greater heights.

Tesla's shares dropped by more than 6% in extended trading after Musk's presentation. That deepened a downturn which began during Tuesday's regular trading session as investors began to brace for a potential letdown. Musk further raised those worries with a series of tweets Monday warning that Tesla's new

battery technology might not be ready for high-volume production until 2022.

Musk reiterated that timetable during Tuesday's showcase and then added it might take up to three years before the battery technology translates into a new Tesla model selling for \$25,000. That would be a dramatic mark-down from Tesla's cheapest car now, the Model 3, a sedan that starts at \$35,000 but usually ends up costing buyers more than \$40,000.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	Switzerland (Franc)	0.9224
Euro costs (Sept. 24)	Thailand (Baht)	31.52
Dollar buys (Sept. 24)	Turkey (Lira)	7.6981
British pound (Sept. 24)	(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
Japanese yen (Sept. 24)		
South Korean won (Sept. 24)		
Commercial rates		
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771	
British pound	\$1.2745	
Canada (Dollar)	1.3256	
China (Yuan)	6.8033	
Denmark (Krone)	6.3706	
Egypt (Pound)	15.1991	
Euro	\$1.1682/0.8550	
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7502	
Hungary (Forint)	312.55	
Israel (Shekel)	3.4547	
Japan (Yen)	105.19	
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3962	
Norway (Krone)	9.3969	
Philippines (Peso)	48.59	
Poland (Zloty)	3.85	
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7507	
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3695	
South Korea (Won)	1,165.83	
Interest Rates		
Prime rate	3.25	
Discount rate	0.25	
Federal funds market rate	0.09	
3-month bond	0.10	
30-year bond	1.42	

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



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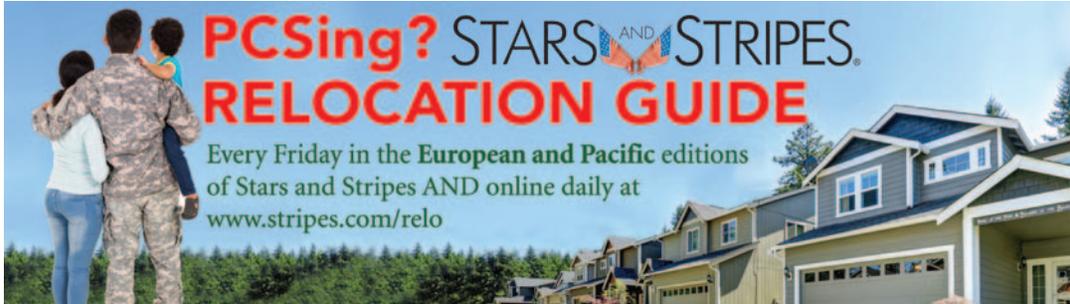
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MILITARY

2 Marines accused in drug overdose case

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Two U.S. Marines were arrested Tuesday on a federal grand jury indictment that alleges the lance corporals were involved in selling drugs to Marines, including to a fellow Marine who died from an overdose.

Lance Cpls. Anthony Ruben Whisenant and Ryan Douglas White were arrested at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, north of San Diego. They were expected to appear later that day in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. Neither Marine responded to an email from The Associated Press asking for comment or to be connected to their legal counsel.

Both Marines are from 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division and are accused of being part of a ring of drug dealers that included three civilians, according to the indictment.

Whisenant and three civilians were charged with conspiring to distribute narcotics, including to the Marine who overdosed. White was charged in the indictment with being an accessory after the fact.

From November 2019 to September 2020, members of the group are accused of being involved in multiple sales of fentanyl-laced oxycodone to an undercover agent, for roughly \$1,000 or more for each transaction, according to the indictment.

Jordan Nicholas McCormick would

obtain drugs, including oxycodone pills containing fentanyl, cocaine and other substances from an unknown source.

Another civilian, Gutavo Jaciel Solis, supplied the drugs for Whisenant's military customers, according to the indictment.

On May 22, Whisenant ordered 10 oxycodone pills containing fentanyl from Solis on behalf of the Marine, who died the next day from an overdose, according to the indictment. Whisenant and White met Solis with the Marine to complete the drug deal, according to court records. White is accused of later trying to interfere with the arrests of Whisenant and Solis.

Solis and another civilian member of the group, Jessica Sarah Perez, were in-

dicted on Aug. 11 on fentanyl and cocaine distribution charges, and Solis was indicted on firearms-related charges. They have pleaded not guilty. Their trial date is scheduled for October 27.

Solis is in federal custody and Perez is free on \$25,000 bond. McCormick is also in federal custody. McCormick could not be reached for comment, and it was unclear if he has a lawyer.

Lt. Cameron Edinburgh said the military has been helping with the investigation.

"Our hearts go out to the family, friends, and service members of the Marine who passed away," Edinburgh said in an email. "We will continue to fully cooperate with the civilian authorities on this matter."

Cutter docks in Japan for repairs after fire

By CATLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Waesche* docked here Tuesday for inspection and possible repairs after a 90-minute fire damaged the ship at sea on Sunday, according to a Coast Guard statement.

Five crew members were hurt fighting a fire in the exhaust stack and nearby areas after black smoke was reported on board at 5:18 p.m. Sunday, the statement said. The injuries were not serious and were treated by the cutter's medical team.

Coast Guard photos show orange flames shooting from the *Waesche* into the night sky.

"The rapid response and courageous efforts from the crew members aboard *Waesche* to quickly contain and extinguish the fire are a testament to the bravery and skill of this crew," the cutter's commander, Capt. Jason Ryan, said in the statement.

Investigators in Yokosuka are assessing the *Waesche* to determine the fire's cause and the extent of the damages, according to the Coast Guard statement.

"While at Fleet Forces Yoko-

suka, the cutter will undergo further inspection and potentially repairs," the statement said.

Yokosuka is home to the U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility and Japan Regional Maintenance Center.

The *Waesche* left its homeport in Alameda, Calif., on Aug. 22 to patrol the Western Pacific. Its crew was scheduled "to engage in professional exchanges and capacity-building exercises with partner nations" in the region, according to the Coast Guard.

At more than 400 feet long and with crews of about 150, national security cutters "are among the largest and most technologically sophisticated vessels in the Coast Guard's fleet," according to the statement.

This is at least the second blaze aboard a Coast Guard cutter this year. In August, a fire aboard the Coast Guard cutter *Healy*, one of two U.S. icebreakers, put a temporary end to U.S. patrols in the Arctic Ocean.

An electrical fire in a main propulsion motor broke out shortly after the *Healy* departed Seward, Alaska, bound for the Arctic Ocean with 11 scientists aboard. The crew extinguished the fire



Aidan Cooney/U.S. Coast Guard

An investigator aboard the Coast Guard cutter *Waesche* looks back toward the superstructure after the vessel caught fire in the Pacific Ocean on Saturday.

within a half-hour and no injuries resulted.

Since last year, the Coast Guard has upped its presence in the increasingly contentious Western Pacific. In 2019, the cutters *Bertholf* and *Stratton* sailed through the region "for a combined 326 days," according to the service.

The ships combat illegal fishing, train with foreign coast guards and monitor and enforce United Nations Security Council resolutions against North Korea "on vessels conducting ship-to-ship transfers in the East China, South China and Yellow Seas," according to the statement.

Also last year, the Coast Guard made history when the cutter *Bertholf* joined the USS *Curtis Wilbur* on a transit of the Taiwan Strait, the first time a cutter had done so.

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Blast kills explosives experts surveying WWII munitions on Guadalcanal

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Two explosives experts were killed Sunday in a blast in the Solomon Islands while surveying munitions left over from World War II, according to police and the aid group they worked for.

The men, one British and one Australian, worked for Norwegian People's Aid and died when an explosion ripped their home and office in the Tasabe residential area of West Honiara on Guadalcanal, according to a statement Monday from the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force.

The two were working on a "non-technical survey of explosive remnants" of the war, according to the police statement.

"We do not know what exactly happened that led to the bomb blast," but a prelimi-

nary investigation indicates the pair had several pieces of unexploded ordnance, or UXO, at their home "and they may have been conducting some UXO work," said police Inspector Clifford Tunuki, who is overseeing the investigation, in the statement.

Killed were Luke Atkinson, a New Zealander with British and Irish citizenship, and Trent Lee, an Australian, the aid group said in a statement Sunday.

"Our primary focus for the time being is taking good care of the next of kin of our two deceased colleagues as well as our 19 program staff in the Solomon Islands," said Per Håkon Breivik, the Norwegian People's Aid director for mine action and disarmament, in the statement.

Tunuki said the police had "a good

working relationship with the NPA project and so we are concerned that they decided to conduct UXO operations within a residential area," according to the police statement.

Police removed other unexploded ordnance discovered at the property, he said.

Norwegian People's Aid, a nongovernmental organization that has been working in the Solomons since 2019, has suspended its operation, according to the statement.

The group has been helping island authorities create a database of known and suspected unexploded ordnance.

Guadalcanal, the Solomons' main island, was the site of the first major U.S. ground offensive against the Japanese empire.

Between Aug. 7, 1942, and Feb. 9, 1943, air, land and sea battles there claimed the

lives of about 30,000 Japanese and 7,000 U.S. and Allied troops along with two U.S. aircraft carriers, numerous other ships and hundreds of aircraft before Japanese forces evacuated.

"Our objective in this program is to contribute to a safer Solomon Islands free from explosive remnants from the Second World War," Breivik said in the statement.

This year the group has found and reported 500 items of unexploded ordnance on Guadalcanal, according to the statement.

Solomon Islands police explosive ordnance teams are the only entity authorized to render safe, move and dispose of unexploded ordnance found in the country, the group said.

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MILITARY

Astral Knight aims skyward to protect Europe

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — U.S. and other NATO forces are practicing how to fend off an attack in central Europe, bringing together B-52 bombers, fighters and missile defenses for a drill simulating a large-scale battle.

The U.S.-led Astral Knight 20, taking place in Poland this week, involves countering threats ranging from ballistic and cruise missiles to aircraft and drones, said Maj. Gen. Derek C. France, U.S. Air Forces in Europe's director of operations, strategic deterrence and nuclear integration.

"It's about putting the right force to defend against the right threat, in the right place at the right time," France said in Wednesday in a call with reporters. "If we do that, our operators will hit home runs all day long."

Russia wasn't specifically named as the threat allies were countering. But the U.S. military in Europe in recent years has focused on boosting air and missile defense capabilities in connection with concerns about Russia's military buildup along NATO's eastern flank.

Astral Knight, in its second iteration, is one of the military's newest exercises in Europe and reflects a broader push by the Pentagon to prepare forces for

potentially fighting sophisticated adversaries like Russia and China.

The exercise, slated to end Friday, also features the U.S.'s Patriot air defense system, which U.S. Army Europe brought to a military base in Szymany, Poland. The Patriots, along with Polish ground systems and allied airpower, are focused on defending and protecting urban centers and other priorities from attack, Polish Air Force Maj. Gen. Ireneusz Starzynski said.

U.S. Air Force aircraft involved include F-16s, F-15s, the KC-135 Stratotanker, KC-10 Extender and the B-52 Stratofortress. Polish F-16 fighters, Su-22 ground attack jets and Mi-17 helicopters also are part of the exercise.

The training involves a combination of flight operations and computer-assisted scenarios.

This exercise aims to develop and use a regional air and missile defense system. The key, France said, was to integrate command and control elements so that U.S. and allied forces can communicate seamlessly in battle.

By the end of the week, allied militaries will be a "stronger, more combat-ready, combined force," France said.

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Above: Members of the 606th Air Control Squadron operate the Theater Operationally Resilient Command and Control system during Astral Knight 20 in Poland on Tuesday.

TORY CUSIMANO/U.S. Air Force



Left: An Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon departs Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, on Monday in support of Astral Knight 20.

JOSHUA R.M. DEWBERRY/U.S. Air Force

Esports: Air Force urges its gamers not to engage trolls, but they can be tricky

FROM FRONT PAGE

"This is the future, gaming and esports are not going away anytime soon," Cooper said. "The Air Force absolutely sees the potential of what this can be. This is us really dipping our toes in the kiddie pool of esports and gaming."

Cooper said that recruiting is not the focus. "While each branch has its own objectives, we decided to focus our program on entertaining our Airmen and providing a place for them to connect. This is not a recruitment tool for us," he said.

But in one prerecorded two-hour episode shared with Stars and Stripes, there was a break in the Call of Duty matches to show a video of a pilot with the F-22 Raptor Demonstration team showing viewers the inside of the plane and aerial maneuvers.

The Air Force moved forward after a survey this year of more than 377,000 airmen — men and women — between the rank of E-1 and O-14 to gauge the branch's interest in gaming and esports. Nearly 35,000 service members responded globally across all installations, marking one of the greatest response rates for any internal survey, according to an Air Force news release.

The survey also found that video games is a top hobby for Air Force men and women. Of those who participated in the sur-

vey, 98% said they spend at least three hours gaming per week, with more than 54% playing over 10 hours. Of that, 81% of men and women surveyed said they spend at least three hours a week watching gaming or esports content on Twitch and YouTube.

The most popular games in the Air Force are first-person shooters such as Call of Duty, Overwatch and Halo. A quarter of troops prefer battle-royal games such as Apex Legends and Fortnite.

The first and last episodes of the series are live shows. A new episode streams on the Air Force's esports channel each Saturday through Halloween. Episodes two through five focus on Air Force men and women at a different base, which was picked by the number of troops who participated in the gaming survey. The bases that showed the most interest in esports are Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, Davis Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona, and Joint Base Langley Eustis in Virginia.

"Based on those responses, we were able to highlight the top four installations," Cooper said. "Those are the installations we did the series on."

— More than 3,100 airmen — male and female — were interested in competing in esports and game streaming for the Air

Force, according to a release. Officials narrowed the list to 103 eligible participants based on skill and who "embodied what it means to be an Airman"; the final 29 were selected after meeting skill requirements and schedule availability. The ages range from 19 to 35, but the average service member participating is under 25, according to a roster of participants.

The Air Force sought to field its first esports team at EVO 2020, the largest and longest-running fighting-game tournament in the world, where players compete in games like Tekken 7, Street Fighter V and Dragon Ball FighterZ. However, the tournament was canceled in July after sexual misconduct allegations involving the organizer.

Many service branches are turning to esports as a recruiting tool. In March, the Navy launched a video-gaming team called Goats & Glory that practices, streams and competes from a specially designed facility in Tennessee. The Army started its esports team last year and credited it as one of the reasons the service met its 2019 recruiting goal.

The military's push into the online gaming space as a recruitment and branding opportunity has hit snags, ranging from social media scandals to an attempt by Congress to squash the Pentagon's streaming efforts altogether.

This summer, the Army esports team went on a five-week hiatus after it banned spammers and trolls from its Twitch channel for bringing up U.S. war crimes in the chat, which sparked concerns of First Amendment violations.

Courts have ruled that government-run social media cannot exclude people, because those accounts are considered public forums. Last year, a federal appeals court ruled that President Donald Trump could not block people on Twitter for criticizing or mocking him.

The issue caught brief attention on Capitol Hill. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., introduced a measure to block funding for military recruitment efforts on Twitch, arguing that many users of the platform are too young to be eligible to enlist or commission. The effort was crushed on the House floor in a 292-126 vote.

Last year, the Navy esports team had to pause streaming on two occasions. A sailor was kicked off Goats & Glory, the Navy's official esports team that streams on Twitch. Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Chandler streamed himself playing with "close friends" who had offensive user names. Two of them — "Nagasaki" and "Japan 1945" referenced the U.S. atomic bomb attacks against Japan. The other person the sailor hosted on his

stream was "Gamer Word," a reference to offensive, derogatory language.

Earlier this month, a National Guard soldier said an anti-Semitic phrase after being baited by a troll. Axel "Zexx0G" Torres was streaming Call of Duty: Modern Warfare when he called a user by an online handle, thanking him for following the channel. Thanking users for a follow is common practice on Twitch. The issue was the new follower went by the name of "emillionwast nough," referencing genocide by the Nazis against the Jews during the Holocaust.

It is also a common practice of Twitch trolls to make their usernames offensive, but spell them in a way that might not be immediately obvious, to get the streamer to say something offensive.

The Air Force is encouraging its gamers not to engage trolls, and are concerned about the especially venomous online harassment female troops might encounter.

"We are well aware that female gamers endure the brunt of bullying and harassment online," Cooper said. "It's unacceptable. Our Airmen are encouraged to ignore the trolls and focus on their passion for gaming and esports."

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WAR/MILITARY

Afghan officials: Taliban attack kills at least 28 police officers

By TAMEEM AKHRAR
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban launched a wave of attacks on security checkpoints in southern Afghanistan overnight, killing a total of 28 Afghan police officers, officials said Wednesday.

The violence comes even as Taliban leaders and Afghan government-appointed negotiators are holding historic peace talks in Qatar, a Mideast country where the Taliban set up a political office after they were toppled from power in the 2001 U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan. The negotiations, which started earlier this month, are meant to end the fighting and establish a roadmap for a post-war society.

According to the provincial governor's spokesman Zelig Ebad, in southern Uzrun late Tuesday in southern Uzrun province.

A Taliban spokesman, Qari Mohammad Yusuf Ahmadi, claimed responsibility for the attacks and said the insurgents carried them out after the police in the area refused to surrender to the insurgents.

Ebad, meanwhile, said the policemen were killed after they had surrendered. The discrepancy in their accounts could not immediately be resolved. The remoteness of the area makes it impossible to independently verify either version of events.

Reinforcements were not able to get to the outposts to save the besieged officers, but Ebad said

Afghan security forces were later back in charge of the checkpoints. The Taliban seized weapons found at the scene before fleeing the checkpoints.

In the negotiations in Qatar, the two sides have so far have spent more than a week deciding on their agendas and the specific manner in which the two sides will be conducting the negotiations.

Both the government in Kabul and the United States have called for a reduction of violence while talks are being held in Qatar, but the Taliban have repeatedly said that they would not commit to a reduction of violence until the terms of a cease-fire are negotiated and resolved. Deep mistrust continues to persist on both sides of the table.



HUSSEIN SAYED/AP

A Taliban delegation attends the opening session of the peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban in Doha, Qatar, on Saturday, Sept. 12.

Search for missing US soldier expanded

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — New information collected during the investigation into Pvt. Richard Halliday's disappearance from Fort Bliss in July has lead officials at the base to expand their search efforts and seek the public's help in locating the soldier.

New evidence uncovered by special agents with U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, known as CID, suggests Halliday went missing about 12 hours earlier than originally believed, said Lt. Col. Allie Payne, spokeswoman for the 1st Armored Division at Fort Bliss. This has led the base to broaden search efforts.

"There is no indication of foul play at this point, but we have not completely ruled it out, and will continue to conduct a thorough investigation," according to a statement from Army CID. "Due to the ongoing investigation, we are not releasing any further information at this time."

Halliday, a 21-year-old soldier with the 32nd Army Air Missile Defense Command, was thought to have been last seen leaving the west Texas base on July 24. Officials now can only confirm that he was seen as recently as about 6 p.m. July 23, Payne said.

Halliday was on restricted movement at the time of his disappearance. Payne had said the soldier had "fled from his escorts."

"It remains uncertain how or when Pvt. Halliday departed Fort Bliss," she said in a statement.



Patricia Hallyday

Pvt. Richard Halliday has been missing from Fort Bliss since July 24.

"Fort Bliss and the soldier's unit have conducted active searches on and off base, and have pursued all leads as they have been received. However, we are widening and increasing our search to include in and around El Paso. We are asking for the community's support in the search for this young man and distribution of notice that he may be missing."

Halliday's parents asked earlier this month for the public's help in finding their son. The Hallidays, who live in Florida, were unaware that he was even missing until they called his unit in late August because they had not heard from him in more than a month.

Halliday is listed as AWOL "for administrative purposes to allow for the continued dedication of proper resources in the search for this young man," Payne said. She had said earlier this month that after Halliday was missing for 30 days that he was considered a deserter.

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Pakistan: 2 soldiers killed in Kashmir

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's military said two of its soldiers were killed Wednesday by Indian fire in an "unprovoked cease-fire violation" in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

In a statement, it said Pakistani troops responded by targeting the Indian posts where the fire originated, causing "substantial damage" on the Indian side.

The Indian military accused Pakistan of initiating the clashes, saying Pakistani troops fired bullets and mortar shells along the Line of Control in the southern Poonch district early Wednesday. India did not report any casualties.

India and Pakistan routinely accused each other of unprovoked attacks along the tense Kashmir frontier in violation of a 2003 cease-fire agreement. Pakistan said India has violated the truce more than

2,000 times this year alone.

The region is split between the two countries, which each claim it in its entirety. India and Pakistan have fought two wars over Kashmir.

Tensions soared in February 2019, when Pakistan shot down an Indian warplane in Kashmir and captured a pilot in response to an airstrike by Indian aircraft targeting militants inside Pakistan. India said the strikes targeted Pakistan-based militants responsible for a suicide bombing that killed 40 Indian troops in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir.

Relations have been further strained since August of last year, when India revoked the Muslim-majority region's decades-old semi-autonomous status, touching off anger on both sides of the frontier. Since then, troops have frequently traded fire, leaving dozens of civilians and soldiers dead on both sides.

House bill orders VA to change its motto

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The House passed bipartisan legislation Tuesday to change the Department of Veterans Affairs motto to be more inclusive of women who served.

The VA motto, which has been the same for 61 years, is a quote from President Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address in 1865: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."

"The Honoring All Veterans Act would change the motto to read: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those 'who shall have borne the battle' and for their families, caregivers, and survivors."

The House approved the bill Tuesday without objection. It was sponsored by Reps. Kathleen Rice, D-N.Y., and Brian Mast, R-Fla., and gained the support of Republican members of the House Committee on Veterans'

Affairs. Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., the ranking Republican on the committee, said the legislation would ensure "the brave service of all veterans, men and women alike, is rightfully honored by VA's mission statement."

Some female veterans and advocates, such as Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, have pushed for a gender-neutral version of the motto since 2017. The VA initially rejected the proposal. More recently, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie has sought new ways to engrain the motto within the department.

Wilkie announced in May his intent to install plaques inscribed with the VA motto, using male-only pronouns, in 145 cemeteries nationwide. The first plaques were installed this summer.

In August, Wilkie dedicated the plaque installed at the Camp Butler National Cemetery in Springfield, Ill., the town where Lincoln lived before becoming president.

"Today's VA welcomes all veterans, including the 10% of all

veterans who are women. The words that brought us here should not to be diluted, parsed or cancelled," Wilkie said at the dedication. "The words that brought us here ought to be preserved as they were spoken and displayed so every generation understands the origin of America's progress in becoming the most tolerant nation on earth."

The bill moves on to the Senate, which must approve the measure before it can be sent to the White House. It's uncertain whether the Senate will consider the legislation.

Also on Tuesday, the House approved five other bills regarding veterans, one of which would prohibit the VA from collecting co-payments from any veteran who is a member of a Native American tribe. Another measure would standardize treatment options for veterans diagnosed with prostate cancer and allow them more access to clinical trials.

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MILITARY

Witchcraft-obsessed killer, who was briefly a soldier, is executed

By MICHAEL TARM
Associated Press

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. — The U.S. government on Tuesday executed a former soldier who said an obsession with witchcraft led him to kill a Georgia nurse he believed had put a spell on him.

William Emmett LeCroy, 50, was pronounced dead at 9:06 p.m. EDT after receiving a lethal injection at the same U.S. prison in Terre Haute, Ind., where five others have been executed in 2020 following a 17-year period without a federal execution.

Lawyers had asked President Donald Trump in a petition to commute LeCroy's sentence to life in prison, saying that LeCroy's brother, Georgia State Trooper Chad LeCroy, was killed during a routine traffic stop in 2010 and that another son's death would devastate their family.

LeCroy, a blue sheet pulled up to his neck, kept his eyes fixed on the ceiling, not turning his head to look at any witnesses behind the death chamber's glass windows. His spiritual adviser, Sister Barbara Battista, stood a few feet away inside the chamber, her head bowed and reading from a prayer book.

LeCroy had told her last week that he didn't want to play into what he called the "theater" surrounding his execution and may not make a statement before he died. When a prison official leaned over him Tuesday night, gently pulled off LeCroy's face mask and asked if he had any last words, he responded calmly and matter-of-factly. "Sister Battista is able to receive in the postal service my last statement," he said.

LeCroy kept his eyes open as the lethal injection was administered. His eyelids began to slowly close as his misdeed quickly began to heave uncontrollably for a minute or two. After sev-

eral more minutes, color drained from his limbs, his face turned ashen and his lips tinted blue. After about 10 minutes, an official with a stethoscope entered the chamber, felt LeCroy's wrist for a pulse and then listened to his heart before he was officially declared dead.

Another execution, of Christopher Valva, is scheduled Thursday. He would be the first African American on federal death row to be put to death in the series of federal executions this year.

Critics say the Justice Department's resumption of federal executions this year is a cynical bid to help Trump claim the mantle of law-and-order candidate leading up to Election Day. Supporters say Trump is bringing long-overdue justice to victims and their families.

William LeCroy broke into the Cherrylog, Ga., mountain home of 30-year-old Joann Lee Tiesler on Oct. 7, 2001, and waited for her to return from a shopping trip. When she walked through the door, LeCroy struck her with a shotgun, bound and raped her. He then slashed her throat and repeatedly stabbed her in the back.

LeCroy had known Tiesler because she lived near a relative's home and would often wave to her as he drove by. He later told investigators he'd come to believe she might have been his old baby-sitter he called Tinkerbell, who LeCroy claimed sexually molested him as a child. After killing Tiesler, he realized that couldn't possibly be true.

LeCroy joined the Army at 17 but was soon was discharged for going AWOL and later spoke about an interest in witchcraft that began during a previous stint in prison for burglary, child molestation and other charges.

House passes bill to clear path for posthumous MOH

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Army Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn Cashe is one step closer to receiving a posthumous Medal of Honor after the House passed a bill Tuesday night that waives the federally mandated time limit for presenting him the nation's highest award for valor.

The bill was filed following an Aug. 24 letter from Defense Secretary Mark Esper stating he believes Cashe should receive an upgrade from his Silver Star to the Medal of Honor for his actions in Iraq in 2005.

"Alwyn's a hero in the purest and most profound sense. What he did on that Iraq battlefield really takes your breath away," said Stephanie Murphy, D-Fla., Rep. Tuesday during a conference call. She said she has been working with Kasinal Cashe White, the soldier's sister, to honor him.

Murphy introduced the bill, H.R. 8276, to waive a federal law that generally requires a Medal of Honor to be awarded within five years of the actions that gave rise to the award, a requirement that Congress regularly waives. She introduced the bill alongside Reps. Michael Waltz, R-Fla., and Dan Crenshaw, R-Texas, who are both veterans. The House approved the bill by unanimous consent.

"With unanimous passage of our bill by the House today, we are one step closer to ensuring that Alwyn Cashe receives the Medal of Honor he earned," Murphy said. "I am grateful that so many Americans are learning of and being inspired by SFC Cashe's heroic actions, which are so extraordinary they nearly defy description."

Cashe was 35 when he died Nov. 5, 2005, at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio



U.S. Army

Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn Cashe died after saving fellow soldiers from a burning vehicle in Iraq in 2005. Lawmakers are working to upgrade his Silver Star to a posthumous Medal of Honor.

from injuries sustained Oct. 17. While deployed with the 3rd Infantry Division in Samarra, Iraq, Cashe was riding in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle that rolled over a roadside bomb which exploded. The vehicle was quickly engulfed in flames.

Cashe was relatively unharmed, but drenched in fuel, according to his Silver Star award citation. He then made numerous trips to and from the burning vehicle to extract his fellow soldiers, even while his own clothing continued to catch fire. He suffered second- and third-degree burns on more than 72% of his body. His actions saved the lives of six soldiers.

"It's not every day you read an extraordinary story like Alwyn Cashe's," Waltz said in a statement. "His bravery in the face of danger has inspired so many already — and this is a significant step forward to properly recognize him for his heroism. I'm incredibly proud to see the House of Representatives come together in favor of this legislation to award

him the Medal of Honor. Now we need our colleagues in the Senate to pass our bill."

Cashe was born in Sanford, Fla., and raised in Oviedo, both of which are located in Murphy's congressional district. He is buried in Sanford. After reading his story, Murphy connected with Kasinal Cashe White to rename a post office in Oviedo in Cashe's honor in 2018. Since then, she has continued to work with White to upgrade his award to a Medal of Honor.

White told reporters Tuesday that upgrading her brother's medal has been her passion and Murphy has "moved mountains" in the bureaucratic process.

Murphy, Crenshaw and Waltz wrote a letter to Esper in October 2019 urging him consider upgrading the award. Last month, Esper wrote back and agreed. However, he said a waiver from Congress was first necessary.

"Once legislation is enacted authorizing the president of the United States to award, if he so chooses, the Medal of Honor to SFC Cashe, I will provide my endorsement to the president," Esper wrote.

With Murphy's bill through the House, it now must clear the Senate, where she fears it may not come up for a vote, despite strong bipartisan support. As a backup plan, the congressman added language to the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2021 that would waive the time limit for Cashe's award.

"What's undeniable is that Alwyn Cashe is an American hero who did incredibly brave things and who deserves the Medal of Honor," Murphy said. "One way or the other, we're going to get this done."

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Dems seek probe into DOJ's coronavirus fund following article

By AARON GREGG
AND YEGANEH TORBATI
The Washington Post

Congressional Democrats sharply criticized a Defense Department decision to repurpose a \$1 billion coronavirus fund into an economic stimulus for defense contractors, a change the lawmakers say violated congressional intent. Two lawmakers asked for an investigation and public hearings on the matter following a Washington Post article that revealed the change.

The funds, set aside under the Cares Act economic stimulus package passed in March, were given to the Pentagon to "prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus." But the Defense Department, acting in consultation

with the White House Office of Management and Budget, as well as other federal agencies, decided to divert most of that funding toward long-standing defense concerns such as drone technology, body armor and dress uniforms.

Reps. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., and Barbara Lee, D-Calif., called for a formal investigation reviewing the legality of the DOD's decision to use any of the coronavirus funding for defense industry stimulus.

"For the Administration to choose to use funds Congress made available to fight COVID-19 on the wish lists of defense contractors, instead of first protecting troops and the general public from the spread of the coronavirus, is unconscionable and should be investigated fully and pro-

secuted if warranted," Pocan and Lee wrote in a letter to House Majority Whip James Clyburn, D-S.C.; Oversight and Reform Committee Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y.; and House Armed Services Chairman Adam Smith, D-Wash.

Jessica R. Maxwell, a DOD spokesperson, said "as with all congressional correspondence, we will respond directly to the authors of the letter."

Smith, whose committee position would have put him in close contact with the Defense Department as it developed its spending plans, said the decision to repurpose funds shows how the Trump administration "continues to exploit the trust of the American people." It was unclear from the release whether he intended to in-

vestigate the issue further, but he noted that DOD's latest request for another \$5.3 billion in Defense Production Act investments has come without a "properly detailed" spending plan.

"Instead of focusing on a clear, coordinated strategy to produce and acquire the medical supplies necessary to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis, the Trump Administration carved up this billion-dollar appropriation and spent three dollars on defense contracts for every dollar it spent on acquiring health resources," Smith wrote in a news release.

Shortly after they decided to repurpose the funds, top DOD procurement officials explained their reasoning to members of Congress, arguing that the \$1 billion could be diverted because

the Department of Health and Human Services had accessed other funds. And in a statement to The Post on Monday, they argued that funding niche defense capabilities is essential to maintaining the economic and national security of the United States.

"We are thankful the Congress provided authorities and resources that enabled the (executive branch) to invest in domestic production of critical medical resources and protect key defense capabilities from the consequences of COVID." Undersecretary of Defense Ellen Lord said in a statement. "We need to always remember that economic security and national security are very tightly interrelated and our industrial base is really the nexus of the two."

MILITARY

Injured Army musician clutch with a crutch

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

Spc. Jessica Tang has been playing clarinet since she was 9, but with perfect pitch, she can pick up almost any woodwind instrument and make music — including, it turns out, her crutches.

Stuck in holdover status after a severe injury during Army basic training, Tang used duct tape and ingenuity to fashion a mouthpiece that turned a crutch's adjustable leg segment into a flute.

"I could make one in about three minutes," Tang said, and she often did so with the plentiful crutches of other trainees at sick call several times a week.

Last month, she posted a video to the social media site Reddit that shows her resting the awkward crutch-flute on her shoulder as she plays a series of compositions.

But the crutch-flute wasn't just for fun. It helped keep her head and hands tuned up for an important first audition at advanced individual training in the Army School of Music.

"I'm just a really competitive person," said the 23-year-old, who is now with the Virginia National Guard's 29th Infantry Division Band in Troutville, in a recent



JESSICA TANG/Instagram

Spc. Jessica Tang plays a song on a crutch that she modified like a flute after sustaining a serious leg injury during basic training.

phone interview.

The senior producer of the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own," who happened to be the director of Tang's high school jazz ensemble, saw her video on a messaging app his military band uses.

"Hey, that's my student Jessica," Sgt. Maj. Scott Weinhold recalled saying when he saw the 55-second video. The band plans to feature her on its Instagram.

Weinhold has directed the jazz

group at McLean High School in Virginia for about 16 years. He often throws students "curveballs," such as changing up how a piece is played, to spur adaptability and creativity.

Tang, who writes novels and makes Chinese papercut artworks, is plenty creative, he said. Weinhold also discusses with students the challenges he faced in auditioning for Pershing's Own — it took him two tries to make

it in. Weinhold "was an absolute titan in my world," Tang said, crediting his influence and getting to play alongside his Army bandmates during high school as a "huge inspiration" for her becoming a military musician. She'd initially considered it a "pipe dream."

It wasn't until her fourth year of college last year that she went for it and shipped to basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Then life threw her a curveball.

Days shy of graduating in March 2019, she fell from the Berlin Wall obstacle in a "freak accident" that left her with a broken leg.

"Don't chapter me," she recalled telling her drill sergeants right after falling from the wall soldiers scale with a rope. Then she told them she could feel her bones rubbing together.

After surgery and recovery at home, she returned to holdover status for more than a month while waiting to go to the Fitness Training Unit, where soldiers either rehabilitate or await medical discharge. Because she remained under discipline similar to that of basic training, her initial requests for her clarinet were denied. She feared she'd grow rusty and bomb her audition.

"You do have to stay on the top of your game," said Weinhold, a competitive triathlete who teaches students about the importance of visualization in training for both music and sports.

"There are ways to practice your musicianship without playing your instrument," he said, but for many musicians, playing "almost becomes an obsession."

Musicians in basic training are typically told they'll be apart from their instruments for a couple of months. Tang, who initially couldn't do anything without crutches — not even shower — spent a year in the training and rehab pipeline.

She had kept the makeshift instruments a secret for a while, but one day a drill sergeant followed the strains of "The Army Song" down a hallway to a room where Tang was practicing.

After a brief interruption, "he just looks at me and says, 'Carry on, private,'" she said.

She eventually got her clarinet while in rehab, but believes the modified crutches gave her an edge when she got to band school, where she finished among the top of her class in March.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

DODEA schools in S. Korea to reopen as restrictions eased

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Schools on U.S. bases in South Korea will open next month, officials said Wednesday, as the military announced it is easing coronavirus restrictions thanks to a decline in the number of cases nationwide.

Department of Defense Education Activity had given parents a choice of sending their children back to in-person or virtual classes amid the pandemic. However, the schools were forced to revert to online education after South Korea suffered a new outbreak in mid-August.

U.S. Forces Korea raised its coronavirus risk level to substantial, in military terms Health Protection Condition-Charlie, on Aug. 16, the day before teachers had been due to report back to work after summer vacation.

The command announced Wednesday that it's lowering the alert level to Bravo for most areas beginning at 4 p.m. Thursday, although personnel will still be barred from unofficial travel to Seoul and surrounding areas.

DODEA followed suit, announcing that students who opted for in-person learning could begin classes. The virtual school option will continue accordingly.

"We have begun the process of transitioning to the brick and mortar learning environment," regional superintendent Jeff Arrington said in a memo. "At this time we are planning to resume in-person instruction on (Oct. 5) at all of our schools in Korea."

Remote instruction will continue through Sept. 30 to provide continuity, but no live sessions will be allowed for a few days to allow teachers to prepare their classrooms and receive training on coronavirus prevention measures, he said.

Laptops that were signed out for remote learning should be returned by Oct. 2 to ensure the schools have sufficient resources for classroom learning, he added.

Students also will be required to respond to health questionnaires and wear masks while in school.

Other safety measures will include social distancing, disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, clear physical barriers in cafeterias as well as individual portable barriers for all students, it said.

Wednesday's decision to lower the health protection condition to Bravo also will allow troops, family members and civilian employees to eat out at restaurants and conduct other recreational activities and travel off base.

However, the command said bars and other adults-only establishments remain off-limits and personnel

must maintain the usual safeguards against the virus, including wearing masks at all times when off their installations.

Travel to Seoul and surrounding cities also is not allowed except for official business, although people who are stationed at Yongsan Garrison and the nearby K-16 base may go to restaurants and other facilities in their local communities, USFK said.

The number of confirmed cases has been declining in South Korea after a new outbreak began in mid-August. Health authorities reported three consecutive days of double-digit figures, although the official tally rose to 110 on Wednesday.

"Once again, the [South Korean] government has done an exceptional job in effectively containing and suppressing the recent outbreak of COVID-19," USFK commander Gen. Robert Abrams said in a press release, referring to the respiratory disease caused by the virus.

"Our record speaks for itself. We will continue to monitor and assess the virus as we have done since January, and will maintain our aggressive approach to identify, contain and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within our formations, installations and communities," Abrams said.

USFK, which comprises a military community of about 58,000 people, raised its coronavirus risk level to substantial, in military terms Health Protection Condition-Charlie, after the pandemic began to take hold in late February. Condition Bravo indicates a lower, moderate risk of coronavirus infection.

USFK briefly lowered the risk level to Bravo in August but reimposed strict safeguards against a new outbreak began on Aug. 14 in the Seoul metropolitan area.

"Based on South Korea's current COVID-19 situation returning to favorable conditions, USFK has adjusted its current health protection condition from 'Charlie' to 'Bravo' for Areas I, III, IV and the Yongsan and Songnam districts within Area II," effective 4 p.m. Thursday, USFK said. "All other districts within Area II will remain in HPCON Charlie for the time being."

The 110 cases reported Wednesday raised South Korea's total to 23,216, with 388 deaths.

USFK has reported 193 cases, but most of those were among troops and other personnel who tested positive after traveling to South Korea from the United States.

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Bahrain: Teacher worried about return to school

FROM FRONT PAGE

Bahrain has the world's fifth-highest per capita rate of confirmed coronavirus infections over the past seven days and the second-highest since the pandemic began its spread, The New York Times reported.

As of Wednesday, the country had an average of 690 daily cases, or about 43 per 100,000 people.

The Navy says commanders may consider lowering an HPCON level to Bravo when there are less than 50 cases per 100,000 local residents per week.

Easing the health threat level is "also based on our ability to conduct testing and to care for those who are infected by the coronavirus," Navy Capt. Gregory Smith, the base's commanding officer, said in an Sept. 10 video message,

shortly after 5th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Samuel Paparo Jr. made that decision.

However, the return to the classroom has teachers worried, said Linda Hogan, the president and executive director of the Overseas Federation of Teachers, the union representing DODEA teachers working in Spain, Turkey, Bahrain and Italy.

In a letter sent to Michelle Howard-Brabaney, DODEA's Europe South District superintendent, the union's Bahrain representatives urged DODEA to delay the reopening "until the current health conditions in Bahrain improve."

The country is experiencing "the highest surge in cases since the pandemic began," the letter said. "These statistics matter because our students, staff members

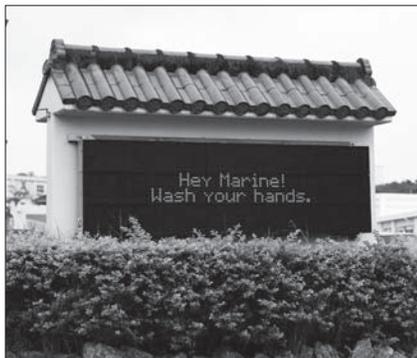
and their families live off base in all areas of Bahrain."

Hogan said in an interview Wednesday she thinks DODEA is pushing to reopen "because the military members need their kids in school. I'm hearing this everywhere. I got just in Bahrain — they want their kids back in school so the military members can do their mission."

"We understand that," Hogan said. "But these are unusual times (and) I think the military can do their mission at the same time while keeping teachers safe."

The school will require masks, space desks at least 6 feet apart and follow other safety precautions upon reopening, military and school officials said.

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KAMERON HERNDON/U.S. Marine Corps

A sign outside Gunner's Fitness Center on Camp Foster, Okinawa, reminds Marines to wash their hands to guard against the coronavirus.

Marines report new virus patient in Japan as total infections fall

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The U.S. military in Japan reported one new patient infected with the coronavirus as of 6 p.m. Wednesday, an individual affiliated with the Marine Corps on Okinawa.

That person tested positive while still in the mandatory quarantine period required of new arrivals to Japan or returning from travel abroad, according to a post on Facebook by Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

The Marines reported two new cases on Okinawa on Tuesday, both individuals in quarantine.

U.S. Forces Japan requires all U.S. military personnel arriving in Japan to spend two weeks in quarantine and test free of the virus before being released. Most of the military's new coronavirus cases now are discovered in quarantine among returning travelers and new arrivals rather than in personnel already in Japan, according to recent military accounts.

The U.S. military in Japan reports new case numbers but does not typically identify the patient as a service member, Defense Department civilian employee or family member.

Also Wednesday, the commander of Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo lifted a ban on public transportation during peak commuting hours. Now anyone affiliated with the base may ride local buses and trains at any time. However, the order by Col. Andrew Campbell stipulates travelers must wear masks and if a train is too crowded, wait for another.

Campbell on Sept. 10 permitted Yokota personnel to travel on planes, trains and buses within Japan but not during the morning and evening periods when Japanese commuters pack trains and

buses to standing room only.

Yokota has the widest permissible travel area of the U.S. military bases in Japan. Campbell on Sept. 10 opened all of the country, except Okinawa and central Tokyo, for off-duty travel by base personnel. Traveling shinkansen, or bullet train, is also permitted and people may ride local trains into central Tokyo to board them.

Yokota last reported a new coronavirus case on Sept. 17, an individual that tested positive at Haneda International Airport.

In Tokyo, the number of new cases reported daily fell a fifth day in a row to 59 on Wednesday, according to public broadcaster NHK, which cited the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

From 220 new coronavirus patients reported Friday, case numbers in Tokyo fell steadily to 88 on Tuesday, according to metro government data.

Numbers of new cases also waned on Okinawa, home to the largest concentration of U.S. troops in Japan.

Okinawa prefecture reported 13 infections Wednesday, a public health official told Stars and Stripes by phone. The prefecture recorded 42 new cases over "Silver Week," the recently concluded four-day Japanese holiday, according to the prefectural website. As recently as August, Okinawa reported as many as 159 new patients in a day.

The prefecture, where 45 have died of coronavirus complications, has reported no deaths linked to the virus in 10 days.

Stars and Stripes reporter Aya Ichihashi contributed to this report. ditzler.joseph@stripes.com
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VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

Colorado announces mandatory furlough for state workers

Associated Press

DENVER — Colorado Gov. Jared Polis announced mandatory furloughs of state workers due to pandemic-related budget cuts, and warned Tuesday about a third wave of coronavirus outbreaks if the state's upward trend continues.

The number of days are based on an employee's annual salary with exemptions for those necessary for the COVID-19 response, assisting Coloradans in finding jobs, and protecting public safety and roads, as well as workers earning \$50,000 a year or less.

Workers earning \$50,000 to \$70,000 will be furloughed for one day, \$70,000 to \$90,000 for two days, \$90,000 to \$140,000 for three days and above \$140,000 for four days.

Polis also said that Colorado had 654 new positive cases of the coronavirus Tuesday. The largest number of cases in the state is among 18-to-25 year-olds, most from the University of Colorado Boulder.

Hawaii

HONOLULU — Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell said Tuesday that the city plans to allow some activities that were shut down last month to control the spread of the coronavirus to resume under new guidelines.

Beginning Thursday, the city will allow social gatherings of up to five people, including at beaches and hiking trails. Retail businesses will be allowed to open at 50% of capacity.

Caldwell said Gov. David Ige verbally approved the new guidelines, but hadn't yet signed them.

Restaurants would be allowed to seat up to five diners at a table as long as the patrons provide their names and contact information so tracers can reach them later if necessary. Diners will have to wear masks when they are not eating.

The guidelines call for restrictions to be relaxed further if cases continue to drop.

The city will consider COVID-19 seven-day average case counts and seven-day average percentage of positive tests when determining how loose or restrictive to be.

Illinois

CHICAGO — Chicago officials Tuesday told visitors from Wisconsin for the second time that they must stay in quarantine for two weeks if they visit the city.

The order set to take effect Friday comes as Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers declared a "new public health emergency" because of a spike in coronavirus cases in that state and extended a state-

wide mask mandate there until Nov. 21.

Tuesday's order was not surprising after Allison Arwady, Chicago's health commissioner, said last week that Wisconsin would land on the list again if the state's case rate did not fall below 15 cases per 100,000.

But Wisconsin is not even close to that rate. On Tuesday, Arwady said with 31 cases per 100,000 residents, the state has the third-highest rate in the nation behind North Dakota and South Dakota.

Kentucky

FRANKFORT — Kentucky won swift federal approval for another infusion of extra unemployment payments for many people who lost work during the COVID-19 outbreak, Gov. Andy Beshear said Tuesday.

The go-ahead came one day after Beshear announced that his administration requested the supplemental \$400 in weekly jobless benefits for an additional three weeks. It means that qualified Kentuckians will receive higher benefits for the weeks of Aug. 22, Aug. 29 and Sept. 5, he said.

Beshear also reported 824 more COVID-19 cases statewide and seven more virus-related deaths.

With many schools preparing to resume in-person classes next week, the Democratic governor urged Kentuckians to redouble their efforts to contain the virus by wearing masks in public, adhering to social distancing guidelines and limiting contacts.

Nevada

CARSON CITY — As facilities throughout the United States prepare to expand the use of rapid coronavirus tests, Nevada officials are weighing how to incorporate them into the data they present to the public.

Since the start of the pandemic, the state has relied heavily on molecular tests — nasal or throat swabs that detect the virus's genetic material. The tests are comparatively expensive and time-intensive, requiring health care workers to collect and test samples.

Officials have expressed skepticism over tests found to be less accurate, including antigen tests, which check for viral proteins rather than the virus itself, and antibody tests, which check blood for proteins the body creates to fight the virus.

But now they are re-examining these tests and how to best use them. After entering into a \$760 million contract with medical device company Abbott Laboratories, the federal government is preparing to deploy 150 million rapid antigen tests to strategic sites throughout the country, in-



WILFREDO LEE/AP

Jackson Health System Public Safety Lt. Jesus Cendan, right, hands out free personal protective equipment to healthcare workers at Jackson Memorial Hospital on Tuesday in Miami. Hundreds of workers lined up for the PPE provided by the New York nonprofit Cut Red Tape 4 Heroes.

cluding to Nevada. These tests yield results in minutes, but they are generally considered to be a less accurate measure of infection.

Ohio

COLUMBUS — Indoor visits with residents of Ohio's nursing homes will be allowed once again as cold weather approaches, Gov. Mike DeWine said Tuesday, lifting a ban instituted at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Republican governor said at his twice-weekly coronavirus briefing that details will come within a week and that in the meantime, the state is asking long-term care facilities to examine their air filtration and ventilation systems in preparation.

DeWine also said it's possible the state could institute real-time COVID-19 testing of visitors before they enter a nursing home, although the ability to offer that isn't available yet.

The state has allowed outdoor visits since late July after concerns grew about residents with memory issues such as those that come with Alzheimer's disease declining because of a lack of interaction. Permitting the practice is up to individual nursing homes, although the governor said he is concerned when he hears reports that homes still don't allow the visits.

Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Department of Corrections on Tuesday reported that two more inmates have died

due to COVID-19, and seven other deaths are possibly the result of the disease caused by the coronavirus.

Of the department's nearly 25,000 inmates, 3,168 have tested positive for the virus, and 1,398 cases are currently active, according to DOC Director Scott Crow. The new numbers show increases of 554 positive cases and 414 active cases from Monday.

The nine deaths are an increase of six from the number reported a week ago. COVID-19 has been confirmed to be the cause of death for two inmates, while the seven other deaths are pending autopsies from the state medical examiner.

Crow said that difficulty in achieving social distancing within prisons has contributed to the increase in positive cases in recent weeks, in addition to resistance to wearing masks.

Texas

AUSTIN — The death toll from the coronavirus in Texas approached 15,000 on Tuesday as the total number of deaths across the United States topped 200,000, by far the highest in the world.

The Texas Department of State Health Services reported 2,964 confirmed new coronavirus cases and 77 more deaths due to COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus.

Health officials have said that there are more than 716,000 confirmed cases in Texas so far. The death toll is at 14,994.

The true number of cases is likely higher, however, because many people haven't been tested

and studies have suggested that people can be infected and not feel sick.

Utah

SALT LAKE CITY — Gov. Gary Herbert will increase pandemic restrictions in two Utah cities. But he stopped short of implementing any mask mandates as COVID-19 cases continue to surge in the state, state officials announced Tuesday.

Herbert is imposing new restrictions in the cities of Provo and Orem that will limit social gatherings to 20 people starting Wednesday. The state health department is granting one exception to the new rules that will allow team sports, but without spectators.

The cities are in Utah County, where cases have grown by 81% in the last week, said Dr. Angela Dunn, the state epidemiologist. The county accounted for 42% of the state's cases despite having only 20% of state's population.

Local leaders are considering a countywide mask mandate, but the state has not set a deadline for how quickly they must make that decision, Herbert said. The county's sole face-covering mandate is in the city of Provo.

Many of the new cases are being driven by college-age students in Utah County, home to Brigham Young University and Utah Valley University. The two colleges issued a joint statement Tuesday warning students that they may implement "more dramatic action" or even close campuses if case numbers do not improve over the next two weeks.

NATION



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

Cindy McCain, wife of former Arizona Sen. John McCain, waves to the crowd after being acknowledged by Arizona Republican Gov. Doug Ducey during his State of the State address on the opening day of the legislative session at the Capitol in Phoenix.

Cindy McCain rebukes fellow Republican Trump to back Biden

By JONATHAN J. COOPER
Associated Press

PHOENIX — Cindy McCain has endorsed Democrat Joe Biden for president in a rebuke of President Donald Trump by the widow of the Republican Party's 2008 nominee.

Trump has had a fraught relationship with John McCain's family since he disparaged the Arizona senator during the 2016 campaign. But the family has until now stopped short of endorsing Trump's rivals.

Cindy McCain cited the decades-long friendship between her family and Biden's, and their bond as the parents of children serving in the military.

"He supports the troops and knows what it means for someone who has served," McCain told The Associated Press in a telephone interview Tuesday. "Not only to love someone who has served, but understands what it means to send a child into combat. We've been great friends for

many years, but we have a common thread in that we are Blue Star families."

Trump reacted harshly to the endorsement, disparaging both Biden and John McCain.

"I hardly know Cindy McCain," Trump tweeted Wednesday as McCain's widow discussed her decision in morning talk show interviews. "Joe Biden was John McCain's lapdog. So many EAD decisions on Endless Wars & the V.A., which I brought from a horror show to HIGH APPROVAL. Never a fan of John. Cindy can have Sleepy Joe!"

McCain's backing could help Biden appeal to Republicans disaffected with the GOP president and give the former Democratic vice president a boost in Arizona, a crucial swing state that McCain represented in Congress for 35 years. He's remained a revered figure since his 2018 death from complications of a brain tumor, particularly with the independent voters Biden is courting.

"I decided to take a stand, and hopefully other people will see the same thing. Other women particularly," she said. "You may have to step out of your comfort zone a little bit, but Biden is by far the best candidate in the race."

McCain said she hasn't voted for a Democrat since she was 18. She remains a registered Republican and has no plans to change, she said.

Biden told donors on Tuesday evening that McCain's endorsement was coming "because of what (Trump) talks about how my son and John and others who are heroes, who served their country. You know, he said they're 'losers, suckers.'"

Biden was referring to comments Trump reportedly made mocking the American war dead. Trump has denied making the remarks, first reported through anonymous sources by The Atlantic, but many of the comments were later confirmed by The Associated Press.

Roberts: Ginsburg was 'tough, brave, a fighter, a winner'

By MARK SHERMAN
AND MATTHEW BARAKAT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Chief Justice John Roberts said the words that best describe the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg are "tough, brave, a fighter, a winner," but also "thoughtful, careful, compassionate, honest."

Roberts spoke Wednesday during a private ceremony in the Great Hall of the Supreme Court. After the ceremony, Ginsburg's flag-draped casket was placed at the top of the court's front steps. This was done so that the public can pay their respects to the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court in line with public health guidance for the coronavirus pandemic.

Thousands of people are expected to pay their respects throughout the day to the women's rights champion, leader of the court's liberal bloc and feminist icon who died last week at 87. Washington is already consumed with talk of Ginsburg's replacement, but at the court, Roberts' focus was on Ginsburg.

"Her voice in court and in our conference room was soft, but when she spoke, people listened," Roberts said of Ginsburg.

Ginsburg's casket arrived at the court at 9:30 a.m. and was carried into the court's Great Hall, past her former law clerks who lined the steps.

Inside, the court's remaining eight justices, all of them wearing masks, were together for the first time since the building was closed in March and they resorted to meetings by telephone. Because of the pandemic, however, chairs for the justices were spaced apart.

Ginsburg will lie in repose for two days at the court where she served for 27 years and, before that, argued six cases for gender equality in the 1970s. Ginsburg's casket will be on public view from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday and 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday.

Nearly 500 members of the public had gathered to pay their respects Wednesday morning, some of them traveling long distances.

Heather Setzler, a physician's assistant from Raleigh, N.C., started her drive to Washington at 1 a.m. to be at the court.

"There was just something about her. She was so diminutive yet turned out to be such a giant," Setzler said, wearing a face mask with portraits of Ginsburg.

Since Ginsburg's death Friday evening, people have been leaving flowers, notes, placards and all manner of Ginsburg paraphernalia outside the court in tribute to the woman who became known as the "Notorious RBG." Court workers cleared away the items and cleaned the court plaza and sidewalk in advance of Wednesday's ceremony.

Inside, the entrance to the courtroom, along with Ginsburg's chair and place on the bench next to Roberts, have been draped in black, a longstanding court custom. These visual signs of mourning, which in years past have reinforced the sense of loss, will largely go unseen this year. The court begins its new term Oct. 5, but the justices will not be in the courtroom and instead will hear arguments by phone.

On Friday, Ginsburg will lie in state at the Capitol, the first woman to do so and only the second Supreme Court justice after William Howard Taft.

GOP-led Senate committees issue report on Bidens and Ukraine

By ERIC TUCKER
AND MARY CLARE JALANICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two Republican-led Senate committees issued a politically charged report Wednesday on the work Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's son did in Ukraine.

Biden's campaign immediately panned the report, released six weeks before the election, as an effort by an ally of President Donald Trump to damage Biden.

Trump has repeatedly drawn attention to the issue even as his own administration has warned of a concerted Russian effort to denigrate Biden and asserted that a Ukrainian lawmaker who

is involved in spreading anti-Biden claims is an "active Russian agent."

Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, whose Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee is one of the two panels that released the 87-page report, had acknowledged in interviews his goal of making the document public before the election because he expected it would paint an unflattering portrait of Biden.

The investigation produced stark political divisions, with Democrats accusing Johnson of a politically motivated initiative at a time when they said the Homeland Security Committee should be focused on the coronavirus pandemic response and

other, less partisan issues. Even before the report was released, the Biden campaign issued a detailed statement aiming to rebut point-by-point allegations that it said had long been debunked by media organizations, as well as by U.S. and Ukrainian officials.

The Senate report examines Hunter Biden's dealings in Ukraine, where he held a paid seat on the board of gas company Burisma, and alleges that work posed a conflict of interest at a time when Biden was vice president in the Obama administration and engaged in Ukraine policy.

The allegations were central to the impeachment case against Trump after the president asked Ukraine's president in a tele-

phone call last year to investigate the Bidens.

One of the claims referenced is that Biden, as vice president, pressured Ukraine to fire its top prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, as a way to stymie an investigation into the owner of Burisma.

But the Biden campaign pointed to news reports and public statements showing that there was no active investigation into Burisma at the time of Shokin's ouster in 2016, and that the firing of Shokin was broadly sought by U.S. and European officials and reflected the official Obama administration policy.

There is no evidence of wrongdoing by the Bidens, and Hunter Biden has denied using his in-

fluence with his father to aid Burisma. But Republicans who came to Trump's defense in this year's impeachment trial encouraged further investigations of his activities. Johnson, a close ally of Trump, took the lead.

"As the coronavirus death toll climbs and Wisconsin struggles with joblessness, Ron Johnson has wasted months diverting the Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee away from any oversight of the catastrophically botched federal response to the pandemic, a threat Sen. Johnson has dismissed by saying that 'death is an unavoidable part of life.'" Biden campaign spokesman Andrew Bates said in a statement.

NATION

Crews make progress against LA-area wildfire



MAXAR TECHNOLOGIES/AP

Fire spots from the Bobcat Fire are seen in the San Gabriel Mountains, in Los Angeles County, Calif., on Monday.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Firefighters are finally starting to tame an enormous wildfire burning in the mountains northeast of Los Angeles.

Officials are confident that crews will make more progress on the Bobcat Fire after containment on Wednesday hit 38% — a 21% jump from a day earlier — before hot, dry winds return to Southern California in a few days.

Meanwhile, a major fire in the northern part of the state, the CZU Lightning Complex in San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties, was 100% contained, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said Tuesday evening. The fire was ignited during a barrage of lightning on Aug. 16 and the cluster of blazes went on to destroy 925 homes and kill one person.

Firefighters have also controlled several other lightning-sparked wildfires burning for more than a month in Northern California.

Crews battling the Bobcat Fire took advantage of two days of calmer weather after erratic winds last weekend pushed flames out of the Angeles National Forest and into communities in the desert foothills, fire spokesman Larry Smith said Wednesday.

"Because the fire transferred out of the timber and into the light fuels near the desert, we were able to make some real progress," Smith said. Crews will shore up containment lines ahead of hotter, gusty weather predicted for the weekend, he said.

Thousands of residents remain under evacuation orders and warnings near the fire that's now one of the largest on record in Los Angeles County. It's burned for more than two weeks in the San Gabriel Mountains and has destroyed at least 27 homes and other buildings.

It's one of dozens of other major wildfires raging across the West, including five in California that are among the largest in state history.

House passes stopgap funding bill shortly after bipartisan deal

By DAVID LERMAN
AND JENNIFER SHUTT
CQ-Roll Call (TNS)

WASHINGTON — The House swiftly passed a stopgap funding measure needed to avert a partial government shutdown in eight days after top congressional leaders reached a deal resolving a fight over farm payments.

On a lopsided vote of 359-57, the House sent to the Senate a revised continuing resolution that would extend current funding for all the federal agencies through Dec. 11.

The bipartisan pact would restore money for farm payments sought by lawmakers from both parties that House leaders had rejected in an earlier stopgap measure introduced Monday. It also would restore new money for a pandemic-related program funding subsidized meals to children who would normally receive them when schools are open, among other nutrition assistance, Democrats said.

"We have reached an agreement with Republicans on the CR to add nearly \$8 billion in desper-

ately needed nutrition assistance for hungry schoolchildren and families," Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a statement.

The measure includes new provisions that would extend pandemic-related flexibilities in the food stamp program for another year and expand the school meals program to those attending child care centers that were closed because of the pandemic, among other things.

The agreement also contains language Pelosi said would prevent "funds for farmers from being misused for a Big Oil bailout," after earlier reports surfaced that the administration has been planning to divert Commodity Credit Corporation funds to refiners.

"The last thing the United States needs right now, in the midst of a pandemic, is a lapse in government funding that was set to expire at the end of this month," Rep. Rodney Davis, R-Ill., said during floor debate. "I'm extremely disappointed that it took us this long to get the CCC, Commodity Credit Corporation, replenished in this agreement and

not held hostage by the majority."

The CR is expected to clear the Senate by early next week. If, as also expected, President Donald Trump signs the bill, it would spare the country a partial government shutdown when the new fiscal year begins on Oct. 1, in the midst of a pandemic and just over a month out from the election.

Congress has not passed any of the dozen regular appropriations bills that would otherwise be needed by then.

The stopgap measure would mostly continue the current funding levels for federal agencies through Dec. 11, though some adjustments, or "anomalies," are included for special circumstances.

Lawmakers will try to hammer out deals on some \$1.4 trillion in fiscal 2021 spending in a lame-duck session after the elections, but that will be a tall order, particularly if the levers of power in Washington change. And a nasty Supreme Court confirmation battle, coupled with potential renewed wrangling over COVID-19 relief, doesn't make the task any easier.

A mostly partisan impasse over



MANUEL BALCE CENETA/AP

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., speaks during a news conference on Capitol Hill on Friday in Washington.

farm payments had threatened to derail plans by House Democratic leaders to push through their own continuing resolution earlier Tuesday. Leaders delayed plans for a floor vote to allow bipartisan negotiations to resume.

Democratic leaders had balked at a push by the Trump administration and lawmakers to pump more than \$20 billion into the Commodity Credit Corporation to make more payments to farmers and ranchers suffering from coronavirus-related losses and a trade war with China.

The new deal came after pushback from farm-state Democrats against party leaders' move to strip the CCC funds. The administration says without replenishment in the continuing resolution, the agency could hit its \$20 billion borrowing cap and be unable to make payments under 2018 farm bill programs.

The American Farm Bureau Federation estimated last week that once October payments are made, resources would dry up without further action from Congress.

Trump expands ban on US money for certain diversity training

Associated Press

President Donald Trump on Tuesday issued an order that he said will expand a ban on the use of federal money for certain diversity training.

Trump earlier this month ordered his administration to stop paying for critical race theory diversity training in federal agencies. He said his new order will expand the prohibition on training for the U.S. military, government contractors, and other federal grantees.

"A few weeks ago, I BANNED efforts to indoctrinate government employees with divisive and harmful sex and race-based

ideologies," Trump tweeted shortly before issuing the order. "Today, I've expanded that ban to people and companies that do business with our country."

The initial memo announcing the restrictions by the Office of Management and Budget came as the nation faced a reckoning this summer over racial injustice in policing and other spheres of American life.

Trump in recent months has repeatedly defended the display of the Confederate battle flag and monuments of Civil War rebels from protesters seeking their removal. It's part of what he has called a "culture war" ahead of the Nov. 3 election.

Last week, he announced plans to establish a commission to promote patriotic education dubbed the 1776 Commission. The panel, he said, would be tasked with encouraging educators to teach students "about the miracle of American history" and plan for the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The new order took issue with the Treasury Department for recently holding a seminar that promoted arguments that "virtually all White people, regardless of how 'woke' they are, contribute to racism" and training materials from Argonne

National Laboratories, a federal entity in suburban Chicago, that included language that racism "is interwoven into every fabric of America."

It listed other examples of government training that the administration says runs contrary to the idea that all individuals are created equal and should be allowed an equal opportunity under the law to pursue happiness and prosper based on individual merit.

"Such ideas may be fashionable in the academy, but they have no place in programs and activities supported by Federal taxpayer dollars," the order said.

WORLD



MICHEL EULER/AP

Russian tourists, one holding a bottle of Champagne, talk to police officers securing a bridge near the Eiffel Tower on Wednesday.

Eiffel Tower is evacuated briefly after bomb threat

Associated Press

PARIS — Paris police briefly evacuated the Eiffel Tower and blockaded the surrounding area Wednesday after a phone-in bomb threat.

All tourists inside the monument evacuated after an anonymous caller phoned police Wednesday morning and said a bomb had been placed inside the tower, according to an official with the tower's management company. The official was not au-

thorized to be publicly named. Police blocked off the streets below the tower and the bridge stretching across the Seine River to Trocadero Plaza, but started lifting the barricades about two hours later. An officer at the scene told The Associated Press that police found no signs of the threatened bomb.

Some tourists were still walking in the area during the police operation, including a group speaking Russian and carrying a bottle of Champagne.

UN agency finds a record low in Greenland ice in 1991

Associated Press

GENEVA — For all the recent talk of global warming, climate historians hunting for past temperature extremes have unearthed what the U.N. weather agency calls a new record low in the Northern Hemisphere — nearly-93 F was recorded almost three decades ago in Greenland.

The World Meteorological Organization publicly confirmed Wednesday the all-time cold reading for the hemisphere: -69.6

Celsius recorded on Dec. 22, 1991, at an automatic weather station in a remote site called Klinck, not far from the highest point on the Greenland Ice Sheet.

"In the era of climate change, much attention focuses on new heat records," said WMO Secretary-General Professor Petteri Taalas in a statement. "This newly recognized cold record is an important reminder about the stark contrasts that exist on this planet."

Seoul: Missing South Korean official may be in North Korea

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — A South Korean official who disappeared off a government ship near the disputed sea boundary with North Korea this week may be in North Korea, South Korea's Defense Ministry said Wednesday.

The ministry said the 47-year-old official was aboard a government vessel that was checking on potential unauthorized fishing near a South Korean border island. Colleagues noticed the man was missing at lunchtime and found only his shoes still on the vessel, prompting a so-far fruitless search involving aircraft and ships.

In its statement, the Defense Ministry said it had information that the missing official was on

North Korean shores on Tuesday afternoon. The ministry did not elaborate on how it obtained that information.

The ministry said officials will contact North Korea to ask about the missing official and take other steps to find more details.

The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, which was operating the vessel the man was on Monday, said 18 people were on board when the man went missing.

It didn't provide information about the missing official.

More than 30,000 North Koreans have fled to South Korea in the past 20 years for political and economic reasons, but it's highly unusual for a South Korean national to defect to North Korea.

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WORLD

Belarus president sworn in despite disputed election

Associated Press

MINSK, Belarus — President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus has assumed his sixth term of office in an inauguration ceremony that wasn't announced in advance.

State news agency Beltra reported that Wednesday's ceremony is taking place in the capital of Minsk, with several hundred top government officials present.

It comes after six weeks of mass protests against the official results of the Aug. 9 presidential election that resulted in Lukashenko's reelection after 26 years in office. The opposition in Belarus has challenged the election as rigged.

According to the official results, Lukashenko, who has run the ex-Soviet nation of 9.5 million



Lukashenko

with an iron fist, won 80% of the vote. The United States and the European Union have also criticized the violent police crackdown on

post-election protests in Belarus. During the inauguration ceremony, Lukashenko swore to "serve the people of the Republic of Belarus, respect and protect rights and freedoms of people and citizens."

After being sworn in, he was handed an ID card of the President of Belarus by the head of the country's central election commission.

Russia's Navalny released from German hospital after 32 days

By DAVID RISING AND DARIA LITVINOVA
Associated Press

BERLIN — Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been released from a Berlin hospital after more than a month's treatment for poisoning, with doctors now believing that a "complete recovery" from the Soviet-era nerve agent is possible for him, the hospital said Wednesday.

Navalny spent 32 days at Berlin's Charite hospital, 24 of them in intensive care, before doctors deemed that his "condition had improved sufficiently for him to be discharged from acute inpatient care."

As he was released Tuesday, the 44-year-old displayed his characteristic sarcastic sense of humor. In an Instagram post, he took swipe at Russian President Vladimir Putin, scoffing at reported comments by the Russian leader, suggesting that Navalny might have intentionally poisoned himself.

Navalny, a politician and corruption investigator who is Putin's most visible opponent, was flown

to Germany two days after falling ill on Aug. 20 on a domestic flight in Russia. He spent those two days in a coma in a hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk, where Russian doctors said they found no trace of any poisoning.

German chemical weapons experts have determined that he was poisoned with the Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok — findings corroborated by labs in France and Sweden.

The hospital said that based on Navalny's progress, physicians believe that a "complete recovery is possible," but added that it "remains too early to gauge the potential long-term effects of his severe poisoning."

In recent days, Navalny has been posting regular photos of his convalescence from the hospital on Instagram, first showing him sitting up in his bed surrounded by his family, then up and about in the building.

In his post Tuesday night, he laughed off a report in the French newspaper Le Monde saying that Putin suggested to French President Emmanuel Macron in a call that he "could have taken the poi-

son himself."

"Good theory, I believe it deserves the most careful attention," Navalny wrote in Russian. "Cooked Novichok in the kitchen. Took a sip from a flask on the plane. Fell into a coma."

He wryly wrote that the "ultimate aim of my cunning plan" must have been to die in Siberia, where the cause of death would be "lived long enough."

"But Putin outmaneuvered me. You can't fool him," Navalny wrote. "As a result, I lay in coma for 18 days like a fool, but didn't get my way. The provocation failed!"

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Wednesday said that the report about Putin's conversation with Macron was "inaccurate in its reported wording," but refused to elaborate as to which part was inaccurate. Macron's office refused to comment on the report.

Navalny's team has said he eventually plans to return to Russia, but had no immediate statement after his release from the hospital.

Stripes

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The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Climber dies when boulder severs rope

NH LINCOLN — A man died when a tumbling boulder severed his rope, causing him to fall 150 feet while climbing on Cannon Cliff in New Hampshire's Franconia Notch State Park, conservation officers said.

Several people saw the climber fall and called for help. The climber was identified as Benjamin Kessel, 34, of Somerville, Mass., officials said. Kessel was climbing up the cliff when a rock the size of a refrigerator dislodged and sliced his rope, officials said.

Men convicted of fishing tournament cheating

UT SALT LAKE CITY — A pair of Utah men were convicted of felony charges stemming from attempts to cheat in a bass fishing tournament.

Robert Dennett, 45, and Kameron Wootton, 35, pleaded guilty last month to felony bribery or threat to influence a contest and misdemeanor unlawful release of wildlife and unlawful captivity of protected wildlife, KTVX-TV reported.

Changing documents said Dennett and Wootton took several bass from the Quail Lake Reservoir in southwest Utah without authorization or permits and transported the fish to Lake Powell.

The men then submitted the fish to a Lake Powell largemouth bass fishing tournament in 2018.

Man guilty of putting semen in worker's drink

CA SANTA ANA — A California man who put his semen in a co-worker's water bottle and on her computer was convicted of assault and battery for sexual purposes.

Stevens Millanastro, 30, of Palmdale, was convicted of misdemeanors by an Orange County judge and must register as a sex offender, Orange County Register reported.

Millanastro was obsessed with his co-worker and stared at her incessantly after she turned him down for a date, prosecutors said.

After she filed a formal human resources complaint, Millanastro placed semen several times in her half-gallon water bottle, in a jar of honey she used for tea and on her computer keyboard, prosecutors said.

Millanastro could face up to two years and six months behind bars.

Man shoots self in groin in supermarket

OR LINCOLN CITY — Police said an Oregon man is recovering after he accidentally shot himself while flaunting a handgun at a Lincoln City supermarket.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported the mishap happened when Nicholas J. Ellingford brandished his Glock 9mm in the checkout line at McKay's Market and tried to show off to a clerk according to the Lincoln City Po-



TOOD PANAGIOPoulos, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/AP

Real horsepower

Adam Hollingsworth, who calls himself the "Dread Head Cowboy," was charged after riding his horse down the local lanes of the Dan Ryan Expressway in Chicago on Monday during rush hour. His ride resulted in extensive delays on the expressway, with traffic backed up for miles. He was charged with reckless conduct, disobeying a police officer and criminal trespass to state supported property, according to state police.

lice Department.

Police said Ellingford mistakenly pulled the trigger as he stuffed the weapon back into his pants. Police said a bullet tore through his groin and exited his thigh, just missing the man's femoral artery.

Snake lands on woman as she opens front door

MS MCCOMB — A woman in Mississippi received a slithering surprise when she got home from work: A snake that had been lodged on top of her front door landed on her head. "I felt this thump on my head," Christina Mitchell said. "I looked down and the snake had landed at my feet in the house."

The newspaper reported the 10-inch serpent then darted to the kitchen. She grabbed a broom and ushered the reptile out of her house.

Based on the photo Mitchell took, her sparring partner looked like an Eastern Rat snake, a largely nonvenomous reptile, according to the National Wildlife Federation.

Man accused of hitting bride with car at wedding

ME LIVERMORE — A Maine man was arrested on assault charges for allegedly striking a bride and two others with his car at a wedding.

Curtis Moody, a guest at the private wedding, allegedly struck three people when others at the

THE CENSUS

\$5M

The approximate worth of heroin, cocaine and fentanyl confiscated by the Delaware State Police and FBI in what investigators called the largest fentanyl seizure in the state's history. The two-year investigation led to the arrests of more than two dozen suspects, including Luis Renteria, a man accused of leading a Delaware-based drug trafficking organization, the agencies said. A July 2 raid on Renteria's home resulted in most of the drug seizures and arrests, state and federal agents said. Officers also confiscated 20 guns, five cars and more than \$264,000 in cash from houses around the state, officials said. The more than 250 charges against Renteria and 27 others include racketeering, conspiracy to drug dealing, money laundering and firearms counts.

private event attempted to stop him from driving, the Sun Journal reported.

Chief Deputy William Gagne said that Moody, 51, was arrested later at his residence on three counts of assault, reckless conduct, driving to endanger, and other charges.

Gagne said that Moody started pushing people that were attempting to stop him from driving and a fight broke out.

Moody then allegedly drove his car at the crowd striking the bride and two others.

Museum vandalized with swastikas, racial slurs

AZ PHOENIX — A museum dedicated to the history of African Americans in Arizona was found vandalized with racial slurs and swastikas.

Phoenix police said they are investigating the vandalizing of the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center.

Authorities said the spray-

painted graffiti was found on the sidewalk and a column in front of the downtown museum. The Carver Museum has been closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Man pleads guilty to having meth, guns

KS WICHITA — A man who had 11 weapons and about 20 pounds of methamphetamine at his rental home in Wichita pleaded guilty to drug and weapons charges, federal prosecutors said.

Wichita police officers who searched the home of Luis M. Hernandez, 40, in December 2018 found baggies of methamphetamine in a dresser and more of the drug wrapped in plastic in a barrel in a garage, according to a criminal complaint.

Hernandez pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and unlawful possession of firearms by a person in the U.S. unlawfully.

Trucker rescued from rig wedged under overpass

FL ORLANDO — Fire officials rescued a truck driver after his big rig got stuck under a Florida overpass when the trailer dramatically raised upright and became wedged perpendicular between the ground and the overpass.

The Seminole County Fire Department posted a photo on social media showing the shocking angle with all but the back wheels tipped up, making the vehicle look like a dog sitting on its hind legs under the overpass along Interstate 4.

The Orlando Sentinel said the driver was trapped in the cabin, but was not injured.

Steakhouse to close after nearly 50 years

IL CHICAGO — A Chicago restaurant that has been serving steaks for nearly 50 years will close at the end of the year.

Lawy's The Prime Rib is the victim of the coronavirus pandemic, an expiring lease and other issues, said Ryan Wilson, chief executive of Lawy's Inc.

"We've done everything we can to hold on, but as ... the pandemic and closures get longer, we're playing the long game here," Wilson told the Chicago Sun-Times.

Wilson's grandfather opened the restaurant in 1974.

Wilson didn't rule out a return to Chicago.

From wire reports

FACES



Another side of Paris

Hilton claims her dumb-blonde persona was just an act in YouTube documentary

By NEAL JUSTIN

Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

When “The Simple Life” debuted in 2003, I described it as a new low in reality TV with “bubble-headed party girls who wouldn’t know which end of the champagne bottle to chug from if their bodyguards weren’t there to help.”

The joke might have been on me. “This Is Paris,” a documentary by director Alexandra Dean, makes the case that hot heiress Paris Hilton is actually a genius. The film insists that the spoiled brat who claimed in “The Simple Life” pilot to have never heard of Walmart was just a Jean Harlow impersonator in a comedy routine, one she performed for more than a decade.

“Like, obviously, I know what Walmart is. It was all about entertainment,” Hilton told TV critics this year. “Anything that I was doing, I was always planning, in a way, I wanted to entertain the audience.”

The dumb-blonde act paid off. Hilton, 39, gets six-figure paychecks for public appearances and has launched 19 product lines.

She also forged a trail for all future reality stars.

“Starting off as a teenager, I basically cre-

ated this kind of brand, and now it’s kind of become like a formula where it’s created a new genre of celebrity,” Hilton said. “I feel proud of it in that way.”

Dean was initially reluctant to take on the project but after meeting the socialite, she realized the film could be a perfect follow-up to her 2017 documentary, “Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story,” a profile of the screen siren whose talents as an inventor were largely overlooked.

“The question everybody was asking me after ‘Bombshell’ was: Could it happen in America today?” said Dean. “Could we feel this way about a similarly gorgeous woman that we think we know? And could she be that misunderstood? And the answer is absolutely, unequivocally yes.”

“This Is Paris,” which debuted Sept. 14 on YouTube, doesn’t just want you to be impressed. It also asks you to be sympathetic.

Early in the film, Hilton reveals that she

Paris Hilton opens up about her experience at a Utah boarding school in a new documentary “This Is Paris,” which debuted for free Sept. 14 on Hilton’s YouTube channel.

AP

Hollywood agrees on pandemic protocols

Associated Press

Hollywood’s unions announced Monday that they have reached an agreement on pandemic protocols with major studios that will allow the broad resumption of production of films and television after six months of stagnant sets and widespread unemployment.

The Directors Guild of America, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the Basic Crafts unions and the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists jointly announced the deal reached with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers after months of planning and negotiating.

The deal includes mandatory and comprehensive use of personal protective gear and testing of cast and crew members, and a dedicated coronavirus supervisor to oversee it all.

It requires the use of a “zone system” that strictly limits interactions between people on sets based on their job’s requirements. Those who must deal with more people will be tested more frequently and have more strict protective equipment and spacing requirements. Actors will be tested especially often because their on-camera work won’t allow for many protective measures.

The agreement also gives 10 days of paid COVID-19 sick leave per employee, which can be used after positive tests or when quarantine is necessary, and says that employees who use the leave must be reinstated so long as their jobs still exist.

“The protocols pave the way for creative workers, who have been hard hit by the pandemic, to resume their crafts and livelihoods in workplaces redesigned around their health,” the unions said in a joint statement.

Some film and television productions have already resumed based on smaller separate agreements, but most of the largest and most elaborately produced films and television shows have been repeatedly delaying going back to work as they waited for the pandemic to subside and for this deal to be reached.

Other news

■ With television production shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic, no scripted programs were included in the Nielsen company’s listing of last week’s 20 most popular prime-time programs. The top 20 included four NFL games and two NBA playoff games. The most-watched scripted show, NBC’s drama “Transplant,” ranked No. 42 with 3.63 million viewers. The top 20 had one entry that was at least ABOUT scripted drama and comedy, with

the telecast of the Emmy Awards on ABC. But the “Pandemmys” had its smallest audience ever, 6.1 million.

■ SiriusXM has a new multi-platform deal with Kevin Hart and his comedy network Laugh Out Loud. The comedian-actor will host new regular and live programs on his channel, Laugh Out Loud Radio, while expanding additional comedic programming that includes radio shows, podcasts and on-demand video.

■ Tommy DeVito, a founding member of the Four Seasons, died Monday from the

coronavirus at 92, N.J.com reported. DeVito, along with Frankie Valli, Bob Gaudio and Nick Massi, founded the Four Seasons in 1960. They sang hits such as “Oh, What a Night.” The Tony-winning Broadway musical Jersey Boys tells the band’s story.

■ Sam McBratney, the Irish children’s author whose picture story of ever-wider and higher devotion “Guess How I Much Love You” became bedtime reading for millions of families, has died. Candlewick Press announced that McBratney died Sept. 18 at age 77.

■ Michael Lonsdale, an enigmatic giant of the silver screen and theater in France who worked with some of the world’s top directors in an acting career that spanned 60 years, died Monday at 89. From his role as the villain in the 1979 James Bond film “Moonraker” to that of a French monk in Algeria in the 2017 movie “Of Gods and Men,” Lonsdale acted, often in brilliant supporting roles, under top directors including Orson Welles, Steven Spielberg, Francois Truffaut and Louis Malle.

From The Associated Press

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OPINION

Religious freedom bolstered for all troops

By MIKE BERRY
Special to Stars and Stripes

In January 2014, the Department of Defense revised DOD Instruction 1300.17, the regulation that governs the accommodation of religious practices within the military. Shortly thereafter, I was invited on behalf of First Liberty Institute to testify before the U.S. House Armed Services Committee about the threats to religious freedom in the military. During the hearing, I stated that the January 2014 revision was a positive, but incomplete, action. I explained that if our service members were to enjoy the Constitution's full promise of religious freedom, the DOD instruction would need a substantial overhaul.

On Sept. 1, 2020, after more than six years of persistent efforts by First Liberty and others, the DOD delivered in spades. And the revision comes not a moment too soon.

For years, incidents of religious hostility within the military increased both in frequency and severity. For example, in recent years First Liberty has defended: an Air Force colonel who was relieved of his command and removed from the promotion list to one-star general because he was unable to fulfill an optional request due to his faith; an Army chaplain who was accused of the military crime of dereliction of duty because he was unable to facilitate a marriage retreat for a same-sex couple even though he followed Army regulations and the U.S. Constitution; a Navy chaplain who faced involuntary separation from the

The DOD must now ensure that military leaders, chaplains and lawyers are trained to this new constitutional standard.

service because some service members complained that his denomination's religious beliefs were old-fashioned and politically incorrect; and Shields of Strength, a private company that has been banned from selling replica military dog tags that include uplifting and patriotic Scripture references.

Recent events during the COVID-19 pandemic have only exacerbated the problem. At bases from Fort Drum, N.Y., to Camp Humphreys, South Korea, our military chaplains remained at their posts, finding innovative ways to continue to serve the troops. Often, the chaplains turned to social media and the internet to find ways to stay connected to the troops in order to offer messages of hope and encouragement during difficult times. Nevertheless, activists and agitators, such as the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, demanded that such messages be censored. Shockingly, the military frequently complied, revealing that far too often military leaders' knee-jerk reaction to any complaint, no matter how petty, is to curtail and censor the religious freedom of those serving in uniform.

But thanks to our commander in chief's

strong stance on religious freedom, the DOD is once again in step with the Constitution and federal law. The revised DOD Instruction is a major paradigm shift that offers new hope for religious liberty in the military.

For America's brave service members, for whom faith is an essential element of their life and duty, the new guidance is most welcome. The revised DOD instruction makes clear that religious freedom is a top priority and reflects the principles set forth in President Donald Trump's Executive Order 13798, "Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty." And importantly, it clearly and unequivocally applies the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to the military.

With new guidance firmly in place, the real work begins. A regulation is only as strong as the will to enforce it. The DOD must now ensure that military leaders, chaplains and lawyers are trained to this new constitutional standard. Many within the Pentagon are sure to be hostile to change, even if the Constitution requires it.

To be sure, no regulation can ever be a panacea for religious hostility. New cases will certainly arise. But when they do, our service members should be comforted to know that the commander in chief is in their corner. And regardless of who occupies the White House, First Liberty Institute will always stand watch over their religious freedom.

Mike Berry is general counsel at First Liberty Institute, and a former active duty U.S. Marine Corps officer.

Privatizing the VA doesn't improve patient care

By ALMA LEE
Special to Stars and Stripes

The Department of Veterans Affairs has the largest integrated health care system in the United States. The Trump administration has designs to destroy it — right when we need a strong health system for veterans more than ever.

How? By putting it under private control. That would be blatantly clear in a recent op-ed by VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, in which he boasted, "President [Donald] Trump gave veterans the real, permanent choice of using private health care providers."

The Trump administration's privatization push at the VA is not about choice. It's about dodging accountability. And that includes attacking the union that represents VA workers, the American Federation of Government Employees' National Veterans Affairs Council (AFGE NVA), which represents over 270,000 VA employees. The union and the VA have been engaged in a yearslong battle for a new collective bargaining agreement, which would be the largest public-sector union contract in the United States.

Workers are seeking a contract that provides them with hazard pay, safe working conditions, adequate staffing levels, and the space and equipment they need to ensure veterans receive the best care possible. If the VA were to honor these requests, veterans could avoid seeking the assistance of urgent and walk-in care clinics, which weren't built on the personal connection and values VA employees have when it comes to serving our nation's heroes.

Yet the VA has consistently presented insufficient proposals for the new agreement in an effort to scuttle the negotiations and



Bill O'Leary/The Washington Post

In a recent op-ed, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie wrote that President [Donald] Trump gave veterans the real, permanent choice of using private health care providers."

impose a new contract on workers without negotiating in good faith.

The importance of a fair contract is critical, especially in the middle of a public health emergency that has seen over 2,300 VA patients die from COVID-19 and 50,000 test positive at VA facilities. However, COVID-19 is only one part of the union's fight for a fair contract — dignity, respect, and a safe working place for all VA employees and the veterans they care for also are paramount.

Recently, the union conducted a nationwide survey about systemic racism at the VA and 78% of employees surveyed reported that racism is a moderate to serious problem at the VA, while another 76% said

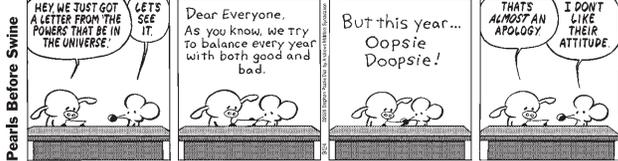
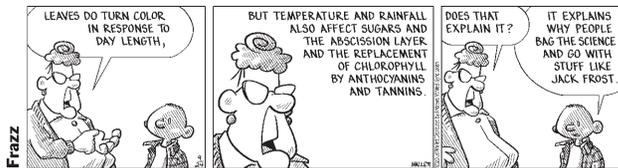
they had experienced racially charged actions while working at the VA. Fifty-five percent of those surveyed reported that they had also witnessed racial discrimination against veterans while on the job. The survey results mark the latest evidence of widespread racism and racial bias going unchecked at the VA under Wilkie's tenure. Wilkie was appointed by Trump amid controversy over Wilkie's longtime membership in the Sons of Confederate Veterans and he has spoken glowingly about Confederate President Jefferson Davis, once referring to him as a "martyr to 'The Lost Cause'" and an "exceptional man in an exceptional age."

As a response to the survey data, I penned a letter to Wilkie calling on him to act to promote an inclusive workplace at the VA, where over 40% of workers identify as people of color. Additionally, the union's survey caught the attention of Sens. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, who requested that the Government Accountability Office conduct an investigation into the culture, policies and practices of the VA to determine the extent to which systemic racism has affected the agency.

This month, a decision on the VA workers' contract is slated to be announced by the Federal Services Impasse Panel, whose members were appointed by the White House but not confirmed by the Senate.

VA employees have had their rights trampled on for far too long — it's time for a fair and legal contract. If Wilkie and the Trump administration continue to put profits and privatization ahead of improving the country's largest public health care system, employees and the veterans they care for will continue to bear the cost.

Alma Lee is president of the AFGE National Veterans Affairs Council.



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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

ACROSS

- 1 High-five sound
- 5 Media mogul
- 8 Getz of jazz
- 12 Curbside yell
- 13 Rock's Brian
- 14 Sainly ring
- 15 War god
- 16 Just out
- 17 Rental units (Abbr.)
- 18 Sea off Poland
- 20 Neighbor of Sweden
- 22 Poem of praise
- 23 By way of
- 24 Furnace fuel
- 27 Seldom
- 32 Plant bristle
- 33 Capote nickname
- 34 Prefix with gram or center
- 35 "Locksley Hall" poet
- 38 Persia, today
- 39 Perfume label word
- 40 Understood
- 42 Use mouthwash
- 45 Midnight noshes
- 49 Beatnik's assent
- 50 Not "dis"
- 52 "Damn Yankees" vamp
- 53 Indy event

DOWN

- 1 Wild guess
- 2 News reporter
- 3 Skater's leap
- 4 Handgun
- 5 Dime
- 6 Compass dir.
- 7 Blue cheese
- 8 "Doctor Zhivago" star
- 9 Household thirst quencher
- 10 Utah ski resort
- 11 Prying
- 12 Freudian concept
- 21 Egg (Pref.)
- 24 Sylvester, for one
- 25 Have debts
- 26 Vampire novelist
- 28 Granada gold
- 29 Element No. 74
- 30 Clean air org.
- 31 Diarist Anaïs
- 36 Kvetchad
- 37 Actor Brynner
- 38 Slanted type
- 41 Atop
- 42 Surround
- 43 Forever and —
- 44 Wax-coated
- 46 Programmer's output
- 47 Swiss artist Paul
- 48 Back talk
- 51 Coach
- 52 Parseshian

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

9-24

CRYPTOQUIP

GBPYNDO GAJYW DKABE DH
 ARWLDPEDL XYEM D PMAX
 YH HWJDTD'P SDGKOYHS

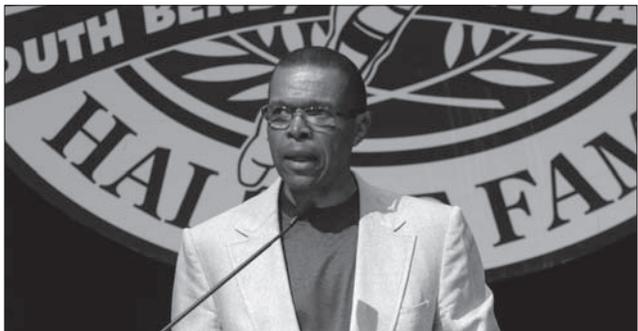
NDRYEDO: "TYJD ODP JWSDP."
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF BRITS THOROUGHLY ADORE THEIR APARTMENTS, DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY MIGHT BE IN-FLAT-UATED?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: G equals M

NFL

Weekly statistics

AFC individual leaders					NFC individual leaders					
Week 2 Quarterbacks					Week 2 Quarterbacks					
Att	Com	Yds	Td	Int	Att	Com	Yds	Td	Int	
Allen, Buf	81	57	729	6	0	Ryan, Atl	90	61	723	6
Rivers, Ind	71	46	577	7	0	Prescott, Dal	86	55	715	1
Newton, Ne	63	45	552	1	1	Bridgewater, Car	76	55	636	1
Roethlisberger, Pit	73	50	540	5	1	Wilson, Sea	65	50	610	1
Watson, Hou	68	50	528	5	1	Rodgers, GB	74	50	604	6
Carr, Las	68	50	521	4	0	Goff, Lar	58	40	542	3
Fitzgerald, Mia	77	51	519	4	0	Stafford, Det	58	40	542	3
Mahomes, KC	79	51	513	4	0	Jones, Nyc	81	51	520	2
Minshew, Jac	65	49	509	6	2	K Murray, Ari	78	51	520	2
Burrow, Cin	87	60	509	6	2	Wentz, Phi	85	50	512	2
Rushers					Rushers					
Att	Yds	Av	LG	TD	Att	Yds	Av	LG	TD	
Henry, Ten	56	200	3.6	14	0	Jones, GB	34	234	6.9	751
Chubb, Cle	33	236	7.2	49	2	Elliott, Dal	64	185	2.9	14
Jacobs, Las	52	181	3.5	14	0	Murray, Ari	21	158	7.5	25
Eker, LAC	35	177	5.1	13	0	McCaffrey, Car	23	146	6.3	15
Edwards-Helaire, KC	18	176	9.8	27	1	Mostert, SF	23	146	6.4	801
J Robinson, Jac	32	164	5.1	39	1	Drake, Ari	36	146	4.1	15
Hunt, Cle	23	158	6.9	33	1	Montgomery, Chi	29	146	5.0	23
Gordon, Den	34	144	4.2	25	1	Peterson, Det	21	134	6.4	25
Kelley, LAC	35	123	3.5	25	1	Brown, Lar	29	126	4.3	19
Taylor, Ind	35	123	3.5	25	1	Gurley, Atl	35	117	3.3	15
Receivers					Receivers					
No	Yds	Av	LG	TD	No	Yds	Av	LG	TD	
Diggs, Buf	16	239	14.9	47	1	Ridley, Atl	16	239	14.9	25
Eldredge, NE	11	226	18.5	49	2	Anderson, Car	15	223	14.9	751
Gesicki, Mia	11	160	14.5	27	0	Hopkins, Ari	22	210	10.0	33
Henry, LAC	11	156	14.2	33	0	D.Adams, GB	17	192	11.3	40
Walker, Buf	14	149	10.6	28	1	McCall, Sea	8	187	23.4	54
Johnson, Pit	14	149	10.6	28	1	McLain, Was	12	184	15.3	47
Waller, Bre	10	145	14.5	24	2	Cooper, Dal	16	181	11.3	58
Hill, KC	10	145	14.5	24	2	Jones, Atl	11	174	15.8	30
M.Brown, Bal	10	143	14.3	47	0	Moore, Car	11	165	15.0	37
Kelso, KC	15	140	9.3	20	2	Punters				
No	Yds	Av	LG	TD	No	Yds	Av	LG	TD	
Huber, Cin	8	428	70	53.5	0	Johnston, Phi	9	468	67	52.0
Haack, Mia	8	414	63	43.8	0	Fox, Det	9	468	67	52.0
Long, LAC	8	375	63	46.9	0	Dickson, Sea	8	391	63	48.9
Kern, Ten	7	326	65	46.6	0	Lee, Ari	8	388	58	48.5
Spencer, Den	5	232	57	46.4	0	Hekker, Lar	5	238	58	47.6
Martin, Den	11	500	56	45.9	0	Way, Was	15	613	60	47.2
Mann, NYJ	8	358	58	45.5	0	Wisniewsky, SF	8	377	59	47.1
Townsend, KC	8	357	55	44.2	0	Dixon, NYJ	8	367	52	45.9
Anger, Hou	6	265	44.3	38	0	Pinion, TB	9	404	59	44.9
Koch, Bal	5	219	52	43.8	0	O'Donnell, Chi	9	347	55	43.4
Punt returns					Punt returns					
No	Yds	Av	Long	TD	No	Yds	Av	Long	TD	
Renfrow, Las	3	42	14.0	27	0	Harris, No	4	50	12.5	20
Roberts, Buf	10	86	12.3	23	0	Peppers, NYG	4	59	14.8	18
Proche, Bal	3	34	11.3	17	0	Sims, Was	7	33	4.7	12
Hines, Ind	4	40	10.0	16	0	Kirk, Ari	3	12	4.0	8
Spencer, Den	4	31	7.8	9	0	Kickoff returns				
Johnson, Pit	5	38	7.6	18	0	No	Yds	Av	LG	TD
Raymond, Ten	4	19	4.8	11	0	Patterson, Chi	3	93	31.0	35
King, LAC	3	10	3.3	7	0	Agnew, Det	4	109	27.3	38
Grant, Mia	3	8	2.7	10	0	Cooper, Car	5	132	26.4	44
Kickoff returns					Kickoff returns					
No	Yds	Av	LG	TD	No	Yds	Av	LG	TD	
Wilson, KC	3	131	43.7	49	0	Osborn, Min	5	138	26.0	38
McCcloud, Pit	3	97	32.3	49	0	Pollard, Dal	5	154	22.0	31
Dulin, Ind	1	90	30.0	41	0	McKinnon, SF	7	87	21.8	29
Badley, LAC	3	131	26.2	49	0	Scoring				
Duvernay, Bal	5	119	23.8	38	0	TD	Rush	Rec	Ret	Pts
Taylor, NE	3	69	23.0	28	0	Jones, GB	4	3	0	24
Malone, NYJ	3	65	21.7	32	0	Kamara, No	4	3	0	24
Scoring Touchdowns					Scoring Touchdowns					
TD	Rush	Rec	Ret	Pts	TD	Rush	Rec	Ret	Pts	
Newton, NE	3	3	0	0	24	Ridley, Atl	4	4	0	24
Jacobs, Las	3	3	0	0	24	Carlson, Sea	3	7	0	18
J.Smith, Ten	2	0	2	0	12	Cook, Min	0	3	0	18
13 tied	2	0	2	0	12	Hibbs, Lar	3	3	0	18
Kicking					Kicking					
PAT	FG	LG	Pts	TD	PAT	FG	LG	Pts	TD	
Tucker, Bal	8/8	5/5	47	23	Koo, Atl	4/5	6/6	49	22	
Blanchard, Ind	8/8	5/5	47	23	Crosby, GB	9/9	6/6	44	21	
Carlson, Sea	8/8	4/4	54	20	Gonzalez, Ari	6/6	4/6	56	18	
Bullock, Cin	4/4	5/6	50	15	Lutz, NO	7/7	3/3	31	16	
Burker, KC	4/5	5/5	58	19	Gould, SF	6/6	3/3	52	15	
Badley, LAC	3/3	5/6	43	18	Sizemore, Lar	6/7	3/4	39	15	
Bass, Bre	3/3	4/4	41	14	Elliott, Dal	6/7	3/4	36	15	
Lambro, Jac	6/7	3/3	50	15	Zuerlein, Dal	6/6	3/4	46	15	
Bal, Bal	4/4	3/3	44	14	Prater, Dal	6/6	3/3	44	14	
Gostkowski, Ten	4/6	3/6	51	13	Santos, Chi	5/5	3/4	35	14	



JOE RAYMOND/AP

Gale Sayers addresses a 2004 luncheon sponsored by the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Ind. Sayers, a Pro Football and College Football Hall of Famer who made his mark as one of the NFL's best all-purpose running backs, died Wednesday, according to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Bears great Sayers dies

Hall of Fame running back, 77, had been diagnosed with dementia

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Hall of Famer Gale Sayers, who made his mark as one of the NFL's best all-purpose running backs and was later celebrated for his enduring friendship with a Chicago Bears teammate with cancer, has died. He was 77.

Nicknamed "The Kansas Comet" and considered among the best open-field runners the game has ever seen, Sayers died Wednesday, according to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Relatives of Sayers had said he was diagnosed with dementia. In March 2017, his wife, Ardyne, said she partly blamed his football career.

Sayers was a blur to NFL defenses, ghosting would-be tacklers or zooming by them like few running backs or kick returners

before or since. Yet it was his rock-steady friendship with Brian Piccolo, depicted in the film "Brian's Song," that marked him as more than a sports star.

"He was the very essence of a team player — quiet, unassuming and always ready to compliment a teammate for a key block," Hall of Fame President David Baker said. "Gale was an extraordinary man who overcame a great deal of adversity during his NFL career and life."

He became a stockbroker, sports administrator, businessman and philanthropist for several inner-city Chicago youth initiatives after his pro football career was cut short by serious injuries to both knees.

"Gale was one of the finest men in NFL history and one of the game's most exciting play-

ers," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said. "Gale was an electrifying and elusive runner who thrilled fans every time he touched the ball. He earned his place as a first-ballot Hall of Famer."

Sayers was a two-time All-American at Kansas and inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame as well. He was selected by Chicago with the fourth pick overall in 1965, and his versatility produced dividends and highlight-reel slaloms through opposing defenses right from the start. He tied one NFL record with six touchdowns in a game and set another with 22 touchdowns in his first season: 14 rushing, six receiving, one punt and one kickoff return. Sayers was a unanimous choice for Offensive Rookie of the Year.

Chiefs' Mahomes shows off his scrambling ability



KEITH BIRMINGHAM, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/AP

Quarterback Patrick Mahomes of the Kansas City Chiefs scrambles against the Los Angeles Chargers. He converted four third downs with scrambles in his team's 23-20 overtime win Sunday.

By Josh Dubow
Associated Press

Patrick Mahomes showed he's nearly as dangerous with his legs as he is with his arm.

The Kansas City Chiefs star quarterback overtime with his scrambling ability in a 23-20 overtime win over the Los Angeles Chargers on Sunday with his 21-yard run on third-and-20, setting up the game-tying field goal late in regulation.

In all, Mahomes converted four third downs with scrambles when the Chiefs needed at least 3 yards to go. The only other player since 1991 to convert that many third downs with at least 3 yards to go in a single game was Tennessee's Vince Young with six in Week 13 of the 2006 season against Indianapolis.

Mahomes ran more than 55 yards of total distance on that play, according to NFL NextGen stats. He covered even more ground on his three other third-down conversion runs, even if they gained fewer yards.

In all, Mahomes covered 962.2 yards of distance on the field during the game with his ability to scramble and move around the pocket to extend plays.

Nearly half of that distance — 455.2 yards — came in the fourth quarter and overtime. The last quarterback to cover that much ground in the fourth quarter and OT of a game was Arizona's Kyler Murray in the 2019 opener against Detroit.

NFC best: No division looks tougher after two weeks than the NFC West. Arizona, Seattle and the Rams have won their first two games, while defending NFC champion San Francisco is 1-1 with the loss coming to the Cardinals. This marks just the second time since the start of the eight-division format in 2002 that teams in a single division went 7-1 through two weeks. The other time it happened was in the 2002 AFC West, when the Raiders, Broncos and Chargers all started 2-0 and the Chiefs were 1-1. The Raiders were the only one of those teams to make the playoffs that year.

Starting fact: Green Bay, Seattle and Las Vegas are among the teams off to fast starts this season, scoring at least 34 points and winning the first two games. In the past 25 seasons, 13 teams have done that, but it doesn't always lead to great on-field success. While the 1906 Packers and 2009 Saints won the Super Bowl those seasons, four teams missed the playoffs entirely.

MLB SCOREBOARD

American League

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
z-Tampa Bay	36	20	.643	.378
z-New York	32	27	.543	.385
Toronto	28	27	.509	.714
Baltimore	23	32	.418	1.274
z-Chicago	24	32	.432	1.474

Central Division	W	L	Pct	GB
z-Chicago	42	618	—	—
z-Minnesota	34	22	.607	1/2
z-Cleveland	27	31	.465	1 1/2
Detroit	22	31	.415	1 1/2
Kansas City	22	30	.420	1.2

West Division	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Oakland	33	21	.611	—
z-Los Angeles	31	27	.536	.575
z-Los Angeles	25	31	.446	.9
New York	23	36	.386	1.915
Texas	19	36	.345	1.415

National League

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
z-Atlanta	33	27	.600	.390
Miami	27	29	.482	.676
Philadelphia	27	28	.491	.686
New York	23	35	.398	1.116
Washington	23	32	.418	1.10

Central Division	W	L	Pct	GB
z-Chicago	32	23	.582	—
St. Louis	27	25	.519	.314
Pittsburgh	27	27	.500	.494
Milwaukee	27	27	.500	.494
z-Cincinnati	23	27	.459	.814
Washington	23	32	.418	1.10

West Division	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Diego	34	21	.619	—
z-San Diego	34	21	.619	—
z-San Diego	27	27	.500	1.114
z-San Diego	23	35	.398	1.614
Arizona	21	34	.382	1.8

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Tuesday

Giants 5, Rockies 2

San Francisco	ab	r	h	bi	r	h	bi
Tapia If	5	1	2	0	2	2	2
Yates	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Story	4	0	1	0	2	1	0
Blickhorn	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Chapman	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kemp	4	0	2	0	0	0	0
Hampton	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ediaz-ph-c	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Basabe	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	34	2	8	0	2	3	2

Cardinals 5, Royals 0

St. Louis	ab	r	h	bi	r	h	bi
Wong	3	0	2	0	1	0	0
Gschmidt	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
Centeno	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Molina	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miller	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carson	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bader	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	32	0	6	0	1	0	0

Braves 3, Yankees 2

Atlanta	ab	r	h	bi	r	h	bi
Wong	3	0	2	0	1	0	0
Gschmidt	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
Centeno	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Molina	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miller	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carson	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bader	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	32	0	6	0	1	0	0

Red Sox 8, Orioles 3

Baltimore	ab	r	h	bi	r	h	bi
Mullins	4	0	2	0	0	0	0
Mintzbeil	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swearif	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
Rizzo	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Alber	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Chavez	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Bray	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	31	1	7	0	0	0	0

Twins 5, Tigers 4 (10)

Reyes cfr 4, 2-10
 W.Castro ss 4, 1-2
 Cordero lf 3, 0-1
 Castro ph 2, 0-0
 Garver c 2, 0-0
 Brifilio ph 1, 0-0
 Glezalaz 2, 0-0
 Pineda 2, 0-0
 Paredes 3, 4-0
Totals 37 4 9 3

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 St. Louis 27, 25, .519
 Pittsburgh 27, 27, .500
 Milwaukee 27, 27, .500
 z-Cincinnati 23, 27, .459
 Washington 23, 32, .418

x-San Diego 34, 21, .619
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Friday's games<

MLB

Dodgers claim 8th straight NL West title



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Chris Taylor hits one of the Los Angeles Dodgers' four home runs during his team's 7-2 win over the Oakland Athletics Tuesday in Los Angeles.

BY JOE REEDY
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Wrapping up an NL West title has become routine for the Los Angeles Dodgers, but in a year in which no one was sure three months ago if there would be a baseball season, manager Dave Roberts wanted his team to still savor the moment.

The Dodgers clinched the NL's top postseason seed and eighth straight division title Tuesday night with a 7-2 victory over the Oakland Athletics. They are third team to win at least eight straight division titles, joining the Atlanta Braves (4 straight from 1991-2005) and the New York Yankees (nine straight from 1998-2006).

"To fast forward a couple months and be crowned NL West champs is a credit to everyone. It should never be taken for granted," Roberts said. "Truth be told, a lot of guys didn't

DID YOU KNOW?

The Los Angeles are only the third team to win eight consecutive division titles, joining the 1991-2005 Atlanta Braves, who won 14 in a row, and the New York Yankees, who won nine straight from 1998-2006.

SOURCE: Associated Press

know we could clinch. We were responsible but I let it know that it has to be appreciated."

Los Angeles, which owns the best record in the majors at 39-16, was the first team in the majors to clinch a playoff berth on Sept. 16. The Dodgers will open postseason play on Sept. 30 by hosting every game in a best-of-three series against the No. 8 seed.

Los Angeles came into the day with a magic number of two and got help with the Angels' 4-2 victory over the

San Diego Padres.

Instead of a wild celebration on the mound after Jake McGee struck out Sean Murphy for the final out, players briskly walked out of the dugout to celebrate with teammates. Everyone grabbed a division clinching shirt and cap before heading to the mound for a group photo.

The clubhouse celebration was also muted. Champagne was still involved, but players toasted each other with a glass instead of being showered in it.

"We talked about it instead of dumping stuff on people. It's a moment you need to celebrate and we did," said Corey Seager, who had three hits and one of the Dodgers' four home runs. "It stinks not being able to do champagne and beer showers because some of the younger guys haven't been able to experience that."

Max Muncy, Chris Taylor and AJ Pollock also went deep for Los Angeles.

Roundup

Ramirez HR sends Indians to playoffs

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Jose Ramirez hit a three-run homer with two outs in the 10th inning, giving the Cleveland Indians a 5-3 win over the Chicago White Sox to clinch a postseason berth.

Ramirez's drive off Jose Ruiz scored Cesar Hernandez and Francisco Lindor, setting off a wild celebration at home plate as the Indians reached the postseason for the fourth time in five years.

Ramirez had pulled Cleveland within one on a two-out double that plated Roberto Perez, who began the inning on second base. After Matt Foster (5-1) walked Hernandez, Ruiz entered and gave up the game-ending drive.

Braves 11, Marlins 1: Bryse Wilson pitched five scoreless innings, Marcell Ozuna drove in five runs with four hits that included two homers and host Atlanta clinched its third straight NL East title.

The Braves hit five homers, including drives by Dansby Swanson and Freddie Freeman off Nick Vincent in a five-run seventh. Freeman drove in two runs with three hits.

Wilson (1-0) allowed three hits and one walk, striking out a career-high seven.

Atlanta clinched its record 20th division title, one more than the New York Yankees.

Yankees 12, Blue Jays 1: Gerrit Cole limited Toronto to five hits over seven innings in his final preparation for the playoffs, and Aaron Hicks drove in three runs in a road win for New York.

Cole (7-3) struck out seven and walked none, inducing 11 ground-ball outs and 14 swings and miss-

es. His one mistake was Cavan Biggio's sole homer in the fourth.

Aaron Judge had his first three-hit game since Aug. 8. Gio Urshela had four hits and Gleyber Torres had three hits and two RBIs. The Yankees have won 11 of 13 following a 5-15 slide.

Brewers 3, Reds 2: Tyrone Taylor homered, Eric Sogard doubled home the go-ahead run in the seventh inning, and Milwaukee rallied to a win at Cincinnati.

Taylor had a solo shot off Sonny Gray, who went five innings in a solid return from a hip injury. The Brewers rallied against Tejay Antone (0-3), who gave up Daniel Vogelbach's single and Jedd Gyro's double to open the seventh.

Orlando Arcia tied it with a sacrifice fly to deep center, and Sogard doubled down the line in left for a 3-2 lead.

Nationals 5-8, Phillies 1-7: Philadelphia tumbled out of a playoff position, getting swept in a doubleheader at Washington when Yadiel Hernandez hit a game-ending, two-run homer in the eighth inning off Brandon Workman (1-4) in the second game.

The 32-year-old Hernandez became the oldest player to hit a walk-off homer for his first big league home run, according to STATS.

Austin Voth (1-5) pitched a three-hitter to win the opener, his first complete game in 20 big league starts and his first victory in 10 starts this season.

The defending champion Nationals (23-32) kept alive their slim postseason hopes by extending their winning streak to four. Daniel Hudson (3-2) claimed the win.

Pirates 3, Cubs 2: Jacob Stall-



TONY DEAK/AP

The Cleveland Indians' Delino DeShields, left, runs past the Chicago White Sox's Tim Anderson in the third inning of the Indians' 5-3 win Tuesday in Cleveland. The Indians clinched a playoff berth.

ings hit a solo home run in the bottom of the ninth inning and host Pittsburgh stalled Chicago's bid to win the NL Central.

The Cubs began the day with a 4½-game lead over St. Louis and Cincinnati in the division standings and a magic number of four to clinch the title.

Stallings connected with one out off Andrew Chafin (1-2) to help the Pirates end their five-game losing streak.

Mets 5, Rays 2: Pete Alonso and New York prevented visiting Tampa Bay from clinching the AL East crown, winning behind three home runs and Seth Lugo's bounce-back pitching performance.

Robinson Cano, Alonso and Guillermo Heredia went deep for the Mets, desperately trying to stay in the National League playoff chase with five games remaining in the regular season. Tampa Bay needs just one win or a New

York Yankees loss to secure its first division title in 10 years.

Red Sox 8, Orioles 3: Nick Pivetta struck out eight in five innings of one-run ball in his Boston debut and Christian Vazquez hit a three-run homer in a win over visiting Baltimore.

There were five errors combined by the teams, a misplayed fly ball and a runner picked off third to kill a rally.

Cardinals 5, Royals 0: Austin Gomber tossed six innings of four-hit ball in a crucial spot start and St. Louis capitalized on some erratic pitching from Brady Singer to win at Kansas City.

The Cardinals, who trail the Chicago Cubs by 3½ games in the NL Central, improved to 27-25 by evening their series.

Twins 5, Tigers 4 (10): Max Kepler hit the tying home run in the eighth inning and the game-winning single with two outs in the 10th, giving host Minnesota

a victory over Detroit that tightened the AL Central race.

Diamondbacks 7, Rangers 0: Carson Kelly had a three-run homer, Caleb Smith and Riley Smith combined to throw a six-hitter and Arizona blanked visiting Texas.

Angels 4, Padres 2: Max Stassi had two impressive home runs among his four hits, Griffin Canning struck out 10 in six innings and Los Angeles won at San Diego.

Astros 6, Mariners 1: Martin Maldonado hit a three-run home run. Framber Valdez struck out eight to set career highs for wins and strikeouts, and Houston won at Seattle to close in on its fourth straight playoff berth.

Giants 5, Rockies 2: Pinch-hitter Alex Dickerson hit a go-ahead homer in the seventh, Austin Slater also connected, and San Francisco beat Colorado to stay right in the playoff race.

STANLEY CUP FINAL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Value of winning faceoffs shown by Stars, Lightning

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta—When Ron Francis knew something was working on faceoffs, he would experiment and not use his best moves right away.

That was usually during the regular season. In the playoffs and in the Stanley Cup Final, the Hall of Fame center knows players can't afford not to go all out to win them.

"They've become more and more key as the games become more and more important," said Francis, now the general manager of the NHL's expansion Seattle Kraken. "In its simplest form, if you win the puck, you have possession. You start with possession and then you're automatically on offense. If you lose the draw, you're on defense and you've got to go hunt to get it back and expend energy to kind of get it."

Faceoffs late in tight games are always important, particularly those in the zone of a team clinging to a lead. While overall faceoff performance has been debated in recent years with more information available and different ways to analyze its importance, this final is showing the value of draws because of how the Dallas Stars and Tampa Bay Lightning prefer to play.

Dallas lost 64% of faceoffs in the first period of Game 2 and fell behind 3-0. The way Tampa Bay has handled when it has the puck puts a spotlight on the faceoff circle in this series.

NHL scoreboard

Stanley Cup Final

(Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)
At Edmonton, Alberta
Dallas 1, Tampa Bay 1
Dallas 4, Tampa Bay 1
Tampa Bay 3, Dallas 2
Wednesday: Game 3
Friday: Game 4 (4:30 Sports; 2 a.m. Saturday CET; 9 a.m. Saturday JKT)
Saturday: Game 5
x-Monday, Sept. 28: Game 6
x-Wednesday, Sept. 30: Game 7

"It's hard enough to get the puck, so it's a set situation: one of the few times you can somewhat control what's going to happen, and faceoffs are it," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "Often times you can see a team, if they've got a huge advantage in the faceoff circle, especially on special teams, it's an advantage."

Keith Jones thinks it's a bigger advantage than ever before because of faceoff rule changes designed to increase offense. Gradually since 2005, the NHL has made it so all power plays start in the offensive zone; the team that loses the puck can't change its players; the player on defense has to put his stick down first; and any puck shot out of play on offense stays in the attacking end.

Jones, a former NHL winger and now an NBC Sports analyst, pointed to multiple overtime goals in the Islanders-Flyers series that resulted from an icing mistake and a lost defensive-zone faceoff. Francis also noted the

Stars' power-play goal in Game 2 that came five seconds after a faceoff win.

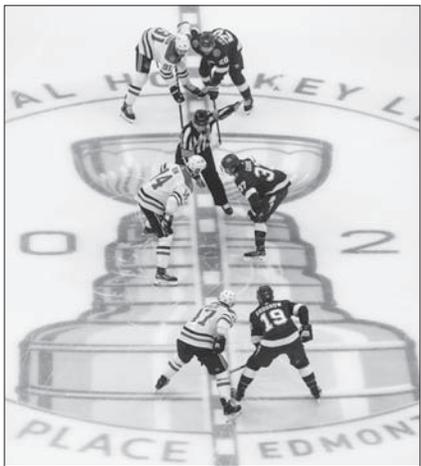
"Certainly the four dots in the end zones are the most critical because they can lead to goals," said Francis, a top faceoff artist as a player. "It's a part of the game that maybe a lot of people don't talk about, but I think it's extremely important and it leads to possession, which leads to offense."

That's why Stars interim coach Rick Bowness harped on the faceoff discrepancy early in the game Monday night. His team lost 13 of 20 even-strength faceoffs, then took penalties and turned the puck over more as a result of not being in control. The Lightning scored twice on the power play and once at 5-on-5.

"When you're losing the faceoffs like we did in the first period, you're chasing the game," Bowness said. "To beat this team, we need to be better in the faceoff circle and we need to manage the puck a lot better. If we do that, then we're going to take less penalties."

Because Dallas is the most penalized team in the playoffs, faceoffs are a nice starting point to cutting down on the lack of discipline. It becomes a mix of video study and practice, taking draw after draw during a morning skate.

"Every single time when you win the faceoffs, you are in charge of the game and you are creating the plays," Stars defenseman Andrej Sekera said. "We've just got



JASON FRANSON, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Players from the Dallas Stars and the Tampa Bay Lightning line up for a faceoff during Game 1 of the Stanley Cup Final on Saturday.

to make sure that we have a plan after every faceoff and try to get the puck out from our zone and go in their zone and play some hockey there."

Easier said than done, especially without injured center Radek Faska, who has won 128 of his 266 attempts for Dallas but brings added value no matter the result.

"I don't think we can underestimate how important Faska's been to that team for a long time, and that's part of his game," Jones said. "Probably not something that jumps off the page, but he's an important guy not just in the faceoff circle but then sorting things out after a faceoff win or

a loss."

Possibly missing forward Blake Comeau, too, Dallas might have to find a better way to compensate if faceoffs again tilt heavily in the Lightning's favor. Francis, as an assistant coach, would chart faceoffs live on the bench to know which matchups were good and bad for his team.

"To me, it was always kind of a chess match sort of within the game with me and the other centermen," Francis said. "If you're losing multiple draws against (someone), you can't keep sticking with the same thing. You've got to try and change something up or figure out what's kind of going wrong for you."

Another game postponed; Mountain West eyes fall

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

As the Atlantic Coast Conference worked Tuesday to reschedule another league game postponed because of a COVID-19 outbreak within one of its teams, the Mountain West was zering in on a possible late October start to its football season.

No. 1 Notre Dame's game at Wake Forest on Saturday was postponed after positive COVID-19 tests landed 13 Fighting Irish players in isolation and another 10 in quarantine.

The schools said they were working with the ACC to reschedule the game. Both teams have off Oct. 3.

Mountain West university presidents moved up a scheduled Friday meeting to Thursday, a person with knowledge of the meeting told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the league is not making its move toward a possible return to fall sports public.



ETHAN HYMAN, THE NEWS & OBSERVER/AP

North Carolina State wide receiver Devin Carter, left, pulls in a 2-yard touchdown pass as Wake Forest defensive back Ja'Sir Taylor tries to tip the ball away on Saturday in Raleigh, N.C. Wake Forest's game against Notre Dame this weekend was postponed.

It was unclear whether the Mountain West presidents would vote Thursday on any proposals, the person said.

Mountain West athletic directors are aiming for an Oct. 24 or Oct. 31 start for the football season. The conference is close to

an agreement that will provide its 12 schools with the capacity to perform daily COVID-19 antigen tests on its athletes, the person said.

Mountain West Commissioner Craig Thompson told the AP last week the conference would not move forward on a fall football season without its schools having the ability to test daily.

The Mountain West postponed its fall sports season on Aug. 10, the day before the Big Ten and Pac-12 did the same.

The Pac-12's CEO Group of presidents and chancellors is also meeting Thursday and is expected to make a decision on whether the conference can start its football season as soon as Halloween weekend. The Pac-12 announced early this month it had acquired daily COVID-19 testing for its members.

The Big Ten announced last week it will kick off its football season the weekend of Oct. 24. The conference plans to start testing its fall sport athletes daily

on Sept. 30.

The hope is daily testing will prevent those who are infected from spreading the virus and cut down on the number of people who end up in quarantine because they were in close contact with someone who tested positive.

The conferences that are currently staging fall football seasons have been testing athletes at least three times per week, but not daily.

Also Tuesday, No. 18 BYU announced that its next two games will be played without fans at LaVell Edwards Stadium in Provo, Utah. The school said health officials in the state had moved Provo from low to moderate COVID-19 risks, which prompted the switch to no fans for Saturday's game against Troy and the Oct. 2 game against Louisiana Tech.

BYU had to postpone its game last week at Army after having players test positive for COVID-19.

AP sports writer Aaron Beard contributed.

NBA PLAYOFFS



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

The Boston Celtics' Marcus Smart, left, defends as the Miami Heat's Jimmy Butler looks to make a pass during the second half of Game 3 in the Eastern Conference finals Saturday in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

Eastern Conference finals

Heat say they have to be better at start of games

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — The formula that the Miami Heat had backed themselves into using throughout this postseason wasn't exactly ideal.

They were losing almost every first quarter, and winning almost every game anyway.

It's not a sustainable plan, and the Boston Celtics finally showed that in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference finals when they pulled off a wire-to-wire win over Miami, not letting the Heat put together their typical comeback. The Heat insist there will be more urgency at the beginning for the remainder of the series.

"I think we've just got to start off better," Heat forward Jimmy Butler said. "I don't think we started off anywhere near where we're capable of. I think we dig ourselves a hole and try to fight back out of it. I think going into this next one, it's up to the starting five to come out with a great start."

Before Game 3, Miami was 8-0 in the playoffs when trailing after the first quarter — after going 10-16 when put in that position during the regular season. In the 36 minutes of first-period action against the Celtics, the Heat have led roughly one-sixth of the time.

Butler's 1-for-6 in 29 first-quarter minutes in the series. Duncan Robinson and Goran Dragic are a combined 10-for-19; the rest of the Heat in first quarters against the Celtics are 11-for-46. Boston

Scoreboard

Playoffs	
CONFERENCE FINALS	
(Best-of-seven; if necessary)	
Eastern Conference	
Miami 2, Boston 1	
Miami 117, Boston 114, OT	
Miami 106, Boston 100	
Boston 17, Miami 106	
Western Conference	
L.A. Lakers 2, Denver 1	
L.A. Lakers 126, Denver 114	
Sunday: L.A. Lakers 105, Denver 103	
Tuesday: Denver 114, L.A. Lakers 106	
Thursday: Game 4 (A.F.S. Sports, 3 a.m.)	
Friday: Game 5 (A.F.S. Sports, 2:30 a.m.)	
Saturday: Game 6 (A.F.S. Sports, 9:30 a.m., Saturday JKT)	
x-Sunday, Sept. 27: Game 6	
x-Tuesday, Sept. 29: Game 7	
Western Conference	
L.A. Lakers 2, Denver 1	
L.A. Lakers 126, Denver 114	
Sunday: L.A. Lakers 105, Denver 103	
Tuesday: Denver 114, L.A. Lakers 106	
Thursday: Game 4 (A.F.S. Sports, 3 a.m.)	
Friday: Game 5 (A.F.S. Sports, 2:30 a.m.)	
Saturday, Sept. 26: Game 5	
x-Monday, Sept. 28: Game 6	
x-Wednesday, Sept. 30: Game 7	

Tuesday	
Nuggets 114, Lakers 106	
L.A. Lakers Davis 9-17 9-10 27, James 14-23 1-2 30, McGee 2-2 0-1 4, Caldwell-Pope 5-8 0-0 12, Green 1-4 1-2 4, Kuzma 4-7 2-3 11, MoMorris 1-2 0-0 2, Howard 2-3 0-1 4, Caruso 1-7 0-0 2, Rondo 4-10 3-8, Totals 48-83 14-22 106.	
DENVER — Grant 7-11 10-12 26, Millsap 2-2 2-5 10, Jokic 9-14 4-22 19, Murray 9-2-2 7, Porter Jr. 10-17 4-7 28, Craig 1-4 0-0 2, Porter Jr. 4-6 0-9, Plumlee 0-1 0-0 0, MoMorris 5-7 2-4, Totals 40-73 22 114.	
L.A. Lakers 29 26 21-106	
Denver 28 34 30 21-114	
Three-Point Goals —L.A. Lakers 6-26 (Caldwell-Pope 2-5, Kuzma 1-2, Green 1-3, James 1-4, Rondo 0-1, Caruso 0-4, Davis 0-4), Denver 11-29 (Murray 4-8, MoMorris 2-4, Grant 2-5, Harris 1-2, Porter Jr. 1-2, Jokic 1-3, Craig 0-2, Millsap 0-3), Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—L.A. Lakers 25 (James 10), Denver 44 (Jokic 10). Assists—L.A. Lakers 27 (James 11), Denver 26 (Murray 12). Total Fouls—L.A. Lakers 26, Denver 21.	

has won the first quarters by a combined score of 88-68, shooting 54% to Miami's 32%.

"Certainly, it would help to be

able to get off to a good start," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "But you have to play good basketball more consistently when you get to this point in the conference finals against a quality opponent."

Another wild stat is this: Boston has outscored Miami 50-18 from two-point range in first quarters so far in the series. And yet, somehow, the Celtics still trail the series 3-1.

"Obviously, you know that when a team lost its last one, you're going to get a great shot," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said. "But you expect a great shot every time. We're going to have to play our best game in Game 4, and then after Game 4 is over, we're going to have to play better than that in Game 5. That's kind of the way it works."

The teams have had three full days off since Game 3, a quirk in the schedule to allow the Western Conference finals matchup between the Los Angeles Lakers and Denver Nuggets to catch up; the Lakers and Nuggets played the third game in their series Tuesday night.

Celtics forward Jayson Tatum offered a simple reason why Boston should be able to keep its edge after a win.

"Because we're still down 2-1," Tatum said. "It's never time to relax in a series until it's over with. Even more sense of urgency when you're down. We're still losing. We know that. We won't get it all back in one game. We just got to go one game at a time."

Back: Nuggets hang on after big lead dissipates

FROM BACK PAGE

appearance in a decade. Anthony Davis, who made the winning three-pointer at the buzzer in Game 2, scored 27 points.

The Nuggets led by 20 with 10½ minutes left and soon after were hanging on after the Lakers charged back with a 19-2 run, turning to a zone defense and forcing turnovers that led to easy baskets.

With Denver's lead down to four, Murray made a three-pointer with 2:16 remaining. He then found Paul Millsap under the basket for a score before hitting a long three to push the lead back to 111-99 with 55 seconds to play.

Coach Frank Vogel acknowledged the Lakers were fortunate to win Game 2, in which they committed 24 turnovers, and would have to be better Tuesday. Instead, it was the Nuggets who raised their game and played from ahead, ending a streak of six straight games where they trailed at halftime.

The Lakers built leads of 15 or more in the second quarter of the first two games. This time it was the Nuggets who started to run away in that period, even with Jokic on the bench resting for their big run that started it.

Denver began with a 7-0 spurt, the last five from Michael Porter Jr., to open a nine-point lead. After a dunk by James, Murray made a three-pointer and Monte Morris scored the next five to make it a 15-2 start to the period and give the Nuggets a 44-29 advantage.

It grew to 18 and could have been worse if not for Davis, who scored nine straight Lakers points. Markieff Morris' three-

pointer trimmed it to 63-53 at halftime.

The Lakers got the first five points of the third to cut the lead in half, but Denver regained control and led 93-75 after three.

Murray finished with eight rebounds.

Tip-ins

Lakers: The Lakers had a six-game winning streak snapped and fell to 10-3 in these playoffs. ... Dwight Howard started the second half at center, replacing JaVale McGehee.

Nuggets: Denver's last half-time lead had been a 59-57 edge over the Clippers in Game 3 of the West semifinals. ... Malone wished his parents a happy anniversary during his interview after the third quarter. His father, Brendan, was a longtime NBA assistant coach who also coached the Toronto Raptors in 1995-96, their inaugural season.

The air up there

The Lakers came into the game 4-0 in the playoffs as the designated road team. Vogel said nothing really changes in the Walt Disney World bubble except the benches the teams are sitting on, but he joked about the big difference that would have awaited his team in a normal situation.

"You know, I did make sure our guys did whatever they needed to do to adjust to the altitude of playing in Denver tonight because Game 3, you've always got to account for that altitude," he said. "Maybe we don't have to account for it tonight in Orlando."



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis, top, passes over the Denver Nuggets' Nikola Jokic during Game 3 of the Western Conference finals Tuesday in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

SPORTS



'The Kansas Comet'
Hall of Fame running back
Sayers dies at 77 » **Page 19**

NBA PLAYOFFS

Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray, left, goes up for a shot as the Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James looks on during the second half of Game 3 in the Western Conference finals Tuesday in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

PHOTOS BY MARK J. TERRILL/AP



Getting back into it

Nuggets win Game 3, avoid 3-0 hole



Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Jamal Murray had 28 points, 12 assists and two late three-pointers to halt a Lakers charge, helping the Denver Nuggets to a 114-106 victory Tuesday night that cut Los Angeles' lead to 2-1 in the Western Conference finals. The Nuggets lost almost all of a 20-point

lead in the fourth quarter but held on to win, avoiding a 3-0 hole that would have been daunting even for this never-out-of-it team.

Denver has set a record by erasing two 3-1 deficits in this postseason, but no NBA team has ever come back from 3-0.

Jerami Grant added a playoff career-high 26 points and Nikola Jokic had 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Nuggets, who will try to

even the series in Game 4 on Thursday.

"We didn't collapse," Denver coach Michael Malone said. "We withstood their run, their punch and we had the poise to get ourselves out of it."

LeBron James had 30 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds for the Lakers, who remain two wins from their first NBA Finals

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"We withstood their run, their punch and we had the poise to get ourselves out of it."

Michael Malone

Denver Nuggets coach, after the Nuggets lost almost all of a 20-point lead late in the game before holding on

