

**FACES**

Camila Cabello and Megan Thee Stallion albums new this week  
Page 15



**MILITARY**

Navy's new hovercraft on track to be mission ready by September  
Page 3



**STANLEY CUP**

Panthers prevail in Game 7 to win team's first title  
Page 24

**Ramstein dentistry clinic for US patients faces licensing issue >> Page 3**

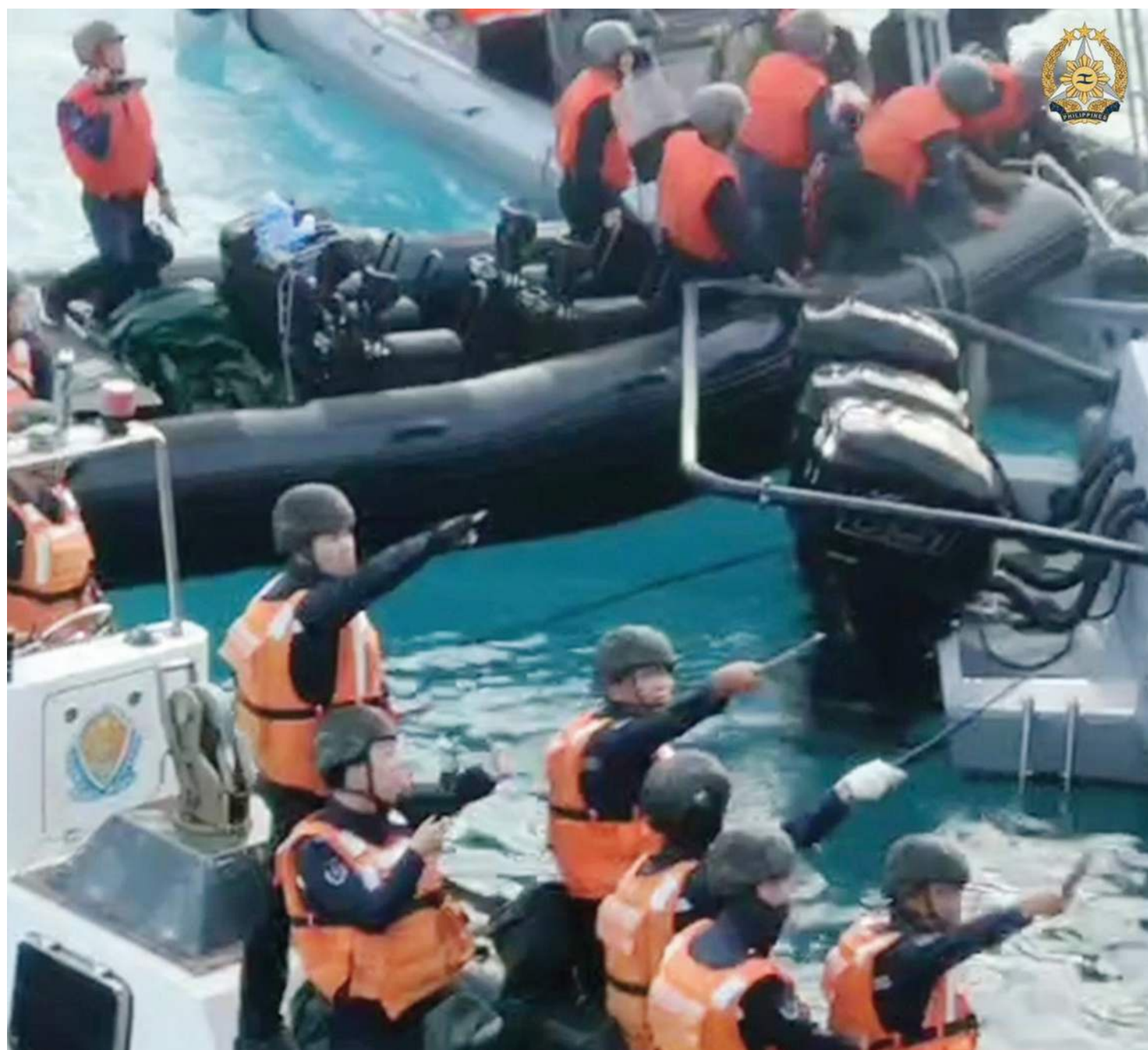
# STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 83 Edition 50 ©SS 2024 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2024

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

50¢/Free to Deployed Areas



## Tools & tactics

### China uses axes, knives, 'jostling' in its territorial disputes with neighbors

By ANIKA ARORA SETH  
*The Washington Post*

When Chinese forces violently intercepted Philippine naval ships last week in a disputed area of the South China Sea, they didn't use handguns or rifles, let alone the more high-tech weaponry now widely seen in modern conflicts.

Instead, videos shared by the Philippine military showed the Chinese coast guard wielding pickaxes and knives as they made their bid to exert control over the area. Experts say that the use of these simple weapons was a tactical choice.

"The underlying logic is something like, 'Sticks and stones can break my bones, but are less likely to lead to war, probably,'" said Daniel Mattingly, a Yale University political science professor who studies the Chinese military.

China, a sprawling country that shares land borders with 14 countries and has mar-

**SEE TACTICS ON PAGE 4**

**Chinese coast guard hold knives and machetes as they approach Philippine troops on a resupply mission in the Second Thomas Shoal at the disputed South China Sea on June 17.**

ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES/AP

## Air Force general pleads guilty to lesser charges as sex assault court-martial begins

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — Maj. Gen. Phillip Stewart pleaded guilty Monday morning to two of the lesser charges against him just before opening arguments were to begin in his court-martial for sexual assault of a subordinate officer.

The two-star Air Force general

pleaded guilty to pursuing an unprofessional relationship with a subordinate officer and adultery during the motions hearing that began at 8:30 a.m. in a courtroom at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam



Stewart

Houston in Texas. However, Stewart did plead not guilty to the remaining charges against him: two counts of sexual assault, dereliction of duty for flying a training aircraft within 12 hours of drinking alcoholic beverages and conduct unbecoming an officer. The general is accused of sexual assault and flying an aircraft

after drinking at Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma in April 2023, according to the charge sheet. The pursuit of an unprofessional relationship stretched between March and May 2023, according to authorities. This violated an Air Education and Training Command regulation in place since 2020. Stewart acknowledged Monday

that the sexual encounter occurred when he pleaded guilty to adultery. At the time of the encounter at Altus AFB, Stewart was married, but it was noted during the court hearing that he is now divorced. For pleading guilty to the charges, Stewart faces punishment. **SEE GENERAL ON PAGE 4**

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## Ford recalls trucks due to transmissions issue

Associated Press

DETROIT — Ford is recalling more than 550,000 pickup trucks in the U.S. because the transmissions can unexpectedly downshift to first gear no matter how fast the trucks are going.

The recall covers certain F-150 pickups from the 2014 model year. Ford's F-Series pickups are the top-selling vehicles in the U.S.

Ford says in documents posted Tuesday by U.S. safety regulators that the downshifting can cause drivers to lose control of the trucks,

increasing the risk of a crash.

The recalls come after U.S. auto safety regulators in March began investigating complaints that more than 540,000 Ford pickup trucks from 2014 can abruptly downshift to a lower gear and increase the risk of a crash.

Documents say the problem is caused by a lost signal between a transmission speed sensor and the powertrain control computer. There also could be corrosion and problems with connector pins.

Dealers will update the power-

train control software at no cost to owners, who will be notified by letters in early July.

Ford says in documents posted Tuesday by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that it has 396 warranty and field reports and 124 customer complaints about the problem, covering 482 trucks.

The Dearborn, Mich., automaker says it knows of 130 complaints, with 52 alleging that rear wheels locked up or that drivers lost control of the trucks.

### EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (June 25)	\$1.05	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
British pound (June 25)	\$1.24	Britain (Pound)	1.2684
Japanese yen (June 25)	155.00	Canada (Dollar)	1.3659
South Korean won (June 25)	1350.00	China (Yuan)	7.2629
		Denmark (Krone)	6.9698
		Egypt (Pound)	48.3816
		Euro	0.9344
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8080
		Hungary (Forint)	370.23
		Israel (Shekel)	3.7392
		Japan (Yen)	159.66
		Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3066
		Norway (Krone)	10.6047
		Philippines (Peso)	58.79
		Poland (Zloty)	4.02
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7520
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3547
		South Korea (Won)	1391.79
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8941		
Thailand (Baht)	36.73		
Turkey (NewLira)	32.9332		

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	8.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
Federal funds market rate	5.33
3-month bill	5.38
30-year bond	4.37

### WEATHER OUTLOOK

#### WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



#### WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



#### THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

### TODAY IN STRIPES

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

## STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us, wherever you need us.

Mobile • Online • Print

### EUROPE

**ADVERTISING**  
 CustomerService@stripes.com | +49 (0) 0631.3615.9111  
 DSN: 314.583.9111

### MIDDLE EAST

**ADVERTISING**  
 CustomerService@stripes.com | +49 (0) 0631.3615.9111  
 DSN: 314.583.9111

### PACIFIC

**ADVERTISING**  
 PacificAdvertising@stripes.com | +81 (42) 552.2511  
 DSN: 315.227.7310

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

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

Also available on mobile apps for Android and iOS.

## STARS AND STRIPES

Mobile • Online • Print

MILITARY

# GAO: New hovercraft mission ready by fall

## Navy craft hit by 4 years of delays

By CAITLYN BURCHETT  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Navy's new hovercraft will be ready to deploy and conduct missions in September as the service races to replace its aging landing craft fleet, according to a recent federal watchdog report.

Known as the ship-to-shore connector, the upgraded version of the service's air-cushioned landing craft has struggled through four years of delays due to developmental testing and technical issues, most recently related to cracking propeller blades and premature gearbox wear, the Government Accountability Office said last week in its annual weapons system assessment.

However, further issues with those components are not expected and the hovercraft should complete its initial operating test and evaluation phase by the end of June, putting the craft on track to be mission ready by the fall, the GAO said.

Manufactured by Rhode Island-based Textron Inc., the new hov-



RONALD NEWSOME/U.S. Navy

**The Navy's next generation air cushion landing craft successfully completed testing in February 2022.**

ercraft is larger, faster and more efficient than its predecessor, which has been used since the early 1980s to ferry Marines and their equipment from amphibious ships to shore during combat or disaster-relief efforts. The older air-cushioned landing craft are reaching the end of their service life, with 68 having already been extended by a decade from 20 years to 30 years.

Program officials previously said initial operational capability — or when the new craft can deploy, conduct missions and be maintained by a unit — would be achieved when six of them were delivered to the fleet.

Nine new craft have been delivered to the Navy since the replacement program launched in 2009, including four in 2023. While it was the first time in the program's history that four connector craft were delivered within 12 months, the GAO report stated several of the vessels took five years to complete and had "major production-quality issues."

Two crafts delivered in 2023 had the lowest number of deficiencies the program has found in testing, though one had a "severe deficiency."

"Specifically, weld repairs on the bottom of the hull failed during testing, allowing water to enter the

hull, and additional weld defects were found after the acceptance trials," the report read.

The program officials said the weld defects were corrected, and the Navy accepted the hovercraft in November 2023.

The Navy's plan is to replace all 72 vessels of its hovercraft fleet. Of those, 24 crafts are under contract, including the nine that have been delivered.

The GAO report has noted delays in the program reaching operational status since 2020. Some hulls had issues with leaks in the propeller lubricating oil system, failure of the craft de-ice propulsor shroud, abrasions on the bow ramp cables, as well as propeller blade erosion and air leakage in the craft cushion vanes, which delayed testing and delivery.

Those issues were corrected and did not impact the delivery of later hulls.

The report raised concerns about a stable production line due to a lack of funding.

Originally, the program's timeline outlined five hovercrafts would be procured each fiscal year. While the contractor demonstrated it could provide four craft per year, the service is slowing its

procurement for fiscal years 2025-28, accepting just two crafts per year, according to the Navy's fiscal 2024 budget estimate.

The decision to slow the procurement was attributed to the current level of planned funding for fiscal 2025 through 2028, according to the GAO.

"The program sees this lower level of craft procurement as a cost risk. It reported that to maintain the contractor's production line and increase cost savings in procuring future [landing craft], it would need to increase the number of craft procured annually, but that it cannot do so at the current level of planned funding," the report states.

The first reported program cost estimate in 2012 was \$5.3 billion, with a unit cost of \$73 million per vessel. As of 2023, according to the report, the program is expected to cost \$6.5 billion and \$90 million per vessel.

In the Navy's fiscal 2025 budget, the service requested a \$17,000 increase to its Amphibious Tactical Support Unit program to support the sustainment of aging landing craft beyond their expected service life, citing a delay in the delivery of new craft.

# Dentistry clinic for Americans closes amid licensing snafu

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — A private dental practice that opened on Ramstein Air Base about eight months ago has temporarily shuttered to sort out additional licensing requirements, its parent company said this week.

The Docs Dental clinic closed on June 14, John Suggs, vice president of marketing and communications for the Pipersville, Pa.-based Docs Health, said in a statement Monday.

A receptionist who answered the phone Friday said that only the pediatric dentist was still able to see patients.

The closure was necessary after an insurance company notified the office that its U.S.-licensed providers would also need German credentials for reimbursement, Suggs said.

Suggs called the decision unexpected.

The company's legal team, in consultation with German authorities and the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, had "determined that as long as services

were being provided on a United States military base, Docs only needed U.S.-licensed dentists to perform care at our facility," he said.

Ramstein Air Base is part of the Kaiserslautern Military Community, which has tens of thousands of Defense Department personnel and their families and is the largest overseas American military community.

Suggs did not specify which insurance company had raised the licensing issue. But several people seen by Docs Dental spoke about their recent experiences on social media.

One person shared a screenshot last month of correspondence from United Concordia, which administers the Tricare Dental Program for active-duty service members and their families.

The statement referred to a claim submitted by a dental office at Ramstein.

"At this time, we cannot verify the licensing eligibility for providers in this office to treat (Tricare) military families in Germany," the message said.

Under the Tricare Dental Pro-



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

**Staffers at the Docs Dental clinic at the Ramstein Air Base exchange mall celebrate its grand opening in October. Other than a pediatric dentist, the clinic is temporarily closed because of an unexpected insurance company requirement that U.S.-licensed dentists get German credentials, the company said.**

gram, claims from unverified providers can be paid up to three times, the statement said, adding that after the third time, the enrollee is responsible for the cost.

German dental officials told Docs Dental when the practice sought to verify licensure compliance that they did not have jurisdiction over any office located on a U.S. military base, Suggs said.

The Docs Dental providers are licensed and credentialed in the U.S., Suggs said, and "have met Germany's strict work permit requirements to perform as dentists

in Germany."

The practice expects to reopen in mid-July, with plans to see some patients in the interim, Suggs said. Germany-based providers employed by Docs Dental "are preparing their schedules to accommodate our patients with a few dates," he said.

The office's two U.S.-based providers are beginning the German credentialing process required by the insurance company, he said.

An AAFES concessionaire, the office in the mall sharing the exchange store is the first overseas

Docs Dental clinic. It had six dentists, two hygienists and three dental assistants on staff when it opened in October, the practice said at the time.

The arrival of the clinic was expected to reduce dental appointment wait times, which can extend up to six months or more for even a checkup or cleaning because of a lack of providers on and off base that see Americans.

Docs Dental operates nearly two dozen offices on U.S. military bases stateside, according to the company.

## MILITARY



ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES/AP

A Chinese coast guard member holds an ax as they approach Philippine troops on a resupply mission in the Second Thomas Shoal at the disputed South China Sea on June 17.

## Tactics: Same unconventional method used in other border clashes

### FROM PAGE 1

itime borders with a further six, has volatile territorial disputes with several of its neighbors. But over recent years, its troops have often used simple weapons while battling over these borders, despite the considerable advances in technology used by the Chinese military in the period.

The tactic has been used notably on China's border with India, according to unverified videos of clashes that have been shared on social media.

In a 2022 clash with the Indian military over a portion of northeastern India that China claims, Chinese and Indian forces appeared to engage in hand-to-hand combat and use stones and makeshift clubs as weapons. In 2017, front-line Chinese and Indian troops did not carry weapons and instead fought by "jostling" — or bumping chests — amid China's effort to seize land from tiny Bhutan, a close ally of India's.

China's use of nonconventional weaponry may be a strategic move to avoid sparking escalation and to stave off international attention, particularly from the United States. But experts warned that while it may have worked this time, it was risky.

"Maybe [China] could point to the idea that these were tools and not weapons in this instance [in the South China Sea]," said Harrison Prétat, deputy director and fellow with the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "But we're getting pretty close to the line."

In the most recent incident in the South China Sea, the Chinese coast guard boarded Philippine navy vessels to damage and confiscate equipment, according to Philippine officials, who said China aimed to stop Philippine ships

from resupplying the Sierra Madre warship on the Second Thomas Shoal, a reef that has become a focal point of the maritime dispute.

A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington disputed this and asserted the Philippines had illegally intruded into waters without China's permission and "violated international law."

"The Chinese side took necessary measures in accordance with [the] law to safeguard its sovereignty, which was lawful and justified, and done in a professional and restrained manner," Liu Pengyu wrote in an email to The Washington Post.

U.S. officials have repeatedly said that an armed attack on a Philippine government vessel in the South China Sea would trigger the 1951 mutual treaty that commits the United States and the Philippines to defend each other in the Pacific.

"Not using guns makes it ambiguous whether the United States is obligated to step in and potentially aid the Philippines," Mattingly said. "If they did use guns, then there is a stronger case that the U.S. should."

The Philippines said Friday morning that it does not intend to invoke that treaty in response to last week's altercation, with Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin telling reporters that the government did not consider that confrontation with the Chinese coast guard to be an armed attack.

"We saw bolo, ax, nothing beyond that," Bersamin said, according to the Associated Press.

While the use of sharp objects could limit the risk of escalation, it can still prove dangerous and even lethal. In the South China Sea this week, a Philippine sailor lost a finger. In June 2020, 20 Indian soldiers — and at least four

Chinese soldiers — died, according to official accounts from both nations.

China and India have disputed the 2,100-mile Himalayan border for decades. Crude battles date as far back as the 1970s, when the armies confronted each other via fistfights and stone pelting. Under the terms of a 1996 bilateral agreement, border troops are barred from using firearms within two kilometers of the border, called the Line of Actual Control.

Recent Sino-Indian border disputes have centered on the Tawang sector, a sector that lies within the northeastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, as well as around Ladakh — at India's far northeastern tip — and the Galwan Valley. A clash in 2022 over the Tawang sector took the shape of a gun-free faceoff, leading to hand-to-hand combat and troop injuries. This clash marked the most serious incident between India and China since 2020.

Sushant Singh, a senior fellow at the Centre for Policy Research in India and a lecturer at Yale, said there was often gunfire on India's borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh. "The PLA's culture is very different from what a Western military culture would be, where use of weaponry is far more frequent," he said.

But September 2020 brought a deviation from this norm, when — amid public pressure following the deaths of Indian soldiers in a clash months before — shots were fired at the border for the first time in decades, with both sides accusing the other of firing warning shots.

"Once either side decides that the norm no longer exists, it doesn't exist on both sides," Singh said. "Think of them as very weak guardrails, which can be broken off and then restarted."

# Trial run of VAT refund app set to expand in Germany

BY BRADLEY LATHAM  
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — A pilot program that reimburses value-added tax for U.S. personnel in Germany through a phone app is expanding to three more Army garrison communities.

Beginning July 1, Installation Management Command-Europe will add users from the Ansbach, Rheinland-Pfalz and Stuttgart garrisons to its trial run for the Remonon app.

Remonon provides tax refunds on "micro purchases" by bundling them into monthly batches. Users scan and upload credit card receipts from German vendors, along with a \$10 VAT form for purchases under \$2,500, to consolidate what they've bought. Cash receipts are accepted on a case-by-case basis.

The expansion means 70 households in the Rheinland-Pfalz footprint, 30 in Ansbach and 50 in Stuttgart may ask to be part of the pilot program by providing a .mil email address and the name of the family sponsor to [usarmy.wiesbaden.id-europe.mbx.g9-micro-purchase-rlp@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.wiesbaden.id-europe.mbx.g9-micro-purchase-rlp@army.mil). Ansbach and Stuttgart residents should substitute -an and -st, respectively, for -rlp when submitting their email requests. Slots were still available as of 1:30 p.m. Tuesday.

New users will need to register with their local VAT relief office and have a bank account with an IBAN number.

Testing began in March, when the installation management command partnered with Grafenwoehr-based Novat, the app creator, to establish an initial pool of about 50 U.S. personnel in Wiesbaden. The pilot program expanded into U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria in May.

There are 130 households partic-

ipating in the program as of Monday, Novat founder and CEO Lukas Weber said.

To date, users have received monthly reimbursement payments, but because of German regulations, Novat will issue two quarterly refund payments for the remainder of 2024. Monthly payments will resume in January, Weber said.

App users receive refunds in their registered bank accounts at a rate of 14% and 4% for items with VAT of 19% and 7%, respectively, as a service fee for using the app.

Multiple users said they've received about 100 euros per month in reimbursement while participating in the pilot program.

"The Remonon app allowed me to recoup the VAT from the small purchases I made when it was impractical to use a VAT form," U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria program participant Tony Noriega said. "I highly recommend it ... and urge IMCOM-Europe to accelerate the app for use theater-wide."

The timeline for full implementation depends on pilot testing and performance, as Novat continues to scale services.

The pilot testing's scaled approach with users and locations is important to building the framework for receipt recognition and full automation, Weber said.

Novat is also planning to develop other services for U.S. military communities in Germany, Weber said.

They include an idea for a 1-2% military discount for Remonon users as well as app-integrated debit and credit card services to streamline VAT reimbursement, while providing better currency exchange rates and lower foreign transaction fees than those offered by many U.S. banks, Weber said.

## General: Weeklong trial expected

### FROM PAGE 1

ment of forfeiture of pay, a reprimand or up to 18 months in prison.

Stewart requested a court-martial by jury panel for the remaining charges. The trial began Monday with military judge Col. Matthew Stoffel. The jury must consist of officers of equal or greater rank than Stewart.

A selection of eight jurors ended Saturday night with six men and two women chosen to serve during a trial that is expected to

last through the week.

At the time of the charges, Stewart commanded the 19th Air Force — the unit responsible for pilot training within Air Education and Training Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Air Force Base.

Lt. Gen. Brian Robinson, commander of the training command, fired Stewart in May and decided last year to move forward with the court-martial despite a report from a hearing in October recommending against it.

## PACIFIC

# S. Korean group: Balloons to fly despite North anger

By DAVID CHOI  
AND YOO KYONG CHANG  
*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — Activists who drew official North Korean ire for sending balloons carrying humanitarian supplies across its border say they will continue their decades-long campaign, despite the North's in-kind retaliation against the South.

North Korea launched over 1,200 balloons tethered to bags of trash toward its southern border between May and June, with some of them reaching as far as South Gyeongsang province, roughly 170 miles below the border, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Some of the balloons and their contents, such as batteries, cigarette butts, scrap paper, manure and other household trash, landed on vehicles and roofs, prompting Seoul and other provinces to issue mass-alert warnings by cellphone.

The trash-laden balloons were a response to balloons launched by South Korean activists toward the north, according to reports from North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency.

"Mounts of wastepaper and filth will soon be scattered over the border," North Korean Vice Defense Minister Kim Kang-il said in a May 26 KCNA report, two days before the North's balloons appeared.

One of these South Korean groups, Fighters for a Free North Korea, has sent humanitarian aid and anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets to the North since the group's founding in 2003.

The 10-member organization based in Seoul solicits online and

direct-deposit donations to fund their campaign "for the freedom of North Koreans," chairman Park Sang Hak said by phone May 31.

The group on Thursday sent 20 large balloons carrying roughly 300,000 propaganda leaflets, 3,000 U.S. one-dollar bills and 5,000 USB thumb-drives containing South Korean music and TV shows, according to a statement from the group that day.

Free North Korea Radio, a separate group of five North Korean defectors based in Seoul, has sent about 900,000 propaganda leaflets and shortwave radios by balloon since last year, group chairman Kim Seongmin said by phone June 3. He said the group sent over 6,000 plastic bottles containing rice and medicine through the Yellow Sea during the same one-year period.

Former South Korean President Moon Jae-in described groups like Fighters for a Free North Korea and Free North Korea Radio as a menace during his administration, which ended in 2022.

Moon's administration, which attempted to broker peace through summit meetings with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, outlawed the groups' practices and imposed fines starting in 2020.

The ban was declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court of Korea three years later.

"What we have been doing is extremely tough, difficult and dangerous," Park said. "We have been doing this at our own risk. Who can do this job as a volunteer?"

Both activists said their headquarters were raided by police prior to the court ruling. Nowadays, the police visit them because of noise complaints, according to Kim Seongmin.

The balloons carry leaflets into "the depths of the North," Kim Seongmin said. "Such places are usually quiet since they're quiet country towns or villages. But some South Korean villagers are scared of our actions, so they report it to the police sometimes."

North Koreans who come across the balloons have the choice of reporting it to local authorities or keeping its contents, according to Kim Seongmin. However, North Koreans can be punished severely for having these items in their possession.

"We need each other," he said. "We have been sending [aid] to North Korea to help North Koreans who would like to know and yearn for the outside world."

Sung-Yoon Lee, a Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars fellow in Washington, D.C., described the activists' campaign as "arguably the right thing to do."

Lee referred to Article 19 of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

What the activists are doing is not illegal, Lee said by phone June 14. "It's the exercise of freedom of speech."

Kim Yo Jong, the sister of Kim



FIGHTERS FOR A FREE NORTH KOREA

South Korean activists pose before sending balloons to North Korea from an undisclosed location, June 6.

Jong Un, mocked the notion of the activists' campaign as a form of free speech and called North Korea's trash-carrying balloons as "sincere presents," according to a May 29 statement in KCNA.

But there is "no moral or legal equivalence" between the South and North's balloons, according to Lee.

"It's the intent and the nature of their efforts," Lee said. "The material objects the South Korean side is sending ... and the nature

and the contents of the objects that North Korea has been sending over the past two weeks are very different."

Despite North Korea's retaliation, Kim Seongmin and Park said their groups will continue sending balloons across the border.

"North Koreans have not been living like human beings for nearly eight decades," he said. "They have no right to sing songs and do other things. Our goal is to make them live like human beings."

## US carrier makes port call ahead of drill in South Korea

By DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — An American aircraft carrier steamed into South Korea's largest port over the weekend for the first time this year "as a demonstration of will" to deter North Korea's provocations, according to the South's navy.

The carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt and destroyers USS Halsey and USS Daniel Inouye docked at Busan on Saturday for a scheduled port call that aims to strengthen Seoul's defense against Pyongyang, a South Korean navy news release said.

The Theodore Roosevelt's arrival precedes the start of the large-scale Freedom Edge military exercise between the United

States, South Korea and Japan. The exercise is scheduled to start in the summer and will encompass land, air and sea for an unspecified duration, South Korean military officials said Monday. South Korean officials customarily speak on condition of anonymity.

The port call marks the first time the Theodore Roosevelt docked in Busan, roughly 200 miles southeast of Seoul, according to the South's navy. The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier was last near South Korean waters in April, when it conducted a rare trilateral naval exercise with five other warships from South Korea and Japan.

North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency on Monday

condemned the warships' arrival on the Korean Peninsula and threatened possible "overwhelming" action against the allies.

The U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet headquartered at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson docked in Busan on Nov. 21 as part of a combined naval exercise with Japan and South Korea. Five warships from the three countries conducted a one-day air-defense and maritime maneuver exercise.

Freedom Edge will be the first exercise of its kind between the three countries. Historical disputes between South Korea and Japan previously stymied U.S. efforts to create a combined front

against North Korea; however, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol has vowed to make amends with Tokyo in order to deal with Pyongyang.

President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Yoon met in August for a summit at Camp David, Md., where they pledged to renew their "bonds of friendship" through a stronger "trilateral relationship."

"The United States unequivocally reaffirms that its extended deterrence commitments to both Japan and [South Korea] are ironclad and backed by the full range of U.S. capabilities," the leaders said in a statement Aug. 18. "Our three countries announce today that we intend to hold annual,

named, multi-domain trilateral exercises on a regular basis to enhance our coordinated capabilities and cooperation."

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Japanese Defense Minister Kihara Minoru and South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-sik reaffirmed their intent "to deter and counter provocations effectively," during a trilateral ministerial meeting June 2 in Singapore, according to a statement from the U.S. Embassy in Seoul.

North Korea has fired over a dozen ballistic missiles in six separate days of testing so far this year.

The communist regime last fired at least 10 short-range ballistic missiles on May 30 into the Sea of Japan.

## PACIFIC

# S. Korean wrestlers put on clinic at Casey

Organizers hope seminar offering tips and tricks is first of many

By LUIS GARCIA  
Stars and Stripes

CAMP CASEY, South Korea — Some of the best wrestlers in South Korea stopped here recently to impart skills to Army troops at this base just 13 miles from the border with North Korea.

Members of the South Korean national wrestling team and the country's Olympic athletes put on a combat wrestling seminar at the Carey Fitness Center on June 18.

The Prep Wrestling Academy, a school for young wrestlers in Seoul, hosted the event, and brought to it Kim Hyeon Woo, a 2012 London Olympic gold medalist, and Seo Bum Gue, a Korean National Team wrestler and medalist.

Learning basic moves from accomplished wrestlers was a great experience for beginners, said Pfc. Severia Velarde, a Florida native, at the event.

"I think it's great that they come out here and expose us, and anybody really, to wrestling," Velarde said.

"Getting a chance to practice with a national team (member) or the Olympic champion, it's actually really cool, and I think it's a good experience for newcomers to kind of get a role model or idol,



PHOTOS BY LUIS GARCIA/Stars and Stripes

**Seo Bum Gue, right, a South Korean national team wrestler, spars with a U.S. Army soldier during a June 18 wrestling seminar in Carey Fitness Center at Camp Casey, South Korea.**



**Seo receives a challenge coin from Dion Jordan, chief of sports, fitness and aquatics.**

and get into the sport," he said.

The seminar was meant to boost interest in freestyle wrestling and encourage larger events in the future, Dion Jordan, the chief of sports, fitness and aquatics for the Community Recreation Division at Camp Casey, said via email Friday.

Kenneth Lee, co-founder of Prep Wrestling Academy and vice president of United World Wrestling-Asia, contacted the Army through Jordan about organizing the seminar.

"We always talked about host-

ing some kind of wrestling club or wrestling events and we were always scratching our heads thinking what to do, so we decided to get in contact with Dion," Lee said at the fitness center.

Around 20 servicemembers attended the roughly one-hour long seminar lead by Lee and his team of five, which included the two nationally recognized athletes, Lee Ho Won, the head coach for Prep Wrestling Academy, and Kim Jun Ho, a co-founder and the academy's chief operating officer.

"Like I said, wrestling is a great sport for not only physical toughness but mental toughness as well," said Lee.

"It's the essence of all self-defense and it comes really handy in real life situations."

Camp Casey is home to the 210<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade and the 3rd Cavalry Regiment rotational unit.

After wrestler introductions, the athletes demonstrated proper ways to execute several moves, then paired up the participants to practice.

After tutoring on about a dozen different wrestling moves, the troops took an opportunity to spar with the South Korean athletes.

The service members' response to the seminar was better than he expected, Lee said.

"It's actually a little bit emotional; I thought my team was going to go home with their tails between their legs," he said, "but I wish they enjoyed it as much as we did, and wish this could be an ongoing thing in the future."

## Soldier held on hit-and-run, DUI charges on Okinawa

By KEISHI KOJA  
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Japanese police arrested a U.S. soldier assigned to Kadena Air Base over the weekend on suspicion of drunken driving, colliding with another vehicle and fleeing the scene.

The 22-year-old Army specialist was taken into custody at 7 a.m. Saturday on a road in the Rycom district of Kitanakagusuku village, a spokesman for Okinawa Prefectural Police said Tuesday.

A witness told police the specialist hit another vehicle at 5:17 a.m. and left the scene, the spokesman said. Police found her car, a Honda Fit, about a mile from the crash site at 5:24 a.m., he said.

The spokesman declined to provide details of the crash citing ongoing investigations. Some govern-



KEISHI KOJA/Stars and Stripes

**A Honda Fit involved in a June 22 hit-and-run is impounded at a police lot in Okinawa city.**

ment officials in Japan are required to speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

A Breathalyzer test at the scene measured her blood alcohol content at 0.09%, three times the legal limit for driving in Japan, the spokesman said.

The specialist was still in police custody Tuesday, the spokesman said. Police sent the case to prosecutors on Monday, he said. No court date has been set in the case.

U.S. Army Garrison Okinawa did not respond to an email Tuesday.

## Marine tells Okinawa court he robbed convenience store to recoup scam debt

By KEISHI KOJA  
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A U.S. Marine pleaded guilty Monday to robbing a convenience store on Okinawa, a crime he testified he committed to retrieve money he lost in an online scam.

Lance Cpl. Andrew Torres, 20, of the 3rd Marine Logistics Group, entered his pleas Monday morning in Naha District Court to one charge of robbery and one of attempted theft. He is in custody and faces up to five years in prison when he's sentenced July 12.

Prosecutors allege Torres took the equivalent of \$840 when he robbed a convenience store clerk at knifepoint April 3.

Two weeks later, he attempted to steal from another convenience store register but was frustrated in the attempt and caught in the parking lot, fleeing the store, according to prosecutors.

Both convenience stores are in

Ginowan city within a quarter mile of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

"It's all true," Torres said in court after hearing a prosecutor read the charges.

Torres said he paid a woman offering sex online but quickly realized he was scammed. He said he never met the woman.

"Torres paid about \$1,570 worth of yen in BitCash," Torres' attorney, who did not provide his name before leaving court, said to Stars and Stripes. "Initially, he was asked to pay \$125 worth of yen in BitCash. Following the first transaction, he faced an escalating series of payment demands."

BitCash is a form of electronic money in Japan used for online payment of games, videos and music downloads.

Torres withdrew the money from the store ATM to purchase BitCash from the clerk and made several payments from the convenience

store, his attorney said.

Realizing the fraud, he asked the clerk to cancel the BitCash transactions, Torres said in court. The clerk refused, Torres said.

Torres reported for duty that day but was unable to concentrate, he said. He decided to rob the convenience store that night.

He came away with \$840 worth of yen and decided two weeks later to rob another convenience store, he testified. Local police caught Torres fleeing the second store with a knife April 18.

"I should have sought help from family and friends," he said. "There were better ways, I wasn't looking into all my options."

Torres, questioned by Judge Teturo Sato, said he "would have kept going" until he acquired the \$1,570. Torres' attorney said that Torres paid \$188 worth of yen as an apology to both convenience stores, and both agreed to forgive him. He also paid \$840 to an insurance company.

VETERANS

# Vets' lawsuit claiming wrongful discharge advances

By LINDA F. HERSEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A federal court in San Francisco has refused to dismiss a class-action lawsuit brought by more than 35,000 LGBTQ+ veterans against the Defense Department, claiming they were wrongfully discharged because of their sexual orientation and often disqualified for veterans benefits.

Attorneys representing the veterans described the court decision as a “major milestone for veterans wrongfully discharged.”

About 30,000 veterans out of more than 35,000 discharged because of sexual orientation received ratings below honorable, according to the lawsuit.

The plaintiffs are seeking discharge status upgrades and the removal of information about sexual orientation from military records and discharge paperwork, according to the complaint.

The case, filed in August 2023, is being heard in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

The class-action lawsuit was filed on behalf of veterans discharged from the armed forces because they were LGBTQ+ — lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-conforming, nonbinary and intersex, according to the complaint.

Joseph Spero, a U.S. magistrate judge, denied the Defense Department’s motion to dismiss the case last week and has ordered the parties to meet again July 14 for a case



ROBERT H. REID/Stars and Stripes

**A federal court has refused to dismiss a class-action lawsuit brought against the Defense Department by more than 35,000 LGBTQ+ veterans.**

management conference.

The military ended its ban more than a decade ago on individuals who were gay or lesbian from service.

The veterans who are plaintiffs largely were discharged from duty under the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy implemented by the Defense Department in 1994 and repealed in 2011.

Under the policy, the military was barred from taking actions against service members who were LGBTQ+ as long as they did not publicly disclose or reveal their sexual orientation.

LGBTQ+ veterans discharged later were denied many benefits and services unless they sought corrective action through a character of service review for benefits eligibility, according to the lawsuit.

Determinations are made by the Dis-

charge Review Board or Board for Correction of Military Records for each veteran’s branch of service.

The lawsuit states the discharge paperwork of the veterans identifies their “actual or perceived sexual orientation as the reason for their discharge,” discharged them with ranks below an honorable discharge and banned them from reenlisting in the armed forces.

Because the reason for discharge stays in their military records, veterans continue to face invasion of privacy, denial of access to benefits and barriers to hiring, the lawsuit claims.

“These veterans have been forced to carry official yet discriminatory paperwork from the U.S. government that unnecessarily indicates their sexual orientation any time they try to prove their status as veterans,” according to a statement from the Impact Fund, Legal Aid at Work and King & Spalding, which represent the veterans.

Plaintiffs named in the lawsuit are Navy veteran Sherrill Farrell of Texas, Army veteran Steven Eglund of Michigan, Navy veteran James Gonzales of California, Marine Corps veteran Jules Sohn of California and Navy veteran Lilly Steffanides of California.

All five were discharged from the military because of their sexual orientation, according to the lawsuit.

The veterans in the case declined Monday to comment through their attorneys.

The Defense Department argued the court should dismiss the case because the discharges were more than 6 years old. The department cited a provision under the Little Tucker Act, citing a general six-year statute of limitations for pursuing a claim against the United States.

The Defense Department also argued it announced plans to review cases of veterans whose separations were the result of their sexual orientations and received less-than-honorable discharges.

In refusing to dismiss the case, the court supported the veterans’ argument that they continue to be discriminated against because the process for obtaining an honorable discharge is lengthy, traumatizing and burdensome.

Honorable discharges entitle veterans to health care benefits, college loans through the GI Bill and assistance with home loans and other housing support.

The veterans assert they were denied equal protection under the Fifth and 14th amendments based on the inclusion of sexual orientation information on their discharge paperwork that was not required of other service members.

The lawsuit seeks the removal of “narratives and separation codes” that disclose the veterans’ sexual orientation and seeks upgraded discharge statuses for veterans who were discharged under the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy and similar policies that preceded it.

D\*DAY 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

SUPPORT A SOLDIER

THE STARS AND STRIPES

SUPPORTER

Pay it forward to a deployed soldier!

**Support a Soldier HERE**

Scan here to support a deployed soldier today!

www.stripes.com

## How you can support

For over 80 years, deployed soldiers in austere environments have relied on Stars and Stripes for news and connection. Now, you can directly support a soldier on the Eastern Front by sponsoring a year of free Digital Access to stripes.com for just \$49.99. Your contribution goes beyond providing what they would receive from printed paper; it offers soldiers 24/7 online access to a wide range of articles from around the globe, hometown news updates, and a vital connection to the world beyond their deployment, keeping them linked to home.



## MILITARY

# Small Marine unit to arrive on Guam this winter

BY ALEX WILSON  
Stars and Stripes

A “small detachment” of U.S. Marines is scheduled to relocate to Guam at the end of the year as the island prepares for thousands more transferring from Okinawa, according to the Marine Corps.

An undisclosed number of logistics Marines will move to Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz this winter, where they’ll help ready new facilities for another 1,300 Marines from the III Marine Expeditionary Force, according to Marine Corps Headquarters spokeswoman Capt. Brenda McCarthy.

The base will also host another 3,700 Marines as a rotational deployment force. The base is sched-



ALEX WILSON/Stars and Stripes

**A small detachment of Marines is expected to arrive at Camp Blaz on Guam sometime in late 2024.**

uled to be at full operational capacity by 2028, base spokeswoman told Maj. Diann Rosenfeld told Stars and Stripes in December.

The Marines’ transfer is part of the Defense Policy Review Initiative, an agreement by the United

States and Japan to relocate some Marine assets from Okinawa to Guam. The deal includes Japan funding \$3 billion of the estimated \$8.6 billion cost to build Camp Blaz and its surrounding infrastructure.

“This commencement of force flow honors a concurrence with the Government of Japan and secures a U.S. Marine Corps posture in the Indo-Pacific region that is more geographically distributed, operationally resilient and politically sustainable,” McCarthy told Stars and Stripes by email Tuesday.

McCarthy didn’t elaborate on the timeline or disclose the number of Marines slated to relocate.

Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, in a June 17 interview with Japanese outlet Kyodo News, estimated the detachment will include about 100 Marines and will arrive sometime in December, according to an audio recording of the interview provided by her office Friday.

Camp Blaz currently only has about 80 Marines or U.S. sailors, Rosenfeld told Stars and Stripes by email Monday.

The relocation likely won’t be completed until the Marines finish construction of Camp Blaz in two to three years, Guerrero added.

Camp Blaz, an approximately 4,000-acre facility on the northwest edge of Guam, was activated in 2020 as the first new Marine

Corps installation since 1952.

Construction on the base is progressing rapidly, with 23 projects completed since work began and another 50 projects underway, Rosenfeld said.

All projects were slightly delayed due to Typhoon Mawar, which passed just north of Guam in May 2023 bringing 150 mph winds and more than 2 feet of rain in some areas.

Most delays were caused by lost time due to site preparation and recovery, she told Stars and Stripes by email Monday.

“A few projects were negatively impacted by the destructive winds, but this type of damage was not widespread,” she said.

## Chase ends with capture of JBLM soldier accused of slaying 2

BY GARY WARNER  
Stars and Stripes

A soldier at Joint Base Lewis-McChord is accused of shooting and killing his pregnant wife and another soldier, then leading police on a high-speed chase that ended with his capture by a SWAT squad in a vast wildlife refuge near the military base.

Spc. John Robert Maupin, 21, was arrested at about 1 a.m. Friday for the killings four hours earlier of his 24-year-old wife, Julia Maupin, and Sgt. Brandon Rudlaff, 26, who family members described as Julia Maupin’s boyfriend, according to local authorities.

John Maupin and Rudlaff were assigned to the 7th Infantry Division at Lewis-McChord, base officials said.

John Maupin, his wife, and Rudlaff lived together in a house in Lacey, a town south of the joint Army-Air Force base near Tacoma, according to a court affidavit filed in Washington Superior Court on Friday by the Thurston County Prosecutor’s Office. Julia Maupin’s mother, Colleen O’Toole, and her partner, Michael Delgado, also lived in the house.

Lacey Police responded Thursday to a 911 call at about 9:05 p.m. from the house where they all

lived. O’Toole and Delgado directed police upstairs where they found Rudlaff lying in the hallway and Julia Maupin on the floor of a bedroom. Both had been shot.

The Lacey Fire Department also responded to the scene and confirmed both were dead.

“Brandon and Julia both had trauma to their heads that appeared consistent with gunshot wounds,” according to the affidavit.

O’Toole told police that Julia was eight months pregnant. The unborn baby did not survive, authorities said.

O’Toole also told police that John and Julia Maupin frequently argued, and John Maupin had threatened suicide several times in the past.

Thursday’s incident also began with an argument over John Maupin’s use of his wife’s phone, with gunshots heard in the bedroom shared by Julia Maupin and Rudlaff, according to the affidavit.

John Maupin then went downstairs, where Delgado was watching television. Delgado told police that Maupin had a handgun and told him to back away. Maupin went out the door, got into a white 2020 Hyundai Sonata and sped away.

O’Toole said she then called 911,

while Delgado went to a neighbor’s also to call local authorities.

A police officer in Olympia spotted Maupin’s car traveling north on Interstate 5 at about 9:15 p.m. and attempted to stop his car.

Maupin instead initiated a high-speed car chase of more than 110 mph. Other police joined the pursuit. As the sun was setting, Maupin drove into the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. He abandoned his car and tried to hide in the wetlands.

A Washington State Patrol helicopter and a Thurston County SWAT squad were dispatched to search for Maupin. He was captured at about 1 a.m. Friday in a swampy area.

Maupin told Lacey police that an “alter ego” named “New John” had taken over his consciousness and he recalled nothing of the shootings or his attempt to flee. Police found a handgun in the glove compartment of the car that Maupin was driving.

County prosecutors wrote in the affidavit that they will seek two counts of second-degree murder, a count of second-degree domestic violence assault and one count of eluding police against Maupin.

Maupin was being held in the Thurston County Corrections Facility in Olympia.



GARY WARNER/Stars and Stripes

**An exit sign for Joint Base Lewis-McChord on Interstate 5 near Tacoma, Wash.**

## Senior Blinken aide taking top job with Austin after Senate holdup

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced Monday that one of his most senior aides is leaving for a top job with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and will be replaced by a brother of President Joe Biden’s national security adviser.

State Department counselor Derek Chollet, a veteran of national security positions in Democratic presidential administrations, will become Austin’s chief of staff. Chollet will be replaced in his State Department role by Tom Sullivan, brother of Bi-



Chollet

den’s national security adviser, Jake Sullivan. Tom Sullivan had been Blinken’s deputy chief of staff for policy.

Chollet had been nominated to be undersecretary of defense for policy, but his Senate confirmation was stalled, and administration officials had become increasingly frustrated by the repeated delays.

The musical chairs in national security

hierarchy comes amid increasing concern over developments in the Middle East, Ukraine and China.

“I am delighted that Derek Chollet will start in July as my chief of staff. He is one of the most distinguished, far-sighted and skillful national-security practitioners of his generation, and I am grateful to him for taking on this key assignment at such an important moment,” Austin said in a statement.

Blinken said in his own statement: “During his time at the State Department, he has

taken on some of the toughest diplomatic assignments, from the Balkans and Burma to Pakistan and Northern Ireland, and for the past nine months has been key to shaping our response to the crisis in the Middle East.”

Blinken also praised Tom Sullivan, who had been a senior official under former Secretary of State John Kerry, as having “an unmatched depth of knowledge about how national security policy is formulated and implemented, one that he brings to bear every day on behalf of the American people.”

## MILITARY



NATO MARITIME COMMAND/X

A Ukrainian sailor speaks during final planning in Glasgow, Scotland, as Sea Breeze 2024 kicks off, in a photo posted on Monday.

## Ukrainian minehunters train with US, allied navies off Scottish coast

BY ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — Two Ukrainian navy ships are participating this week in an annual multinational exercise near Scotland that aims to prepare Ukraine for a postwar era in the Black Sea.

Sea Breeze 2024 started Monday with the first segment dedicated to finding and destroying sea mines.

“A large focus of this exercise is ... the ability to tactically control mine countermeasures assets and effectively keep track of the ships’ operations throughout the exercise scenario,” said Lt. j.g. Paula Niederland, a spokeswoman for U.S. 6th Fleet.

Participants in the exercise include Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Japan, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the U.K., the U.S. and NATO Maritime Command, the Navy said.



JAN VALLE/U.S. Air Force

**The German navy ship Donau pulls into King George V Docks for Sea Breeze 2024.**

Sea Breeze includes 10 support personnel from U.S. 6th Fleet’s Task Force 68 and four others from a U.S. expeditionary warfare training group, according to the statement.

A second and third segment of the exercise will take place later this year in Bulgaria.

Last year, England gifted two retired minehunter ships, subsequently named Cherkasy and Chernihiv, to Ukraine. The British navy says their instructors have

been working with the Ukrainian crews for the past 18 months.

That work is part of a collaborative effort, headed by the U.K. and Norway, to help Ukraine with the equipment, training and infrastructure needed to bolster security in the Black Sea region, according to the British navy.

Sea Breeze includes training in sea, air and land operations. The exercise, which has frequently drawn Moscow’s ire, was preempted in 2022 by Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February of that year. It resumed in 2023, also in Scotland.

“It is crucial for Allies and partners to have a venue to work side-by-side on mine countermeasures, especially with the great threat floating mines pose to maritime safety and security in the Black Sea as a result of the war in Ukraine,” said Capt. Geoffrey Townsend, commodore of Task Force 68.

# White House warns of House DOD budget veto

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The House is set to vote this week on an annual defense spending bill that President Joe Biden said he would veto for harming service member access to reproductive health care, threatening the health of safety of LGBTQ+ troops and undermining readiness.

The legislation provides \$833 billion to the Defense Department for a 4.5% pay raise for troops and investments in national security in fiscal 2025 but also contains conservative social policy riders that Democrats have revolted against.

The House is expected to hold a vote on the spending bill by Friday. The Senate has yet to release its version of the legislation.

“House Republicans are again wasting time with partisan bills,” the White House’s Office of Management and Budget wrote Monday in a statement criticizing the bill. The administration earlier this month also objected to parts of the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act, an annual defense policy bill that is funded by the spending bill.

The White House aimed its harshest criticism at provisions in the spending bill that would stop funding a travel reimbursement program for troops who need to cross state lines for abortion and other reproductive health care, strip funds from the Defense Department’s diversity and inclusion initiatives and prohibit funding of gender-affirming care for transgender service members.

More divisive amendments

could be added to the legislation as the House Rules Committee meets Tuesday to decide which proposals will get a vote on the House floor. One amendment, which successfully passed the House last year but was removed during negotiations with the Senate, would reduce Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin’s salary to \$1.

House Republicans have stressed their efforts to slash spending on social programs are geared toward refocusing the Pentagon on its war-fighting mission and preparing the military for long-term competition with China and other adversaries.

The White House argued the cuts, including \$621 million from climate change initiatives and \$53 billion from diversity programs, would have devastating consequences for military readiness and prevent the Defense Department from recruiting “a total force representative of America’s diversity.”

The administration also said it disagreed with a proposal to give junior enlisted service members an extra 15% pay raise ahead of a Pentagon review of the military basic pay table. The total 19.5% pay raise for junior troops would cost more than \$3.3 billion in fiscal 2025 and is not fully funded by the House’s draft spending bill, according to the White House.

The bill eliminates two planned ship procurements and provides \$761 million less for shipbuilding than requested. It also fails to include money for a longstanding weapons acquisition and training program for Ukraine.

## Marine vet pleads guilty in neo-Nazi plot to hit power grid

BY ALEXANDER RIEDEL  
*Stars and Stripes*

The final defendant in a group of five former military members with ties to white-supremacist organizations pleaded guilty this week to weapons charges stemming from a plot to attack the power grid in the northwestern United States.

Jordan Duncan, a Marine veteran who was previously stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, appeared Monday in a federal court in Wilmington, N.C., and admitted to aiding and abetting the manufacture of firearms.

The charge carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison. His

plea follows those of co-defendants Paul James Kryscuk, 38; Liam Collins, 25; Justin Wade Hermanson, 25; and Joseph Maurino, 25.

Motivated by white supremacist ideologies, the defendants studied a prior assault on a power substation, intending to replicate and escalate the violence using firearms and explosives, according to court documents.

From 2017 to 2020, the group coordinated through encrypted messaging apps and conducted paramilitary training in the desert near Boise, Idaho, authorities said.

Court documents detail pur-

chases of modified weapons, which were transferred from Idaho to various locations across the country.

“During that time, Duncan gathered a library of information, some military-owned, regarding firearms, explosives, and nerve toxins and shared that information with Kryscuk and Collins,” federal prosecutors said in a statement Monday.

When Duncan was arrested in Boise in October 2020, investigators found secret Defense Department documents on his hard drive, along with documents detailing how to craft homemade explosives, news site RawStory re-

ported last year.

Both Collins and Duncan were previously stationed at Camp Lejeune, according to prosecutors.

Duncan, 29, left the Marine Corps in late 2018. Afterward, he worked as an Air Force contractor at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. In September 2020, he began working as a contractor for the Navy near Boise, court documents state.

During the time of the group’s crimes, Hermanson belonged to the same unit to which Collins was last assigned and was still enlisted in the Marine Corps at Camp Lejeune. Maurino was a member of the Army National Guard at the

time, according to the indictment.

Collins pleaded guilty Oct. 24, 2023, to aiding and abetting the interstate transportation of unregistered firearms, with a maximum sentence of 10 years. Kryscuk pleaded guilty Feb. 15, 2022, to conspiracy to destroy an energy facility, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years.

On March 8, 2023, and April 11, 2023, respectively, Hermanson and Maurino pleaded guilty to conspiracy to manufacture firearms and ship them across state lines. Each faces up to five years in prison.

All five defendants await sentencing.

## EUROPE

# Russia presses assault as aid's arrival looms

BY VASILISA STEPANENKO  
Associated Press

**DONETSK REGION, Ukraine** — Relentless Russian attacks on Ukrainian positions defending the strategically important eastern city of Chasiv Yar are disrupting troop rotations and the delivery of some supplies, soldiers in the area say.

The Kremlin's army is seeking to press its advantages in troop numbers and weaponry before Ukrainian forces are bulked up by promised new Western military aid that is already trickling to the front line, analysts say.

It has been hitting civilian targets just as hard, using powerful glide bombs that obliterate buildings and leave huge craters. Its monthslong campaign to cripple Ukraine's electricity supply aims to sap public morale and deny energy to Ukraine's burgeoning arms industry.

Attacks on such civilian targets brought arrest warrants from the International Criminal Court on Tuesday for former Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and military chief of staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov for alleged war crimes. Judges said there is evidence they "intentionally caused great suffer-

ing or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health" of Ukrainian civilians.

For Ukrainian soldiers defending the eastern Donetsk region, the Russian ground assaults and aerial barrages allow little respite after more than two years of war.

"We work, you could say, without rest," said a platoon commander who, in line with his brigade's rules, identified himself only by his first name, Oleksandr.

"So no two days are alike. You always need to be ready to work day and night," he said Monday.

His platoon is part of Ukraine's 43rd Artillery Brigade. It dashes to positions and without delay fires a Soviet-era Pion self-propelled howitzer at Russian positions before it can be targeted itself.

Holding Chasiv Yar is crucial. The town, highly sought-after due to its strategic location and elevated position but now largely in ruins, lies to the west of neighboring Bakhmut, which was captured by Russia last year after a 10-month battle.

Ukraine is racing to stabilize parts of the about 620-mile front line after badly needed military assistance was approved by the United States in April.

## US plans to send Ukraine \$150M more in munitions

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. is expected to announce Tuesday it is sending an additional \$150 million in critically needed munitions to Ukraine, as Russia accuses Ukraine of using U.S.-provided munitions to strike inside Russia or Russian-held territory, according to two U.S. officials.

On Monday, Russia summoned the American ambassador to protest what it says was the use of U.S.-made advanced missiles in a Ukrainian attack on Crimea on Sunday that reportedly killed four people and wounded more than 150.

Crimea, which Russia seized from Ukraine in 2014 in a move that most of the world rejected as unlawful, long had been declared a fair target for Ukraine by its Western allies.

However, the Pentagon said last week that Ukraine's military is also now allowed to use longer-

range missiles provided by the U.S. to strike targets inside Russia if it is acting in self-defense. Since the outset of the war, the U.S. had maintained a policy of not allowing Ukraine to use the weapons it provided to hit targets on Russian soil for fear of further escalating the conflict.

The upcoming shipment is expected to include munitions for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, or HIMARS. That system is capable of firing the longer-range missiles from the Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS, which Russia has said would prompt retaliation and risk escalating the conflict. One of the U.S. officials said they could not verify whether this aid package included ATACMS munitions, but said the aid did not include cluster munitions.

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to provide details not yet been made public.



PHOTOS BY CZAREK SOKOLOWSKI/AP

**Volunteers in Poland's army practice shooting during training exercises in Nowogrod, Poland, on Thursday. Poland's army has launched a program this summer called "Holidays with the Army" to train young volunteers in combat.**

## 'Holidays with the Army' rolled out in Poland in recruitment drive

BY VANESSA GERA  
Associated Press

**NOWOGROD, Poland** — With assault rifles laid out before them, the young Polish men and women kneel on the grass and follow orders on how to pack their survival kits. Next comes a lesson on applying camouflage paint to their faces. Not too much neon, an instructor says as he shows them how to add dark streaks of green.

Many at the training in eastern Poland are new high school graduates, with the men's heads freshly shaven and the women's hair tied back. They have signed up for a new summer program, "Holidays with the Army," which offers basic military training for thousands of Poles aged 18 to 35.

The military introduced the program in a search for recruits as Poland expands its 198,000-member army in the face of renewed Russian aggression in the region, including neighboring Ukraine.

Despite the program's name, this is no holiday. The recruits rise early to learn combat and survival skills. When not in the field, they clean their quarters. There is no leaving the base, 80 miles from the border with Belarus, for visits home or nights out. They earn \$1,500 for the 28 days.

There has been great interest in the program, which is taking place at 70 locations across Poland, officials say.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has sparked an impulse among Poles to want to defend the nation, said Maj. Michal Tomczyk, a spokesperson at the Defense Ministry.

"We haven't had such a threat since World War II," Tomczyk



**Volunteers in Poland's army learn to apply camouflage face paint during basic training in Nowogrod, Poland, on Thursday.**

said. He said they had planned for 10,000 volunteers for the program and have more than 11,000.

At the end of the training, the volunteers will take a soldier's oath in which they swear "to serve loyally the Republic of Poland ... even at the cost of losing my life or blood."

Those who choose a military life can join a branch of the professional armed services or the Territorial Defense Forces or be on standby as reservists, said Col. Pawel Galazka, commander of the 18th Lomza Logistics Regiment, a unit training the volunteers.

"The army wants to train as many citizens as possible," Galazka said. "Everyone knows about the threat that comes from the east."

The Lomza regiment's training field is in a forest clearing near the Narew River. The surrounding area has been defended by generations of Poles, from the time when Poland was partitioned and ruled

by foreign powers starting in the late 18th century until the early 20th century, to World War II, when the Germans and Soviets invaded.

Bunkers in the area are evidence of the Polish defense line that was broken when Nazi Germany invaded in 1939, sparking World War II.

The patriotism nurtured by the history passed on in schools and by families helped motivate young people to join the new program, Galazka said.

One volunteer, 18-year-old Dominik Rojek, originally planned to study computer science. But the troubles in the region led him to shift to a military career, driven by the desire to defend the homeland. He hopes he can still pursue his passion for computer science in the military and use his skills in cyberdefense.

"Someone has to do it," Rojek said. "Not everyone is capable of this, but we are capable of this. ... There is no other way."

Rojek's generation came of age in peace and enjoyed the rising prosperity that has been the dividend of Moscow-backed communism's collapse across the region 35 years ago.

But young Poles, like those of their generation along NATO's entire eastern front, fear they can no longer take that peace for granted.

Russia's initial seizure of Ukrainian territory in 2014 sent jitters through the region. But its full-scale invasion has brought a major security realignment from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea and forced nations and individuals to consider the prospect of one day taking up arms.

NATION



PAUL WEBER/AP

**A monument of the Ten Commandments is outside the Capitol in Austin, Texas. Civil liberties groups in Louisiana are suing to block the state's new law requiring the Ten Commandments be displayed in all public school classrooms starting in 2025.**

# Suit challenges Louisiana law on Ten Commandments in schools

Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — Civil liberties groups filed a lawsuit Monday to block Louisiana's new law that requires the Ten Commandments to be displayed in every public school classroom, a measure they contend is unconstitutional.

Plaintiffs in the suit include parents of Louisiana public school children with various religious backgrounds, who are represented by attorneys with the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Freedom From Religion Foundation and the New York City law firm Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett.

"This display sends a message to my children and other students that people of some religious denominations are superior to others," said the Rev. Jeff Simms, a Presbyterian pastor who is a plaintiff in the suit and father of three children in Louisiana public schools.

Under the legislation signed into law by Republican Gov. Jeff Landry last week, all public K-12 classrooms and state-funded universities will be required to display a poster-sized version of the Ten Commandments in "large, easily readable font" next year.

Opponents argue that the law is a violation of separation of church and state and that the display will isolate students, especially those who are not Christian. Proponents say the measure is not solely religious, but that it has historical significance. In the language of the law, the Ten Commandments are "foundational documents of our state and national government."

Plaintiff Joshua Herlands has two young children in New Orleans public schools who, like their father, are Jewish. There are multiple versions of the Ten Commandments, and Herlands said the specific version mandated for classroom walls does not align with the version from his faith. He worries the display will send a trou-

bling message to his kids and others that "they may be lesser in the eyes of the government."

The lawsuit filed Monday seeks a court declaration that the new law violates First Amendment clauses forbidding government establishment of religion and guaranteeing religious liberty. It also seeks an order prohibiting the posting of the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms.

Defendants include state Superintendent of Education Cade Brumley, members of the state education board and some local school boards.

Landry and Louisiana Attorney General Elizabeth Murrill support the new law, and Murrill has said she is looking forward to defending it.

Other states, including Texas, Oklahoma and Utah, have attempted to pass requirements that the schools display the Ten Commandments. However, with threats of legal battles, none has the mandate in place except for Louisiana.

# 2 judges limit plan to forgive student debt

By JOHN HANNA  
Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. — Federal judges in Kansas and Missouri on Monday together blocked much of a Biden administration student loan repayment plan that provides a faster path to cancellation and lower monthly payments for millions of borrowers.

The judges' rulings prevent the U.S. Department of Education from helping many of the intended borrowers ease their loan repayment burdens going forward under a rule set to go into effect July 1. The decisions do not cancel assistance already provided to borrowers.

In Kansas, U.S. District Judge Daniel Crabtree ruled in a lawsuit filed by the state's attorney general, Kris Kobach, on behalf of his state and 10 others. In his ruling, Crabtree allowed parts of the program that allow students who borrowed \$12,000 or less to have the rest of their loans forgiven if they make 10 years' worth of payments, instead of the standard 25.

But Crabtree said that the Department of Education won't be allowed to implement parts of the program meant to help students who had larger loans and could have their monthly payments lowered and their required payment period reduced from 25 years to 20 years.

In Missouri, U.S. District Judge John Ross' order applies to different parts of the program than Crabtree's. His order says that the U.S. Department of Education cannot forgive loan balances going forward. He said the department still could lower monthly payments.

Ross issued a ruling in a lawsuit

filed by Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey on behalf of his state and six others.

Together, the two rulings, each by a judge appointed by former President Barack Obama, a Democrat, appeared to greatly limit the scope of the Biden administration's efforts to help borrowers after the U.S. Supreme Court last year rejected the Democratic president's first attempt at a forgiveness plan. Both judges said Education Secretary Miguel Cardona exceeded the authority granted by Congress in laws dealing with students loans.

Bailey and Kobach each hailed the decision from their state's judge as a major legal victory against the Biden administration and argue, as many Republicans do, that forgiving some students' loans shifts the cost of repaying them to taxpayers.

The White House said it strongly disagrees with the judges' rulings and would continue to defend the program, and use every available tool to give relief to students and borrowers.

Both orders are preliminary, meaning the injunctions imposed by the judges would remain in effect through a trial of the separate lawsuits. However, to issue a temporary order each judge had to conclude that the states were likely to prevail in a trial.

There was some irony in Crabtree's decision: Kansas is no longer a party to the lawsuit Kobach filed. Earlier this month, Crabtree ruled that Kansas and seven other states in the lawsuit — Alabama, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska and Utah — couldn't show that they'd been harmed by the new program and dismissed them as plaintiffs.

# Surgeon general declares gun violence a public health emergency

By AMANDA SEITZ  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. surgeon general on Tuesday declared gun violence a public health crisis, driven by the fast-growing number of injuries and deaths involving firearms in the country.

The advisory issued by Dr. Vivek Murthy, the nation's top doctor, came as the U.S. grappled with another summer weekend marked by mass shootings that left dozens of people dead or wounded.

"People want to be able to walk through their neighborhoods and



Murthy

be safe," Murthy told The Associated Press in a phone interview. "America should be a place where all of us can go to school, go to work, go to the supermarket, go to our house of worship, without having to worry that that's going to put our life at risk."

To drive down gun deaths, Murthy calls on the U.S. to ban automatic rifles, introduce universal back-

ground checks for purchasing guns, regulate the industry, pass laws that would restrict their use in public spaces and penalize people who fail to safely store their weapons.

None of those suggestions can be implemented nationwide without legislation passed by Congress, which typically recoils at gun control measures. Some state legislatures, however, have enacted or may consider some of the surgeon general's proposals.

Separately on Tuesday, the White House reported that more than 500 people, including some

linked to transnational cartels and organized crime rings, have been charged with gun trafficking and other crimes under the landmark gun safety legislation President Joe Biden signed two years ago.

The report obtained by The Associated Press on the implementation of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act also said that enhanced background checks under the new law have stopped roughly 800 sales of firearms to people under age 21 who would be prohibited from buying them.

The bill was a signature achieve-

ment for the Democratic president, and the particulars on how it has been implemented come as he seeks reelection in November. But Biden is also quick to say the law didn't go far enough, as he continues to push for stricter background checks and has called for a ban on assault rifles.

In addition to new regulations, Murthy calls for an increase on gun violence research and for the health system — which is likely to be more amenable to his advisory — to promote gun safety education during doctor visits.

## NATION

# More than 500 charged under new gun law

By COLLEEN LONG  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More than 500 people — some linked to transnational cartels and organized crime rings — have been charged with gun trafficking and other crimes under the landmark gun safety legislation President Joe Biden signed two years ago Tuesday.

A White House report obtained by The Associated Press on the implementation of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act also said that enhanced background checks under the new law have stopped roughly 800 sales of firearms to people under age 21 who would be prohibited from buying them.

It highlights that 14 states are using or planning to use funding from the legislation to make better use of red flag laws, which allow law enforcement to remove weapons from people in crisis but are often underused or not well understood. And the report lays out how \$85 million in funding has been awarded to 125 school districts across 18 states to help identify students who need mental health care and help them access it.

“It was designed to reduce gun violence and save lives,” Biden said recently of the law. “And I’m so proud of the tremendous progress we’ve made since then.”

The bill was a signature achievement for the Democratic president, and the particulars on how it has been implemented

come as he seeks reelection in November. But Biden is also quick to say the law didn’t go far enough, as he continues to push for stricter background checks and has called for a ban on assault weapons.

Republican presumptive presidential nominee Donald Trump, meanwhile, has promised no new gun regulations if he returns to the White House.

Trump has spoken twice this year at National Rifle Association events and was endorsed by the group in May. The former president has claimed that Biden “has a 40-year record of trying to rip firearms out of the hands of law-abiding citizens.” His campaign and the Republican National Committee also announced the creation of a Gun Owners for Trump coalition that includes gun rights activists and those who work in the firearms industry.

Biden created the first-ever White House office of gun violence prevention and issued new rules that mean tens of thousands more firearms dealers across the U.S. will have to run background checks on buyers at gun shows or other places outside stores.

Gun safety groups on Tuesday praised the law and Biden’s work. “We are determined to build on this momentum and urge Congress to continue prioritizing gun safety laws to keep our communities safe,” said Angela Ferrell-Zabala, executive director of Moms Demand Action.



ANDRES LEIGHTON/AP

A charred car and the remains of the Swiss Chalet Hotel are shown after it was destroyed by the South Fork Fire in the mountain village of Ruidoso, N.M., on Saturday.

## Team combs NM community for remains of missing after blaze

Associated Press

As residents return to a fire-ravaged village in the mountains of southern New Mexico, the mayor on Monday warned them that some parts of Ruidoso remain off limits as special search and rescue teams comb the charred rubble along the hardest-hit streets.

They’re looking for the remains of people who are still unaccounted for after the South Fork and Salt fires ripped through the area just days ago, killing at least two people, forcing thousands to flee and destroying more than 1,500 structures.

Mayor Lynn Crawford put the number of missing at 29. Village officials said in a Sunday night update that the search teams have identified potential additional fatalities, but any confirmation will

have to be made by investigators.

“The search and rescue teams are in there and they’re with canines and so they’re still going property to property to property,” Crawford said during his Monday morning radio address.

With cell service going down during the evacuations last week, it made communication nearly impossible. While service slowly is being restored, some residents said Monday they are still having a difficult time connecting.

The 29 people on the list have not been in touch with friends or family since last Monday. The list was larger just a day ago, but village officials have been using social media and working with the American Red Cross to mark evacuees as “safe” as soon as they are heard from.

Authorities have blocked traffic into so-called exclusion zones to ensure these areas remain undisturbed until they are officially cleared. The FBI also is investigating, offering up to \$10,000 for information leading to the arrests and convictions of those responsible for the human-caused fires.

Several dozen members of the New Mexico Army and Air National Guard were stationed in Ruidoso to help. Utility workers also were installing new power poles and stringing wires throughout the community. Workers with the New Mexico Environment Department were testing the drinking water system.

Officials also warned residents to be mindful of the potential for flash flooding if more rain falls on the bare mountain slopes.

## More rain possible in Midwest as flooding breaches levee

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Floodwaters breached levees in western Iowa on Tuesday, creating dangerous conditions that prompted evacuations as the deluged Midwest faced another round of severe storms forecast for later in the day.

The sheriff’s office in Monona County, south of Sioux City near the Nebraska border, said the Little Sioux River breached levees in several areas. Evacuation orders were issued and roads closed in two small towns, emergency management officials said. No injuries were immediately reported.

“Please stay out of the area for your safety,” the sheriff’s office said in a social media post.

Patrick Prorok, emergency



TIM HYNDS, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL/AP

Tam Nguyen, wearing a cap, is helped to dry land by a Sioux City Fire Rescue firefighter after he and Bruce Ege, left, were rescued by boat from their flooded homes in Sioux City, Iowa, on Monday.

management coordinator in Monona County, described waking people in Rodney, a town of about 45 people, to recommend evacuation about 4 a.m. Later

Tuesday morning, the water hadn’t yet washed into the community.

“People up the hill are saying it is coming our way,” Prorok said.

Iowa state transportation officials said they planned to close sections of I-29 and I-680 north of Council Bluffs Tuesday because of rising floodwaters.

The flooding has damaged roads and bridges, closed or destroyed businesses, required hospitals and nursing homes to evacuate, and left cities without power or safe drinking water, the governors of Iowa and South Dakota said. Officials reported hundreds of water rescues.

Severe storms were forecast for Tuesday afternoon and evening with large hail, damaging winds and even a brief tornado or two in parts of western Iowa and eastern Nebraska, according to the National Weather Service. Showers and storms were also possible in

parts of South Dakota and Minnesota, the agency said.

The weather service also predicted more than two dozen points of major flooding in southern Minnesota, eastern South Dakota and northern Iowa, and over three dozen points of moderate flooding. Flood warnings are expected to continue into the week.

President Joe Biden approved a major disaster declaration for affected counties in Iowa on Monday, a move that paves the way for federal aid to be granted.

Late Monday in Correctionville, Iowa, the Little Sioux River rose to nearly 31 feet, about 12 feet above flood stage, according to the National Weather Service. About a quarter to a third of residents had evacuated Monday.

WORLD

# Israel's high court orders draft of ultra-Orthodox

*Associated Press*  
**JERUSALEM** — Israel's Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled unanimously that the military must begin drafting ultra-Orthodox men for compulsory service, a landmark decision that could lead to the collapse of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition as Israel continues to wage war in Gaza.

The historic ruling effectively puts an end to a decades-old system that granted ultra-Orthodox men broad exemptions from military service while maintaining mandatory enlistment for the country's secular Jewish majority. The arrangement, deemed discriminatory by critics, has created a deep chasm in Israel's Jewish majority over who should shoulder the burden of protecting the country.

The court struck down a law that codified exemptions in 2017, but repeated court extensions and government delaying tactics over a replacement dragged out a resolution for years. The court ruled that in the absence of a law, Is-

rael's compulsory military service applies to the ultra-Orthodox like any other citizen.

Under longstanding arrangements, ultra-Orthodox men have been exempt from the draft, which is compulsory for most Jewish men and women, who serve three and two years respectively as well as reserve duty until around age 40.

These exemptions have long been a source of anger among the secular public, a divide that has widened during the eight-month-old war, as the military has called up tens of thousands of soldiers and says it needs all the manpower it can get. Over 600 soldiers have been killed since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack.

Politically powerful ultra-Orthodox parties, key partners in Netanyahu's governing coalition, oppose any change in the current system. If the exemptions are ended, they could bolt the coalition, causing the government to collapse and likely leading to new elections at a time when its popularity has dropped.

# Julian Assange expected to plead guilty to felony charge

*The Washington Post*  
 Julian Assange, the founder of the anti-secrecy site WikiLeaks, has reached a tentative deal to plead guilty to one count of violating the Espionage Act for his role in obtaining and publishing classified military and diplomatic documents from 2009 to 2011, according to court filings.

The plea deal likely ends a long-running legal saga and a transatlantic tug-of-war that pitted national security against press freedom.

He is expected to be sentenced on Wednesday in the Northern Mariana Islands, according to a letter filed by the Justice Department in the remote U.S. jurisdiction Monday evening. He will then return to his home country of Australia, the letter says, indicating he will be sentenced to the 62 months he has already spent behind bars in a London jail.

A criminal information filed

alongside the letter says Assange "knowingly and unlawfully conspired" with Chelsea Manning to "receive and obtain documents ... connected with the national defense" and "communicate" that



Assange

information to "persons not entitled to receive" it. Manning, then a young Army intelligence analyst in Iraq, was convicted of violating the Espionage Act and other laws at a court-martial in 2013.

Assange, whose snow-white hair became recognizable worldwide, was a polarizing figure. Supporters saw him as a courageous journalist whistleblower of government misdeeds, but his detractors saw a pompous self-promoter interested primarily in fame and oblivious to the harm his leaks

might cause.

In negotiating the plea deal, the U.S. government had already agreed that if Assange were convicted at trial in the United States, he could serve his sentence in his home country of Australia — one of several concessions made by the Justice Department in its five-year effort to extradite the WikiLeaks founder.

The United States promised Assange he would not face any charges that could trigger the death penalty, that he would not be automatically put in solitary confinement, and that he would receive mental health treatment. But Assange's attorneys repeatedly argued that those promises were insufficient to prevent him from self-harm were he to be in U.S. custody.

Assange's health deteriorated during his long stay in London's Belmarsh Prison, family members and his lawyer have said.

## STARS AND STRIPES

# SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market

Transportation
944

### VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

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

For Further Information Please Contact

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

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

LOGISTICS EUROPE GMBH

### Are you in the picture?

Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.

*No one covers the bases the way we do.*

Transportation
944

Ship Cars and Containers to and from the USA

WORLDWIDE SHIPPING AGENCY

**OPENING HOURS:** 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon - Fri  
 0800-522-6274 or 800-WSA-SHIP (972-7447)  
 For a free rate request, please email: info@worldwide-ship.de  
 Visit our Website: www.worldwide-ship.de

### Off Duty? Amuse Yourself!

Concert, events, TV, movies, music, video games, celebrity antics...

*Get entertained with...*

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Bears killed in effort to boost caribou herd

**AK** ANCHORAGE — State wildlife officials have now killed a total of 180 brown bears on Southwest Alaska caribou calving grounds in just over a year as part of a contested strategy to restore the renowned Mulchatna herd.

Shooting from a helicopter between May 10 and June 5, Alaska Department of Fish and Game employees killed 81 brown bears and 15 wolves they spotted across 530 square miles of tundra, officials said this month.

In 2023, the first year of the program, state employees killed 94 brown bears including some cubs, five black bears and five wolves.

State wildlife officials say killing bears feeding on newborn calves is a last-ditch attempt to shore up a herd that has declined from a peak of 200,000 animals in 1997 to just over 13,000 today. The state halted all hunting of Mulchatna caribou in 2021 with a goal of reaching a herd size of 30,000 to 80,000 animals.

## Storage is getting tight amid cannabis crackdown

**NY** NEW YORK — City deputy sheriffs have seized so much cannabis from unlicensed pot shops amid a crackdown that the agency's offices have become a weed wonderland, with pot stowed in every nook and cranny they can find, The New York Daily News has learned.

When the sheriff's office was tasked with raiding illegal weed shops, the cannabis they removed was initially stored in six 20-foot shipping containers with poor ventilation inside an indoor parking garage at the agency's Long Island City offices on Starr Ave. But deputies quickly realized that they were collecting more marijuana products than they had space for, union members said.

So much weed had been collected that deputy sheriffs responsible for vouchering the evidence from the weed raids were being inundated by the smell — and some even getting sick, union officials said.

## Man dies after being struck by roller coaster

**OH** MASON — A man who was struck by a steel roller coaster at an Ohio theme park last week after he entered a restricted area to retrieve his lost keys has died from his injuries.

Arntanaro Nelson, 38, of Wilmington, entered a fenced area at Kings Island, according to a statement issued by the park. He was found on the ground with a "critical injury" and died days later at a hospital.

The Hamilton County coroner's office has listed Nelson's death as a "suspected accident," but it remains under investigation. His death was announced Monday.



ANTHONY VAZQUEZ, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES/AP

## Beholding the 'bean'

Visitors look up and take photos of the underside of the "Cloud Gate" sculpture, also known as the "bean," at Millennium Park on Sunday. Cloud Gate reopened to the public after several months of renovation.

Nelson dropped his keys while riding the Banshee, an inverted roller coaster where the train dangles from the track, and then went into the restricted area and was struck by the coaster, according to Mason police. No other injuries were reported in the incident.

## State may soon return stolen land to tribe

**IL** SPRINGFIELD — Some 175 years after the U.S. government stole land from the chief of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation while he was away visiting relatives, Illinois may soon return it to the tribe.

Nothing ever changed the 1829 treaty that Chief Shab-eh-nay signed with the U.S. government to preserve for him a reservation in northern Illinois: not subsequent accords nor the 1830 Indian Removal Act, which forced all indigenous people to move west of the Mississippi.

But around 1848, the U.S. sold the land to white settlers while Shab-eh-nay and other members of his tribe were visiting family in Kansas.

To right the wrong, Illinois would transfer a 1,500-acre state park west of Chicago, which was named after Shab-eh-nay, to the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. The state would continue providing maintenance while the tribe says it wants to keep the park as it is.

## Lifeguard dies in shark attack while surfing

**HI** HONOLULU — A professional lifeguard died after he was attacked by a shark while surfing off the island of Oahu in Hawaii on Sunday afternoon, authorities said.

City and County of Honolulu Ocean Safety lifeguard Tamayo Perry, 49, died in the attack near Goat Island, Shayne Enright of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department said in a statement.

Honolulu Ocean Safety and the city's fire, police and emergency medical services departments responded to Malaekahana Beach on Oahu's North Shore just before 1 p.m. after a caller reported seeing a man who appeared to have suffered shark bites, Enright said.

Lifeguards brought Perry to shore by jet ski and paramedics assisted with the death pronouncement, Enright said.

## More than \$13M awarded to athlete injured in fall

**WA** SEATTLE — A jury awarded \$13.1 million to an ultramarathon athlete who was severely injured when she fell on a Seattle sidewalk in 2021.

The award by a King County jury found that the city of Seattle and the owners of an apartment building are responsible for the amount, the Seattle Times reported.

Lesley Mettler Auld, 53, said in a news release issued by her attorneys on Friday that she will never run again and struggles to walk after the fall on a sidewalk in Seattle's Queen Anne neighborhood.

## Cargo ship leaves months after bridge collapse

**MD** BALTIMORE — The cargo ship Dali headed out of Baltimore for Virginia on Monday, nearly three months after it lost power and crashed into one of the Francis Scott Key bridge's supporting columns and caused the bridge to collapse.

The 984-foot Dali started moving shortly before 8:30 a.m. with four tugboats.

The Dali was sailing under its own power with a full crew of 22 and six salvage experts, the U.S. Coast Guard said in a news release.

The Coast Guard is overseeing the voyage and providing a 500-yard safety zone around the Dali during its trip.

The Dali is scheduled to go directly to Virginia International Gateway to have roughly 1,500 cargo containers off-loaded to reduce draft, the Coast Guard said. The vessel is then scheduled to travel further to Norfolk International Terminal, where it is scheduled to undergo continued salvage and repairs from damage caused during the bridge collapse.

Shortly after leaving the Port of

Baltimore early on March 26, the ship lost power and propulsion and crashed into one of the bridge's supporting columns, killing six construction workers.

## Boy found safe after 22 hours alone in wilderness

**CA** FRESNO — A 4-year-old California boy who wandered away from a campground in the Sierra National Forest was found safe after spending 22 hours alone in the wilderness, authorities said.

A search-and-rescue team of about 50 officers and volunteers set out around 11 a.m. Thursday after the child was reported missing from the camping site surrounded by dense forest north of Fresno.

The boy, from Torrance near Los Angeles, was last seen wearing shorts and a T-shirt, the Fresno County Sheriff's Office said.

Around 8 a.m. Friday, the boy was discovered in good condition "nestled under a tree" near a lake about a quarter mile from the Rancheria Campground where his family was.

"He was hungry and exhausted, but otherwise in good health. We got him a sandwich and then carried him out to be reunited with Mom and Dad," the sheriff's office said Saturday on Facebook.

## FACES



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

**A Mariah Carey classic is one of the copyrighted works that Suno and Udio are alleged to have mined for content.**

## Major record labels sue AI companies

From wire reports

Big record companies are suing artificial intelligence song-generators Suno and Udio for copyright infringement, alleging that the AI music startups are exploiting the recorded works of artists from Chuck Berry to Mariah Carey.

The Recording Industry Association of America announced the lawsuits Monday brought by labels including Sony Music Entertainment, Universal Music Group and Warner Records.

One case was filed in federal court in Boston against Suno AI, and the other in New York against Uncharted Labs, the developer of Udio AI.

Suno AI CEO Mikey Shulman said in an emailed statement that the technology is “designed to generate completely new outputs, not to memorize and regurgitate pre-existing content” and doesn’t allow users to reference specific artists.

Shulman said his Cambridge, Mass.-based startup tried to explain this to labels “but instead of entertaining a good faith discussion, they’ve reverted to their old lawyer-led playbook.”

Udio didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment.

Among the copyrighted tracks allegedly mined by the AI programs were Mariah Carey’s “All I Want for Christmas Is You,” Jerry Lee Lewis’ “Great Balls of Fire,” the Beach Boys’ “I Get Around,” ABBA’s “Dancing Queen,” James Brown’s “I Got You (I Feel Good),” Michael Bublé’s “Sway,” Green Day’s “American Idiot,” the Temptations’ “My Girl” and Michael Jackson’s “Billie Jean.”

RIAA Chairman and CEO Mitch Glazier said in a written statement that the music industry is collaborating with responsible AI developers but said that “unlicensed services like Suno and Udio that claim it’s ‘fair’ to copy an artist’s life’s work and exploit it for their own profit without consent or pay set back the promise of genuinely innovative AI for us all.”

# Camila Cabello, Megan Thee Stallion among week’s new streaming releases

Associated Press

Here’s a collection curated by The Associated Press’ entertainment journalists of what’s arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

## Music

■ The Grammy-award winning R&B singer Lucky Daye is preparing to release a new album on Friday titled “Algorithm.” (Think of the name as a creative reversal — he aims to make soulful music that extends beyond the predictability of machine learning.) His single “Soft” is a celebration of the vulnerabilities inherent in a new relationship — atop big drum fills and heart-fluttering harmonies. “HERricane” slows it down, funky riffs making for a flirty track somewhere at the intersection of love and lust.

■ On her fourth solo album, “C,XOXO,” Camila Cabello aims to reinvent herself. The lead single “I LUV IT,” featuring rapper Playboi Carti, is what happens when mainstream pop performers pay attention to the hyperpop underground — amplified by its elated, anxiety-inducing repetition of “I love it / I love it / I love it / I love it” in the song’s chorus. Her second single was another detour: The lackadaisical club-y “He Knows,” featuring Lil Nas X, samples Ojnerime’s “Give Up 2 Me,” and moves leisurely like smoke dissipating in the air. So, what other surprises will appear on “C,XOXO”? That will be revealed on Friday.

■ “Megan,” Megan Thee Stallion’s third full-length album and the first to be self-released under her own label, Hot Girl Productions, promises to continue her reign as the sovereign of hot girl summers. Independence looks good on her: From the rap-rock “COBRA,” with its fearless lyricism on everything from infidelity to depression, to the Gwen Stefani-sampling “BOA” — an imaginative take on 2004’s “What You Waiting For?” — it’s clear Megan is enjoying her creative autonomy. But don’t take it from us — a quick listen to “HISS,” an aggressive reclamation of her public image, makes it clear from the spoken-word intro.

■ Available on video-on-demand starting Friday, “Revival69: The Concert That Rocked the World” documents the 1969 Toronto Rock and Roll Revival, a famous festival that featured the debut of The Plastic Ono Band — including video footage of John Lennon’s first major performance outside the Beatles, what many credit as a trigger for Lennon’s decision to leave the band. This doc offers a behind-the-scenes look at the event and footage from its grounds, featuring talking-head interviews with some of the musicians who were there. And with a lineup boasting of Lennon, Yoko Ono, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, the Doors, Alice Cooper and beyond — there’s a lot to celebrate.

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

## Movies

■ Before Lily Gladstone was Oscar-nominated for Martin Scorsese’s “Killers of the Flower Moon,” she starred in the Sundance 2023 entry “Fancy Dance,” director Erica Tremblay’s drama about life on the Seneca-

Cayuga Nation reservation in Oklahoma. The film, which debuts Friday on Apple TV+, is about Jax (Gladstone), who, with her niece Roki (Isabel Deroy-Olson), searches for her missing sister. “Fancy Dance,” rich in both cultural detail and genre plotting, marks Tremblay’s directorial debut.

■ The life and style of fashion icon Diane von Furstenberg is chronicled in directors Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy and Trish Dalton’s documentary “Diane von Furstenberg: Woman in Charge,” which debuted Tuesday on Hulu. The film, which kicked off the recent Tribeca Festival, profiles the Belgian designer whose huge influence on 20th century fashion is most notable for bringing the wrap dress to prominence in 1974.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

## Television

■ In “Land of Women,” Eva Longoria plays Gala, a New Yorker who is living the good life one day, and the next is left with her husband’s massive debt after he disappears. She flees to northern Spain with her mother and teenage daughter. The fish-out-of-water series is based on a popular novel and was created for TV by the prolific Spanish TV producer Ramón Cam-

pos. The dialogue is a combo of English, Spanish and Catalan — a language spoken in north-eastern Spain. “One of the big sources of comedy is miscommunication, and this is ripe for that,” Longoria told TV critics earlier this year. The “Land of Women” debuts Wednesday on Apple TV+.

■ Shows like “CSI” prompted an interest in forensics, not to mention crime-solving. Now, the franchise creator is behind a non-scripted version called “The Real CSI: Miami.” The show looks at how science was used to solve true crime cases. It premieres Wednesday on CBS and will stream on Paramount+.

■ Much like Hulu’s take on Catherine the Great in “The Great,” a new Prime Video series called “My Lady Jane” is an irreverent telling of the story of Lady Jane Grey. At 17, Grey became Queen for nine days before her half-sister Mary stole her support and her crown. She was then sent to the Tower of London where she was executed. “My Lady Jane” debuts Thursday.

■ Hello again, Wisconsin! The second season of “That ’90s Show” debuts on Netflix on Thursday. Season 1 saw Mila Kunis, Ashton Kutcher, Wilmer Valderrama, Laura Prepon and Topher Grace reprise their roles. (Danny Masterson was written out of the show as he prepared for a rape trial that ended with his conviction and a 30-year prison sentence.) For Season 2, Prepon is the only one from the core group who will be back. The sequel series stars Callie Haverda as Leia Forman, the daughter of Grace’s Eric and Prepon’s Donna, who is visiting her grandparents, Red and Kitty, played by Kurtwood Smith and Debra Jo Rupp.

■ Ryan Serhant of Bravo’s “Million Dollar Listing” is now fronting his own show on Netflix called “Owning Manhattan.” Cameras follow some of his Serhant real estate employees as they compete for expensive listings in New York. Where Serhant pounded the pavement in “Million Dollar Listing,” the pressure is now on his staff instead. Serhant appears in more of a mentor role.

■ Marvel star Anthony Mackie swam with sharks in the Gulf of Mexico for National Geographic’s “Shark Beach with Anthony Mackie,” to kick off its Shark-Fest lineup. The actor is a boating enthusiast who has swum with sharks around the world. He’s also passionate about that region of the country because New Orleans is his hometown. “Shark Beach with Anthony Mackie: Gulf Coast” debuts Sunday on National Geographic and July 1 on Disney+ and Hulu.

— Alicia Rancilio

**Camila Cabello will release her fourth album, “C,XOXO,” on Friday.**

CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP



## STARS AND STRIPES

Laura Law, Chief Operating Officer  
Lt. Col. Katie R. Fidler, Europe commander  
John Rodriguez, Europe chief of staff  
Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, Pacific commander

## EDITORIAL

Robert H. Reid, Editor in Chief  
reid.robert@stripes.com

Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation  
moores.sean@stripes.com

Ann Pinson, Digital Managing Editor  
pinson.ann@stripes.com

## BUREAU STAFF

## Europe/Mideast

Erik Slavine, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief  
slavine.erik@stripes.com

+49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

## Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief  
kidd.aaron@stripes.com

+81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

## Washington

Joseph Cacchioli, Washington Bureau Chief  
cacchioli.joseph@stripes.com

(+1)(202)886-0033

Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News  
bowers.brian@stripes.com

## CIRCULATION

## Mideast

David Schultz, District Manager  
schultz.david@stripes.com  
xsscirculation@stripes.com

+49(0)152.5672.5036; DSN (314)583-9111

## Europe

Carlo Aquino, Circulation Manager  
aquino.carlo@stripes.com  
memberservices@stripes.com

+49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583.9136

## Pacific

Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com  
+81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)227.7333

## CONTACT US

## Washington

tel: (+1)202.886.0003

633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

## Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

## Additional contacts

stripes.com/contactus

## OMBUDSMAN

Jacqueline Smith

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

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published week-days (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Stars and Stripes of the products or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

© Stars and Stripes 2024

[stripes.com](http://stripes.com)

## OPINION

## Europe – and Germany – are stable and strong

By ARTHUR I. CYR

Special to Stars and Stripes

The European Parliament elections this month show growing support for far-right political parties, including in Germany, and the mass media have seized on that — predictably. However, the larger and far more important result is confirmation of the overall stability of European politics today.

The middle-of-the-road parties remain strongest overall. The major point of European Union (EU) institutions is to restrain extremist movements, and potentially extremist nations, in a web of economic, political and legal agreements that provide increasingly powerful incentives to compromise and cooperate.

The European Parliament is the legislative, popular representative body of the European Union, comprising 720 seats. Parties on the political right elected an estimated total of 157 members (Associated Press).

Understandably, given history, Germany is a special focus of attention.

In the results, Germany's extreme right AfD (Alternative for Germany) in fact gained significant ground, with 16% of the vote. This placed the party second in Germany's results, behind only the conservative CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic and Christian Social Union).

This is a major achievement. AfD won the majority in all five of the states that formerly comprised East Germany (the German Democratic Republic).

At the same time, the AfD was thrown out

of the Identity Group (ID Group), established in 2019 as a European coalition of parties on the far right of the political spectrum. This followed remarks by Maximilian Krah, leader of AfD candidates for the European Parliament, that not all members of the notorious Nazi SS were criminals. In consequence, Krah was replaced as head of the party delegation to the parliament.

President Ursula van der Leyen of the European Commission, the executive of the EU, described the election results as a victory for moderate politics. The centrist European People's Party (EPP), which won 190 seats, the most for any one group, can serve in her words as "an anchor of stability."

She also called for vigilance against extremism.

Lost in all the alarm about the political right is the fundamentally important role Germany today plays in the overall economic stability of Europe.

European summits and discourse have been defined in part by German insistence on economic discipline. Germany is by far the largest and strongest economy on the European continent. Long-term Chancellor Angela Merkel proved to be adept at deflecting Germans angry about underwriting the debts of other Europeans, while simultaneously pressing shaky EU partners to strengthen their national balance sheets.

Financial services remain a realm where the United States, and the United Kingdom, are strong. Predictions that Frankfurt would supplant London, and perhaps even-

tually New York, have not been realized though Brexit (leaving the EU) is hurting Britain.

Given the interconnectedness and integration of the global financial system, financial failures of Greece or other debt-burdened EU member nations could result in another slump, perhaps even a major world crisis. Events in Europe could duplicate those in the United States of 2007-8, when initially apparently contained negative commercial developments led to more general meltdown, through quick contagion.

These challenges reinforce the role of Germany, where Merkel and now Chancellor Olaf Scholz have proven effective in juggling contentious interests at home, including the strong nationalist currents, while building coalitions among the broad diverse membership of the EU.

The European Union including the predecessor organizations began soon after World War II. Tangible economic integration perceptively was regarded as an instrument for encouraging political stability and peace.

Henry Kissinger has emphasized that the vexing irony for Germany historically was that a Germany powerful enough to feel secure threatens neighbors, while a non-threatening Germany is insecure.

Today, German militarism is part of the past, while democracy and the economy are both strong.

Arthur I. Cyr is author of "After the Cold War" (NYU Press and Palgrave/Macmillan). He can be reached at [acyr@carthage.edu](mailto:acyr@carthage.edu)

## Wes Moore's marijuana pardons are a model for US

By EDITORIAL BOARD

The Washington Post

Maryland's legalization of recreational marijuana just over a year ago has obviously been a boon to users. But it has also benefited the state, bringing in more than \$26 million in tax revenue during the second half of 2023. Meanwhile, citizens with possession convictions on their records, most of whom committed crimes that wouldn't be punished at all anymore, were left behind. Last week, Democratic Gov. Wes Moore did the right thing and pardoned them.

Moore's executive order forgiving low-level marijuana offenses for an estimated 100,000 people is a good example of clemency done properly. The bulk of the cases are misdemeanors, involving possession and possession with intent to use drug paraphernalia. The pardons also help correct a glaring racial disparity: Before Maryland joined 23 states and D.C. in legalizing recreational cannabis with a constitutional amendment that went into effect last year, Black Marylanders were three times more likely to be arrested for crimes involving the drug.

Maryland's policy is part of a national trend. President Joe Biden forgave similar low-level offenses for around 6,500 Americans in a 2022 clemency initiative. There isn't much more he can do. The vast majority of convictions happen at the state level, so it's up to state executives to wipe them away.

But the president's thinking on pardons gives those executives a model. The pardon power is a potent authority, and easily

abused. Donald Trump exploited it to let his associates, such as former national security adviser Michael Flynn, off scot-free for serious violations of the law. Bill Clinton invoked it at the 11th hour to forgive a fugitive from justice whose ex-wife was a big-time Democratic donor. Biden has embraced the pardon power in individual cases, too, but based on principle rather than personal favor — focusing on people who paid their debt to society in prison and then went further by serving their families and communities after their release. (To be sure, Trump made some similar grants of clemency to selected drug offenders.)

Crucially, however, Biden has also employed the pardon power to forgive broader classes of convicts. In commuting the sentences of 75 nonviolent drug offenders as well as pardoning the 6,500 with marijuana-related misdemeanors on their records, he considered the way laws have changed since those punishments were meted out. The 75 nonviolent drug offenders would serve shorter sentences if they were tried today.

Moore appears to be thinking along the same lines in a state that has already done what the federal government is on the road to doing. Sentences for the types of offenses pardoned in Maryland this month were short to begin with, and, because of the 2023 amendment, prosecutions for possession misdemeanors have now stopped altogether.

That means no one is getting out of prison as a result of the pardons, because no one covered is imprisoned. But the move is still significant, both symbolically and substantively. The effects of a drug conviction ex-

tend beyond a person's time behind bars. Maryland has already "banned the box," or stopped employers from conducting criminal-history screenings of applicants before their first in-person interview. But, in later stages of hiring, companies running background checks still can decide against job seekers with any blot on their record — even if it was years ago, and even if the crimes of which they were convicted aren't crimes anymore.

Take Shiloh Jordan, 32, who stood next to Moore as he signed the order. A single cannabis possession charge lost him a job he already had, when, on the second day of his employment, a background check revealed his past. Now, he has a college degree, a successful career and, because of the pardons, a clean slate for whatever lies ahead. Others who received clemency have been turned down for housing, education and more.

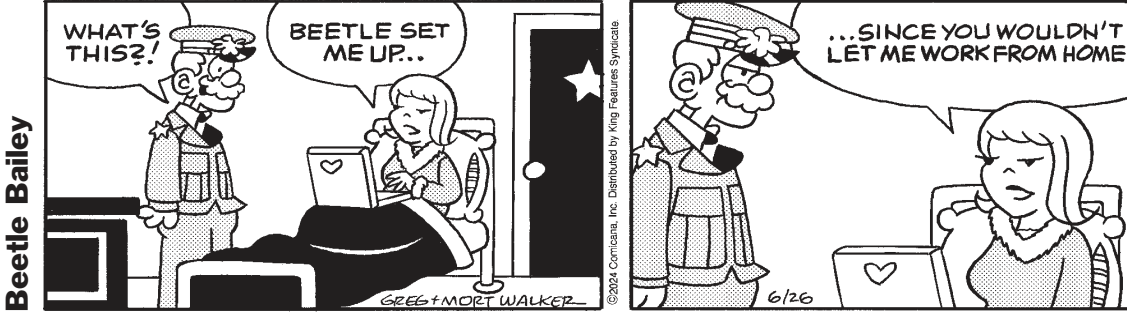
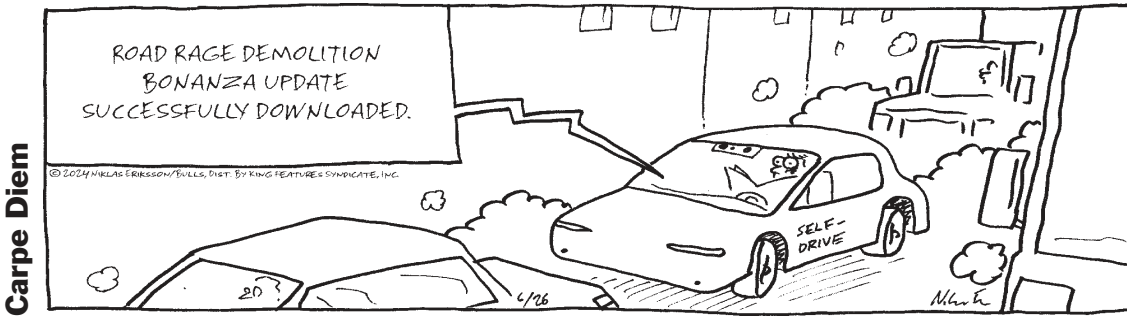
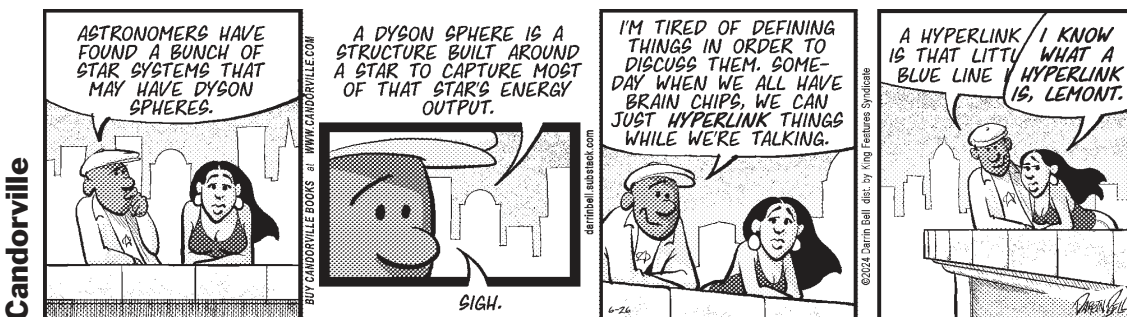
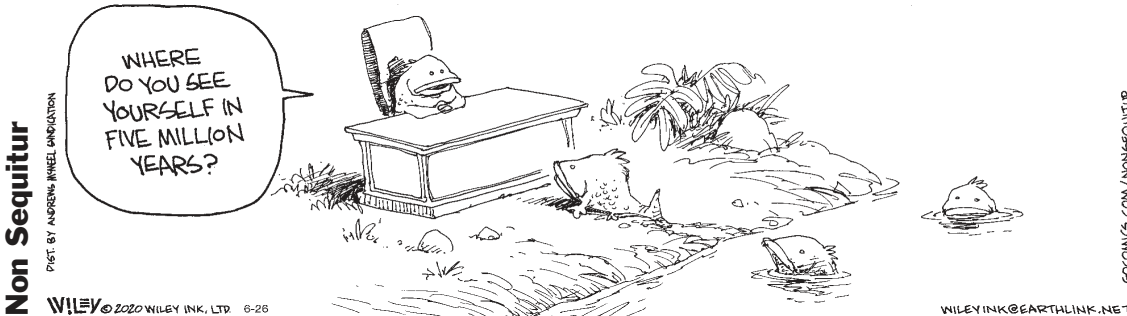
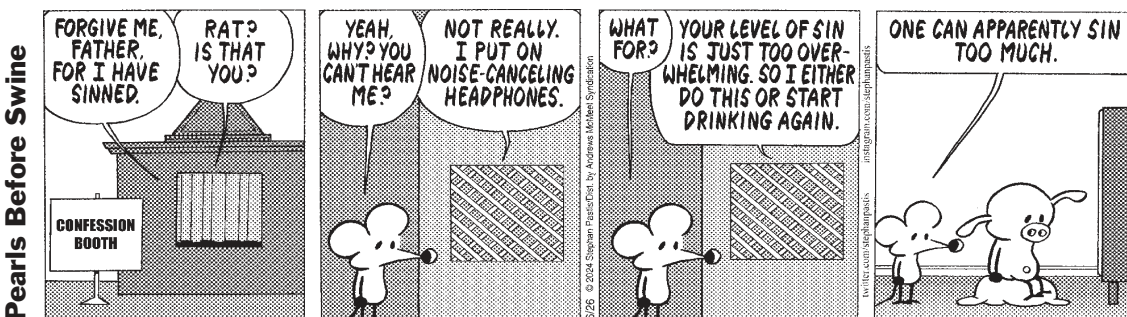
Thanks to the executive action, their charges will be automatically expunged if their only offense was misdemeanor marijuana possession. That covers about 40,000 cases. Other charges will require expungement by the judiciary, on the reasonable theory that legislation should be required for any more sweeping policy.

Marijuana consumption shouldn't be celebrated; recent health studies suggest it should be discouraged. But neither should it be harshly punished by the criminal justice system. It, much like other harmful but legal and regulated substances such as alcohol and tobacco, it simply doesn't do enough damage to merit upending lives over simple possession. Moore has recognized this, and so have executives in nine other states and multiple cities. More should follow suit.

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

Grid for Eugene Sheffer Crossword with numbers 1-59 indicating starting positions for clues.

ACROSS

- 1 Attempt
5 Badly lit
8 Border on
12 Swiss river
13 Perfect serve
14 Stratagem
15 Course summary
17 AOL and MSN
18 Capital of South Korea
19 007 foe
21 Heart of the matter
24 Equal (Pref.)
25 Gym site, for short
28 Pride member
30 "Avatar" craft
33 Tic-tac-toe win
34 Our, in Arles
35 Sunbather's goal
36 Zilch
37 Wall St. debuts
38 Marries
39 Trojans' sch.
41 Tart
43 Laundry container
46 Yeshiva teacher
50 French cleric
51 Restricted road areas
54 Manhandle
55 — pickle
56 Old salts
57 Mayflower pole
58 Try the tea
59 Sex educator Shere

DOWN

- 1 Get lippy
2 Diggs of "Rent"
3 Dino in "The Good Dinosaur"
4 Caviar provider
5 Bit of moisturizer
6 Hosp. section
7 Neatnik's nightmare
8 Astrological ram
9 Greyhound driver's course
10 Priority Mail org. host John
11 TV/radio host John
16 Actor Mahershala
20 Coal source
22 Chow for a sow brand
23 Texas vodka brand
25 Hither's go-with

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Grid for Answer to Previous Puzzle with words like GARP, BID, ATTA, ELOI, ROO, RAHM, etc.

6-26

CRYPTOQUIP

DRZC GQPXN QVF GZXX XFFGRFM
CRZC LZWF CRFJT RZKJCZCM
JV ZVN ZTQPVN MLZXX
MCTFZLM? KTQQWDQTLM.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN PEOPLE ARE COMPLETELY AFRAID OF ELEVATORS, I RECKON THEY WILL TAKE STEPS TO AVOID THEM.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals C

# SCOREBOARD/SPORTS BRIEFS

## COLLEGE BASEBALL

**College World Series**  
**At Omaha, Neb. (Double Elimination) Friday, June 14**  
 North Carolina 3, Virginia 2  
 Tennessee 12, Florida St. 11  
**Saturday, June 15**  
 Kentucky 5, NC State 4, 10 innings  
 Texas A&M 3, Florida 2  
**Sunday, June 16**  
 Florida St. 7, Virginia 3, Virginia eliminated  
 Tennessee 6, North Carolina 1  
**Monday, June 17**  
 Florida 5, NC State 4, NC State eliminated  
 Texas A&M 5, Kentucky 1  
**Tuesday, June 18**  
 Florida St. 9, North Carolina 5, North Carolina eliminated  
**Wednesday, June 19**  
 Florida 15, Kentucky 4, Kentucky eliminated  
 Tennessee 7, Florida St. 2, Florida St. eliminated  
 Texas A&M 6, Florida 0, Florida eliminated

**Championship Series (Best-of-three)**  
**Saturday:** Texas A&M 9, Tennessee 5  
**Sunday:** Tennessee 4, Texas A&M 1  
**Monday:** Tennessee 6, Texas A&M 5

## PRO SOCCER

### MLS EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Inter Miami CF	12	3	5	41	46	29
Cincinnati	12	4	3	39	32	23
New York	9	4	7	34	34	25
Charlotte FC	9	6	5	32	23	20
Columbus	8	3	6	30	29	17
NYFC	9	8	2	29	26	23
Nashville	6	5	8	26	23	23
Toronto FC	7	10	3	24	28	35
Atlanta	5	8	6	21	26	24
Orlando City	5	8	6	21	23	31
Philadelphia	4	7	8	20	31	31
New England	6	10	1	19	17	30
D.C. United	4	9	7	19	26	37
CF Montréal	4	8	7	19	26	41
Chicago	4	9	6	18	23	34

### WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
LAFC	11	4	4	37	38	23
Real Salt Lake	10	3	7	37	40	23
LA Galaxy	10	3	7	37	38	27
Colorado	9	7	4	31	38	32
Minnesota	8	6	5	29	31	29
Portland	7	7	6	27	36	33
Houston	7	6	6	27	26	23
Austin FC	7	7	6	27	23	28
Vancouver	7	7	4	25	26	24
Seattle	6	7	7	25	27	25
FC Dallas	5	9	5	20	27	31
St Louis City	3	6	10	19	24	31
Sporting KC	3	12	5	14	31	44
San Jose	3	14	2	11	29	51

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

**Friday's game**  
 Orlando City at New York City FC

**Saturday's games**  
 Toronto FC at Atlanta  
 Philadelphia at CF Montréal  
 Columbus at New England  
 D.C. United at New York  
 Cincinnati at FC Dallas  
 Charlotte FC at Houston  
 Austin FC at Sporting Kansas City  
 Miami at Nashville  
 St Louis City at Vancouver  
 Colorado at Los Angeles FC  
 Minnesota at Portland  
 LA Galaxy at San Jose  
 Chicago at Seattle

## NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Kansas City	9	0	5	32	37	20
Orlando	9	0	5	32	27	11
Washington	10	3	1	31	29	17
Gotham FC	8	3	3	27	16	11
Portland	7	5	2	23	26	20
North Carolina	6	7	1	19	16	16
Chicago	5	7	2	17	19	22
Louisville	3	4	7	16	20	18
San Diego	3	5	6	15	12	13
Angel City	4	7	3	15	15	21
Bay FC	5	9	0	15	18	25
Houston	3	6	5	14	11	20
Seattle	2	9	3	9	14	26
Utah Royals FC	2	11	1	7	7	27

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

**Friday's games**  
 Houston at Kansas City  
 Chicago at San Diego

**Saturday's games**  
 Bay FC at Louisville  
 North Carolina at Washington  
 Portland at Utah Royals FC

## PRO BASKETBALL

### WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	15	3	.833	—
Connecticut	13	3	.813	1
Atlanta	6	9	.400	7½
Chicago	6	9	.400	7½
Indiana	7	11	.389	8
Washington	4	13	.235	10½

WESTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	13	3	.813	—
Seattle	10	6	.625	3
Las Vegas	8	6	.571	4
Phoenix	8	8	.500	5
Los Angeles	4	13	.235	9½
Dallas	3	13	.188	10

**Sunday's games**  
 New York 96, Atlanta 75  
 Seattle 72, Connecticut 61  
 Washington 92, Dallas 84  
 Chicago 88, Indiana 87

**Monday's games**  
 No games scheduled.

**Tuesday's games**  
 Minnesota at New York

**Wednesday's games**  
 No games scheduled.

**Thursday's games**  
 Minnesota at Dallas  
 Connecticut at Washington  
 Las Vegas at Chicago  
 Indiana at Seattle

**Friday's games**  
 Atlanta at Connecticut  
 Los Angeles at Phoenix

**Saturday's games**  
 Las Vegas at Washington  
 Dallas at Seattle

## TENNIS

### Eastbourne International

**Monday**  
**At Devonshire Park Lawn Tennis Club**  
**Eastbourne, Great Britain**  
**Purse: Euro 740,160**  
**Surface: Grass**  
**Men's Singles Round of 32**  
 Billy Harris, Britain, def. Jacob Fearnley, Britain, 6-4, 7-6 (7).  
 Aleksandar Vukic, Australia, def. Fabian Marozsan, Hungary, 6-2, 6-4.  
 Max Purcell, Australia, def. Laslo Djere, Serbia, 6-1, 4-6, 6-3.  
 Juncheng Shang, China, def. Tomas Martin Etcheverry (7), Argentina, 7-5, 3-6, 7-6 (4).  
 Marcos Giron, United States, def. Francisco Cerundolo (5), Argentina, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (4).  
**Women's Singles Round of 32**  
 Anhelina Kalinina, Ukraine, def. Sorana Cirstea, Romania, 6-3, 6-2.  
 Magda Linette, Poland, def. Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (8), Russia, 1-6, 7-6 (4), 6-4.  
 Harriet Dart, Britain, def. Marie Bouzkova, Czechia, 7-5, 6-7 (7), 6-4.  
 Jelena Ostapenko (5), Latvia, def. Greet Minnen, Belgium, 7-6 (3), 6-1.  
 Yuan Yue, China, def. Anastasia Potapova, Russia, 6-3, 6-6, ret.  
 Leylah Annie Fernandez, Canada, def. Barbora Krejčíková (7), Czechia, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2.

### Mallorca Championships

**Monday**  
**At Santa Ponca**  
**Mallorca, Spain**  
**Purse: Euro 932,135**  
**Surface: Grass**  
**Men's Singles Round of 32**  
 Rinky Hijikata, Australia, def. Luca Nardi, Italy, 6-2, 2-6, 7-5.  
 Fabio Fognini, Italy, def. Gijs Brouwer, Netherlands, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5).  
 Alexander Shevchenko, Russia, def. Constant Lestienne, France, 7-5, 7-6 (5).  
 Luciano Darderi (5), Italy, def. Pedro Martinez, Spain, 7-5, 7-5.  
 Sebastian Ofner, Austria, def. Jaume Munar, Spain, 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (4).  
 Gael Monfils (7), France, def. Dominic Thiem, Austria, 6-3, 7-6 (3).  
**Bad Homburg Open**  
**Monday**  
**At Bad Homburg Tennis Club**  
**Hamburg, Germany**  
**Purse: Euro 802,237**  
**Surface: Grass**  
**Women's Singles Round of 32**  
 Linda Noskova, Czechia, def. Taylor Townsend, United States, 7-5, 6-1.  
 Liudmila Samsonova (2), Russia, def. Sara Sorribes Tormo, Spain, 6-3, 6-1.  
 Jule Niemeier, Germany, def. Maria Sakrari (1), Greece, 2-6, 6-2, 7-6 (4).  
 Katerina Siniakova, Czechia, def. Clara Burel, France, 6-3, 6-7 (7), 6-1.  
 Beatriz Haddad Maia (4), Brazil, def. Tamara Korpatsch, Germany, 6-1, 7-6 (6).  
 Anna Blinkova, Russia, def. Bianca Andreescu, Canada, 6-4, 6-2.  
 Diana Shnaider, Russia, def. Angelique Kerber, Germany, 7-5, 6-3.

## DEALS

### Monday's transactions

**BASEBALL**  
**Major League Baseball**  
**MLB** — Suspended New York Mets RHP Edwin Diaz 10 games and fined him an undisclosed amount for violating the prohibitions on foreign substances.  
**American League**

**BALTIMORE ORIOLES** — Designated SS Nick Maton for assignment. Recalled OF Heston Kjerstad from Norfolk (IL).  
**BOSTON RED SOX** — Placed C Connor Wong on the paternity list. Optioned RHP Brad Keller to Worcester (IL). Recalled RHP Isaiah Campbell from Worcester. Recalled C Tyler Heineman from Worcester. Recalled RHP Josh Winckowski from Worcester. Optioned LHP Cam Booser to Worcester.

**CLEVELAND GUARDIANS** — Activated SS Gabriel Arias. Optioned RHP Darren McCaughan to Columbus (IL). Recalled RHP Xzavion Curry from Columbus. Optioned SS Angel Martinez to Columbus.

**KANSAS CITY ROYALS** — Designated LHP Jake Brentz for assignment. Placed 2B Adam Frazier on the 10-day IL to June 23. Reinstated 2B Michael Massey from the 10-day IL. Selected the contract of 3B CJ Alexander from Omaha (IL). Optioned OF Nelson Velázquez to Omaha.

**LOS ANGELES ANGELS** — Sent LHP José Suarez outright to Salt Lake (PCL).  
**NEW YORK YANKEES** — Sent RHP JT Brubaker on a rehab assignment to FCL Yankees. Optioned SS Oswald Peraza to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL).

**SEATTLE MARINERS** — Reinstated SS Jorge Polanco from the 10-day IL. Optioned 3B Tyler Locklear to Tacoma (PCL).  
**National League**

**CINCINNATI REDS** — Placed CF TJ Friedl on the 10-day IL. Selected the contract of SS Levi Jordan from Louisville (IL).

**MILWAUKEE BREWERS** — Sent RHP Elieser Hernández outright to Nashville (IL). Sent RHP Elieser Hernández outright to Nashville (IL).

**NEW YORK METS** — Designated C Joe Hudson for assignment. Activated C Luis Torrens from the paternity list.

**PITTSBURGH PIRATES** — Reinstated SS Ji Hwan Bae from the 10-day IL. Optioned SS Ji Hwan Bae to Indianapolis (IL).

**SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS** — Designated CF Trenton Brooks for assignment. Selected the contract of LHP Raymond Burgos from Sacramento (PCL).

**ST. LOUIS CARDINALS** — Reinstated RHP Nick Robertson from the 15-day IL. Reinstated C Willson Contreras from the 10-day IL. Optioned RHP Nick Robertson to Memphis (IL). Optioned C Nick Raposo to Memphis.

### FOOTBALL

**National Football League**  
**GREEN BAY PACKERS** — Elected Edward R. Policy as the organization's next Chairman of the Board, President, and CEO, a position he will formally assume in July of 2025. Claimed K James Turner off waivers from Detroit.

**KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** — Released DL Isaiah Buggs.

**NEW YORK JETS** — Released DB Tae Hayes.

**SAN DIEGO PADRES** — Placed SS Fernando Tatis Jr. on the 10-day IL retroactive to June 22. Selected the contract of OF Bryce Johnson from El Paso (PCL).

**SEATTLE SEAHAWKS** — Signed RB Ricky Person to a contract. Waived DB Ro Torrence, DL Rason Williams, and RB TaMerik Williams.

### BASKETBALL

**National Basketball Association**  
**MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES** — Signed Head Coach Chris Finch to a multi-year contract extension.

**Women's National Basketball Association**  
**DALLAS WINGS** — Released F Morgan Bertsch.

### HOCKEY

**National Hockey League**  
**BOSTON BRUINS** — Signed G Brandon Bussi to a one-year, two-way contract.

**LOS ANGELES KINGS** — Signed LW Samuel Fagemo to a one-year, two-way contract.

**NEW JERSEY DEVILS** — Re-signed D Nick DeSimone to a one-year, one-way contract.

### SOCCER

**MLS**  
**AUSTIN FC** — Reached an agreement to acquire Ukrainian D Oleksandr Svatok via transfer from SC Dnipro-1 (Ukrainian Premier League).

**ORLANDO CITY SC** — Loaned D Abdi Salim to Detroit City FC (USL Championship).

**SAN JOSE EARTHQUAKES** — Fired Head Coach Luchi Gonzalez. Named Ian Russell Interim Head Coach.

**National Women's Soccer League**  
**ORLANDO PRIDE** — Agreed with D Brianna Martinez to a two-year contract.

**COLLEGE**  
**DAYTON** — Hired Scott Loiseau to Head Baseball Coach.

## AP SPORTLIGHT

### June 26

**1910** — For the second consecutive year, Hazel Hotchkiss wins the singles, doubles and mixed doubles titles at the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association championships. Hotchkiss beats Louise Hammond 6-4, 6-2 for the singles title.

**1959** — Ingemar Johansson knocks out Floyd Patterson in the third round at Yankee Stadium to win the world heavyweight title.

**2012** — Major college football finally gets a playoff. A committee of university presidents approve the BCS commissioners' plan for a four-team playoff to start in the 2014 season.

## BRIEFLY

# Bruins G Ullmark traded to Ottawa

Associated Press

**BOSTON** — The Boston Bruins traded 2023 Vezina Trophy winning goaltender Linus Ullmark to the Ottawa Senators on Monday in exchange for the Senators' 2024 first-round draft pick, forward Mark Kastelic and goaltender Joonas Korpisalo.

As part of the transaction, the Senators will retain 25% of Korpisalo's remaining salary.

It answers a looming question the Bruins had about who they would have starting between the pipes next season.

The plan was for Ullmark to be the Bruins' No. 1 netminder to open this season. But, instead he alternated with 25-year-old Jeremy Swayman, who was 25-10-8 in 43 starts with a 2.53 goals-against average during the regular season. The plan was to do the same in the playoffs; but after Ullmark lost Game 2 of the first-round series against Toronto, Swayman started the rest of the way, going 6-6 with a 2.15 GAA.

Boston was eliminated by the Florida Panthers in six games in the Eastern Conference semifinals. The 30-year-old Ullmark spent three seasons in Boston, signing prior to the 2021-22 season as former goaltender Tuukka Rask attempted to return from a hip injury. When Rask's comeback attempt ended after just four games that season, Ullmark stepped into the primary role and excelled, posting an NHL-best 1.89 goals-against average to help the Bruins set an NHL single-season wins record.

Swayman had a .933 save percentage and 2.15 goals-against average in the postseason. In his two postseason starts, Ullmark had an .886 save percentage and 3.90 GAA. Ullmark's numbers were down from .915 and 2.57 during his 39 regular-season starts.

Ullmark is set to make \$5 million next year.

**Source: Cavs hiring Atkinson as coach**  
**CLEVELAND** — Just days ahead of the NBA Draft, the Cavaliers picked their coach. Kenny Atkinson, an assistant with Golden State who helped Brooklyn rebuild before a puzzling departure, will be Cleveland's new coach, a person familiar with decision told The Associated Press on Monday.

The Cavs have been looking for a new leader for their young team since firing J.B. Bickerstaff last month despite two straight playoff appearances and continued progress. The sides have agreed on a deal and are working through details of Atkinson's contract, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the team is not discussing its search publicly.

ESPN.com was first to report Atkinson is heading to Cleveland. Atkinson spent the past three seasons as Steven Kerr's top assistant with the Warriors. In 2022, Atkinson accepted Charlotte's coaching job but backed out a week after agreeing to a four-year contract.

In other NBA news:  
 ■ The Minnesota Timberwolves signed head coach Chris Finch on Monday to a contract extension that covers the next four seasons, coming off the franchise's best finish in 20 years.

Finch steered the Timberwolves to a 56-26 regular-season record, their second-best ever, before they reached the Western Conference finals and lost in five games to Dallas. The only other time in 35 years since the franchise joined the NBA that the Wolves advanced past the first round of the playoffs was 2004.

With a .557 winning percentage over 3½ seasons, Finch (160-127) is the all-time Timberwolves leader. The late Flip Saunders (427-392), who led the 2004 team to the Western Conference finals, had a .521 winning percentage over 11 seasons. Saunders and Finch are the only two Wolves coaches with 100-plus wins.

■ Scottie Barnes and the Toronto Raptors have agreed to terms on a max extension, one that will be worth about \$225 million over five years and could reach about \$270 million if he meets supermax criteria, a person with knowledge of the deal said Monday.

Barnes intends to sign the contract shortly after the league's moratorium on signings is lifted July 6, said the person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the deal cannot be announced by NBA rule until that time.

It would begin in the 2025-26 season, with a starting salary of about \$39 million and reaching about \$51 million in 2029-30 — unless he qualifies for a supermax contract next season, and then the numbers would get even higher.

Barnes will make about \$10 million this coming season, the last of his rookie deal.

## COLLEGE WORLD SERIES/MLB



REBECCA S. GRATZ/AP

Tennessee players celebrate their victory over Texas A&M in Game 3 of the College World Series finals in Omaha, Neb., on Monday. It is the first title for the Volunteers but fifth in a row for the SEC.

# Tennessee tops Texas A&M to claim first national title

By ERIC OLSON  
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Tony Vitello jumped into the stands to share a group hug with the legion of Tennessee fans who invaded Omaha. His players ran a lap around the warning track high-fiving them. Kavares Tears squatted in right field taking in the moment with a towel over his eyes.

Tennessee at long last won its first national championship in baseball.

Christian Moore hit a leadoff homer, Dylan Dreiling went deep for the third time in three games and Tennessee survived anxious moments late to take the title with a 6-5 victory over Texas A&M on Monday night in Game 3 of the College World Series finals.

The Volunteers bounced back from a Game 1 loss to win two straight and become the first No. 1 national seed in the NCAA Tournament to win the title since Miami in 1999.

"Kids are tough these days. They will do what you ask them to do," said Vitello, the Vols' seventh-year coach. "I know our fans got us through that tough inning. That was a group effort on the mound. If you're in the SEC, you're going to be a superstar player, but you need to be a good teammate, and that's what these guys were."

Tennessee (60-13) held an Aggies team averaging 8.5 runs per game for the season to six runs over the last 20 innings of the finals, with Zander Sechrist and Nate Snead doing the heavy lifting on Monday before Texas A&M came back to score four runs and get the tying run at the

plate in the ninth.

Aaron Combs struck out Hayden Schott and Ted Burton to end the game and set off a Tennessee celebration behind the pitcher's mound.

Tennessee had made runs at the title before. The Vols reached the CWS in 2021 and went 0-2. The next year they were the No. 1 national seed and lost at home in a three-game super regional. They were back in Omaha last year and won a game. And they slugged their way back again this year, making it to the finals for the first time since the 1951 team lost to Oklahoma in the championship game.

Minutes after the final pitch, the 45-year-old Vitello shared an embrace with his father, Greg, a long-time state champion high school baseball and soccer coach in St. Louis.

"I felt like I was the dad and he was the kid because he wouldn't stop crying," Vitello said. "I had to rub some dirt on him."

The Vols are the eighth Southeastern Conference school to win a national title in baseball. Those eight have combined for 16 titles. The SEC has won five in a row, all by different schools, and 10 of the past 15.

Texas A&M threatened to cut into a 3-1 deficit in the sixth and seventh innings, but Snead got the Vols out of trouble both times.

Dreiling, the CWS Most Outstanding Player, connected for his 23rd homer of the season and Hunter Ensley evaded Jackson Appel's tag at the plate as he scored on Tears' double to make it 6-1 going to the eighth. Since the

CWS best-of-three finals began in 2003, Dreiling is the only player to homer in three games.

"I kind of blacked out again in the moment," Dreiling said. "I know first pitch I overswung on a heater way up. I told myself just see the ball deep and put a good swing on something. He gave me a changeup over the middle. I tried to stay back and put a good swing on it."

The Vols' two homers Monday moved them into a tie with the 1998 LSU team for most in an NCAA Tournament (37) and gave them 184 for the season, four behind the 1997 LSU team's NCAA record of 188.

Texas A&M created some anxiety for the Vols in the eighth, scoring twice and threatening to get more with two runners on base with one out. Kirby Connell got two strikeouts, pumped his left fist twice coming off the mound, gave a primal scream and skipped over the third-base line on his way back to the dugout.

The Aggies scored twice in the ninth, the second run coming home on a wild pitch, to make it a one-run game before Combs finished it off.

"Tough one to swallow," Aggies coach Jim Schlossnagle said. "You make it this far, you want to win your last game."

Temperature at first pitch was a humid 98 degrees.

Moore took Tennessee fans' minds off the heat, at least for a moment, when he drove Justin Lamkin's fourth pitch, an elevated fastball, off the back wall of the left-field bullpen for his team-leading 34th homer of the season.

## Finally, good news on pitchers' health

By NOAH TRISTER  
Associated Press

In a demoralizing season for pitcher health, two Cy Young Award winners finally returned to the mound in the past week.

Gerrit Cole pitched four-plus innings Wednesday for the New York Yankees and Max Scherzer worked five scoreless frames Sunday for the Texas Rangers.

Each right-hander was making his season debut.

Cole and Scherzer are two of the lucky ones — in that they were actually able to come back this season. Shane Bieber, Sandy Alcantara, Félix Bautista and Shohei Ohtani haven't pitched at all in 2024 and aren't expected to. Spencer Strider and Shane Bieber pitched a bit but are now out for the rest of the year. And they're hardly the only ones.

The Dodgers' Clayton Kershaw was progressing toward pitching this season but has been shut down for a week after experiencing lingering soreness in his comeback from left shoulder surgery in November.

Kershaw, 36, had an MRI that "showed no new incidents," manager Dave Roberts said on Monday.

"You go through surgery. You go through rehab. You start throwing. You ramp up velocity, workload," Roberts said, "and there is bound to be some soreness, and that's where we're at."

So it was a boost for the Yankees and Rangers when their two stars returned from their injuries.

Cole and Scherzer joined teams in significantly different spots.

New York leads the AL East

even after losing two of three to both Baltimore and Atlanta. Cole was scheduled to pitch again on Tuesday.

The Yankees have the best ERA in the American League, which shows how well their rotation has pitched even in Cole's absence, but he may be back at just the right time. The day after Cole made his season debut, Luis Gil — who has been mostly brilliant this year — was knocked out in the second inning of a 17-5 loss. Later in the week, New York had to put slugger Giancarlo Stanton on the injured list with a hamstring issue. So Cole's ability to pitch after missing time with elbow problems could be crucial in the weeks to come.

Texas, meanwhile, is three games under .500 and could certainly use any help the 39-year-old Scherzer can provide.

Scherzer indicated he felt a little thumb soreness — something that didn't surprise manager Bruce Bochy — after his season debut. Scherzer had dealt with thumb soreness during his rehabilitation appearances after undergoing surgery in mid-December to repair a herniated disk in his lower back. The 39-year-old had a bullpen session scheduled for Tuesday and is on track to start again Friday at Baltimore.

Of course, with pitchers these days, any optimism should be cautious. Scherzer was sidelined late last season with shoulder problems, and he had back surgery in the offseason. The three-time Cy Young Award winner allowed just one hit in his outing against Kansas City over the weekend.



ALBERT PENA/AP

Rangers pitcher Max Scherzer threw five scoreless innings against the Royals on Sunday in his first game back from the injury list.

MLB

ROUNDUP

# Hoskins' slam sparks Brewers to win

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Rhys Hoskins put Milwaukee ahead for good with a grand slam during a five-run rally in the sixth inning and the Brewers beat Texas 6-3 on Monday to snap the Rangers' four-game winning streak.

"It was a big situation in the game," said Hoskins, who homered for the first time since June 3. "I've learned pretty quickly that the game is always going to throw the next moment right at you. You've just got to stay ready, regardless of how it's gone. I learned from a coach you've got to want that fifth at-bat, even if you're 0 for 4."

Adolis García homered for the Rangers.

Milwaukee pounded the Rangers' bullpen after Texas' Michael Lorenzen held the Brewers scoreless for the first four innings. Milwaukee's Jackson Chourio raced home on Lorenzen's two-out wild pitch in the fifth to end a streak of 26 straight shutout innings by Rangers pitchers.

Milwaukee trailed 3-1 when William Contreras hit a leadoff double in the sixth to knock Lorenzen out of the game. The Rangers brought in Jacob Latz, who hadn't allowed a run in his eight relief appearances this month.

After Latz walked Christian Yelich and Willy Adames to load the bases, Hoskins sent a first-pitch fastball into the left-field seats to give the Brewers their first lead of the game.

Hoskins' third career grand slam was his 11th homer of the season.

"Just trying to get something up, regardless of first pitch or not," Hoskins said. "Just really trying to be ready to hit. There have been times I think in the last month where I've been a little passive. The situation called for something up, and I was just happy to not miss it."

Latz (2-2) gave up three runs, two hits and two walks without getting anyone out.

"He has been so good for us," Rangers manager Bruce Bochy said. "It's going to happen occasionally. Looking back, it's the walks that hurt him."

**Phillies 8, Tigers 1:** Bryce Harper homered, doubled twice, drove in five runs and helped turn a triple play as visiting Philadelphia beat Detroit.

Alec Bohm had four hits, including a homer, and was also involved in the triple play for the big league-best Phillies (52-26).

Detroit's best chance at a rally came in the third, when singles by McKinstry and Carson Kelly put runners on the corners with no one out. But Matt Vierling hit a broken-



MORRY GASH/AP

The Milwaukee Brewers' Rhys Hoskins celebrates after hitting a grand slam during the sixth inning against the Texas Rangers on Monday in Milwaukee. The Brewers came from behind to win 6-3.

bat liner back to Nola, who tossed to Harper at first for a double play. Catcher Garrett Stubbs, noticing McKinstry had never stopped running from third, signaled to Harper to throw to third, where Bohm stepped on the bag to finish the 1-3-5 triple play.

It was the first 1-3-5 triple play in the majors since the Tigers turned one against the Red Sox on July 11, 1929, Major League Baseball said, citing the Society for American Baseball Research.

**Reds 11, Pirates 5:** Ellie De La Cruz hit a long homer and had three RBIs, Spencer Steer drove in three runs and host Cincinnati routed Pittsburgh.

Two-run doubles by Steer and Stuart Fairchild paced a five-run fourth inning for the Reds, who had scored just three total in dropping two of three to the Pirates last week in Pittsburgh.

Reds outfielder Levi Jordan, making his major league debut at age 28, collected his first RBI on a sacrifice fly in the fourth inning. He had his first hit in the sixth, a double off the wall in right field, and eventually scored.

**Guardians 3, Orioles 2:** José Ramírez hit a tiebreaking homer in the sixth inning, and visiting Cleveland won its sixth straight game beating Baltimore, which lost four in a row for the first time this year.

Tanner Bibee (6-2) allowed one earned run in six innings for the Guardians, who were able to protect their slim lead without using highly worked closer Emmanuel Clase. Tim Herrin and Hunter Gaddis worked the seventh and

eighth, and Scott Barlow struck out the side in the ninth for his second save.

**Rays 4, Mariners 3:** Yandy Díaz had a two-run single in a three-run eighth inning and host Tampa Bay rallied to beat Seattle.

Ben Rortved's two-out RBI double in the eighth off Austin Voth (2-2) cut Tampa Bay's deficit to 3-2. Closer Andrés Muñoz loaded the bases with a walk to José Caballero, and Díaz followed with a tough-hop single to right.

**Red Sox 7, Blue Jays 6:** Jarren Duran drove in Ceddanne Rafaela with a ninth-inning single to help host Boston cap a furious rally and beat Toronto.

Rafael Devers and David Hamilton both added a two-run home runs for the Red Sox, who have won 10 of their last 12 and are a season-high seven games over .500 at 43-36.

**Cardinals 4, Braves 3:** Brendan Donovan had three hits with an RBI and Lance Lynn pitched into the seventh inning, lifting host St. Louis over Atlanta for its fourth straight win and ninth in 12 games.

St. Louis is 25-13 after a 15-24 start, moving three games over .500 for the first time since the end of the 2022 season.

**Dodgers 3, White Sox 0:** James Paxton combined with four relievers on a five-hitter, and visiting Los Angeles beat Chicago.

Los Angeles was shut down by Garrett Crochet, but got to Chicago's shaky bullpen for three runs. The NL West leaders won for the sixth time in eight games.

**Royals 4, Marlins 1:** Cole Ra-

gans (5-5) struck out 11 and gave up one run in six innings for his first win in a month, and host Kansas City beat Miami for just its fourth win in 15 games.

Vinnie Pasquantino, Salvador Perez and Hunter Renfroe hit solo homers off Roddery Muñoz (1-3), who has allowed six home runs in his last 10 innings.

**Angels 5, Athletics 1:** Taylor Ward hit a two-run homer, Griffin Canning pitched seven strong innings and host Los Angeles beat Oakland.

Ward gave the Angels a 2-0 lead with his drive to right field in the first inning and he had a ninth-inning leaping catch at the wall for the second consecutive game. He did the same at Dodger Stadium on Saturday.

**Padres 7, Nationals 6 (10):** Jurickson Profar's two-run, bases-loaded single with two outs in the 10th inning lifted host San Diego to a wild victory over Washington.

The Nationals had taken a 6-3 lead in the top of the 10th when Keibert Ruiz doubled in a run and Nick Senzel followed with a two-run homer to left.

**Giants 5, Cubs 4:** Wilmer Flores drew a bases loaded walk in the ninth, capping a wild comeback as host San Francisco snapped a five-game skid with a victory over Chicago.

Flores was the eighth Giants player to bat in the ninth. His walk scored Patrick Bailey, who singled with one on and one out in a 4-3 game to score Chapman, and Austin Slater's sacrifice fly two batters later tied the game.

## Scoreboard

### American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	52	28	.650	—
Baltimore	49	29	.628	2
Boston	43	36	.544	8½
Tampa Bay	39	40	.494	12½
Toronto	35	43	.449	16

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	50	26	.658	—
Minnesota	43	35	.551	8
Kansas City	43	37	.538	9
Detroit	36	42	.462	15
Chicago	21	59	.263	31

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	45	36	.556	—
Houston	38	40	.487	5½
Texas	37	41	.474	6½
Los Angeles	31	46	.403	12
Oakland	29	52	.358	16

### National League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	52	26	.667	—
Atlanta	43	33	.566	8
Washington	38	40	.487	14
New York	37	39	.487	14
Miami	27	51	.346	25

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	46	33	.582	—
St. Louis	40	37	.519	5
Cincinnati	37	41	.474	8½
Pittsburgh	37	41	.474	8½
Chicago	37	42	.468	9

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	49	31	.613	—
San Diego	42	41	.506	8½
Arizona	38	40	.487	10
San Francisco	37	42	.468	11½
Colorado	27	51	.346	21

### Monday's games

- Milwaukee 6, Texas 3
- Philadelphia 8, Detroit 1
- Cincinnati 11, Pittsburgh 5
- Cleveland 3, Baltimore 2
- Tampa Bay 4, Seattle 3
- Boston 7, Toronto 6
- St. Louis 4, Atlanta 3
- L.A. Dodgers 3, Chicago White Sox 0
- Kansas City 4, Miami 1
- L.A. Angels 5, Oakland 1
- San Diego 7, Washington 6, 10 innings
- San Francisco 5, Chicago Cubs 4

### Tuesday's games

- Cleveland at Baltimore
- Philadelphia at Detroit
- Seattle at Tampa Bay
- Pittsburgh at Cincinnati
- N.Y. Yankees at N.Y. Mets
- Toronto at Boston
- Atlanta at St. Louis
- Colorado at Houston
- L.A. Dodgers at Chicago White Sox
- Miami at Kansas City
- Texas at Milwaukee
- Oakland at L.A. Angels
- Minnesota at Arizona
- Washington at San Diego
- Chicago Cubs at San Francisco

### Wednesday's games

- Seattle (Kirby 6-5) at Tampa Bay (Pepiot 4-4)
- Philadelphia (Turnbull 3-0) at Detroit (Flaherty 5-4)
- Pittsburgh (TBD) at Cincinnati (Abbott 6-6)
- Colorado (Feltner 1-6) at Houston (Arrighetti 3-6)
- Miami (Rogers 1-8) at Kansas City (Singer 4-4)
- Texas (Eovaldi 4-3) at Milwaukee (Rea 6-2)
- Oakland (Estes 2-2) at L.A. Angels (TBD)
- Washington (Herz 1-1) at San Diego (Cease 6-6)
- Cleveland (Carrasco 3-6) at Baltimore (Rodriguez 8-3)
- N.Y. Yankees (Gil 9-2) at N.Y. Mets (Manea 4-3)
- Toronto (Rodriguez 0-2) at Boston (Crawford 3-7)
- Atlanta (Sale 10-2) at St. Louis (Pallante 3-3)
- L.A. Dodgers (Stone 8-2) at Chicago White Sox (Fedde 5-2)
- Minnesota (Woods Richardson 2-1) at Arizona (Nelson 5-5)
- Chicago Cubs (Imanaga 7-2) at San Francisco (TBD)

## OLYMPICS

# Mu falls, won't get to defend 800 title

BY EDDIE PELLIS

Associated Press

EUGENE, Ore. — Athing Mu got tangled up in the middle of the track and started falling. One hand hit the ground, then the other. As she rolled onto her back, her bright pink shoes started pointing toward the sky.

With that, one of America's most promising runners saw her hopes of back-to-back Olympic titles in the 800 meters go down the drain, while sports fans got a refresher on just how unforgiving these U.S. track trials really are.

The 22-year-old from New Jersey became the first big-name casualty of the trials Monday, victimized by a bunched-up pack in the backstretch of the first lap, to say nothing of the long-standing rule in the U.S. that only the top three finishers at trials make the Olympics, regardless of their résumé.

"I've coached it, I've preached it, I've watched it," Mu's coach, Bobby Kersee, told The Associated Press. "And here's another indication that regardless of how good we are, we can leave some better athletes home than other countries have. It's part of our American way."

Mu filed an appeal and USA Track and Field officials sorted through the replays deep into the night, but eventually denied the protest. Kersee said Mu got spiked, had track burns and hurt her ankle.

"She's going to be licking her wounds for a couple of days," Kersee said.

Mu got back to her feet and finished, but was more than 22 seconds behind the winner, Nia Akins, who ran 1 minute, 57.36 seconds. Mu was choking back tears as she headed quickly off the track and through the tunnel after



GEORGE WALKER IV/AP

**Athing Mu finishes last after falling early in the women's 800-meter final during the U.S. Track and Field Trials on Monday in Eugene, Ore. Mu won the event at the Tokyo Olympics.**

the race. She did not do interviews.

She was racing on the outside in a tightly bunched pack and looked to be veering to her left toward the eventual third-place finisher, Juliette Whitaker, when she tripped and went tumbling, leaving three runners behind her flailing as they jumped over and around her.

Mu is hardly the first athlete to have this happen. One of the more memorable and heartbreaking moments on this track came eight years ago in the same event, when Alysia Montano, looking to return to the Olympics, got tripped up in the homestretch and stayed down on the track crying.

"I have a little mama bear feel-

ing," said Montano, who is at the track this week doing in-house interviews over the PA system. "But the race is brutal sometimes. It's two laps, a tight race and everyone's feeling scrappy to try to figure out what position they want to get into."

The Olympic trials marked Mu's first meet of the year after dealing with injuries all season. She looked to be in good form in her first two rounds, and Kersee said her season was coming together.

But in the 800 final, she barely made it half a lap.

Despite the fall, Mu could still go to Paris as part of the U.S. relay pool; she was a key part of Amer-

ica's gold-medal win in the 4x400 three years ago in Tokyo.

After winning NCAA, national, world and Olympic championships all before turning 21, Mu won a bronze medal at worlds last year and, afterward, conceded she needed a break from all the pressure, social media and other demands that came along with being tagged as one of track's great new stars.

In interviews leading into this week's meet in Eugene, she said she had rediscovered her love for the sport and was looking forward to the quest to become a back-to-back champion.

She has dominated this distance thanks, in part, to a long, loping

stride, and that might be what cost her in a race where she came in as the favorite.

"I heard it and I was just like 'OK, keep running, it wasn't you,'" second-place finisher Allie Wilson said of the commotion that resulted in Mu's tumble. "That, unfortunately, is part of racing. Things like that can happen."

## Hall's comeback

Mu's 800 was a stark contrast to that run by heptathlete Anna Hall less than a half-hour earlier.

Hall won her 800 — the seventh and final event in the two-day heptathlon — to win the title and make the Olympics. It came three years after a stumble over the hurdles cost her a spot in the Tokyo Games, and a mere six months after knee surgery made her question if she could get back in time for Paris.

She, too, was crying after her race as she headed to the stands to hug the greatest American in that event, two-time Olympic champion Jackie Joyner-Kersee.

"I'm almost in shock," Hall said. "This year has been so hard. And falling in 2021. The journey to get here has been so much harder than I imagined."

## Other drama

There was drama elsewhere on a busy night that included six finals.

The women's 5,000-meter race came down to a .02-second difference with Elle St. Pierre finishing in 14:40.34 to barely beat Elise Cranny. Both are going to the Olympics.

Also, Vashti Cunningham, who had a combined 13 straight U.S. indoor and outdoor high jump titles coming into the week, needed to win a jump-off for third to make her third Olympic team.

# Hamby replaces Brink for 3x3

BY DOUG FEINBERG

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Before the season started, Dearica Hamby wrote her goals down on a basketball.

On the list was making the U.S. 3x3 Olympic team.

She didn't initially achieve that because she wasn't one of the four members of the squad chosen earlier this month. Now she can check that off after replacing Los Angeles Sparks teammate Cameron Brink, who tore the ACL in her left knee last week.

"My heart breaks for her. When she got the news she made it and I got the news I didn't originally, we cried together," Hamby told The Associated Press in an interview. "It's kind of an ironic situation. I'm sure if she wanted to have anybody replace her,

she'd want it to be me."

She joins Hailey Van Lith, Ciera Burdick and Rhyne Howard on the squad that will compete at the Paris Games next month. The U.S. won the inaugural 3x3 Olympic gold medal in Tokyo in 2021.

It's the second consecutive Olympics that the U.S. team had to replace one of its original players. Katie Lou Samuelson missed the Tokyo Games after she caught COVID-19 right before the Olympics. She was replaced by Jackie Young, who helped the team go on to win a gold medal.

Hamby said she was initially upset when she first didn't make the roster, feeling she deserved to be on the team.

"I think that should have been something originally done. Cam and I both should have been on

that team," she said. "I thought it was a no-brainer, but the committee is the committee."

Hamby was MVP of the 2023 3x3 AmeriCup and was part of the national team camp in Springfield, Mass., in April.

"It is an honor to announce Dearica Hamby's addition to the USA 3x3 Women's National Team and we look forward to getting to work as a squad very soon," said Jay Demings, USA Basketball 3x3 national team director and member of the USA Basketball 3x3 women's selection committee.

"I'm grateful to be a part of it and they considered me. I wasn't in the pool growing up, I was 96 out of 100 as a high school player," she said. "So to be part of the 5-on-5 and 3-on-3 pool this year was special to me."



ABBIE PARR/AP

**Los Angeles Sparks forward Dearica Hamby is replacing teammate Cameron Brink, who suffered a torn ACL last week, on the U.S. Olympic 3x3 basketball team. This will be her first Olympics.**

## STANLEY CUP FINAL

## Barkov first Finnish captain to win title

BY STEPHEN WHYNO  
Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — A Finnish flag waved prominently in the stands as the Florida Panthers celebrated with the Stanley Cup. Aleksander Barkov held his 2-year-old child in his arms minutes after getting the trophy from Commissioner Gary Bettman.

The first championship in franchise history was made possible by a handful of Finns, none more effective than Barkov, who became the first captain from his country to be presented and then hoist the Cup.

“I was young when I came here, so I never thought I could celebrate someday with my kid,” Barkov said. “Unreal feeling.”

Asked during the series about being the first Finnish Stanley Cup-winning captain, the 28-year-old responded: “I don’t know what it would mean for the country. It would mean a lot for me.”

Barkov led the way with a dominant two-way postseason, tying for the team lead with 22 points in 24 games and defensively shutting down star opponents throughout the run, from Boston’s David Pastrnak to New York’s Artemi Panarin and eventually Edmonton’s Connor McDavid, who had no points in Games 6 and 7 of the Final.

“It starts with Barkov and filters down,” coach Paul Maurice said.

Barkov led a team full of Canadians, Swedes, Russians, Americans — and was one of four Finns in the lineup for the Cup clincher, along with forwards Anton Lun-



NATHAN DENETTE, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Edmonton Oilers forward Connor McDavid is consoled by Florida Panthers forward Aleksander Barkov after the Panthers won Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final on Monday in Sunrise, Fla.

dell and Eetu Luostarinen and defenseman Niko Mikkola. One of Maurice’s assistants, former player Tuomo Ruutu, is also Finnish.

Maurice said Ruutu is “harder on those guys than the rest.” Barkov is the guy Lundell, 22, and Luostarinen, 25, idolize.

“Everybody who grows up playing hockey in Finland, they look up to guys here, and Sasha’s one guy we all want to be one day,” Lundell said. “You grow up watching his highlights. You go to practice, you want to do (drills) the same way he does them. We all have idols, but I have to say, I think

he’s the biggest idol in Finland.”

Barkov’s mother, Olga Barkova, still could not believe it in the aftermath of the Game 7 win.

“It’s been really exciting for the whole family,” she said. “We support each other. So happy this was the last game and they won. Maybe I understand this tomor-

row when I see all the pictures.”

Barkov’s picture-perfect post-season came on the heels of earning Selke Trophy honors as the best defensive forward in the NHL.

Veteran Kyle Okposo, who joined Florida at the trade deadline, admired him as an opponent for just how suffocating he is defensively and compared Barkov to six-time Selke winner Patrice Bergeron.

“Just the way that he thinks about the game, you don’t see many players that have that (who) are so talented offensively,” Okposo said. “When (Bergeron) hung up his skates in Boston, he was the other guy that never cheated the game. That’s not something that a lot of special offensive players have in their game.”

One play in Game 3 crystallized how much of an impact Barkov can have. He forced Oilers defenseman Evan Bouchard to lose the puck, outworked him to get it and set up Florida’s goal that silenced the raucous crowd in Edmonton.

“Doesn’t try to make a skilled play, just takes it up the wall, fends him off, turns up, finds a late guy and ends up in the back of the net,” forward Evan Rodrigues said. “Simple playoff hockey and he’s (done) a great job for us all playoffs long.”

Barkov is just the fifth European captain to hoist the Cup after Nicklas Lidstrom with Detroit in 2008, Zdeno Chara with Boston in 2011, Alex Ovechkin with Washington in 2018 and Gabriel Landeskog with Colorado in 2022.

## McDavid named playoff MVP despite Oilers’ loss

BY STEPHEN WHYNO  
Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Connor McDavid won the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP on Monday night despite Edmonton’s Stanley Cup Final loss to Florida, a nod to one of the greatest postseason performances in NHL history.

McDavid, who was held without a point the final two games of the Final, still led all playoff scorers with 42 points, five shy of the record of 47 set by Wayne Gretzky in 1985. He did not return from the locker room to accept the trophy from Commissioner Gary Bettman, leaving it sitting on its stand while the Panthers celebrated nearby.

“It’s an honor with the names on that trophy, but yeah,” McDavid said.

McDavid was first on 16 of 17 ballots. Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov was second.

“I don’t think he cares,” longtime running mate Leon Draisaitl said. “I mean, it speaks to how



MARTA LAVANDIER/AP

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman announces that Oilers center Connor McDavid is the winner of the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP.

amazing of a hockey player he is. There’s no player in the world that wants to win a Stanley Cup more than him. He does everything right, every single day, just to win it one day. It’s really hard with him

being sad and being disappointed at the end.”

After not scoring (but still leading the team with three assists) through the first three games against Florida, McDavid

changed the course of the series by doing something no other player in history has done, including Gretzky. He had four points in consecutive games in the Final to keep the Oilers from being eliminated.

“You think about the year that Connor had: 100 assists, leading our team, the performance he had in this playoffs, especially in this final round when we’re down three games to zero and then he comes out with eight points in two games,” coach Kris Knoblauch said. “Yeah, he’s our leader. He’s our best player.”

McDavid is just the second skater after the Flyers’ Reggie Leach in 1976 to win the Conn Smythe on a team that lost in the Final. Goal-tenders Jean-Sebastien Giguere of Anaheim in 2003, Ron Hextall of Philadelphia in 1987, Glenn Hall of St. Louis in 1968 and Roger Crozier with Detroit in 1966 were also playoff MVPs after backstopping teams that fell just short of hoisting the Cup.

Asked how he was feeling nearly a half-hour after the loss, McDavid could only muster the words, “It sucks.”

McDavid, the reigning and three time Hart Trophy winner long considered the best hockey player in the world, put on a show in his first trip to the Final. His goal and three assists in an 8-1 rout in Game 4 avoided a sweep, and his four points including an empty netter in Game 5 three nights later dragged the series back to Alberta.

Those who know McDavid believe it’s the year-round work he has put in throughout his career allowed him to thrive when the spotlight was at its brightest.

“He’s unique in his dedication to his craft,” said Hall of Famer Ken Hitchcock, who coached McDavid in 2018-19. “He’s very unique. He’s learned to be relentless, and he enjoys it and he’s very, very serious about his craft, and that becomes contagious when you’re on the team with him.”

## STANLEY CUP FINAL



WILFREDO LEE/AP

Florida Panthers head coach Paul Maurice hugs right wing Vladimir Tarasenko after Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final against the Edmonton Oilers on Monday in Sunrise, Fla.

# After long wait, Maurice finally has a Stanley Cup

By TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Paul Maurice was once the last player picked in the NHL Draft. An afterthought, almost. He never made it to the league as a player. And there were many times when he wondered if his name would ever be on the Stanley Cup.

Wonder no more.

It took 1,985 games, 939 wins, four different franchises, a team relocation, three times getting fired — twice by Carolina alone — and a semi-retirement to get him to this moment, one he'd dreamed about for most of his 57 years walking the planet and had never experienced until now.

It's over. Florida 2, Edmonton 1 in Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final on Monday night was the last act of the lifetime quest. His name will be on Lord Stanley's chalice. A lifetime of work now has checked the final box, now that the words "Paul Maurice" will soon be etched into a silver and nickel band for all the hockey world to see for decades to come.

"He's the type of guy everybody respects and it's because it's earned," Panthers forward Ryan Lomberg said. "He doesn't expect people's respect just because he's the head coach. He does it the right way. He truly cares about each individual in this locker room and it goes a long way. So, yeah, we all respect him as much as possible."

This was a void on Maurice's résumé, no question about it. No-

## DID YOU KNOW?

It took 1,985 games, 939 wins with four different franchises, a team relocation and being fired three times before Panthers coach Paul Maurice won his first Stanley Cup. Until Monday night, nobody had coached more games, won more games and coached more seasons without winning one.

SOURCE: Associated Press

body has — well, now, change that to "had" — coached more games, won more games and coached more seasons without a Stanley Cup than Maurice. He was going to go down in history as a good coach, a veteran coach, a well-liked coach no matter whether he won a Cup, even though the start to his Florida tenure was rocky.

"One of my favorite memories ever of coaching in Florida was in about December last year," Maurice said. "So, our (team) marketing program is 'Time to hunt.' And the guy had a poster over there on the wall and it was beautiful. It said, 'time to hunt for a new coach.' It was awesome. He kept putting it up at every whistle."

Retire the poster. Maurice is forever a Panthers legend now.

And let's face it, had the Panthers not won Monday night and blown a 3-0 lead in the title series, it would have followed Maurice around forever. But now, whenever his career ends, they'll have to call him a champion coach. The glaring hole has been filled.

"Literally, whatever he says, he means it," Panthers captain Alek-

sander Barkov said. "Going back to that first year when we had those tough moments in the regular season, he would give us the game plan and he would just say, 'All right, it's time to wake up.' It would literally work almost every time. So that's probably when we realized, 'OK, you've got to listen to him.'"

Maurice didn't go to the 1985 NHL Draft in Toronto. He wasn't even paying much attention to it. Imagine his surprise when his mother called that night and said he'd been picked by the Philadelphia Flyers. Maurice started doing the math. The Flyers had the last pick in the draft, No. 252 of 252.

After four years of playing in the Ontario Hockey League, Maurice decided to give coaching a shot. Five years as an assistant first, then two years as a head coach of what were then called the Detroit Junior Red Wings. He made it look easy. Made the finals his first year, won the title the next year and headed to the NHL's Hartford Whalers as an assistant before getting promoted to head coach almost right away.

Coaching, suddenly, was no longer easy. In his first 19 NHL seasons, he either missed the playoffs or got fired in 14 of them. And when he stepped down in Winnipeg, nobody, not even Maurice, knew what was next. The rest is history. He started watching Panthers games and got smitten. A few months later, his phone rang.

# 1st: It took everything Florida had left in tank

FROM PAGE 24

the only teams to lose the Final after taking a 3-0 lead in the title round.

"It's not what I thought it would be," Panthers coach Paul Maurice said. "It's so much better."

It wasn't easy. Not even close. But it's done.

Barkov handed the Cup to Bobrovsky and the celebration was on. It took until the very end for the Panthers to deny Connor McDavid his first title, and Edmonton what would have been its first Cup since 1990.

"You want to become a true champion and you want to win," said Bobrovsky, a champion for the first time at 35. "But at the end of the day, you don't do it for the Cups. You do it for the love of the game."

McDavid won the Conn Smythe as MVP of the Stanley Cup playoffs. He didn't come out for the trophy. It's not the one he wanted, anyway. The Cup is what they play for, and it was Florida that hoisted it.

"No player in the world wants to win the Stanley Cup more than him," Oilers teammate Leon Draisaitl said of McDavid, who had one of the greatest individual postseasons in NHL history with 42 points. "He does everything right, every single day."

But the Panthers did a little more right on Monday. And that's the difference.

"It's not a dream anymore. It's not a dream. It's reality," said Tkachuk, who got traded to Florida two summers ago with this as his

goal. "I can't believe it. I can't believe it. ... I can't believe how good these two years have been. So thankful for this group of guys. It's the best place, best guys. It's something really special here with what we have."

Mattias Janmark had the goal for Edmonton and Stuart Skinner stopped 19 shots. The Oilers also couldn't snap Canada's title drought; it's been 1993 and counting since a team based in Canada won the Cup.

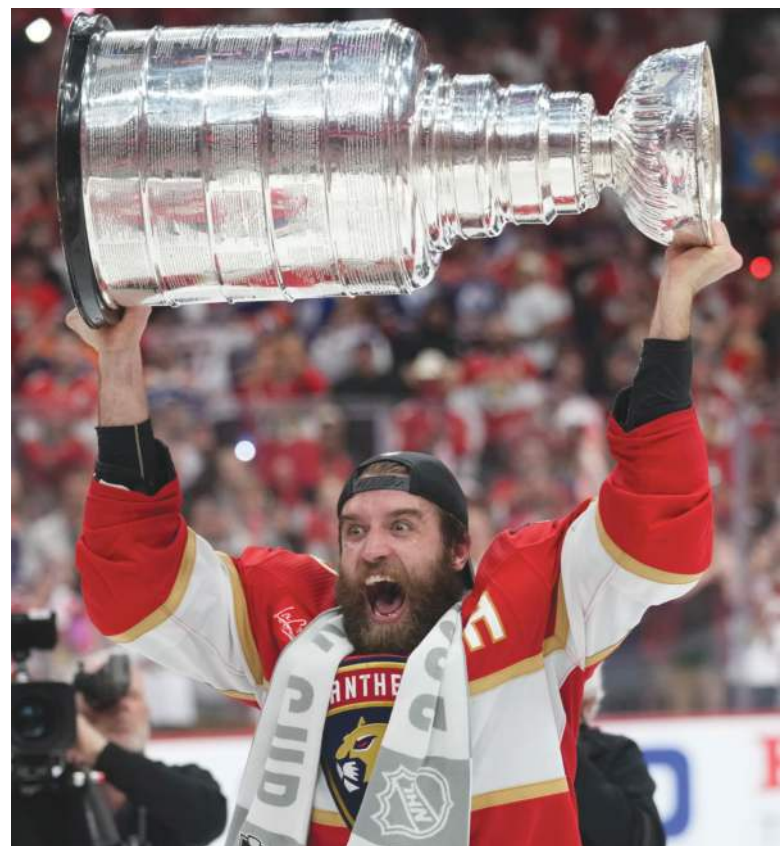
Montreal was the last to do so, 30 seasons ago. Since then, there have been seven attempts by teams from Canadian-based cities — Vancouver in 1994 and 2011, Calgary in 2004, the Oilers in 2006, Ottawa in 2007 and the Canadiens in 2021 — to win titles.

Florida led this title series 3-0, then got outscored 18-5 in Games 4, 5 and 6 to waste three chances at winning the Cup. Edmonton was one win away from becoming the second team in NHL history to win the Cup after dropping the first three games; Toronto did it to Detroit in 1942, and no team has pulled off such a comeback since.

Florida was an NHL-best 44-0-3 entering Monday when leading after two periods this season. An NHL-best 85-2-6 in that situation in the two seasons under coach Maurice, too.

They slammed the door, one last time. And the Cup was their reward.

"This is the best moment of my life so far," veteran Panthers defenseman Aaron Ekblad said. "Nothing tops it."



WILFREDO LEE/AP

Veteran Florida defenseman Aaron Ekblad raises the Stanley Cup after Monday's 2-1 victory over Edmonton in Game 7.

# SPORTS



## Vols claim national title

No. 1 seed Tennessee wins deciding Game 3 » College World Series, Page 19

# Florida wins 1st Stanley Cup



## Panthers halt nosedive, deny Oilers history

By TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Aleksander Barkov put his hands at either end of the Stanley Cup and began skating away to start the celebration that the Florida Panthers have wanted forever.

And as he began to hoist hockey's chalice for the first time, he had one thought.

"It's heavy," he said.

A 37-pound trophy wasn't too much for him. A three-game slide wasn't too much for the Panthers. There was no stumble with the Cup, no collapse with the Cup on the line. The Panthers are champions for the first time, after taking about the hardest path possible to the title.

Sam Reinhart and Carter Verhaeghe scored goals, Sergei Bobrovsky made 23 saves and the Panthers beat the Edmonton Oilers 2-1 on Monday night in Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final. It was the third title-round appearance in Florida's 30-year history; it was swept in 1996 by Colorado and routed 4-1 by Vegas last season. And that loss last year was what this team needed.

"You have to go through it first," forward Matthew Tkachuk said, "to know what it takes to get it done."

This time, they were on the right side of history — after avoiding what would have been a historic collapse. The Panthers won the first three games of the series, then lost the next three and needed a win on Monday to avoid joining the 1942 Detroit Red Wings as

SEE 1ST ON PAGE 23

### INSIDE

Maurice earns Cup after 1,985 games  
Page 23

Oilers' McDavid wins Conn Smythe  
Page 22

NATHAN DENETTE, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman presents the Stanley Cup to Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov after Florida's 2-1 victory over Edmonton in Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final on Monday in Sunrise, Fla. The Cup is Florida's first in three appearances in the Final.

## Mu falls, misses shot to defend 800 crown » Olympics, Page 21

