Resilience
& healing

Wounded airmen at Ramstein recover with help from their own

Resilience

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The first time Senior Master Sgt. Brian Williams attended an adaptive sports camp for wounded airmen like himself, his prosthetic leg fell off while riding a spin bike.

“I was the only amputee,” he recalled. “I was slightly embarrassed and annoyed at the same time. I was like, ‘I’m not doing this.’”

But Williams stuck with the program, and four years on he’s helping other airmen do the same.

This week, Williams is at Ramstein coaching sitting volleyball at the Warrior Care event at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Wounded warriors go through wheelchair rugby practice drills at the Warrior Care event at Ramstein.

Wounded airmen at Ramstein recover with help from their own

Jordan Lee-Fatt serves the ball during a seated volleyball match at the Warrior Care event at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Participating along with caregivers and families are more than 40 warriors — active-duty and medically retired airmen facing serious wounds, injuries or illnesses. Most are from Air Force bases in Europe, though some are from the States.

It’s hoped the weeklong event will boost airmen’s resiliency and healing through adaptive sports such as wheelchair rugby and activities like painting, yoga and journaling.

Care events are part of a federally funded program to help wounded, sick or injured airmen return to duty, said Marsha Gonzales, the branch chief for Warrior Program’s Warrior Care event, the first ever in Europe.

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Pakistan PM will work with US on Afghan accord

By Deb Riechmann
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After years of tension between Washington and Islamabad, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan insisted Tuesday the two are now on the same page and said he will do his best to persuade the Taliban to open negotiations with the Afghan government to resolve their war.

The U.S. has been engaging with the Taliban, who so far have refused to talk directly to the Afghan government, which they see as a puppet. Afghans are wary of Pakistan’s role in crafting a future for their country, but Khan said the Taliban need to participate in the next Afghan presidential election in September.

“It’s not easy. It’s not going to be easy,” Khan said about getting the Taliban and the Afghan government to the negotiating table.

Khan said the Taliban delegation to the U.S. negotiations asked to meet with him a few months ago probably because the prime minister has maintained there is no military solution to the war in Afghanistan. He said at the time that he didn’t do it because the Afghan government didn’t want him meeting with the Taliban.

But Khan said he’s spoken with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and he will reach out to the militant group when he returns to Pakistan. He met Monday with President Donald Trump.

“Now, I will meet the Taliban and I will try my best to get them to talk to the Afghan government,” Khan said at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington. “The election in Afghanistan must be an inclusive election where the Taliban are also participating.”

With all the talk about peace negotiations, Afghans were stunned Monday when Trump said he could unleash the U.S. military and wipe Afghanistan off “the face of the earth” in a week or 10 days.

“Trump’s casual comments were viewed with alarm because the war has not been between the U.S. and Afghanistan,” Khan said. For years, Afghan security forces have fought alongside their U.S. and NATO partners against the Taliban.

No civilians were injured by the blast, which was heard in the capital around 8:30 a.m., Farzad Faramarz said.

Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi confirmed the bomber targeted a convoy heading to a military camp in Kabul.

Kabul police spokesman Farzad Farzad told Stars and Stripes the attack happened less than a mile from the base at Kabul airport used by coalition and Afghan forces.

Croatian soldier killed, 2 wounded in Afghanistan attack

By Phillip Walter Wellman
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A Croatian soldier supporting NATO’s mission in Afghanistan was killed Wednesday in an apparent suicide bomber attack near Kabul’s military airport, officials said.

The soldier, identified as Josip Briski, 27, died following an attack on his vehicle, the Croatian Defense Ministry said. The two others in the vehicle were hospitalized in serious but stable condition, the ministry said, adding that the attacker had rammed into their armored vehicle with his motorcycle.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, saying a suicide bomber targeted a convoy of foreign forces.

Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi confirmed the bomber targeted a convoy heading to a military camp in Kabul.

Kabul police spokesman Farzad Farzad told Stars and Stripes the attack happened less than a mile from the base at Kabul airport used by coalition and Afghan forces.

No civilians were injured by the blast, which was heard in the capital around 8:30 a.m., Farzad Faramarz said.

The NATO mission in Afghanistan confirmed a coalition vehicle was hit by “an explosive device” Wednesday morning, without providing further details. Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said that “we have never experienced such an attack with such consequences” since joining the international mission 16 years ago, The Associated Press reported.

Croatia contributes 106 soldiers to NATO’s Resolute Support mission, which focuses on training and advising Afghan forces, according to the latest Defense Department figures. Overall, the mission is supported by 17,000 foreign troops, half of which are American.

Reports in the Croatian media said Briski was a member of Croatia’s special operations who was advising and mentoring Afghan troops.

Zubair Babakar Khan contributed to this report.

Twitter: @pwwellman
Russia denies airspace violation, wants probe

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Russia wants an investigation into South Korea’s allegations that a Russian military plane violated its airspace earlier this month.

Russia’s Defense Ministry has denied the allegations, saying the Russian reconnaissance plane entered South Korea’s airspace after a joint patrol with Chinese fighter jets on July 25.

The plane entered the South Korean airspace twice, the ministry said, without specifying which country’s airspace it violated. South Korea’s defense minister said the incident was not a matter of airspace violation but a case of unusual turbulence.

South Korea’s defense ministry said it received a report from the Russian military about the incident and that it was investigating further.

South Korea and Russia have had a tense relationship over territorial disputes in the East Sea, which South Korea calls the Yellow Sea.

South Korea accused Russia of侵犯其领空，但俄罗斯否认。南韩国防部表示，俄罗斯侦察机在7月25日与中国人民解放军战斗机进行联合巡逻时进入南韩领空。

俄罗斯国防部表示，该侦察机于7月25日进入韩国领空两次，但没有说明是侵犯哪个国家的领空。南韩国防部长表示，这起事件不涉及领空侵犯，而是异常的空域遭遇。

南韩国防部表示，它收到了俄罗斯军方的报告，并正在进一步调查。南韩和俄罗斯在东海上存在领土争端。

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Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, shown with President Donald Trump, speaks during his swearing-in ceremony Tuesday.

Pentagon on Dec. 31 when he re-signed, citing major policy differences with President Donald Trump.

Esper pledged during his confirmation hearing last week before the Senate Armed Services Committee that he would take an “aggressive and holistic” approach to solving the contamination problem.

PFAS, also known as perfluorooalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl, are man-made chemicals used worldwide since the 1950s in a variety of products, including in the firefighting foam that DOD installations have long used, nonstick cookware and water-repellent fabrics. They have been linked to an increase in cancer risks, low birth weights, liver failure and other health problems, according to the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

The Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit organization that specializes in environmental research and advocacy, has identified 175 military installations where PFAS have been found in drinking water. The Defense Department has stopped using the foam in training, but it has continued to use it to fight actual fires.

The task force will include experts from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Veterans Affairs, Esper said. The group is to consider all “key issues” of PFAS, including the cleanup of contaminated sites and finding an alternative firefighting solution.

The Defense Department needs to make certain “we go after this problem very aggressively, very holistically, and we get in front of it, stay in front of it, take care of our families, our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines and the out-lying communities,” Esper said. “We need to follow the science on this.”

Esper’s first trip as defense secretary will come next week when he visits U.S. Central Command’s headquarters near Tampa, Fla., to focus on major issues throughout the Middle East and south and central Asia, he said. Chiefly that includes updates on recent tensions between the United States and Iran and the military’s planning for potential problems there.

The new defense secretary said the U.S. military would protect American-flagged vessels from Iranian aggression in the region, but he stopped short of announc-ing plans for Navy warships to accompany U.S. commercial ships or to keep us out of politics as much as possible.

Although the military in recent months has found itself at the center of political controversy following reports that Navy officials were asked by the White House to hide the name of the USS John S. McCain during a Trump visit to Japan. Also during that visit, sailors were photographed wearing unofficial patches on their uniforms depicting a likeness of Trump that included a play on his campaign slogan that read “Make Aircrew Great Again.”

The defense secretary said he would set a “personal example to keep us out of politics as much as possible.”

“It’s something you always have to stay on top of, and that’s my commitment,” Esper said.

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Thursday, July 25, 2019

**PACIFIC**

**Okinawa passenger jailed for loaded gun in luggage**

**By Matthew M. Burke and Aya Ichihashi**

*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A Seattle man flying to Okinawa for a new job as a civilian firefighter at White Beach Naval Facility was arrested after a loaded firearm was found in his bag at Narita International Airport, Japanese police said.

Michael Edward Applegate, 43, was arrested shortly after the weapon was discovered about 5:50 p.m. Monday as he checked his luggage at Terminal 1 for a connecting flight to Okinawa, according to a Narita International Airport Police spokesman.

The gun was described only as an “automatic.”

It is customary in Japan for spokespeople to sometimes decline to provide their names to reporters. Narita is in Chiba prefecture, 27 miles southeast of central Tokyo.

Applegate told police he didn’t know the firearm was in his suitcase and that it must have been packed accidentally in the moving process, the spokesman said. Police also confiscated 28 rounds of ammunition. Applegate was expected to be referred to the Chiba District Public Prosecutor’s Office on Wednesday for violating Japan’s swords and firearms control law, the police spokesman said.

If convicted, he faces three to 20 years in prison, a spokesman from the prosecutor’s office said.

“The Navy holds its personnel to high standards and takes any allegation of criminal behavior by its personnel seriously,” Navy Region Japan spokesman Marshall Smith wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes on Wednesday evening.

Police originally reported that Applegate was heading to a job at Kadena Air Base, which serves as Commander Fleet Activities Okinawa’s headquarters.

**Active-shooter alert prompts Yokota lockdown**

**By Aaron Kidd**

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Reports of a suspected active shooter spurred an 18-minute lockdown Wednesday afternoon at the home of U.S. Forces Japan and the 5th Air Force in western Tokyo.

“REAL WORLD — LOCKDOWN, Yokota Air Base is under LOCKDOWN,” said a text alert sent by the 374th Airlift Wing about 1:50 p.m. “Last known location: Bldg. 31, O-Club — LOCKDOWN.”

After sweeping the Officer’s Club, security personnel found “no indications of an active shooter and no injuries were reported,” said a statement from the wing.

A message broadcast over Yokota’s Giant Voice public address system at 2:08 p.m. announced that the emergency had ended.

It was the second incident concerning a suspected active shooter at Yokota this year. On March 13, reports of shots fired at or near a westside car care center locked the installation down for about an hour.

However, security personnel and Japanese police found no evidence of firearms being discharged on or off base at the time, according to the 374th Airlift Wing.

Sources on base reported the sound may have been caused by a vehicle backfiring or special cannons used to scare wildlife away from aircraft, base officials said.

**USS Indianapolis to be commissioned at Indiana port**

Associated Press

BURNS HARBOR, Ind. — The Navy is planning to commission its new USS Indianapolis combat vessel at a northwestern Indiana port this fall.

The ceremony marking the ship’s entry into the Navy’s active fleet is set for Oct. 26 at Burns Harbor along Lake Michigan. It is the fourth military vessel carrying the Indianapolis name.

The second USS Indianapolis was sunk by a Japanese submarine in July 1945 after it delivered key components for the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

The ship was built at a Marinette, Wis., shipyard and will be based near Jacksonville, Fla. It is a Freedom-class littoral ship designed to be highly maneuverable for missions such as mine-clearing and anti-submarine warfare.

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**Officials honor the fallen as maneuvers in Australia end**

**BY SETH ROBSON**

**Stars and Stripes**

BOWEN, Australia — Military leaders from the U.S., Australia and Japan — in town for the bimennial Talisman Sabre exercise — laid wreaths at a memorial to fallen Australian soldiers on the final day of maneuvers in this northern Queensland town.

U.S. Marine Col. Matthew Sieber, an exchange officer with the Australian Army, laid a wreath on behalf of American forces.

"This is a good way to show our respect for those who have done this for years and years before us," he told the other troops, noting that U.S. and Australian soldiers have fought side by side since the Battle of Hamel in northern France in 1918.

The memorial is topped by a sandstone statue of a "digger," as Australian soldiers were affectionately called during World War I. It was built by citizens of the town to commemorate those who died in service or were killed in action during that conflict.

Later, plaques were added that list the names of locals killed in other conflicts.

Maj. Chris Thomson, the Australian Army officer in charge of exercise control in Bowen, said the cenotaph is typical of monuments in small towns all over Australia.

"Anyone who has sacrificed in conflict is represented by these memorials," he told those in attendance.

Andrew Willcox, mayor of the Whitsunday Region, which includes Bowen, thanked the troops for keeping the community safe by showing the strength needed to resolve conflicts through diplomacy.

"This cenotaph is used on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day," he said.

"We honor Australian and New Zealander troops and all the allies and also the people who we fought against who lost their lives."
US takes possession of new hospital in S. Korea

Long-awaited facility set to open Nov. 15

By Kim Gamel
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The United States took possession late last month of a state-of-the-art, 68-bed hospital at the new U.S. military headquarters in South Korea, as part of efforts to accommodate the growing population of American forces in the region.

That will be a relief for the more than 30,000 Americans based at Camp Humphreys, many of whom must commute some 55 miles north to the South Korean capital city for medical services, including behavioral health care and childbirth.

U.S. military leaders told reporters Wednesday, speaking ahead of the hospital's official opening next month, that the facility will meet U.S. standards set for rapid deployment of a Juniper-class buoy tender that will carry out this mission.

“We had to replace all of the firewalls,” Yoon said Wednesday. “I was devastated and worried about the handshake, but we managed to get it done.”

The project cost nearly $215 million, Yoon said. That’s more than 40% above the original estimate given by other officials and years behind schedule.

The United States has paid about $50 million to furnish and equip the facility, officials said.

Hospital commander Col. Andrew Landers blamed most of the delays on requirements that the facility meet U.S. standards set by the Joint Commission, an accreditation organization.

He expressed confidence that all the problems had been resolved.

“Today is one of those days that I was afraid would never come,” said Col. Teresa Schlosser, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District. She attended the ceremony on her last day as district commander.

“I appreciate being able to close out this hospital after all the years of hard work to get it across the finish line,” she said.

Services to be offered at the 418,572-square-foot facility include emergency, primary care, behavioral health, physical and occupational therapy. It also will have an intensive care unit and a room for cesarean sections in the maternity unit.

The opening of the hospital, one designed to counter “antagonistic, antagonistic behaviors that are not consistent with the enforcement,” Schultz said. It also means assistance with fishing regulations to search and rescue.

Coast Guard cutter. It also means assistance with the security cutter Bertholf, will carry out this mission.

“We are collaborating, working very diligently with the Vietnamese,” the admiral said. “We’ve worked with the Malaysians, the Indonesians, helping them build out their capacity; with the Philippines, as I’ve mentioned.

“We need to be a little bit more engaged and developing firewalls,” Yoon said Wednesday. “They must meet the wave of vessels large and small that China puts to sea with a partnership and a commitment to rule of law.

The overall goal, he said, sprinkling the half-hour session with a phrase common in maritime defense circles, is a “free and open Indo-Pacific,” meaning one absent limits imposed by China as it seeks to expand its sphere of influence.

The South Koreans have fulfilled most of their obligations, but Landers said the facility remains 41% behind schedule.

“TOKYO — The U.S. Coast Guard’s commandant is pushing for a better working relationship with island nations in the western Pacific — one designed to counter “antagonistic, aggressive behaviors” from the Chinese.

“I think what we would champion is transparency engagement,” Adm. Karl Schultz said Tuesday from Saipan. “I think we have seen behaviors out of the Chinese coast guard — the maritime militia that are not consistent with the rule-based order.”

Siding with the United States in the global power competition in the Indo-Pacific region means receiving a used Coast Guard cutter. It also means assistance with everything from enforcing international fishing regulations to search and rescue operations and training in maritime law enforcement, Schultz said.

“I think there needs to be an international pushback to say, ‘We reject the type of behavior, the antagonistic, aggressive behaviors that are not consistent with the rule-based order,’” he said.

The commandant announced a 30-day deployment of a Juniper-class buoy tender that’s fast response cutter as part of efforts to beef up the Coast Guard presence in the Northern Marianas, a U.S. Commonwealth in the western Pacific that includes Guam and Saipan.

Schultze spoke as the potential for conflict in the region continues to simmer. On Friday, Vietnam demanded China remove a survey vessel and coast guard ships from American Samoa for an extended period as a “proof of concept.”

BUOY TENDERS — The Juniper-class buoy tender is one of a series of vessels that are being deployed to the Pacific to maintain navigational buoys, according to the Coast Guard.

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Iran open to ship release if UK reciprocates

By Nasser Karimi and Aya Batrawy

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — President Hassan Rouhani suggested on Wednesday that Iran might release a U.K.-flagged ship if Britain takes similar steps to release an Iranian oil tanker seized by the British Royal Navy off Gibraltar earlier this month.

His remarks could create an opening to reduce tensions as Boris Johnson becomes prime minister. It’s unclear how the new government will respond to Rouhanis suggestion or the impasse with Iran.

“We do not seek the continuation of tension with some European countries,” Rouhani said, echoing comments carried on his website. “Should they be committed to international frameworks and give up their wrong actions, including what they did in Gibraltar, they will receive a proportional response from Iran.”

Britain this week announced plans to develop and deploy a Europe-led “maritime protection mission” to safeguard shipping in the area after Iran’s Revolutionary Guard seized the Stena Impero in the Strait of Hormuz on Friday.

Rouhani said that while Iran does not seek a military conflict, it will not allow threats to its security in the important waterway. He described the Iranian seizure of the ship as “professional and brave.”

Iranian officials have alleged the ship was seized after it violated international maritime law by turning off its signaling for longer than is allowed and passing through the wrong channels.

However, Iranian officials have also suggested the ship was seized in response to Britain’s role in impounding an Iranian supertanker two weeks earlier off the coast of Gibraltar, a British overseas territory. The U.K. says the tanker was suspected of violating sanctions on oil shipments to Syria.

Both sides claim the interception of one another’s ships “hostile acts” and “piracy.”

Stena Bulk, the owner of the ship being held by Iran, said it made first contact Tuesday evening with the crew of 23 since its seizure Friday. The company said the ship’s master advised “that everyone was safe with good co-operation with the Iranian personnel onboard.”

The crew are mostly Indian, but also include Filipino, Russian and Latvian nationals. Iranian state TV aired video of the crew onboard the vessel off Iran’s port of Bandar Abbas earlier this week.

A spate of incidents in past weeks has threatened security in the Strait of Hormuz, which lies between Iran and Oman. Tensions have also soared following President Donald Trump’s decision last May to pull out of the nuclear deal and impose maximal sanctions on Iran.

One-fifth of global crude oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, making it an internationally important chokepoint for global energy supplies from Gulf producers.

In past weeks, Iran has shot down a U.S. spy drone, U.S. officials say military cyberforces struck Iranian computer systems that handle missile and rocket launchers, and six oil tankers have been sabotaged near the strait.

Iranian officials on Wednesday reiterated their denial that any Iranian drones were intercepted, after the U.S. military said Tuesday that it took aim at two of them last week.

U.S. Central Command said one Iranian drone crashed into the sea after the USS Boxer took “defensive action” against it July 18. It said the Roger also “engaged” a second Iranian drone at the same time but could not confirm it was destroyed.

Iranian Defense Minister Gen. Amir Hatami told reporters Wednesday that “if someone claims he should provide evidence,” adding that “none of our drones have been intercepted.”

Despite a U.K. government advisory that British-flagged ships avoid the Strait of Hormuz, a large British-flagged vessel transited the corridor and arrived at a port in Qatar on Wednesday.

Maritime publication Lloyd’s List identified the vessel as the BW Elm and reported that a British warship, likely the HMS Montrose, closely shadowed the large liquefied petroleum gas carrier but that the Royal Navy did not provide a direct escort.

The Ministry of Defence declined to specifically comment on the transit and referred to recent comments by chief executive of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, which has been under discussion for a month.

Mark Esper, then the acting secretary of defense, first called for a joint strategy to protect shipping in the Persian Gulf during a meeting at NATO headquarters in June. Marine Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters in early July that a concrete plan had been formulated and that the role of allies would become clear within weeks.

The United States was “working diligently to build out a maritime security initiative” with “a broad range of countries participating,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said July 17.

The State Department and the Department of Defense co-hosted a discussion with allies about the plan on Friday. The meeting included more than 60 nations from around the world, according to a State Department spokeswoman who spoke on the condition of anonymity per department rules.

During a speech Tuesday, President Donald Trump said he felt the United States should not take too much responsibility for ships in the Persian Gulf, suggesting instead “very rich” countries like Japan and China could do it.

Following the capture of a British tanker on Friday, British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt outlined a separate, Europe-led plan Monday “to support safe passage of both crew and cargo in this vital region.”

Speaking to British lawmakers on Monday, Hunt said that the plan was different from the U.S. proposal. “It will not be part of the U.S. maximum pressure policy on Iran because we remain committed to preserving the Iran nuclear agreement,” Hunt said.

British officials have emphasized that the plan would be about ensuring freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf — an aim that Tehran could theoretically back as well. But Mark Dubowitz, chief executive of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a group that often calls to isolate Iran, said the European plan could ultimately count as a win for Trump.

“Burden sharing from our allies gives them a stake in deterring and responding to aggression from the regime in Iran,” he said.

“No nation has yet publicly pledged material support for the U.S.-led maritime security initiative. Experts say some nations may be concerned about linking with the U.S. maximum pressure campaign on Iran, either hoping to salvage the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement or because they still maintain good relations with Tehran.”

Jarrett Blanc, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace who worked on the Iran deal at the State Department under the Obama administration, said the lack of traction was not surprising.

“Other countries take the front line under U.S. command and control, but other countries do not trust us not to escalate [or] provoke,” Blanc said of the U.S. proposal in an email.

Some nations that seek to have good relations with both the United States and Iran have offered vague statements of support but made no detailed commitments.

The British-led proposal has had more luck securing backing, in part because European nations like Britain, France and Germany, along with Russia and China, have remained in the nuclear agreement with Iran even as Trump pulled the United States out last year.

On Monday afternoon, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas expressed public support for the British proposal on the condition that diplomatic channels remain open. France issued its own message of support on Tuesday.

Some European nations may be cautious that Britain, in the midst of a change of leadership that could see Hunt replaced as foreign minister, may draw back from its plans.

But analysts see the British proposal as a clear indication that even in the final lead-up to Brexit, Britain is still opting to coordinate with its European partners on matters of security.

It remains unclear what level of coordination there would be with the United States.

So far, both plans remain at the early stages.

Iranian president Hassan Rouhani told a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday that it was the duty of Iran to protect the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

“I do believe that the whole world should be grateful to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps for preserving security in the Persian Gulf,” Rouhani said, according to Mehr News Agency.

A speedboat and a helicopter of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard move Sunday around the British-flagged oil tanker Stena Impero, which was seized Friday by the Guard, in the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas.

Patrol: British plan seeks to ensure freedom of navigation in Persian Gulf
Airmen: Wounded Warrior program helps injured through transition

FROM FRONT PAGE
Warrior Care support. “If we can’t, we focus on helping them through that transition.” The other services also run similar programs.

Williams, 37, said he feels fortunate to still be in the Air Force. He was injured in 2012 in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, while on a mission as a military working dog handler.

“The dog went in a room and didn’t come out,” he said. “I went up the stairs to get him. Something went off. Instant leg amputation. Missing teeth. Compound fracture to my left wrist. Ruptured ear drums. I mean, you name it; I had the gamut of injuries from that explosion.”

Williams didn’t attend his first wounded warrior camp until 2015, after he recovered and returned to duty.

“I did fine at the end, but other people will say I was moody, I was hesitant,” Williams said of the experience.

He went and, “now, you have a hard time getting me out of archery,” he said, comparing it to shooting, minus the bang, “time getting me out of archery,” he said, comparing it to shooting, minus the bang.

“When a staff member asked him if he will say I was moody, I was hesitant,” Williams said. “I made a lot of friends here,” he said. “If I’m in a dark place again, they would pull me out of that.”

Wounded warriors do running drills at the Warrior Care event at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on Tuesday. Part of the Air Force Wounded Warrior program, it was the first such event at an Air Force base in Europe.

Wounded warriors do running drills at the Warrior Care event at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on Tuesday. Part of the Air Force Wounded Warrior program, it was the first such event at an Air Force base in Europe.

Marsha Gonzales, branch chief for warrior care support

THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAM WAS TO HELP THEM THROUGH THE TRANSITION (TO CIVILIAN LIFE). BUT WHAT WE REALIZED IS MANY OF THESE AIRMEN CAN STILL SERVE.

“I love to sweat and go fast,” he said. “I missed the feeling of intense physical activity that he used to get from running.

“I made a lot of friends here,” he said. “If I’m in a dark place again, they would pull me out of that.”

Proud again to wear blue

The program has also helped medically retired Air Force Maj. Lisa McCranie pull through her struggles with combat-related PTSD in the face of unsupportive Air Force leaders and medical personnel in a culture that makes it difficult for pilots to seek mental help and maintain their wings. McCranie flew numerous cargo and combat missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, often dodging mortar attacks on base.

“Builds so much camaraderie,” she said. “Is I never had support in the military. I never had somebody stand up for me.”

The Wounded Warrior staff “will do what it takes,” from providing emotional support to helping with paperwork, she said.

“They speak the same language — we’re military — you don’t really have to explain yourself because they just get it.”

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MILITARY

German defense minister backs more military funds

Associated Press

BERLIN — Military spending in Germany must keep rising, the country’s new defense minister said Wednesday, underlining her commitment to long-term targets.

She told critics that the country’s own security needs require more funds and the move isn’t simply a response to foreign pressure.

She said the government had agreed in 2014 to “aim to move toward” increasing defense spending to 2% of their gross domestic product by 2024, though Germany has already said it doesn’t expect to meet that goal. The U.S. has criticized Berlin’s spending.

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who also leads Chancellor Angela Merkel’s center-right party, told lawmakers after being sworn in as defense minister that she is committed to aiming for the 2% target and that Germany must reach 1.5% by 2024. She said spending needs to remain on “a reliable constantly growing path.”

Kramp-Karrenbauer said Germany is and will remain “a reliable ally,” but the 1.5% aim reflects “our minimum needs.”

She also said clearly: This is not about wishes from abroad; this is not about rearmament,” she said. “It is about equipment and personnel.”

Germany’s military spending is expected to hit 1.53% of GDP this year, compared with 1.25% in 2018. However, a budget proposal earlier this year suggested that it would drop back again by 2023, angering the U.S.

The junior partners in Merkel’s fractious coalition, the Social Democrats, question the 2% spending target.

The leader of the party’s parliamentary group, Rolf Muetzenich, said the German parliament controls the country’s budget and that “no alliance and no international organization can presume that right for itself.”

Muetzenich said Kramp-Karrenbauer appeared to think resolving security issues was simply “a question of money.” He said he would advise her to address weaknesses in her new ministry before asking for more spending and referring to “a supposed 2% target.”

Kramp-Karrenbauer succeeds Ursula von der Leyen, who was elected last week as the next president of the European Union’s executive commission.

Turkey slams US’ safe-zone proposal

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey on Wednesday slammed a new U.S. proposal for a so-called “safe zone” in northern Syria, saying it was “not satisfactory” and warning that Ankara may launch a new offensive to secure its border if an agreement isn’t reached soon.

According to Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, U.S. officials held talks with Turkish officials in Ankara about Syria, including the setting up of a safe zone along the Turkey-Syrian border.

“The United States must come with proposals that are satisfactory to us or are close to our proposals,” Cavusoglu said, adding that Turkey’s patience “has run out.”

Turkey views Kurdish fighters who have battled Islamic State alongside U.S. forces as terrorists, allied with a Kurdish insurgency within Turkey. Ankara wants the safe zone established east of the Euphrates River to keep the Kurdish fighters away from the border region.

Since 2016, Turkey has launched two cross-border offensives against ISIS and the Kurdish fighters. It has recently been sending reinforcements to its border area, signaling a possible new offensive.

Cavusoglu, speaking to reporters at a joint news conference with visiting Nicaraguan counterpart Denis Moncada, said the U.S. delegation had offered new proposals on the safe zone, including possible joint patrols and “who would be in it and who would enter.” He did not elaborate on what was unsatisfactory about the new Washington proposal.

The U.S. Embassy in Ankara said the issues discussed included “proposals to end back. Ankara security along the border in northeast Syria.”

Turkey and the U.S. have been divided on the size of the safe zone, who would control it and the degree to which the Kurdish fighters would pull back. Ankara wants Turkish troops to control the zone.

“Turkey is for a safe zone to be established soon,” Cavusoglu added. “Otherwise, we will do whatever is necessary ourselves.”

Futures Command marks 1st anniversary

By Rose L. Thayer

AUSTIN, Texas — To celebrate one year since its activation in downtown Austin, the Army Futures Command hosted a public event Monday.

Called “Thank You, Austin,” the event featured the 312th Army Rock Band, a swearing-in ceremony of future soldiers, a performance and clinics with the Army Field Band, and a demonstration from the Army Golden Knights parachute team.

More than 1,000 people attended the celebration held at the Long Center for the Performing Arts.

Futures Command is the Army’s newest four-star command. It aims to transform the acquisition and modernization process to prepare and equip soldiers for future battlefields.

Former US sailor sentenced for stealing almost $140K in benefits

By Scott Daugherty

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

Camasha Walters was a petty officer 3rd class living in Norfolk. Her husband was a U.S. citizen living in Bangladesh. To boost her take-home pay, Walters told the Navy in 2015 her husband was a U.S. citizen living in Brooklyn, N.Y. She said she needed larger housing and cost-of-living allowances to support him.

Walters, 37, was sentenced last week to five months in jail on charges she stole almost $140,000 from the federal government.

Following her release, she will be on house arrest for six months. She also must perform 200 hours of community service and pay full restitution.

“When a servicemember lies in order to inflate their benefits, that member offends a system built on trust, and insults those colleagues who approach the system honestly,” Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Dave Walters said in court documents, arguing for a sentence of 10 months in jail in the hopes of deterring others from engaging in such frauds.

The charges against Walters, who enlisted in 2013, stem from May 2015 through February 2018 when she was assigned to the Theodore Roosevelt and George Washington aircraft carriers.

According to court documents, Walters traveled to Bangladesh to marry Amrito Gomes in February 2015.

Later, Walters informed the military of her marriage and identified her husband as a U.S. citizen living in New York.

In various documents filed with the military, Walters asked to transition her Navy Basic Allowance for Housing from her mother’s address in Norfolk to her husband’s address in Brooklyn. She also requested an increased cost of living allowance.

The housing and cost of living allowances are pay supplements designed to offset the cost to servicemembers or their dependents who live in more expensive parts of the country.

To receive the housing allowance, Walters signed multiple documents regarding her husband’s Brooklyn address. To prove her claims, she also provided a signed lease and a notarized letter supposedly from a property owner suggesting the apartment’s utilities were contained in the rent.

Layne said Walters was not entitled to the inflated allowances because her husband never lived in Brooklyn. He’s never even visited the United States, he said.

In all, Walters’ various lies led the Navy to pay her $139,420.60 she was not entitled to.

“The military is somewhat unique in the broad benefits it affords its employees. The military also relies on its members to honestly convey their living and family situations in order to properly allocate those benefits and finite resources,” Layne said.

To the surprise of U.S. District Judge Arena L. Wright Allen, Walters received an honorable discharge from the Navy earlier this year despite knowledge of her fraud.

Assistant Federal Public Defender Lindsay McCaslin asked the court for leniency, arguing her client was a Jamaican immigrant who had worked hard over the years to become a U.S. citizen and better herself.
ICE releases US citizen held more than 3 weeks

By NOMAAN MERCHANT
Associated Press
HOUSTON — A U.S.-born 18-year-old was released from immigration custody after wrongly being detained for more than three weeks.

Francisco Erwin Galicia left a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Pearsall, Texas, on Tuesday after being wrongfully detained.

His lawyer, Claudia Galan, confirmed he had been released, less than a day after The Dallas Morning News reported about his detention.

ICE did not immediately comment. Nor did U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which oversees the Border Patrol, the agency that first detained Galicia.

Galicia lives in the border city of Edinburg, Texas, and was traveling north with a group of friends when they were stopped at a Border Patrol inland checkpoint. According to Galan and the Morning News, agents apprehended Galicia on suspicion that he was in the U.S. illegally even though he had a Texas state ID.

Galicia was detained for three weeks by the Border Patrol, then transferred to the ICE detention center.

Galan said she believes Galicia was “absolutely” a victim of racial profiling. The others in the vehicle with him were all Latinos, including his brother Marlon, 17, who was born in Mexico and was in the U.S. illegally. Marlon told the Morning News that he agreed to be returned to Mexico.

The Border Patrol apprehension of people entering the U.S. illegally, both directly at the U.S.-Mexico border and with unauthorized checkpoint militia points in the border. In most cases, agents glance at drivers passing through the checkpoints, check them, and let them pass quickly. A passport or proof of citizenship is not normally demanded to pass through an inland checkpoint.

Galicia was detained by the Border Patrol for well above the 72 hours that CBP says it is supposed to hold detainees. But in South Texas’ Rio Grande Valley, where Galicia was arrested, the Border Patrol is holding hundreds of adult men and women accused of entering the country illegally for longer than 72 hours.

The Morning News reported that Galicia wasn’t transferred out of Border Patrol custody to ICE until Saturday. That’s when he was able to make collect calls to his mother. Galan drove Tuesday to the detention center in Pearsall to secure his release.

Immigration authorities are not supposed to detain U.S. citizens. But both ICE and CBP have apprehended citizens in the past.

A person covers their head Monday outside a Nashville, Tenn., home where an immigration agent gave up trying to arrest a man who, aided by neighbors, refused to leave his vehicle for four hours. An immigration enforcement operation that targeted 2,100 people so far has netted 35 arrests.

USDA rule would cut food stamp benefits for 3.1M

By CAROLE FELDMAN
Associated Press
WASHINGTON — About 3.1 million people would lose food stamp benefits under the Trump administration’s proposal to tighten automatic eligibility requirements for the food stamp program.

The Agriculture Department said Tuesday that the rule would close “a loophole” that enables people receiving only minimal benefits from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to be eligible automatically for food stamps without undergoing further checks on their income or assets.

“For too long, this loophole has been used to effectively bypass important eligibility guidelines. Too often, states have misused this flexibility without restraint,” Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said in a statement.

The proposed rule is the latest in the Trump administration’s efforts to cut back on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, the official name of the food stamp program. It also has proposed to tighten work requirements for those who receive federal food assistance.

USDA estimates that 1.7 million households — 3.1 million people — “will not otherwise meet SNAP’s income and asset eligibility prerequisites under the proposed rule.” That would result in a net savings of about $94 billion over five years.

Congress has rejected previous, similar attempts to change the expanded automatic eligibility provisions, most recently during the farm bill debate in 2018.

Under the new proposal, to qualify for automatic eligibility, people would have to get at least $30 a month in benefits from TANF for a minimum of six months.

Perdue said the change is necessary for “preventing abuse of a critical safety net system so that people who need assistance the most are the only ones who receive it.”

The rule was expected to be published in the Federal Register on Wednesday.

Immigration raids targeting 2,100 result in 35 arrests

WASHINGTON — An immigration enforcement operation that President Donald Trump said was part of an effort to deport “millions” of people from the United States resulted in 35 arrests, officials said Tuesday.

Trump billed the operation targeting families as a major show of force as the number of Central American families crossing the southern border has skyrocketed. There are about 1 million people in the U.S. with final deportation orders; the operation targeted 2,100.

Of those arrested, 18 were members of families and 17 were collateral apprehensions of people in the country illegally who were encountered by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers. None of those arrested resulted in the separation of family, officials said.

The effort was demonized by Democrats as a full-force drive to deport families and trumpeted by Republicans as a necessary show of force to prove there are consequences for people coming here illegally. But career ICE officers described it as a routine operation, one expected to net an average of about 10% to 20% of targets.

A separate nationwide enforcement operation targeting immigrants here illegally who had criminal convictions or charges netted 3,282 notices of inspection to businesses that may be employing people here illegally.

Acting ICE director Matthew Albence said the operations would be ongoing, stressing the importance of enforcement.

“Part of the way you stop people from coming is having a consequence to the illegal activity when you do come,” he said.

The operation targeting families was centered on those who had been ordered deported by an immigration judge in 10 cities around the country who were subjected to fast-track proceedings. It was canceled once after media reports telegraphing when and where it would begin, though Trump announced it would be postponed following a phone call with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who urged him to do so.

The second effort began July 14 and again was met with media attention noting where and when it was to start, including from Trump, who announced the date.

Albence said Trump’s comments didn’t hurt the effort because it had already been the subject of media reports for weeks. But the overall publicity caused problems for an operation that relies largely on secrecy and surprise. Albence said the publicity made some officers targets, and they had to be pulled off.

Part of the reason other similar operations were more successful is because they were “done without a lot of fanfare and media attention,” Albence said. “That certainty, from an operational perspective, is beneficial.”

Another factor was weather; operations were suspended in New Orleans because of the hurricane there.

Immigrant rights activists nationwide had the rare advantage of knowing when to expect increased immigration enforcement, and they pushed “know-your-rights” campaigns hard.

Activists reported one clear success story in Nashville, Tenn., on Monday. Neighbors noticed ICE surveillance in the area and helped a 12-year-old boy and man avoid arrest by calling others and then linking arms around their van. ICE officers eventually called off the operation to avoid escalation.

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House OKs bill to improve VA adaptive housing grants

By Rose L. Thayer
Stars and Stripes

A bill to increase the amount of funding available to disabled veterans to adapt their homes to meet their needs is one step closer to becoming law.

The Ryan Kules Specially Adapted Housing Improvement Act of 2019 passed the House on Tuesday night by a voice vote.

The new law, introduced by Reps. Mike Levin, D-Calif., and Gus Bilirakis, R-Fla., updates the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Specially Adapted Housing grant program, which now provides a maximum of $85,000 to veterans with certain permanent, service-connected disabilities, with the most common being bilateral amputees.

The new law ups the amount of the grant to about $90,000 and allows veterans to receive funds up to six times.

By Eric Tucker,
Mary Clare Jalonick and Michael Balsamo
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former special counsel Robert Mueller on Wednesday dismissed President Donald Trump’s claims that his investigation had exonerated the president of obstructing his probe into Russia’s efforts to help Trump win the 2016 election.

“The president was not exculpated for the acts that he allegedly committed,” Mueller declared at the opening of congressional hearings into his investigation.

He described the impeachment investigation’s efforts to interfere in American politics as among the most serious challenges to democracy he had encountered in his decades-long career, which included leading the FBI after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The televised Capitol Hill appearance, Mueller’s first since wrapping his two-year Russia probe last spring, unfolded at a moment of deep divisions in Congress and the country, with many Americans hardened in their opinions about the success of Trump’s presidency and whether impeachment proceedings are necessary. It was unclear whether hours of testimony will shape public opinion about Trump’s acts.

Democrats hoped his testimony would weaken Trump’s reelection prospects in ways that Mueller’s book-length report did not. They hope that even if his testimony doesn’t inspire impeachment demands — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has made clear she will not pursue impeachment, for now — Mueller could nonetheless unambiguously spell out questionable, norm-shattering actions by the president.

In the first of the day’s two hearings, Republicans, by contrast, immediately defended Trump and criticized the Democrats for continuing to go after him.

They highlighted Mueller’s conclusion of insufficient evidence to establish a criminal conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia.

“Those are the facts of the Mueller report. Russia meddled in the 2016 election,” said Rep. Doug Collins, the top Republican on the House Judiciary Committee. “The president did not conspire with Russians. Nothing we hear today will change those facts.”

Mueller frequently gave terse, one-word answers to lawmakers’ questions and referred back to the wording in his report. He at times appeared stilted and halting, and several times asked for questions to be repeated.

Pressed as to why he hadn’t investigated a “dossier” of claims that the Republicans insist helped lead to the start of the probe, he said that was not his charge.

“I was outside my purview,” he said repeatedly.

Though Mueller declared at the outset that he would be limited in what he would say, the hearings nonetheless carried the extraordinary spectacle of a prosecutor discussing in public a criminal investigation he conducted into a sitting U.S. president.

Mueller, known for his taciturn nature, warned that he would not stray beyond what’s already been revealed in his report.

Additionally, the Justice Department instructed Mueller to stay strictly within those parameters, giving him a formal directive to point to if he faced questions he does not want to answer.

On Tuesday, Democrats on the House judiciary and intelligence committees granted his request to have his top aide in the investigation, Aaron Zebley, sit at the table with him.

Trump lashed out early Wednesday ahead of the hearing, saying on Twitter that “Democrats and others” are trying to fabricate crime and pin it on “a very innocent President.”

“Why didn’t Robert Mueller investigate the investigators?” Trump said in his tweet.

In the second hearing, Mueller, responding to a question from intelligence committee Chairman Adam Schiff, a California Democrat, said his investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election was “not a witch hunt.”

Schiff said the report is “methodical and devastating” during his prepared remarks at the start of the second hearing Wednesday.

Schiff said the report also tells the story of “disloyalty to country, about greed and about lies,” adding that what is at stake is “our next election, and the one after that, for generations to come.”

Former special counsel Robert Mueller testifies before the House Judiciary Committee hearing on his report on Russian election interference Wednesday.

Mueller, left, is given guidance by his top aide in the investigation, Aaron Zebley, right.

Servicemembers make incredible sacrifices for our freedom, and it is our responsibility to support them when they return home — particularly when they return with wounds from their service.

Rep. Mike Levin, D-Calif.

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By Andrew Demillo
Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — A federal judge blocked three new abortion restrictions from taking effect Wednesday in Arkansas, including a measure that opponents say would likely force the state’s only surgical abortion clinic to close.

U.S. District Judge Kristine Baker granted a 14-day temporary restraining order shortly before midnight Tuesday. The 159-page ruling blocks the state from enforcing the new laws, including a measure prohibiting doctors from performing an abortion if it’s being sought because the fetus has Down syndrome.

The laws are being challenged by Planned Parenthood and Little Rock Family Planning Services, the state’s only surgical abortion clinic. Planned Parenthood offers only medication-induced abortions in Arkansas and earlier this month stopped providing abortions at its Fayetteville facility while it looks for a new location. It continues to provide the procedure at its Little Rock center.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas challenged the laws. The group’s spokeswoman, Holly Dickson, said early Wednesday that ACLU attorneys are reviewing the order.

“We are so relieved that these bans and restrictions have been temporarily blocked from taking effect,” Dickson said. “The most left with a spokeswoman for the Arkansas Attorney General’s Office was not immediately returned early Wednesday.

“We are looking forward to a fresh take on this historic competition that will showcase the incredible women vying for the crown,” said Regina Hopper, president and CEO of the Miss America Organization. “We are looking forward to a fresh take on this historic competition that will showcase the incredible women vying for the crown,” said Regina Hopper, president and CEO of the Miss America Organization. “We are looking forward to a fresh take on this historic competition that will showcase the incredible women vying for the crown,” said Regina Hopper, president and CEO of the Miss America Organization.

“The pageant began in Atlantic City in 1921 as a way to extend the summer tourism season beyond Labor Day weekend. It became synonymous with the New Jersey seaside resort but moved to Las Vegas in 2005, returning to Atlantic City in 2013. 

But the pageant moved to Connecticut this year but has agreed to not enforce the CEO’s offer to cover the cost, the businessman said Tuesday.

Todd Carmichael, chief executive and co-founder of Philadelphia-based La Colombe Coffee, said he offered to give Wyoming Valley West School District $22,000 to wipe out bills that generated the recent warning letter to parents.

But school board President Joseph Mazur rejected the offer during a phone conversation last Wednesday, according to school spokesman Aren Platt said Tuesday. Mazur argued that money is owed by parents who can afford to pay, Platt said.

“The position of Mr. Carmichael is, irrespective of affluence, irrespective of need, he just wants to wipe away this debt,” Platt said.

Mazur did not return a phone message left at his home. Wyoming Valley West’s solicitor, Charles Coslett, said he did not know what the school board plans to do.

“I don’t know what my client’s intention is at this point,” Coslett said. “That’s the end of the line.”

In a letter sent to newspapers in the Wilkes-Barre area on Monday, Carmichael said his offer was motivated in part because he received free meals as a child growing up near Spokane, Wash.

“I know what it means to be hungry,” Carmichael wrote. “I know what it means to feel shame for not being able to afford food.”

Carmichael said Tuesday in a phone interview that his offer stands.

“I’m just going to hold on and I’m going to continue to be optimistic and see if we can’t do something,” Carmichael said. “Even if you’re a difficult person, we’re in. What can we do?”

The letters from the school district warned parents that they “can be sent to dependency court for neglecting your child’s right to food” and that the children could be removed and placed in foster care.

Child welfare authorities have told the district that Luzerne County does not run its foster system that way.

Luzerne County’s manager and child welfare agency director wrote to Superintendent Irvin DeReemer, demanding the district stop making what it called false claims. DeReemer has not returned messages in recent days.

In an editorial Tuesday, the Times-Tribune of Scranton called the threats shameful and an act of hubris.
Doctors: Havana incidents altered diplomats’ brains

By Nora Gamez Torres
El Nuevo Herald

MIAMI — Whatever happened in Havana, where eight U.S. diplomats became ill after hearing strange sounds, changed the brain structure of those affected, according to a new study published Tuesday.

Scientists at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine analyzed magnetic resonance imaging scans of 40 people — 23 men and 17 women — who were exposed to sounds or vibrations while they were in the Cuban capital. When compared with images from two control groups, the researchers found “significant differences between the groups,” they wrote. White and gray matter in the cerebellum and the “functional connectivity in the auditory and visual processing subnetworks” changed.

The first incidents in Havana were reported at the end of 2016 and the most recent were in May of last year. The U.S. State Department confirmed that so far 26 diplomats and five other U.S. citizens had been affected by what they considered attacks against their personnel.

The study includes personnel who could have been exposed to an alleged “directional source” of energy, officials and scientists have speculated following the descriptions given by the patients.

The changes found in the new study of the 12 patients, most detailed so far, are consistent with some of the symptoms they have experienced, such as dizziness, balance problems and a decrease in cognitive abilities.

The researchers could not connect the observed changes to specific diagnoses, such as a mild brain traumatic injury or concussion, a suggestion made earlier in a previous article that published from more confidential data, also authored by the UPenn team.

Scientists at the University of Miami, who first assessed the affected officials, later also questioned the concussion theory. Instead, the UM team said they found that the patients had a unique pattern of balance and cognitive dysfunctions. They also presented data about the vascular system of the inner ear, which is responsible for sensing the position of the body.

After more than two years and investigations by the FBI, the State Department and other agencies, the incidents in Havana, initially known as “sonic attacks,” remain a mystery.

The State Department has said that it is still not known who or what caused them.

The incidents created a diplomatic crisis between Washington and Havana. The United States withdrew almost all of its embassy staff and suspended visa processing in Havana.

Senate approves bill to extend 9/11 victims fund

By Matthew Daly
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate gave final legislative approval Tuesday to a bill ensuring that a victims’ compensation fund related to the Sept. 11 attacks never runs out of money.

The 97-2 vote sends the bill to President Donald Trump, who is expected to sign it.

The vote came after Democratic senators agreed to allow votes on amendments sponsored by two Republican senators who had been blocking the widely popular bill. The Senate easily defeated the amendments proposed by GOP Sens. Mike Lee, of Utah, and Rand Paul, of Kentucky. Lee and Paul voted against the bill’s final passage.

Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, of New York, said 9/11 first responders and their families have had “enough of political games” that delayed passage of the bill for months.

“Our 9/11 heroes deserve this program as written,” Gillibrand said. “Let our heroes go home and live in peace and finally exhale.”

The bill would extend through 2092 a fund created after the 2001 terrorist attacks, essentially making it permanent. The $7.4 billion fund is rapidly being depleted, and administrators recently cut benefit payments by up to 70%.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates the House-passed bill would result in about $10.2 billion in additional compensation payments over 10 years, including more than $4 billion for claims already filed.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, of New York, said the bill guarantees “once and for all that the heroes who rushed to the towers 18 years ago will no longer have to worry about compensation for their families when they’re gone.”

First responders “won’t have to return to Congress anymore to fight for the compensation they always should have been given,” Schumer said. “They will be able to go home, attend to their illnesses, their family members, their friends. That’s what they always wanted to do, just take care of themselves and their families.”

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who has been the subject of withering attacks from comedian Jon Stewart and other activists, also hailed passage of the bill.

The legislation makes “sacred commitments” to first responders, police officers and other first responders “who rushed selflessly toward the World Trade Center” just moments after the 2001 terrorist attacks began, McConnell said.

“Congress can never repay these heroes, women and families for their sacrifices. But we can do our small part to try and make our heroes whole,” McConnell said on the Senate floor. “That’s why the Senate has never failed to attend to the victims’ fund before. We weren’t about to do so now.”

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House adopts resolution opposing Israel boycott

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House overwhelmingly approved a resolution Tuesday opposing an international effort to boycott Israel, a rare bipartisan vote as Democrats try to tamp down increasingly heated political rhetoric over differences with the long-time U.S. ally.

Democrats have been wrestling with the issue all year.

Liberal lawmakers, most notably Reps. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., and Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., two newly elected Muslim Americans, have spoken out about the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions movement, known as BDS, as they criticize Israel’s treatment of Palestinians, particularly in the occupied territories.

Republicans have amplified the views of the left flank to portray Democrats as deeply divided and at odds with Israel.

The resolution passed on a vote of 398-17.

House Democrats have been eager to vote to show support for Israel and, for those lawmakers from more conservative areas, to resist having the party be defined by its most liberal members.

Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., the majority leader, had promised lawmakers the bill would come up for a vote before the August recess.

It’s a way to shield House Democrats from continued Republican efforts to attack them around the issue of Israel, according to a Hoyer aide who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the matter.

Omar, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, was among the only lawmakers to voice objection to the bill when it was included in a package the panel approved last week.

The tax revenue from legalization would support job training, substance abuse treatment, literacy programs and other services for individuals and communities hit hard by drug enforcement. Some of the revenue would also support programs designed to help “socially and economically disadvantaged individuals” start their own marijuana businesses.

While support for marijuana legalization has gained traction in Congress it’s still a long shot that a bill will pass this session. Still, Nadler’s introduction means the issue is very likely to get a hearing before his committee.

“Never in American history has the Judiciary introduced a bill to end federal marijuana criminalization,” said Justin Strekal, political director of the Washington-based National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws.
Franky Zapata performs a training flight over the Saint Inglevert airport near Calais, Northern France, on Wednesday in preparation for an attempted crossing of the English Channel.

Frenchman to try flying across English Channel on his flyboard

Associated Press

SAINT INGLEVERT, France — The man who wowed the crowd on Bastille Day, whirling over France’s invited leaders on his flyboard, is undertaking a training challenge: to soar across the English Channel on his flyboard.

Franky Zapata told reporters Wednesday that it’s all systems go but conceded it’s “not an easy challenge.”

Zapata is to take off on Thursday anchored to his flyboard — a small flying platform he invented — from Sangatte, in France’s Pas de Calais region, to the Dover area in southeast England.

He said he’s confident but that he didn’t want to make projections about his arrival across the 22.4-mile stretch of water.

He expects his average speed to be about 87 mph per hour.

He said: “You’re like a bird. It’s your body that flies.”

Group: Iraq mismanaging water crisis

Associated Press

BASRA, Iraq — Increased rainfall in Iraq this year has helped alleviate a water crisis in Basra and may avert the kind of large-scale and violent protests that affected the southern province last summer.

However, a leading rights group and many Basra residents accuse Iraqi authorities of doing little to address the underlying conditions causing the water shortages and pollution crisis, warning of outbreaks of water-borne diseases and continued economic hardship for the governorate’s 4 million people.

“The government urgently needs to act,” Belkis Wille, of Human Rights Watch, told a press conference in Baghdad, where the organization released its report on Basra’s water crisis.

“The people of Iraq have a right to know what is in their environment and how to keep safe.”

The report, titled “Basra is Thirsty: Iraq’s Failure to Manage the Water Crisis,” said a full year after Basra’s violent protests, authorities continue to allow activities that pollute the province’s water resources despite the health risks to residents. Promised government projects to improve water quality have failed to materialize due to mismanagement and corruption, it said, and it warned of outbreaks of water-borne diseases if the problems are left unaddressed.

Basra’s acute water problems have been going on for decades, leading to outbreaks of protests every summer. The protests turned into a full-blown crisis last year after thousands of people were hospitalized due to stomach ailments and skin rashes blamed on the water quality.

The contaminated water, along with other failing city services and soaring unemployment, also led to violent protests and rioting in Basra, Iraq’s oil-exporting capital. During a week of demonstrations, protesters set fire to government buildings and offices of Iranian-backed militias that they blame for mismanagement and profiteering while residents struggle with poverty.

After years of meager rains, Iraq had seen its wettest winter in a generation, restoring fresh water marshes in southern Iraq and bringing welcome relief.
Japanese utility will scrap 4 more reactors at Fukushima

By Mari Yamaguchi
Associated Press

TOKYO — The operator of the nuclear plant wrecked by a 2011 earthquake and tsunami said Wednesday that it will decommission four more reactors in northeastern Japan in addition to those already being scrapped.

Tokyo Electric Power Co. Holdings said a final decision on dismantling the four reactors at the Fukushima Dai-ki plant will be formally approved at a board meeting, expected later this month.

Nearby Fukushima Dai-ichi had meltdowns in three reactors and structural damage in a fourth during the disaster. All six reactors, including four that are currently being decommissioned, will be dismantled in a process that will take decades.

TEPCO President Toshiaki Kobayakawa told Fukushima Gov. Masao Uchibori that it will take about 40 years to finish decommissioning all four reactors at Fukushima Dai-ki. Kobayakawa told the governor that the company also plans to build a new facility at the Dai-ki complex to move spent fuel from cooling pools to dry casks—a safer long-term storage option recommended by experts.

The plan means all 10 of TEPCO’s reactors in Fukushima will be dismantled. Kobayakawa, however, said the additional decommissioning won’t affect the ongoing work at Fukushima Dai-ichi, which is already a challenge.

The plan still needs approval by the Nuclear Regulation Authority. Its acting chairman, Satoru Tanaka, told reporters that the committee will carefully study TEPCO’s Fukushima Dai-ki decommissioning plan. “Obviously, TEPCO must carry out a plan without affecting” the ongoing cleanup work, he said.

Fukushima officials and residents have demanded the decommissioning, saying the uncertainty hampers reconstruction in the region.

Uchibori welcomed TEPCO’s plan to decommission additional reactors “as an important step toward achieving decommissioning of all reactors in the prefecture. Obviously, TEPCO must carry out a plan without affecting” the ongoing cleanup work, he said.

Fukushima officials and residents have demanded the decommissioning, saying the uncertainty hampers reconstruction in the region.

The company has said the decommissioning will cost about $2.5 billion in addition to the estimated $200 billion needed for the ongoing cleanup at the wrecked Fukushima Dai-ichi plant.

TEPCO would be left with only the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant in Niigata, in northern Japan, to produce nuclear power. Local restart approvals for two of its seven reactors are pending more than eight years after the Fukushima disaster.

Other nuclear plant operators have also opted to decommission aging reactors due to hefty spending to meet new safety standards put in place after the disaster, including nuclear fuel power far more expensive than it used to be.

Of the 54 workable commercial reactors that used to operate in Japan before the Fukushima accident, 24 of them, including 10 of TEPCO’s, are designated for scrapping.

Italian strikes likely to affect military travelers

By Scott Wyland
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Nationwide transport strikes will disrupt Italy’s bus, subway and rail services on Wednesday and through the weekend. Pilots, flight attendants and baggage handlers will be taking part.

Because the strike involves airport employees and not a specific carrier, there is no way to foresee which flights will be canceled and adjust reservations to avoid them, said a customer service representative for Sato Travel, which books flights for military personnel.

If possible, service members should change a Friday flight to Sunday because Saturday is likely to be backed up from all the passengers who were unable to fly on Friday, the representative said.

Postponing a flight can be troublesome for service members who are expected to show up on a particular day for an assignment, but in this case a tardy arrival might be unavoidable, she said.

Travelers are entitled to a refund or compensation when a strike causes a flight to be canceled and from most European countries, according to European Union regulations.

Authorities have appealed to the unions to limit the strikes at airports to four hours, saying the country’s transportation system is still recovering from the problems caused by a railway fire near Florence on Monday. The suspected arson caused four-hour delays in trains running through Rome.

Union leaders, who timed the strikes during the busy travel season for maximum impact, have not yet announced how long the airport worker strike will last.
**BABY ALLIGATOR FOUND IN SWIMMING POOL**

**NY**

BAYPORT — Authorities said a Bayport, Long Island, family found an 8-inch baby alligator swimming in their pool over the weekend.

The Suffolk County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation are trying to determine how the alligator was found in the area. It is illegal to possess alligators in New York.

The SPCA said it took custody of the alligator to protect the public, and it encourages anyone who has an illegal pet to turn it in.

The alligator was to be transported to a licensed facility.

**SEVERAL APOLLO 14 ‘MOON TREES’ ARE LOST**

**NM**

ALBUQUERQUE — Five trees planted in New Mexico from seeds taken to the moon during the Apollo 14 mission and given to the state by NASA have all died or been forgotten.

KOAT-TV in Albuquerque reported officials where the trees were planted decades ago admit they have lost track of the trees.

Other states have kept up with their moon trees locations.

Moon trees were grown from 500 seeds taken into orbit around the moon by former U.S. Forest Service smokejumper Stuart Roosa during the 1971 mission.

**JEEP WRANGLER TIRES SLASHED AT SEASIDE**

**NC**

OUTER BANKS

Authorities in North Carolina said a tire-slasher at Cape Hatteras National Seashore is apparently targeting Jeep Wranglers.

The Charlotte Observer reported Bodie and Hatteras islands saw a rash of vandalism last week as seven cars with slashed tires entered the heavily crowded park.

 Authorities said the 18-year-old passenger in the driver’s car grille in Vermont is expected to make a full recovery.

Police said the Bismarck city dispatcher who alerted authorities said it took custody of the alligator to protect the public, and it encourages anyone who has an illegal pet to turn it in.

The alligator was to be transported to a licensed facility.

**4 DEPUTIES INJURED, HORSE PUNCHED AT FAIR**

**CA**

TURLOCK — Authorities said four Northern California deputies were injured, a horse was punched and five people were arrested in a brawl at the Stanislaus County Fair.

The Modesto Bee said sheriff’s deputies watching a line at a beer booth on Friday noticed a man wearing gang clothing who appeared to be drunk and trying to start fights. Authorities said the sheriff’s fair didn’t allow gang symbols or clothing.

Sheriff’s Sgt. Josh Clayton said while deputies talked to that man, that another man began throwing punches, hitting two deputies, and other crowd members got involved. Authorities said a man punched a Sheriff’s Department that four minority congresswomen should return to “the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came.”

**SIGN LEADS SOME TO LEAVE CHURCH SERVICE**

**VA**

APPOMATTOX — The sign outside a church in Virginia reads “America: Love it or leave it.” Several congregants decided to leave the church.

Pastor E.W. Lucas said some members walked out of the Sunday service over the sign. Lucas said he stands by the Friendship Baptist Church sign and it is meant to make a statement about the political divisions in Washington.

The pastor has said that people who want to criticize the president and the country should “go over there and live in these other countries for a little while.”

His comment echoes President Donald Trump, who recently tweeted that four minority congresswomen should return to “the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came.”

**WOMAN POSTS SELFIE WITH A ZOO MONKEY**

**ND**

BISMARCK — Police said a Mandan woman could be charged with trespassing for jumping a protective fence at the Dakota Zoo in Bismarck.

Authorities said the 18-year-old woman scaled a fence at the monkey exhibit and touched one of the animals. She posted a selfie on social media.

Police said the Bismarck city attorney is reviewing the case.

**GOOSE FREED FROM PIZZA DRIVER’S GRILLE**

**VT**

BURLINGTON — Authorities said a goose that got stuck in a pizza delivery driver’s car grille in Vermont is expected to make a full recovery.

Driver Ryan Harrington told WCAX-TV he saw a goose wandering across the road in Burlington on Saturday. He slammed his brakes, but heard a thud and knew he struck the bird. He wasn’t prepared to see it stuck in his car — and alive — when he returned to work.

His manager reached a police dispatcher who alerted authorities and a nonprofit animal rescue group. The fire department arrived to help free the goose.

The goose was taken to a wildlife rehabilitator in Poultney who said it may have a broken pelvis, but they expect it will survive.

**BILL WOULD OUTLAW DECLAWING CATS**

**MA**

BOSTON — Massachusetts lawmakers are weighing a ban on the practice of declawing cats.

Supporters of the measure say declawing is cruel and painful. They say cats rely on their paws and claws to groom themselves and to help protect and defend their bodies. The practice involves amputating a cat’s toes to the first knuckle.

A public hearing on a bill that would prohibit declawing was held Monday before the Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure.

**POLICE DOG DIES AFTER SNIFFING DRUGS AT PRISON**

**AL**

MONTGOMERY — A prison search dog in Alabama that was injured after sniffing synthetic marijuana was expected to make a full recovery, but now authorities say he has died.

The Alabama Department of Corrections announced the dog, named Jake, died over the weekend when he developed pneumonia.

The prison system said the dog was searching a housing dorm for contraband at Staton Correctional Facility with emergency response teams. Jake became unresponsive after alerting on a powdery substance that turned out to be synthetic marijuana.

Veterinarians initially said he was improving after suffering an allergic reaction. His condition deteriorated over the weekend when he developed a secondary infection.

**DISNEY WORKER PUNCHED BY AN IRATE TOURIST**

**FL**

LAKE BUENA VISTA — Authorities said a 23-year-old tourist from Chicago punched a worker in the face when her FastPass wasn’t valid for the Tower of Terror ride at Disney’s Hollywood Studios.

An Orange County Sheriff’s report says the Disney World cast member offered to help the woman’s group on July 13, but they only offered her a drink.

The Orlando Sentinel reported the woman started pushing but her FastPass wasn’t valid. When her FastPass wasn’t valid, the employee pushed her hand away, and the woman started pushing but her FastPass wasn’t valid. When her FastPass wasn’t valid, the employee pushed her hand away.

The Orlando Sentinel reported the woman started pushing but her FastPass wasn’t valid. When her FastPass wasn’t valid, the employee pushed her hand away.

The group left the ride, but she became angry and punched a Disney worker in the face.

**THE CENSUS**

**$50K**

The amount of money that property stolen from a landlord in Wyoming is said to be worth. The Jackson Hole News & Guide reported that Michael Lynch, 36, was arrested Friday after skipping a court appearance on police claims that he stole the property. Lynch initially was arrested in June in connection with the theft of high-dollar silver and gold coins, computer gear and other items from his landlord.

**From wire reports**
Netflix film can’t quite prove that Facebook helped elect Trump

BY ANICK JESDANUN

The new documentary “The Great Hack” captures how Facebook’s cavalier handling of user data in the Cambridge Analytica scandal posed a threat to democracy. But it doesn’t prove the movie’s claims that the ill-gotten data helped elect Donald Trump.

The movie, now available globally on Netflix, follows former Cambridge Analytica Executive Brittany Kaiser around the world. She reveals internal emails, calendar entries and video sales pitches, although the movie doesn’t quite connect the dots on what the documents really say.

Instead, the movie is mostly a recap of what’s already been reported in various news outlets. If you’ve never heard of Cambridge Analytica, or you aren’t steeped in all the details of the scandal that landed Mark Zuckerberg in front of Congress and his company under major federal investigations, “The Great Hack” provides a good overview on the way companies like Facebook collect and use data to influence your thinking.

Cambridge Analytica drew data through a Facebook app that purported to be a psychological research tool. Roughly 270,000 people downloaded and shared personal details with the app. Under Facebook’s policies at the time, the app was able to draw information from those users’ friends as well, even though those friends never consented. Facebook said as many as 87 million people might have had their data accessed.

The app was designed by then-Cambridge University psychology professor Aleksandr Kogan. Cambridge Analytica, whose clients included Trump’s 2016 general election campaign, paid Kogan for a copy of the data, even though the firm was not authorized to have that information. Cambridge Analytica shifted the blame to Kogan, who in turn accused Facebook of trying to deflect attention from what he called its own negligent and systematic exposure of user data. The scandal broke in March 2018 after newspapers reported that Cambridge Analytica still had data it had promised to delete.

Listening to Kaiser, a self-described whistleblower, you might think Cambridge Analytica won the election for Trump. Kaiser, who was the firm’s business development director, explained that the data helped Cambridge Analytica identify “persuadable voters.” She said the firm targeted blogs, websites, articles, videos and ads specifically at them “until they saw the world the way we wanted them to.”

David Carroll, a Parsons School of Design professor who is also heavily featured in the movie, said that given how close the election was in certain states, just turning a “tiny slice of the population” was enough.

Roughly 270,000 people downloaded the app, “so to some extent we have a logical research tool. Roughly 270,000 people downloaded the app, and video sales pitches, although the movie doesn’t quite connect the dots on what the documents really say.”

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Federal election records show that the Trump campaign paid Cambridge Analytica roughly $6 million. Cambridge Analytica said it never used Kogan’s data in its work for Trump. The Trump campaign also denied using the firm’s data.

Experts say Cambridge Analytica’s influence was plausible but inconclusive.

“They had the data, (but) it’s not quite clear how it was fully rolled out,” Jennifer Grygiel, a Syracuse University communications professor, told The Associated Press.

Not until 12 minutes before the credits roll does the movie mention other factors at play, including a Russian-led misinformation campaign centered on fake posts and ads to sow discontent in the U.S. electorate. It’s not surprising that Cambridge Analytica’s marketing pitches, as disclosed by Kaiser and other undercover footage captured by Britain’s Channel 4, would boost of the company’s capabilities. And it’s not surprising that the company would seek to minimize its role once caught. The truth is likely somewhere in between — but just where, the movie doesn’t explore.

Meek Mill launches record label with Jay-Z’s Roc Nation

Associated Press


The two hip-hop players celebrated the launch of Dream Chasers Records on Tuesday at the Roc Nation headquarters in New York City, signing contracts at a small press conference and popping champagne to celebrate their partnership.

“Of course I had offers to do a lot of business with other people, but the relationship we’ve built from (Roc Nation) believing in me through my whole career, through my ups and downs and the morals they showed to me and my team when it wasn’t in their best interest to have showed it — I feel comfortable going through this right here at home,” Mill said. “We’re ready to work. We’re just starting the beginning of a new chapter, a new page.”

Mill, 32, will lead Dream Chasers as president, overseeing the label and its staff.

Mill built a strong fan base and buzz in Philadelphia with a string of mixtapes, and reached the pop charts with songs like “Going Bad” and “All Eyes On You.”

Jay-Z, hip-hop’s ultimate businessman, said he and Mill not only bonded musically, but in other areas.

“He is a hard worker, he is a go-getter. He is always go, go, go,” Mill said about the 49-year-old Jay-Z. “His integrity, his honesty, his sense of responsibility,” Jay-Z said about Mill.

“Everything that he’s done leading up to this point, it showed that he can carry that weight for the next generation of people.”

For his new label, Mill said he hopes to sign hard-working artists looking to move the needle, “not a social media success for the weekend or for the month.”

Jay-Z, hip-hop’s ultimate businessman, said he and Mill not only bonded musically, but in other areas.

“He’s got this vision, he’s got this plan, he’s got this way of looking at the world, the way he wants things done,” Mill said about Jay-Z.

“And me, I’m the guy that can execute, the guy that can make sure the vision comes to life,” Mill said.

Meek Mill, 32, will lead Dream Chasers as president, overseeing the label and its staff.

Mill built a strong fan base and buzz in Philadelphia with a string of mixtapes, and reached the mainstream when he topped the mainstream when he topped the chart with his major-label debut in 2012.

He’s released two platinum albums and two gold records and reached the Top 25 of the pop charts with songs like “Going Bad” and “All Eyes On You.”

Jay-Z’s, hip-hop’s ultimate businessman, said he and Mill not only bonded musically, but in other areas.

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“Everything that he’s done leading up to this point, it showed that he can carry that weight for the next generation of people.”

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**OPINION**

**Don’t rely on TV to transmit values to your kids**

**BY CYNTHIA M. ALLEN**

*Fort Worth (Texas) Star-Telegram*

_Leaves Fort Worth, Texas, many mothers, I begin summer with the best of intentions for my children. For example, we will go to the park, afternoons by the pool and lots and lots of backyard swing time. But this season, and if the heat doesn’t drive you inside by 11 a.m., the bugs must certainly do.

And so, by early July, my kids and I are mostly indoors, which inevitably means the television is on at least every now and again — a reality I concede and sometimes despise.

So thanks to sites like commonsensemedia.org, it isn’t too difficult to screen programs and find some that meet your family’s desires and needs. For us that usually means something animated, preferably with animal or fantasy creatures that doesn’t introduce content that’s age inappropriate or concepts that my husband and I would prefer to introduce ourselves.

We’ve mostly had success in identifying shows that we believe are worthwhile, although we’ve certainly asked children’s programs to educate our kids or impart values to them. That’s our job.

But apparently our careful curating of shows and TV programs could never be careful enough, at least not in the “woke” world of children’s television.

According to a new study by children’s app company Hopper, titled “Is TV Making Your Child Prejudiced?” the lack of socioeconomic, minority and sexual identity diversity in kids’ shows is turning our kids into Donald Trump fans.

The report took aim at shows like “PAW Patrol” over gender balance and “My Little Pony” for lacking in “woke” sexual distinctions. (Never mind that the latter made headlines recently for its inclusion of a same-sex pony couple.) It also claimed that a third of content studied perpetuates gender stereotypes, showing “boys who fight” and “girls who are image-orientated.”

Yet many of the report authors seem to find this unfounded but most moms I know probably would affirm.

More action is needed to “shape the perception of characters in children’s shows,” it states. And while there are a few channels worth checking, because even the innocent commercials can’t just fill our kids’ heads with wonder, it has to fulfill a certain social agenda.

Hopper’s findings aren’t novel.

This past spring, Rutgers University, UCLA and Ryerson University collaborated on a research project called “The Landscape of Children’s Television in the U.S. and Canada,” which similarly determined that children’s TV programs perpetuate “systematic gender inequality” and benefit of characters who are disabled, LGBT, poor or minority.

The authors labeled all sorts of suggestions to content creators, such as developing shows for the “audience of tomorrow” while conceding that “racially diverse on-screen characters (are) somewhat reflective of the actual population.”

They also recommend that programs feature fewer fantasy characters because “children’s fascination with magical behaviors, better from stories from human characters.”

It is certainly true that what children watch and digest affects their understanding of the world. Why so many parents limit and curate what their children are exposed to on TV. And it’s why so many parents, like myself, opt for programs that portray fantasy or even idyllic worlds that avoid violence, death and suffering. Our kids will face the realities of this world, its challenges and adversities soon enough.

But the most Aviatic thing about these reports isn’t their judgment of TV content, it’s that they seem to want TV programs to transplant the role of parents. They shouldn’t.

Surely I’m not the only mom who isn’t relying on television programs to address race or other inequalities, to introduce my kids to people of differing physical or mental abilities or to present concepts like socioeconomic gaps. That should (and is) coming from the state, not from me assuming that most parents feel the same.

I hope these reports don’t motivate the creators of the fantasy rainbow kingdom in “True” or the charming Scottish bird family of “Puffin Rock” to change their content. But either way, start braving the heat and watching less TV.

Cynthia M. Allen is a columnist for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

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Ernie Gates

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FTC fines Facebook $5B for privacy violations

By MARCY GORDON AND BARBARA ORTUTAY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Federal regulators fined Facebook $5 billion for privacy violations and are imposing new oversight and restrictions on its business. But they are only holding CEO Mark Zuckerberg personally responsible in a limited fashion.

The fine is the largest the Federal Trade Commission has levied on a tech company, though it won’t make much of a dent for a company that had nearly $56 billion in revenue last year.

As part of the agency’s settlement with Facebook, Zuckerberg will have to personally certify his company’s compliance with its privacy programs. The FTC said that false certifications could expose him to civil or criminal penalties.

Some experts had thought the FTC might fine Zuckerberg directly or seriously limit his authority over the company. “The magnitude of the $5 billion penalty and sweeping consent relief are unprecedented in the history of the FTC,” Joe Simons, the chairman of the FTC, said in a statement.

Facebook does not admit any wrongdoing as part of the settlement.

The commission opened an investigation into Facebook last year after revelations that data mining company Cambridge Analytica had gathered details on as many as 87 million Facebook users without their permission. The agency said Wednesday that following its yearlong investigation of the company, the Department of Justice will file a complaint alleging that Facebook “repeatedly used deceptive disclosures and settings to undermine users’ privacy preferences.”

The FTC had been examining whether that massive breakdown violated a settlement that Facebook reached in 2012 after government regulators concluded the company reportedly broke its privacy promises to users. That settlement had required that Facebook get user consent to share personal data in ways that override their privacy settings.

The FTC said Facebook’s deceptive disclosures about privacy settings allowed it to share users’ personal information with third-party apps that their friends downloaded but the users did not give permissions to.

Privacy advocates have pushed for the FTC to limit how Facebook can track users — something that would likely cut into its advertising revenue, which relies on businesses being able to show users targeted ads based on their interests and behavior. The FTC did not specify such restrictions on Facebook.

The fine is well above the agency’s previous record for privacy violations — $22.5 million which it dealt to Google in 2012 for bypassing the privacy controls in Apple’s Safari browser.

There have been even larger fines against non-tech companies, including a $14.7 billion penalty against Volkswagen to settle allegations of cheating on emissions tests and deceiving customers. Equifax will pay at least $700 million to settle lawsuits and investigations over a data breach, the FTC was one of the parties.

The money will likely go to the U.S. Treasury.

The fine does not spell closure for Facebook, although the company’s investors — and executives — have been eager to put it behind them. Facebook is still under various investigations in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world, including the European Union, Germany and Canada. There are also broader antitrust concerns that have been the subject of congressional hearings, though it is too early to see if those will come to fruition.

UPS introduces package pickup at some stores

By ARHA BHATTARAI
The Washington Post

Brick-and-mortar retailers have found a new calling in the age of e-commerce: As pickup and drop-off sites for online purchases.

Kohl’s this month began accepting Amazon returns at its stores, calling the arrangement its “single biggest initiative of the year.” Now CVS, Michael’s and Advanced Auto Parts stores are joining the fray, as delivery spots for UPS orders.

The initiative, announced Tuesday, adds 12,000 stores to UPS’s network of “access points,” where customers can retrieve their packages, print out labels and drop off returns. Demand for those services has grown, UPS executives said, as Americans look for secure and convenient ways to receive online purchases — and return unwanted merchandise.

“Consumers, especially those who live in apartments, want secure deliveries,” said Kate Gutmann, chief sales officer for UPS. “This is part of our broader strategy for e-commerce.”

Retailers and delivery services are racing to find new ways to offer fast — and secure — ways for customers to pick up their packages. Amazon offers free in-car delivery for Prime members, while Walmart’s Jet.com is testing smart-lock technology that allows workers to drop off packages in residents’ homes even when they aren’t there.

UPS offers package pickups and drop-offs at about 9,000 neighborhood shops, banks and office buildings, as well as 5,000 of its franchised company stores. Its newest efforts would more than double its national reach.

For retailers, such partnerships have become an important way to get people into their stores. Consumers are doing more of their shopping online, leaving many retailers scrambling to find new ways for their physical stores, such as Nordstrom and Target, are experimenting with smaller-format stores in city centers, while Walmart, Macy’s and others are encouraging customers to buy online, and pick up in stores.

UPS picked the three national chains, Gutmann said, because they cater to Americans in both urban and rural areas, and offer extended evening and weekend hours. Representatives for CVS, Michael’s and Advanced Auto Parts did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Weather Outlook

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

Tour de France

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**Tennis**

World Team Tennis

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**Soccer**

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**Deals**

**BASEBALL**

**American League**

- **BOSTON RED SOX**
  - Placed RHP Nick Pivetta from the 10-day IL. Reinstated LHP Diego Castillo from the 60-day IL.
  - Acquired RHP Tyler Chatwood from the Miami Marlins for a player to be named later.
  - Reinstated OF Mookie Betts from the paternity list.

- **CINCINNATI REDS**
  - Reinstated OF Alex Blandino from the 10-day IL.
  - Placed RHP Tyler Mahle to the IL.

- **HOUSTON ASTROS**
  - Reinstated RHP Hector Perez from the IL.

- **MINNESOTA TWINS**
  - Acquired RHP Tyler Rogers from the San Francisco Giants for a player to be named later.

- **OAKLAND ATHLETICS**
  - Reinstated OF Mark Canha from the paternity list.

- **Tampa Bay Rays**
  - Reinstated RHP Yonny Hernandez from the 10-day IL.

- **TIGERS**
  - Placed 3B Yuli Gurriel on the IL.

**National Basketball Association**

- **BOSTON CELTICS**
  - Reinstated 1B Jason Tatum from the 10-day IL.

- **MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES**
  - Signed PF JaMychal Green to a contract.

- **NEW ORLEANS Pelicans**
  - Signed PF Eric Bledsoe to a contract.

- **PHILADELPHIA 76ERS**
  - Reinstated G Mike Bibby from the 10-day IL.

- **TENNERS**
  - Signed PF JaMychal Green to a contract.

**Football**

- **ATLANTA FALCONS**
  - Agreed to terms with G Cameron Erving.

- **BENGALS**
  - Placed WR A.J. Green on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

- **BUFFALO BILLS**
  - Placed WR Stefon Diggs on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

- **CINCINNATI BENGALS**
  - Reinstated WR A.J. Green from the reserve/COVID-19 list.

- **DALLAS COWBOYS**
  - Agreed to terms with LB Michelle Mirkovic.

- **DETROIT LIONS**
  - Placed WR Tommie Bell on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

- **GREEN BAY PACKERS**
  - Agreed to terms with LB Sione Takitaki.

- **HOU STARS**
  - Placed WR Jaelan Phillips on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

- **INDIANAPOLIS COLTS**
  - Reinstated DE Michael Christopher from the 10-day IL.

- **JACKSONVILLE JOaguars**
  - Placed WR Marvin Hall on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

- **KANSAS CITY CHIEFS**
  - Agreed to terms with WR Jalenah Bailey.

- **MIAMI DOLPHINS**
  - Placed LB Charles Omenihu on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

- **PHILADELPHIA EAGLES**
  - Agreed to terms with LB Alex McCalister.

- **TENNESSEE TITANS**
  - Agreed to terms with WR Darius Slayton.

- **WASHINGTON REDSKINS**
  - Placed WR Steven Davis on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

**National Hockey League**

- **ANAHEIM DUCKS**
  - Reassigned LHP Max Jones to the Abbotsford Canucks.

- **PHILADELPHIA FLYERS**
  - Signed D Morgan Frost to a contract.

- **SAN JOSE SHARKS**
  - Signed G Aaron Dell to a contract.

**NASCAR**

- **JIMMIE JOHNSON**
  - Signed with Turner Motorsports.

**National Football League**

- **NFL**
  - Increased the number of suspensions from four games to six games for violating the league’s policy on substances of abuse.

**National Basketball Association**

- **BOSTON CELTICS**
  - Agreed to terms with G Payton Pritchard.

- **MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES**
  - Reinstated 1B Shabazz Napier from the 10-day IL.

**National Hockey League**

- **ANAHEIM DUCKS**
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- **BOSTON BRUINS**
  - Acquired G Linus Ullmark from the New York Rangers.

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Opponents to the games say the spending cuts into budgets for local housing and environmental issues.

Organizers are also preparing for Tokyo's typically hot summer weather, though this summer has been wet and cool. Traffic and subway congestion is also a concern, as is earthquake preparedness.

"This year Tokyo is chilly rather than hot," Yoshire Mori, the president of the organizing committee, said. "It's quite different from what we experienced last year."

Mori said Japanese Emperor Naruhito had accepted a role "as honorary patron" of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. He will be expected to announce the opening of both the Olympics and Paralympics.

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike was asked a few days ago to justify spending billions by using existing venues. Tokyo is building eight new venues, but using 35 "temporary" or older venues.

Koike described the Olympics and Paralympics as an "accelerator" to get things done, though research shows that the Olympic deadlines drive up costs. And Tokyo is famous for building — with or without the Olympics.

"I'd like the legacy of the 2020 Games to be something more than a way of thinking for people and for society," she said. Koike described the Paralympics, which open Aug. 25, 2020, as a "springboard" to make the city more accessible to people with disabilities.

The goals for next year are more modest than they were in 1964, when the Tokyo Olympics showcased bullet trains, futuristic designs and a new expressway to document Japan's recovery following World War II. A group of anti-Olympic activists, many from outside Japan, have held small protests and other events in recent days under the Japanese title "Hangorin no Kai" — which translates roughly to No Olympics. They oppose Olympic spending, which they say cuts into budgets for local housing and environmental issues.

They also call for more money to rebuild Fukushima prefecture located northeast of Tokyo. Organizers say Fukushima is a main focus of the Olympics, locating baseball, softball and soccer games there to persuade the world the area is safe.

"For us, the Olympics are a disaster," Misako Ichimura, a spokeswoman for the anti-Olympic group, said on Tuesday. She said the billions spent on the Olympics should be used instead to rebuild Fukushima, which was devastated by a 2011 earthquake, tsunami and the meltdown of three nuclear reactors.

"The Olympics is scary entertainment for us," she added.

Tokyo organizers have shattered records for local sponsor revenue, which has passed $3 billion — about three times more than any previous Olympics. Much has been raised by giant Japanese advertising company Dentsu Inc.

There have also been glitches and scandal. Tsunekazu Takeda, the head of the Japanese Olympic Committee, was forced to quit earlier this year when he was implicated in a vote-buying scheme to land the games. He has denied wrongdoing, but acknowledged he signed off on about $2 million that French investigators allege went to buy votes.

The 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics are implicated in the same kind of vote-buying bribery.

Tokyo organizers were also forced to redesign their logo when the original draft faced charges of plagiarism, and an international labor union has alleged work-safety violations at Olympic venues, largely regarding migrant labor.

A futuristic design for the new stadium by the late British architect Zaha Hadid was scrapped when costs soared to $2 billion. Japanese architect Kengo Kuma was chosen instead with a design focused on wood lattice and greenery.
White pushes ahead with skateboarding

US gold medalist will compete at worlds

**The answer is, if anyone can do it, it’s Shaun, but he has a long, hard road in front of him.**

Josh Friedberg
CEO of USA Skateboarding

The three-time Olympic snowboarding champion has won five of his 23 X Games medals on the summer side in skateboarding.

But when skateboarding became an Olympic sport, and with no similar option on the Summer Games side, White focused on the X Games.

He announced last summer that skateboarding was in his plans but only competed in one contest last year.

Street and park skateboarding are on the 2020 Olympics program, neither of which is considered White’s specialty.

He is expected to focus on the park version, which mixes vertical jumps like those seen on the halfpipe with street features like rails and stairs.

Josh Friedberg, the CEO of USA Skateboarding, said last month “the question we always get is the Shaun White question.”

“The answer is, if anyone can do it, it’s Shaun, but he has a long, hard road in front of him,” Friedberg said.

White, 32, has acknowledged as much, and stopped short of saying Tuesday that he’s all-in for a run at the Olympics.

“I thought, why don’t I test the waters, compete a little and see what happens,” he said. “After that I’ll probably make the big announcement of what I’m going to do.”

**Early forecast: US tops in medals**

By Stephen Wade

**Associated Press**

TOKYO — If the Tokyo Olympics were opening today, the United States would top the overall medal count and the gold-medal count.

It’s that the forecast released Tuesday by Gracenote Sports, which supplies statistical analysis for sports leagues around the world.

Simon Gleave, the head of sports analysis at Gracenote, said his model has the United States winning 51 gold medals, 34 silver, and 41 bronze for 126 overall.

China is ranked second with 38 gold and 81 overall.

Host nation Japan is third, which would be a strong showing for a country with a much smaller population than China or the United States.

Japan is predicted to win 29 gold medals, 67 overall and take advantage of the “home-field advantage” that always goes to the host nation.

Spain got a boost back in the ‘92 Barcelona Olympics, China jumped in 2008 Beijing, as did Britain in London in 2012.

The Tokyo Olympics open on July 24, 2020.

The next seven countries ranked in order of overall medals are: Russia (65), Britain (43), Australia (43), France (41), Germany (38), Netherlands (34), and Italy (32).

This is the fifth forecast Gleave has put together and the record is solid.

“Sometimes countries over-perform, or under-perform, and that’s not to do with our model,” Gleave told AP in an interview. “That just happens in sport.”

Three years ago in Rio de Janeiro, Gracenote predicted the order of the top three countries correctly, and picked eight of the top 10 medal-winning countries.

In the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, it correctly picked Norway to win a record number of medals and finish ahead of No. 2 Germany. It also picked the top four countries in the correct order. Its predictions for seven of the top 10 countries were within one or two medals of their final totals.

Russia is a major headache. Its track and field athletes are still banned from Tokyo following a widespread doping scandal.

The governing body of track and field, the IAAF, has had a ban on the Russian athletics federation since 2015. Russia’s medal total of course will be impacted by any change in eligibility.

“If just before the Olympics, Russia is allowed to enter again it’s going to be a bit of an issue,” Gleave said of the medal predictions.

Other highlights:

- Britain finished in the top three in the last two Olympics, but is expected to fall out of that ranking.
- England is predicted to win 29 gold medals, 67 overall and take advantage of the “home-field advantage” that always goes to the host nation.

The Netherlands is predicted to surpass its best overall medal total of 25 — that was 2000 in Sydney — and reach 34.

- The second 10 in overall medal totals predicted are: South Korea (30), Poland (19), Japan (18), Ukraine (16), Brazil (15), Australia (15), France (14), Germany (14), and Italy (14).

- Women’s participation in Tokyo will almost reach parity with men. Countries not promoting women’s sports are sure to suffer in the medal standings.

**Scandal, high costs but unrivaled demand**

By Stephen Wade

**Associated Press**

TOKYO — Despite scandals, rising costs and doubts about the economic payoff, the Tokyo Olympics will be a must-see event — if you can find a ticket or a hotel room — when they open in a year.

Tokyo was supposed to be a “safe pair of hands” after Rio de Janeiro’s corruption and near-meltdown three years ago.

Mostly, it has been.

Local sponsorship revenue has passed $3 billion, about three times more than any previous games, driven by Japan’s giant advertising and marketing company Dentsu Inc., the exclusive marketing agency for the Tokyo Games caught in a French probe into alleged vote-buying connect ed with Tokyo winning the 2020 Olympics.

Ticket demand is unprecedented and few Japanese can even get them. Estimates suggest up to 90% of Japan residents who applied were unsuccessful in the first phase of a ticket lottery in June. Tickets prices are sure to soar with scalping a certainty, though Japan just passed a law banning the practices.

“This is probably going to be the most popular Olympics, and possibly one of the most popular events of all time,” Ken Hanscom told The Associated Press. He follows ticketing around the globe as the chief operating officer of Los Angeles-based TicketManager.

Ryo Tomizawa, a Japanese American who lives in Japan and has a producing career, said he applied for 16 tickets and got zero of the three medals.

Organizers have quickly thrown together a so-called second-chance lottery in August, and have another lottery set for later in the year. But this will not change the reality: Demand exceeds supply in Japan by at least 10 times. And it’s a similar story for buyers outside Japan.

“I thought that putting myself down for the most expensive ticket would ensure me of winning seats, but that wasn’t the case,” Tomizawa told the AP. “I struck out resoundingly. The high demand appeared to surprise everyone, Japanese and non-Japanese alike.”

Tomizawa, whose father was a producer for NBC News at the ’64 Olympics, said the “measured demeanor” of the Japanese hides their Olympic enthusiasm. There are great expectations. Japan is shooting for a record 30 gold medals, almost twice the previous best of 16 in Tokyo.

And don’t forget: Greater Tokyo has a population of more than 35 million — the world’s largest metropolitan area.

The Olympics will be simply a sideshow for some Tokyo visitors, astounded by the cleanliness, courtesy and order. Japan’s sprawling capital is a dense mix of the traditional and eccentric where bowing meets bustle.

“I’ve never, never seen interest in attending the Olympics like I have for Tokyo,” said Greg Harney, who works at Cartan Global, an Authorized Ticket Reseller for much of Latin American and the Caribbean, and is preparing to attend his 19th Olympics.
Red Sox top Rays, move into second in AL East

Associated Press

Roundup

The Nationals’ Trea Turner watches his solo home run in front of Rockies catcher Chris Iannetta during the first inning of Tuesday’s game in Washington. Turner hit the cycle.

BY HARVEY VALENTINE

The Nationals’ Trea Turner knows better than most what it takes to hit for a cycle. The key, he says, is quite a bit of good luck. Turner hit his second career cycle, and Stephen Strasburg earned his major league-leading 13th win and the Washington Nationals routed the Colorado Rockies 11-1 Tuesday night.

Turner led off the first inning with homer, singled in the second and tripled leading off the fifth. After grounding into a double play in the sixth, he doubled home a run during Washington’s eight-run seventh.

“Didn’t screw it up this time,” Turner said.

“Had a chance earlier in the year to do it and needed a single and didn’t do it. For me it’s almost more funny than anything that I got lucky enough to get the right hits. I think it’s kind of a lucky stat because you’ve got to do it twice to get the ball in the right place at the right time.”

It was the fourth cycle for the Nationals since relocating to Washington in 2005, half of them by Turner against the Rockies. He’s the 26th player to hit for a cycle and the third to do it twice against the same team after Fred Clark (1901, 1903 versus Cincinnati) and Christian Yelich (2018 versus Miami), according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

“It was really quite the day and then the team’s resurgance has coincided with his return after missing 38 games with a broken finger. Turner increased his average to .268, and the team’s resurgence has coincided with his return after missing 38 games with a broken finger.

Strasburg singled his first time up, giving him hits in four straight at-bats before he grounded out in the fourth inning. Martinez joked that Strasburg might pinch hit before he grounded out in the fourth inning. Martinez added his 10th home run and Dakota Hudson, 2.96; Verlander, 2.86; Berrios, Minnesota, 2.96; Verlander, Detroit, 3.12; Miley, Houston, 3.18; Odorizzi, Minnesota, 3.54; Verlander, Detroit, 3.69; Verlander, 4.02; Bumgarner, San Francisco, 4.12; O’Neill Jr, 4.09; C. Dickerson, Miami, 4.27; O’Neill Jr, 4.27; C. Dickerson, Miami, 4.27; O’Neill Jr, 4.31; C. Dickerson, Miami, 4.34; O’Neill Jr, 4.34; C. Dickerson, Miami, 4.34. HR—J.Martinez (20), Goldschmidt (20), S.Marte (17). DPR—St. Louis 3-0 0-0 0-0 0-4, Goldschmidt (20), S.Marte (17). DPR—St. Louis 3-0 0-0 0-0 0-4, Goldschmidt (20), S.Marte (17). DPR—St. Louis 3-0 0-0 0-0 0-4, Goldschmidt (20), S.Marte (17). DPR—St. Louis 3-0 0-0 0-0 0-4, Goldschmidt (20), S.Marte (17). DPR—St. Louis 3-0 0-0 0-0 0-4, Goldschmidt (20), S.Marte (17).
Pellegrini wins 200 free for fourth time at worlds

BY BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

GWANGJU, South Korea — Federica Pellegrini defeated a field of younger competitors, minus ailing Katie Ledecky, to win the 200-meter freestyle at the world swimming championships on Wednesday.

Sun Yang was back in the pool but with none of the rancor from the previous night when he was booted and shunned on the medals podium. The Chinese star with a history of doping failed to medal in the 800 free.

Pellegrini overtook 18-year-old Australian Ariarne Titmus down the stretch to earn her fourth career gold in the event. The 30-year-old Italian touched in 1 minute, 54.22 seconds.

“I am too old for this,” she said afterward.

Titmus, who stunned Ledecky in winning the 400 free, took silver in 1:54.66. Sarah Sjostrom of Sweden earned bronze in 1:54.78. She received oxygen on the pool deck after the race, but appeared for the medal ceremony.

Ledecky hasn’t been at the pool since Monday. She withdrew from the 200 free heats and the 1,500 free final on Tuesday with an illness. The American star is being observed by doctors, but no diagnosis has been disclosed.

Pellegrini joined Katinka Hosszu of Hungary and Sjostrom as the only women to win an event in three world championships in a row.

The 30-year-old Italian is the first to win three 200 free titles at world meets, having done so in 2009, 2013 and now 2019.

The Italian swimmer, who is six days shy of her 31st birthday, said the experience of winning another world title in the event was her proudest professional moment.

“It’s an amazing feeling,” said Pellegrini, who climbed out of the pool and took two deep bows as the crowd cheered. Her coach, Tamas Szeszuly, said, “It’s just a time traveler in a way. I’m still here, still running, still putting down good times, still training really well. Just staying focused on what the goal is.”

And that goal is to show the kids he’s still young at heart. At a Diamond League race in Monaco on July 12, Gatlin won the 100 in 9.91 seconds, holding off Lyles by 0.01 seconds.

“Those young athletes, they make me feel young,” said Gatlin, who doesn’t consider the Tokyo Olympics this fall in Doha his last chance to be Justin.

“I just feel like a time traveler in a way. I’m still here, still running, still putting down good times, still training really well.”

Justin Gatlin competes in the men’s 100-meter final on June 11 during the Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku, Finland.

Sprinter Gatlin still feels spry at age 37

BY PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Some-thing off a particularly grueling workout, sprinter Justin Gatlin will turn to his younger training partners and inquire: “Are you sore, too?”

It’s just an age check. He doesn’t feel 37 except on rare occasions. Like in big races when he sees so much youth on the starting line and the not-so-familiar faces from years gone by.

Missing, of course, is his biggest rival, Usain Bolt, the Jamaican star who rewrote the record book before saying goodbye to track nearly two years ago.

Arriving on the scene, a slew of 20-somethings such as Americans Christian Coleman and Noah Lyles who present another challenge for Gatlin, the defending Olympic champion.

“I don’t think about age. I don’t think about being old,” said Gatlin, who will compete in the 100 at the U.S. championships this week in Des Moines, Iowa. “I just feel like a time traveler in a way. I’m still here, still running, still putting down good times, still training really well. Just staying focused on what the goal is.”

And that goal is to show the kids he’s still young at heart. At a Diamond League race in Monaco on July 12, Gatlin won the 100 in 9.91 seconds, holding off Lyles by 0.01 seconds.

“These young athletes, they make me feel young,” said Gatlin, who doesn’t consider the Tokyo Olympics next summer his last chance to be Justin. “They’ve had so many epic races over the years, like at worlds in 15 when Bolt eclipsed Gatlin at the line.”

Justin Gatlin competed in the men’s 100-meter final on June 11 during the Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku, Finland.
Italy’s Trentin wins 17th stage of Tour

Associated Press

GAP, France — Italian rider Matteo Trentin used a solo attack to win Stage 17 of the Tour de France on Wednesday after pulling clear of a group of breakaway riders.

It was Trentin’s third career stage win at the Tour, but first since 2014.

Trentin rode at the front for most of the stage after taking part in a breakaway that formed just after the start of the 200-kilometer hilly ride from Pont du Gard to Gap.

The European champion moved clear of the leading group about 14 kilometers from the finish at the bottom of the Col de la Sente-nelle. He was first at the summit and went all out in the downhill leading to Gap.

Kasper Asgreen was second, 37 seconds behind, with Olympic champion Greg Van Avermaet completing the podium.

The overall contenders crossed more than 20 minutes behind but there was not any significant change in the overall standings as Trentin and his breakaway companions were not a threat. Julian Alaphilippe of France has the yellow jersey, with defending champion Geraint Thomas in second place overall.

Yankees place Sanchez on injured list

MINNEAPOLIS — New York Yankees’ 14-12, 10-inning win over Minnesota on Tuesday night. He was replaced by Austin Romine.

Sanchez was hurt when he stepped on first base while grounding out in the eighth inning of the Yankees’ 14-12, 10-inning win over Minnesota on Tuesday night. He was replaced by Austin Romine.

Sanchez also was sidelined between April 10 and 24 because of a strained left calf. He had a strained right groin last season that caused him to go on the disabled list from June 25 to July 19 and from July 24 to Sept. 1.

He said he planned to have an MRI on Wednesday.

The 26-year-old, an All-Star for the second time, is batting .229 with 24 homers and 58 RBIs.

Bengals sign WR Boyd to 4-year extension

CINCINNATI — Receiver Tyler Boyd signed a four-year contract extension on Tuesday, coming off his breakthrough season with the Cincinnati Bengals.

Boyd was a second-round pick out of Pittsburgh in 2016 and was entering the final year on his contract. The extension runs through the 2023 season.

He had a breakout season in 2018, when A.J. Green was sidelined by a toe injury. Boyd led the team with 76 catches and 1,028 yards receiving, both career highs. He also tied for the team lead with seven touchdowns.

Bengals’ Brown against 18-game regular season

By Joe Kay

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Bengals owner Mike Brown thinks the NFL’s current 16-game schedule for the regular season is long enough, and he doubts that the league will be able to shorten the preseason and add games that count in the standings because of the players’ opposition.

Brown said Tuesday that he strongly opposes a suggestion to have an 18-game regular season and allow teams to rest players for two of the games. He can’t envision playing the Steelers, for instance, with a healthy Ben Roethlisberger sitting out.

“I can’t envision playing the Steelers, for instance, with a healthy Ben Roethlisberger sitting out. He can’t envision playing the Steelers, for instance, with a healthy Ben Roethlisberger sitting out. He can’t envision playing the Steelers, for instance, with a healthy Ben Roethlisberger sitting out.”

Commissioner Roger Goodell reiter-
ated last month that he wants to reduce the number of preseason games. The length of the season is one topic of preliminary talks between the league and the players’ association over a new collective bargaining agreement. The current one expires after the 2020 season.

One proposal would eliminate two pre-
season games and add two in the regular season. To avoid putting a more physical toll on players, they would get two regular games off.

“Different owners have different thoughts and they’re welcome to express them, to argue them,” Brown said. “I just don’t think we want to play Boston unless (Tom) Brady isn’t playing.”

“Everyone knows the discussion on this. It isn’t the way football has been played. Baseball is played that way, different pitchers and all. In our game, you get the best team out there, and I think that’s the way it ought to be.”
By Stephen Wade  
Associated Press

TOKYO — With exactly one year to go until the Tokyo Olympics open, organizers marked the day by unveiling the gold, silver and bronze medals that will symbolize the 2020 Games.

Thousands of politicians, sponsors, and fans jammed a massive exhibition hall in central Tokyo on Wednesday, piling on speeches, musical interludes and dancing performances to celebrate the one-year mark.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made a cameo appearance to welcome the guests. And IOC President Thomas Bach repeated what he has said often in various places around the world.

“I can truly say,” Bach said, “I have never seen an Olympic city as prepared as Tokyo with one year to go before the Olympic Games.”

Despite all the talk and theatrics, the center stage belonged to the medals by Japanese designer Junichi Kawanishi.

Kawanishi wrote that the medals are to “resemble rough stones that have been polished and which now shine with light and brilliance.”

The front side carries the Tokyo Olympic emblem, with the Greek goddess of victory on the back.

Bach, a fencing gold medalist in the 1976 Olympics, conducted a mock fencing duel earlier in the day with a junior high student — another chance to draw attention to the one-year milestone. The games will be held July 24-Aug. 9, 2020.

Tokyo is spending about $20 billion to prepare the city to host the games, though

SEE TOKYO ON PAGE 26