BAGHDAD — The U.S.-led coalition in Iraq withdrew on Sunday from a military base in the country’s north that nearly launched Washington into an open war with neighboring Iran.

The K1 Air Base is the third site coalition forces have left this month, in line with U.S. plans to consolidate its troops in two locations in Iraq.

Coalition officials said they would still assist Iraqi forces with air support and surveillance, but significantly cut back on training and ground operations, as the limited withdrawal continues.

A rocket attack on the base in late December killed one American contractor and led to a series of tit-for-tat attacks between the U.S. and Iran-backed Iraqi militia groups. The attacks culminated in the U.S.-directed killing of top Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani and a senior Iraqi militia leader, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

Coalition forces handed over the K1 base in the northern Iraqi province of Kirkuk to Iraq’s military, according to a coalition statement. At least $1.1 million of equipment was transferred to the Iraqis as 300 coalition personnel departed.

K1 has hosted coalition forces since 2017 to launch operations against the Islamic State group in nearby mountainous areas. Areas south of Kirkuk, north of neighboring provinces of Diyala, Salahaddin and Nineveh remain hotbeds of ISIS activity.

The stretch of territory is also disputed between the federal Iraqi government and the Kurdish regional government.

President Donald Trump salutes as the U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort departs from Norfolk, Va., to assist hospitals in New York responding to the coronavirus outbreak Saturday. Defense Secretary Mark Esper stands to his right.

New cases — and new restrictions — could jeopardize US military readiness in S. Korea

By Kim Garel
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — New coronavirus cases on the main U.S. base in South Korea have prompted strict new health measures that could jeopardize military readiness on the peninsula, the commander of U.S. Forces Korea said.

Gen. Robert Abrams said he was willing to take that risk despite the threat from North Korea after three more people tested positive on Camp Humphreys, raising the total number of infections affiliated with USFK to 12.

“This morning we went to bare bones minimum, watch teams only in the headquarters, everybody basically shelter in place, only go out for the essentials,” he told Stars and Stripes Friday in an exclusive interview.

The new restrictions were a blow to the military community that already has been largely confined to home or base for more than five weeks as South Korea saw new cases — and new restrictions — could jeopardize US military readiness in S. Korea

US-led forces pull out of 3rd Iraqi base this month
Flash of optimism amid uncertainty on Wall Street

Associated Press

Stocks rallied this week as Washington acted to provide $2.2 trillion of relief to an economy shocked by the coronavirus outbreak, leaving some on Wall Street cautiously optimistic that the panic selling that had gripped the market earlier may have come to an end.

Even after a loss Friday, the S&P 500 had its best weekly percentage gain since March 2009. The Dow Jones Industrial Average posted its biggest weekly rally since 1938. The gains came after two brutal weeks that jarred memories of the market’s sell-off in 2008 as the government and the Federal Reserve scrambled to contain the financial crisis.

“The takeaway from this week is the initial down phase has probably run its course,” said Willie Delwiche, investment strategist at Baird. “Investors can get out of the duck-and-cover mode and start to figure out what they need to do. But it doesn’t mean that we’ve gotten an all-clear signal.”

Strategists like Delwiche know the outlook is still uncertain, at least until more progress can be made fighting the pandemic and the number of new cases level off and start dropping.

On Friday, the S&P 500 fell 3.4%, eraseing some of the rally from the previous three days. The index still finished with a gain of 10.3% for the week. The Dow closed with a weekly gain of 12.8%, led by a rebound in shares of Boeing.

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.
S. Korea: North fires 2 missiles in latest test

By Kim Gamel and Yoo Kyong Chang
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles off its eastern coast Sunday, South Korea’s military said, the latest in a series of launches that have raised the regime’s flouts concern about the global coronavirus pandemic.

The launch came a week after the North welcomed a letter sent by President Donald Trump offering help in fighting the virus but expressed continued frustration over stalled nuclear talks.

The missiles were launched within a 20-second interval from the eastern city of Wonsan and flew more than 140 miles, with a maximum altitude of nearly 20 miles, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Seoul.

A U.S. surveillance plane, the Navy’s EP-3E, was spotted at about 25,000 feet over South Korea on Sunday, the monitoring site Aircraft Spots said in a tweet. It did not confirm it was a missile launch.

It was the fourth such test in a month as the North continues to develop its weapons program amid stalled nuclear talks with the United States.

North Korea also has conducted artillery drills in what officials have said are part of its annual winter training.

The military activity resumed after the North went on lockdown for about 30 days after the virus first appeared in the country last year, said Gen. Robert Abrams, commander of U.S. Forces Korea.

“As evidence by made-for-TV events, we’ve seen a beginning of relaxation of some of that,” Abrams told Stars and Stripes on Friday, pointing to the artillery drills and previous missile tests.

“That’s all end here pretty soon.”

“With the winter training cycle and they’ve got to get ready for planting season,” he said during the interview at his office on Camp Humphreys.

“They’ve got to feed their people and their military is a full participant in the spring planting season.”

North Korea’s military said it was closely monitoring the situation and maintaining a readiness posture.

“Such military actions by North Korea’s military are very inappropriate at a time when the world has hit a rough patch due to the coronavirus,” the joint chiefs said.

“We call upon North Korea to stop such behavior immediately.”

South Korean national security adviser Chung Eui-yong, Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo and other senior officials also held an emergency video conference to discuss the launch, according to the presidential office.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un announced in a New Year’s message that his country was no longer bound by a self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests due to the diplomatic deadlock with Washington.

He also vowed to strengthen the North’s self-defense capabilities and warned a “new strategic weapons” would be unveiled soon.

North Korea, which sharply restricted travel and quarantined foreigners after the virus first appeared in China in late December, has not confirmed any cases of the virus.

Officials have expressed skepticism about claims that the isolated nation would be especially vulnerable to an outbreak because of its weak medical infrastructure.

Trump has said he’s not concerned about the short-range missile launches but signaled that an intercontinental ballistic missile test would be a red line.

In announcing Trump’s letter last week, Kim’s sister Kim Jo Yong stressed the relationship between the two leaders remained “very excellent” but warned that was not a guarantee for peace.

She alluded to the fact that the country faces hardship from stringent U.S.-led economic sanctions aimed at driving it back to the nuclear negotiating table.

“Even at this moment we are working hard to develop and defend ourselves on our own under the cruel environment which the U.S. is keen to provide,” she said.

A man watches a TV screen showing a file image of North Korea’s missile launch during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, on Sunday. North Korea on Sunday fired two suspected ballistic missiles into the sea, South Korea said.

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Marines fire Okinawa-based helicopter squadron leader

By Seth Robson
Stars and Stripes

The commander of a Marine Corps helicopter squadron on Okinawa was relieved of command Thursday, according to an official statement.

Lt. Col. Andrew Mills lost his job leading Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466 due to a loss of trust and confidence in his ability to command, III Marine Expeditionary Force said Friday. He was fired by Brig. Gen. Chris McPhillips, commander of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

The squadron, consisting of CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters, is based at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, which is in densely packed urban area in central Okinawa.

Mills has been notified, per Department of Defense directions said in an email to parents.

The two cadets, both seniors, are in isolation and appear to have the virus.

Most of the nearly 4,000 cadets at the academy were dismissed two weeks ago and are studying remotely until the end of the academic year. The unprecedented move was taken to allow seniors, who remain on campus, to be housed in individual rooms and follow social distancing guidelines, which are considered key in stopping the spread of the coronavirus.

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By Matthew M. Burke and Hana Kusumoto
Stars and Stripes

A Marine from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit takes part in a raid exercise in February. A panel on Okinawa has recommended speeding up the reduction of U.S. bases.

Okinawa panel calls for reducing US bases, dispersing Marines

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By Heather Benit
Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Air Force Academy cadet was found dead on campus Tuesday.

The academy also announced that two cadets have tested positive for the coronavirus, bringing the number of confirmed cases at the sprawling campus to five. Two civilian employees and an active-duty service member have also been confirmed to have the virus.

The two cadets, both seniors, are in isolation and are being closely watched.

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By AHN YOUNG-JOON

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Remembering Iwo Jima
Carnage remains seared into vets' memories 75 years later

By Matthew M. Burke
Stars and Stripes

Roy Earle chuckles as he recalls his “memorable” 21st birthday laying communication lines on Iwo Jima 75 years ago. It isn’t long before the laugh turns to melancholy as the darkness of the hellacious battle fought there catches up with the 96-year-old Maine resident.

Then a private first class with the 4th Marine Division’s 1st Joint Assault Battalion, Earle landed at Yellow Beach 1 on Iwo Jima in the fourth wave on Feb. 19, 1945. The short-range field telephone and switchboard operator scooted up walls of black volcanic sand and ash under fire to find a large shell hole where he set up his switchboard that would link the beach with Marines on the inland end.

The next day, he was ordered back down to the beach to find and destroy 23rd Marines, which hadn’t established communications.

“We couldn’t get in touch with our right flank,” he said earlier this month in a phone interview with Stars and Stripes, his voice growing quiet. “I walked over and, oh my God, what a mess.”

Just as the Marines had run off their landing craft, a shell landed at the far end of the beach, killing many of them.

“A kid I served mess duty with before we left … there he was,” Earle said. “I remember that I remember for a long time. What a thing. Oh God, it was awful.”

Earle found the dead Marine’s switchboard and carried the 75-pound device back to the shell hole. He sent word for their surviving rifle companies to get in touch so he could get them hooked up.

“By the third day we were really getting slaughtered up there,” he said. “We lost 55% of our division on Iwo.”

The island was finally declared secure March 26, 1945. The Reunion of Honor, an annual memorial service scheduled for Saturday that brings together American and Japanese veterans of the battle, was called off because of coronavirus concerns. However, remembering the sacrifices and stories of those who fought and died on Iwo Jima is still important to many.

“Iwo Jima is a testament to what America was willing to endure to defend freedom and our way of life,” said Marine Corps History Division director Edward Nevogloski. “The 75th anniversary of Iwo Jima is about celebrating the selfless and courageous acts of thousands of American boys sent overseas … who would ask for nothing in return. When I think of Iwo Jima, I always ask, where do we get such men?”

The Battle of Iwo Jima began with an amphibious assault by B-29 Superfortress bombing the southern end of the island in mid-1944. The Japanese had dug deep into the volcanic rock of the island, connected by a labyrinth of tunnels.

“Seyventy-thousand Marines by Japanese accounted for, with more than 6,800 killed and 19,000 wounded. On the Japanese side, about 18,000 were killed. Only 216 Japanese were captured alive,” Earle said. “It was the first time the U.S. had fought the Japanese on native soil. It was the first time American casualties outnumbered those of the enemy.”

The flag-raising atop Mount Suribachi, it was the first time the U.S. had fought the Japanese on native soil. It was the first time American casualties outnumbered those of the enemy.

The flag-raising atop Mount Suribachi, at the same time, it became clear that the enemy had suffered a heavy defeat.

“Casualties.”

The V Amphibious Corps landing force departed the Marinas for Iwo Jima on Feb. 15 and 16, according to the park service historian. At the same time, the Navy launched air strikes against the Japanese islands, “Honolulu distanced the Japanese from Iwo Jima. The 4th and 5th Marine Divisions landed Feb. 19 on Iwo Jima’s black sand beaches. The landing areas on the southeastern coast had been designated Green, Red, Yellow and Blue beaches.

Initially, the Marines met little resistance as they piled up on the beaches, according to the history said. About 40 minutes into the landing, Kuribayashi opened up with everything he had, Niemeier said. The Marines soon discovered they had walked into a shooting gallery. The Japanese artillery and interlocking fields of machine-gun fire from fortified concrete blockhouses and other concealed positions.

“It was like shooting ducks in a barrel,” Niemeier said. “The majority of the Marine Corps KIAs and casualties are going to take place at a high rate on this first day, and not any time after that.”

Towering hills of coarse, black volcanic sand marked the men’s exit from the kill zone, Earle recalled.

“You don’t run on Iwo,” he said. “That sand and ash and stuff was murder there, so I ‘hurried’ as they say.”

Once ashore, the volcanic rock that covers the island caused deep cuts and lacerations on the Marines when they sought cover from enemy fire.

“The Japanese were taken prisoners and concealed in hundreds of cave openings,” Nevogloski said. “The Japanese had been preparing defenses on Iwo for more than 20 years and had their weapons zeroed and fields of fire mapped out precisely. The Marines would have to fight a 360-degree battle as the Japanese often popped up from cover once the Marines passed by.”

The 4th Marine Division pushed forward and took the enemy stronghold known as “the Quarry” on the first day, despite heavy opposition, the Navy historian said. Marines from the 5th Marine Division’s 28th Marines isolated Mount Suribachi.

Jack Colby, now 95 and living in Alexandria, Va., hit the beach with the 4th Marine Division. A man of few words, he struggled to describe the horrors he witnessed as a young private first class.

“It was a mess, a pure mess, that’s about the size of it, guys getting knocked down right and left,” he told Stars and Stripes earlier this month. “The [Japanese] had a pretty good position where they were looking down on a lot of our troops. But anyway, that’s about the size of it.”

As asked what he remembered most about the battle, Colby answered with one word: “Casualties.”

“I spend a lot of time moving around behind the line, with a line of casualties,” he said. “You’d see casualties. It was bad business. But that’s war.”

Colby was at Airfield No. 1 when the two flag-raising occurred atop Suribachi. A battle was still raging, so he paid them little mind.

Hershel “Woody” Williams, the last living Medal of Honor recipient from the battle, told Stars and Stripes at Iwo Jima in 2015 that the flags energized the men whose morale was dragging.

“If we had never put Old Glory on Mount Suribachi, it would have been just another campaign,” he said, looking up at Suribachi. “But the fact that we put it up on enemy territory, the flag was what energized everything that took place. Our morale was dragging, we had lost so many guys.”

The men still had 31 days of the toughest fighting ahead of them to move the northeastern end of the island. The 3rd
Airlifters focus on ‘aggressive’ training despite virus limits

**By Slobodan Lekic**

Stars and Stripes

CHIEVRES, Belgium — “Herky 72” pulls a tight turn to the right and then rolls 60 degrees. From its cargo bay, the hinged rear door has already been lowered. When the pilot orders the drop, a loadmaster pulls the cord retaining the training pallet — loaded with water-filled containers — which rolls down the ramp, plunging into the void.

A parachute blossoms behind the pallet, seemingly stopping its fall in midair moments before touchdown at this NATO air base in Belgium. Still simulating a combat mission during Thursday’s flight, the Super Hercules — call sign “Herky 72” — and piloted by Maj. Erik Svendsen and Lt. John Koahrens — made a tight turn and climbed before leveling off. The plane, which runs air bases in Germany, Portugal, Spain and Belgium and has facilities in several other European countries, has adjusted to each country’s regulations, said wing commander Brig. Gen. Mark R. August.

But the first concern is making sure the airmen and their families are protected from the pandemic, he said. This includes closing mass gatherings as well as gyms or libraries, August said in an interview.

Military personnel in Europe have also generally been told to limit their travel and to follow precautions like practicing social distancing and washing their hands for at least 20 seconds.

So far, there have been six confirmed COVID-19 cases among people who live or work at the base, the base website said Friday.

“In some ways, this has definitively slowed down (operations),” August said. “But my air traffic control is open … maintenance of aircraft is open, hangars are open, my mission-oriented skill set is still open.”

As an airlift wing, the 86th must be prepared to respond not just to an adversary, but also to scenarios involving humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and deployment of medical supplies to various locations, he said.

“When it comes time of taking care of (our) mission, our nation is counting on us to continue to project air power to different regions on the earth,” August said.

Lt. Col. Gregory Kantz, commander of the 37th Airlift Squadron, said that the training flight Thursday showed how the squadron intended to maintain its combat readiness despite the current restrictions.

This included flying more complex training missions about five times per week, rather than just occasional takeoff-and-landing flights.

“In order to maintain our … proficiency to execute a wartime mission, we have to do more aggressive flying,” Kantz said.

“Our primary focus has been to find ways to continue to train … while taking prudent precautions to avoid spreading this disease,” he said. “I think we’ve found a pretty good balance and we’re able to go do those things.”

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**Iwo Jima: 27 Medals of Honor awarded for actions during battle**

FROM PAGE 4

Marine Division joined the fighting on the fifth day to help take the center sector of the island, a Marine said. The 5th Marines had prepared successive lines of Japanese positions across the heart of the island to greet them.

**Step toward victory**

As they moved north, the Marines fought through places with names like “Meat Grinder,” Hill 226 and the “Turkey Trot.” They had a reinforced concrete communications center, and the “Amphitheater,” a southeastern extension of Hill 382, the Navy history said.

The 3rd Marine Division encircled the most heavily fortified position on the island in its move to take Airfield No. 2.

All those positions “had interlocking fields of fire, that hills covered other hills and cliffs covered other cliffs, so that if you moved up to take one out, the other would open up on you,” Neimeyer said.

“Iwo Jima for us — not just the infantry was forced to get up close and personal to engage their concealed enemy, blasting them out with satchel charges and burning them out with flamethrowers.

Marines fought all day, lost men and gained only a couple of hundred yards.

The 5th Marine Division moved to the west center and the 4th moved up the east coast.

The 4th received a “mini banzai” attack from the final 700 Japanese navy holdouts and linked up with the other divisions by March 10, six days after the first B-29 made an emergency landing on Iwo Jima, the Navy history said.

Neimeyer said the 4th moved secure on March 16, though fighting continued. The U.S. Army’s 147th Infantry regiment took control of the island on April 4.

Twenty-seven Medals of Honor were awarded for actions during the battle, more than any other battle in U.S. history, a Navy history said.

Neimeyer said the victory at Iwo Jima was significant because the public viewed it as the first step toward final victory.

“They had gone on this long march across all these island chains and they had lost all these lives,” Neimeyer said. “They fought hard on each one of these island campaigns and now it looks like we’re in going in the final chapter of the war and there’s an end to it, so it was a very positive thing, although they knew the possibility of even greater casualties were going to come if they had to invade. It was also a wake-up call for how violent the invasion the home islands was likely to become.”
US bases in Japan and limits as cases increase

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE, CAITLIN DOORNBOSS AND SETH ROBSON Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Commanders ordered people to shelter in place and enacted other safety measures for U.S. personnel in Japan, where five active-duty service members and one dependent have tested positive for coronavirus since Thursday.

Late Saturday, the Air Force’s 18th Wing confirmed that two airmen assigned to Kadena Air Base on Okinawa have been infected. Both individuals, who are not part of the same unit, recently returned from Europe, 18th Wing commander Brig. Gen. Joel Carey said in a video posted to Facebook. Their symptoms developed during a 15-day period of restricted movement.

The wing later announced a tactical pause for Monday and Tuesday.

U.S. commanders will use this 48-hour period to further educate their teams and their families on the coronavirus and reinforce understanding and execution of current Restriction of Movement procedures as well as other measures we’ve put in place to protect our forces,” said a message on Kadena’s official Facebook page.

Friday evening at Yokosuka Naval Base — where a sailor on Thursday became the first U.S. service member in Japan to test positive for the virus — personnel were told to shelter in place when two more sailors became infected. The installation is about 40 miles south of Tokyo.

It’s unclear where the new patients contracted the illness. They “have no known connection to the first positive result,” a base statement said. “Public health professionals are performing contact tracing to identify people who may have been exposed to facilitate notification and screening.”

The shelter-in-place order, originally planned for 48 hours, was extended Sunday afternoon. “Only mission-essential personnel shall report to work until further notice,” Yokosuka officials announced Sunday. “All personnel are directed to limit activity to their quarters until further notice and all other activities are restricted to essential movement only.”

Also on Friday, U.S. Army Japan announced that a dependent tested positive at Camp Zama, about 28 miles southwest of Tokyo. The person, who had been restricted to quarters since returning from the United States on March 19, is now in isolation on post, a statement said.

Leaders at the affected installations emphasized in separate statements that infected personnel are under direct medical supervision and strict quarantine.

Before the sudden surge in cases, commanders across Japan had already imposed a series of restrictions to curb the coronavirus spread.

A floor decal inside the post office at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo encourages social distancing Friday.

Not all sailors who apply for the extension will not be considered for the extension.

Navy offers extension for sailors leaving service after ban on traveling

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOSS Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — An order to stop all personnel movement to curb the coronavirus’ spread has prompted the Navy to offer a deal to sailors leaving the service in the coming year.

Sailors scheduled to exit the Navy or retire before April 2, 2021 may apply to extend their service by six months to a year, according to a Navy memorandum issued March 20.

The Navy on March 21 announced a 60-day halt on all travel, including personnel moving to new assignments. The order will expire on May 11 but leaves open the possibility that some critical job vacancies during that period will go unfilled.

The decision to offer extensions was made to mitigate the effects of coronavirus on the Navy “and maintain operational, sailor and family readiness,” according to the memo.

Not all sailors who apply for the extension will be approved. Priority will be given to those in “sea duty and critical billets,” according to the memo. Requests will be considered until July 1.

Also, sailors facing mandatory separation or retirement, officers who are not selected for promotion twice and those separating because of disability or misconduct will not be considered for the extension.

Additionally, the Navy in its memo invited sailors who recently left the service but are interested in returning to contact their local recruiters for opportunities to return to active duty.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Balikatan exercise in Philippines canceled amid concerns

BY SETH ROBSON Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military has canceled a major exercise in the Philippines because of the coronavirus.

“The U.S. military has canceled a major exercise in the Philippines because of the coronavirus. “Due to concerns for the health and safety of the participating exercise forces and local populations near the planned exercise areas, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command has canceled Exercise Balikatan 2020 scheduled for May 4-15 in the Republic of the Philippines,” an INDOPACOM official said in a statement Friday.

Balikatan is an annual exercise between the United States and the Philippines with participation by Australia.

Cancelling the exercise follows restrictions on international travel implemented by the U.S. Department of Defense and the Philippines in response to the coronavirus pandemic, the command said.

“In light of the extraordinary circumstances surrounding COVID-19 pandemic and in the best interest of the health and safety of both countries’ forces, it is prudent to cancel Balikatan 2020,” Adm. Phil Davidson, INDOPACOM commander, said in the statement. “We remain deeply committed to our long-standing Alliance and friendship.”

Last year, the Navy sent the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp and F-35B Lightning II stealth fighters to the Philippines for the first time as part of the drills.

This year’s exercise was expected to proceed despite a rift between the allies. In February, the Philippines notified the United States of its intention to terminate the Visiting Forces Agreement, which permits U.S. troops to deploy in the country.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte ordered the termination after Washington reportedly canceled a U.S. visa for Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, a stalwart ally and former Philippines National Police chief.

Dela Rosa has been cited for human rights violations related to Duterte’s bloody drug war that began when he was elected president in 2016.

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOSS Stars and Stripes

The USS Wasp arrives in Subic Bay, Philippines, for Balikatan drills in March 2019. The drills this year have been canceled due to virus concerns.

Additional funding for nurses, soldiers, sailors and Marines is expected to be used in response to the coronavirus pandemic in order to maintain readiness and continue this mission,” according to the memo.

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Additional funding for nurses, soldiers, sailors and Marines is expected to be used in response to the coronavirus pandemic in order to maintain readiness and continue this mission,” according to the memo.

Additionally, the Navy in its memo invited sailors who recently left the service but are interested in returning to contact their local recruiters for opportunities to return to active duty.
New: US military tries to balance readiness, rising cases amid restrictions

FROM FRONT PAGE

a few days,” Abrams said in his office, wearing civilian clothes including a baseball cap and a black T-shirt with the #KilltheVirus logo that the military has adopted. “The number of people in quarantines, which had recently dipped from a high of 398 to double-digits, rose back above 100, Abrams said. People who had been near the confirmed cases were urged to self-isolate and contact the public health line (0503-337-2556).

Shifting the balance

Abrams acknowledged the challenges, particularly for platoons and company-level training on Camp Humphreys, home to most of the 28,500 service members stationed on the divided peninsula. Gyms also were closed. The U.S. military has canceled or curtailed exercises and implemented similar restrictions throughout the force as more than 650 cases of the coronavirus have been confirmed within the Defense Department.

But the Army in South Korea is on one of the world’s most dangerous fronts. Camp Humphreys is less than 100 miles south of the heavily fortified border with North Korea.

Understanding the threat, North Korea test-fired two short-range ballistic missiles on Sunday, the fourth such launch this month as it continues to develop its weapons program amid stalled nuclear talks with the United States.

“We call it fight-tonight readiness,” Abrams said Friday. “To protect the force is our No. 1 priority, but we have to balance that with maintaining mission readiness.

“I have shifted the balance today for Camp Humphreys and accepted what I believe is acceptable risk on the mission side until I feel confident that we have our arms around these particular cases,” he added.

The North insists it has not had any cases, although it’s impossible to confirm and State Department officials have expressed concern about a breaching humanitarian crisis.

Abrams said the North had resumed military activity after going on lockdown for about 30 days due to the coronavirus, which first appeared in China late last year.

He said that would likely stop soon since the North was nearing the end of its winter training cycle and needed to deploy troops to help with the spring planting season and construction projects.

Possible exposure

Four coronavirus cases have now been confirmed at Camp Humphreys, which has a population of more than 37,000 in the rural area of Pyeongtaek.

The other eight—including the only other soldier—were at bases in Daegu and nearby areas.

Military officials were scouring closed-circuit TV footage and interviewing people to determine who else may have been exposed after a soldier and a contractor confirmed to have had the virus on Friday.

Abrams said they appeared to have been infected by another contractor who tested positive Tuesday, which would make the first people known to have been infected on post. All worked at Eighth Army headquarters.

Military police were on guard as lines formed outside the Camp Humphreys commissary on Friday because only 100 people were allowed in at a time to prevent close contact.

“I’ve been staying at home all the days I’m not on duty and I ran out of food,” Navy Lt. Jamie Colyer said as she waited her turn.

“Do I want to stand outside in the wind? No. Am I upset about it? No. I think that the restrictions are a reasonable measure,” she added.

“We’ve seen how it can jump from person to person,” she said.

Down the street, soldiers wheeled a cart packed with groceries toward the barracks on foot after on-post taxi and bus service was halted.

Last straw

Abrams stressed that even with the new cases, the USFK numbers remain relatively low for a community comprising about 58,000 people including service members, family members, civilians and South Korean employees.

However, he declared a public health emergency earlier this week to gain authority to enforce compliance among civilians as well as service members with rules against nonessential activity off post.

Two soldiers received nonjudicial punishment on March 19, including reductions in rank, forfeiture in pay, extra duty and written reprimands, for violations of COVID-19 public health guidelines and other orders, according to the Eighth Army.

Five civilians also had been caught in local establishments after posting photos on social media, Abrams said.

“The message is if you want access to a USFK installation you actually have to be 100% compliant, every single person because it only takes one,” he said.

“Once it gets inside the wire, once it gets inside the protective bubble, then it puts everybody else at risk,” he said, “and it puts the mission at risk.”

Trump sees off NY-bound Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort

NORFOLK, Va. — President Donald Trump visited Naval Station Norfolk Saturday to see off the USNS Comfort as it headed to New York with medical staff and hospital beds to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

“This great ship behind me is a 70,000-ton message of hope and solidarity to the incredible people of New York, a place I know very well, a place I love,” Trump said, standing in front of the gleaming white hull of the Comfort. “We’re here for you. We’re fighting for you and we are with you all the way and we always will be. You have the unwavering support of the entire nation.”

The Navy hospital ship, which is crewed by civilian mariners and gets most of its medical staff from Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, should arrive Monday.

The plan is for the ship to take patients needing hospital care that are not infected with the virus, freeing up much-needed space in the city’s hospitals. The Comfort’s sister ship, the USNS Mercy, arrived Friday in Los Angeles on a similar mission. “For several weeks, the Department of Defense has been surging personnel capabilities and equipment to help slow the spread of the virus,” Secretary of Defense Mark Esper said in his introduction of the president. “Thousands of National Guard troops are mobilized across the country, conducting a variety of essential tasks ranging from planning to logistics to medical support. Active duty units are moving critical supplies and equipment and medical personnel to some of the nation’s most heavily impacted areas.”

More than 120 Navy Reserve volunteers, many medical professionals, reported to the Military Sealift Command’s ship on Wednesday for the mission. The Navy has yet to release how many medical personnel are headed to New York. The Mercy, like the Comfort, can carry about 1,200 medical and support staff. The Navy currently has about 800 in Los Angeles.

Trump said the Comfort was quickly made ready to depart. A process that was supposed to take weeks took just four days, he said.

“The Comfort will arrive at Pier 90 in Manhattan on Monday, three weeks ahead of schedule,” Trump said. “Its crew will begin treating patients on Tuesday. It will be met in New York harbor by Governor Cuomo, who I just spoke with. He’s very excited.”

In his Saturday press conference, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said he would welcome the ship “with open arms.” The Comfort contains more than 1,000 hospital beds, 12 fully-equipped operating rooms, a CAT-scan, medical laboratory, pharmacy, large helicopter landing deck, two oxygen-producing plants and many other services.
VIRUS OUTBREAK

Calif. death toll surpasses 100 as infections surge

Residents are asked to spend another weekend at home

By Daisy Nguyen
Associated Press

With cases of coronavirus surging and the death toll surpassing 100, lawmakers are pleading with coop-ed up Californians to spend a second weekend at home to slow the spread of infection.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said Saturday that the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 spiked to more than 1,000, and that overnight the number of people admitted to intensive care units doubled from 200 to more than 400. He said the numbers are relatively modest in comparison with the 52,000 confirmed cases in New York, the U.S. epicenter of the outbreak, but the trend could lead to overstretched hospitals in California.

California could see conditions similar to New York “if we stop practicing physical distancing ... if we pull back from our stay-at-home order,” Newsom said while touring a Silicon Valley firm that is refurbishing ventilators for hospitals.

The escalating crisis was underscored by a public health order Saturday that 12 elderly residents of a nursing facility in the Southern California desert city of Yucaipa tested positive for COVID-19. An 89-year-old woman who lived there died from the illness Thursday, according to San Bernardino County public health officials, who said she was working to test an unspecified number of residents and employees at the facility.

“This outbreak is a signal to anyone in the county who is not taking this pandemic seriously and is resisting complying with public health orders and guidelines that the threat of COVID-19 is very real,” said Dr. Erin Gudat, the acting county health officer.

Also Saturday, the state’s Judicial Council, the rule-making arm of the judicial system, announced several measures that will take effect immediately and extend 90 days after California lifts its state of emergency. They are:

- Extend the period of 10 court arraignments and preliminary hearings so that “defendants are not held in custody or removed from the custody of their parents or guardians, without timely due process of law or in violation of constitutional rights.”

- It has been more than a week since Newsom issued the stay-at-home order for 40 million residents, restricting them from all but essential outside activities such as buying food and including only outdoor exercise such as walking or running near home that doesn’t put them within 6 feet of another person.

- However, reports of people packing beaches and hiking trails has prompted local governments to crack down.

- Los Angeles over the weekend began a three-week shutdown of beaches, piers, bike paths and parking lots along with public trails, including one leading to the famous Hollywood sign. Golf courses, tennis courts and skate parks also were shuttered.

- The warnings resonated at Venice Beach, which was nearly empty on a sunny Saturday except for a few souls walking by the water and cycling on the bike path. The scene was remarkably different from a week ago, when people packed the famous stretch of sand on the first weekend of the stay-at-home order.

- In San Diego, the most popular beaches were blocked with yellow police tape, and police were patrolling them to discourage people from congregating there. 

- spokesman Ricardo Lopez said scofflaws could face misdemeanor charges carrying a sentence of up to six months in jail.

Trump backtracks on New York quarantine suggestion

By Colby Itzkowitz and Marissa J. Lang
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The United States reached a grim milestone Saturday, doubling the number of coronavirus-related deaths over two days to more than 2,000 people as the rate of infected Americans surpassed every country in the world.

New York remained the hardest hit, a devastating toll compounded Saturday by President Donald Trump’s day-long dance over whether he’d order a federal quarantine of New York metro region — a proposal he ultimately retracted.

The president spent most of the day teasing a travel restriction on the New York metro area, confounding public officials who were blindsided by the suggestion. 

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, called the idea “preposterous” and equated it to imprisonment and “a declaration of war.”

Then, a little after 8 p.m., the president tweeted that a quarantine wouldn’t be necessary after all, and instead, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would issue a “strong travel advisory” for the New York tri-state area, the details of which were not immediately available.

With the country now leading the world in coronavirus cases, Trump suggested earlier in the day that a mandatory quarantine on parts of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut — the nation’s hit-hardest region — could be forthcoming.

Some people would like to see New York quarantined because it’s a hot spot,” Trump told reporters outside the White House. “I’m thinking about that right now, we might not have to do it, but there’s a possibility that sometime today we’ll do a quarantine, short-term, two weeks, on New York.”

Trump later clarified that if enacted, the quarantine would affect “the New York metropolitan area,” but he did not specify exactly what parts of that tri-state region.

Two White House officials said the idea was spurred by a conversation that morning with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis who had complained to Trump about people from New York pouring into the Sunshine State. Aides spent the day warning the president against doing it, saying that it would be impossible to enforce and could create more complications, the officials said, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Trump first raised the idea as he headed to Norfolk, where a medical ship meant to ease the burden on New York City hospitals waited to depart. He said governors from other states had asked him to consider a domestic travel ban from the New York area.

Cuomo, who said he spoke with the president early Saturday about medical supplies, hospital beds and additional aid for New York, called a regional lockdown “a civil war kind of discussion.”

“I don’t think it’s plausible, I don’t think it’s legal. It would be total mayhem, I don’t have another word for it,” Cuomo said during a briefing interview on CNN. “Why would you want to create total pandemonium on top of a pandemic, I have no idea.”

“It wouldn’t just be New York, New Jersey, Connecticut. Next week it would be Louisiana with New Orleans, then the next week after that, Detroit, Michigan and so on across the nation,” he said. “I don’t think the president is looking to start a lot of wars with a lot of states just now about, for a lot of reasons.”
VIRUS OUTBREAK

Expert: US could see up to 200K deaths from virus

In Europe, Spain and Italy demand more help as infections continue to surge

By CARA ANNA

Prevention measures turn violent in parts of Africa
ANXIETY WORSENS FOR PATIENTS WITH DISORDER

By Malcolm Ritter
Associated Press

NEW YORK — At first, Jonathon Seidl wasn’t worried about the coronavirus despite his anxiety disorder. But that changed.

The 33-year-old digital media strategist from Dallas, who takes medication, said his concern was less about getting sick than about the battering the economy could sustain. Would he be able to feed his family? Would there be a run on food stores? He couldn’t shake his doubts.

So he paced. His heart raced. He wanted to go to bed early “because sleep was the only respite.” But his sleep was rarely restful. “I would wake up during the night,” he said.

The pandemic is worrisome enough for most people. For those with anxiety disorders, it presents a special challenge, especially if they are not receiving treatment.

That’s the case for about two-thirds of people with anxiety disorders, says Dr. Bruce Schwartz, president of the American Psychiatric Association. “Those are the ones I’m worried about,” he said.

Schwartz, who maintains a practice in New York, said those who are in treatment “do pretty well” in the face of the pandemic.

Still, some psychologists say they have witnessed symptoms with the spread of the virus. And for some anxiety conditions, the recommendations from health officials can appear to feed the problem. People who fear interacting with others now hear advice to avoid crowds. People with obsessive-compulsive disorder who fear germs so much they wash their hands excessively now hear public health authorities encouraging frequent hand-washing.

Standard treatments can deal with coronavirus fears in people who already had anxiety troubles, helping them to avoid emotional extremes, psychologists say. The goal is accepting an appropriate level of anxiety and living with some uncertainty.

“Don’t have to like that any of this is happening to accept that this is our reality right now,” said Vaile Wright, director of clinical research and quality at the American Psychological Association. People can focus on what’s under their control, she said, like now to work from home or manage the kids with schools closed.

Mary Alvord, a psychologist in Rockville, Md., said she sees increased anxiety in people whose fear of picking up germs drives them to rituals to ease that fear. Public health messages about cleaning surfaces and washing hands can make some patients think “we were right all along,” Alvord said.

So “we have to really deal with reality checks,” she said. People with an anxiety disorder tend to focus on “what-if” ideas and worst-case scenarios more than with those in the general population, she said. “That’s what we’re trying to get under control.”

But anxiety in people with obsessive-compulsive behavior to focus on taking reasonable precautions without fueling their compulsions is less critical, said Neda Gould, associate director of an anxiety clinic at the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore. A mental health provider can help them set goals and limits, she said, while techniques for relaxation and meditation can help “turn off that heightened anxiety or stress response ... or at least to turn it down.”

Schwartz recommends that people staying home limit the amount of time spent listening to the news, which includes not leaving it on in the background. And he suggests staying busy with activities that benefit family as well as getting outdoors for walks.

A useful therapy is to help people like Seidl, who says he has found some solace in thinking about life after the outbreak. “There’s one of the things that gives me hope,” he said, describing a point where his mind slows down and he hears his heart beat. “There is so much relief, and there is so much rest.”

FEARS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS MOUNT AMID VIRUS RESTRICTIONS

By Michael Tarm

CHICAGO — The orders seem prudent in the bid to thwart the spread of the novel coronavirus: Don’t go out, don’t gather with others and keep your stores closed.

But growing segments of the U.S. population say state and federal governments are trampling on freedoms central to American life in the name of protecting public health.

The case is already being made. A churchgoer in New Hampshire’s says prohibitions against large gatherings violate her religious rights. A Pennsylvania golf course owner argues that gubernatorial edicts curtailing business amount to illegal seizure of his private property.

If civil libertarians aren’t yet sounding alarms, many have their hands hovering over the button.

“So far, we haven’t had draconian methods, like armed police blocking people’s movement in the streets, surveillance and phone tapping,” said Larry Gostin, a public health lawyer at Georgetown University. “But we are seeing an lockdown of millions of people like we have never seen before.”

He added: “We are on the precipice of some of the most significant erosion of American values and freedoms.”

Questions about the extent of government’s power to impose restrictions haven’t been fully resolved since New York cook Mary Mallon, a typhoid carrier, defied public health department orders to isolate. Mallon, better known as Typhoid Mary, lost her legal battle for freedom and ended up effectively imprisoned for 28 years on an island cottage, dying there in 1938.

Responses are no longer as severe. But thousands of Americans are already confined to their homes under threat of fines and even jail. Businesses are losing hundreds of dollars. Workers are laid off.

One man infected with the coronavirus in Kentucky recently left a hospital and refused to quarantine; an armed county deputy was posted outside his home to ensure the 53-year-old stayed put.

“It’s a step I hoped I’d never have to take, but we can’t allow one person who we know has the virus to refuse to protect their neighbors,” Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear told reporters.

Authority to order shutdowns and quarantines inside states rests almost entirely with states under provisions in the U.S. Constitution ceding power not explicitly delegated to the federal government to states.

The federal government itself can’t order nationwide quarantines or business closures; courts have ruled over the years. It does, however, have clear power under constitutional clauses regulating commerce to quarantine international travelers or those traveling state to state who are suspected of carrying an infectious disease.

At least some legal scholars believe the Constitution’s Commerce Clause may vest President Donald Trump with powers to impose a national lockdown, but he’d likely have to resort to persuading all 50 states to agree to uniform restrictions if he ever seriously contemplated such a move.

That doesn’t appear to be his inclination. He said he was hoping to lift restrictions in a bid to boost the plummeting U.S. economy as early as Easter Sunday, April 12, setting up a standoff with state officials who have said they can’t risk it.

The federal government has done guidelines. And then states can follow the guidelines; states can fashion the guidelines to fit their specific circumstances,” New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said.

Laws spelling out what steps a state can take during a pandemic can be complex and difficult for judges to sort through. Some haven’t been updated in decades, according to a report by the Congressional Research Service.

And they also differ state to state. The maximum penalty in most states if someone violates mandatory quarantines — often backed by a court order — is no more than a year in jail. In Mississippi, it can be anything in some circumstances, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

A few Americans are already fed up and have taken their grievances to court by suing their respective states. But a relative trickle of legal challenges will likely become a flood if lockdowns drag on for weeks and frustrations mount.

The Pennsylvania lawsuit filed on behalf of the Blueberry Hill Golf Club says Gov. Tom Wolf’s power to close businesses under state law is limited to man-made or natural disasters such as oil spills, tornados and mudslides. The coronavirus, it argues, doesn’t fall into those categories.

So far, judges have rejected the few legal challenges to state restrictions. Pennsylvania’s Supreme Court refused to freeze Wolf’s sweeping shutdown orders. In response to complaints, Wolf did ease restrictions on some businesses.

A New Hampshire court issued a similar ruling in the lawsuit by the churchgoer. It upheld Gov. Chris Sununu’s ban on large gatherings, the court’s written ruling saying it couldn’t “accurately determine the public objective “than protecting the citizens of this state and this country from becoming sick and dying.”

But courts have never been asked whether the unprecedented lockdowns are constitutional “and in violation of individual rights,” Gostin said. A battle all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court on that issue, he says, may be looming.
WASHINGTON — A gun rights group is cheering the Trump administration's move toward easing restrictions on the firearms industry, including retailers, as part of the nation's critical infrastructure during the coronavirus emergency.

The designation by the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency for the firearms business, which was part of the original list of critical infrastructure, may have been a way to help keep gun factories running during the pandemic. The agency notes that the designation does not override determinations by individual jurisdictions of what they consider critical infrastructure sectors.

The firearms industry was not part of the federal agency's original list of critical infrastructure issued just over a week ago. The designation in an emergency was not new, and the rule was not ignored what it calls "the ability to protect yourself" during the emergency stemming from the coronavirus outbreak.

Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN — Government officials faced heavy criticism for their response to the coronavirus outbreak in Puerto Rico as details trickled out about the newest death reported Friday in the U.S. territory, which was the first for a resident.

The victim was identified as a 48-year-old teacher at a private school in the popular tourist town of Rincon. The woman was mar- ried and had two children.

Police officers and her death prompted authori- ties to shut down a police station that was near her home.

The number of new coronavirus cases in Puerto Rico has slowed in recent days, with fewer people testing positive for the virus.

Maryland

BALTIMORE — Maryland's governor said Saturday that a nursing home in the state has been struck by an out- break of COVID-19 which includes 66 positive cases and 11 hospitalizations.

Gov. Larry Hogan also said in a news release that Maryland recorded five more deaths state- wide, bringing the total to 137. Earlier Saturday, state officials had reported that Maryland has around 1,000 positive cases.

Hogan said that state and local health officials are at the Pleas- ant View Nursing Home in Mount Airy working on ways to protect the staff and residents.

"Multiple state agencies are on the scene and working closely with the local health department and the facility as they take ur- gent steps to protect additional residents and staff who may have been exposed," he said.

North Carolina

RALEIGH — Gun rights activ- ists filed a lawsuit Friday in North Carolina that temporarily halted handgun permits amid a surge of interest during the coronavirus outbreak.

The lawsuit against Wake Coun- ty Sheriff Gerald Baker was filed Friday in federal court by Grass Roots North Carolina, one of its members, the Second Amend- ment Foundation and Firearms Policy Coalition.

The lawsuit asked a judge to force Baker to start issuing pistol permits again, arguing that state law requires him to process the permits. Under normal circum- stances, a sheriff can deny an individual application for certain reasons, but state law doesn't give the authority to halt all applica- tions even if there are extenuating circumstances, the lawsuit argues.

Baker said Tuesday that he was suspending the issuance of pistol permits until April 30 to prevent the spread of germs at his office and because of a backlog of appli- cations. His office said that pistol permit requests have increased dramatically amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

South Carolina

COLUMBIA — South Caroli- na's governor is aiming to protect first responders during the new coronavirus briefing, ordering that anyone calling 911 be asked if anyone near them has symp- toms of COVID-19.

In a new executive order issued Saturday, Gov. Henry McMas- ter required 911 emergency dis- patchers to ask anyone requesting calls for service whether they or anyone at their location has test- ed positive or is symptomatic for COVID-19.

The order also authorized the state's public colleges and univer- sities, already doing coursework remotely, to finish out the 2020 spring semester via virtual learning. And it directs the continued closure of public K-12 school dist- ricts throughout the state.

COVID-19 remains a threat to public health officials are at the Pleas- ant View Nursing Home in Mount Airy working on ways to protect the staff and residents.

North Dakota

FARGO — North Dakota offi- cials began outlining worst-case scenarios — including building temporary hospitals in Bismarck and Fargo — after health officials Saturday confirmed the highest number of COVID-19 cases in a 24-hour period.

The state listed 26 new cases of the coronavirus between Friday and Saturday afternoon, raising the total number of positive tests to 94. Gov. Doug Burgum said during a news briefing that the number might be closer to 1,000 cases, applying some models that have been used around the world.

"We were very flat in the be- ginning," Burgum said. "Now it appears we are on this climb upward that other states have seen."

Burgum said that modeling should become more precise once that state tops 100 cases, but re- vealed estimates Saturday which show the state having anywhere between 600 and 1,300 positive tests three weeks down the road.

He urged residents to follow state guidelines in order to stay on the low end of that model.

Nevada

LAS VEGAS — More than a dozen unincorporated Clark County businesses have had their business licenses suspended for remaining open during a gov- ernment-ordered shutdown in Nevada as a result of the corona- virus pandemic.

The county Business License Department has issued emergen- cy suspensions between Saturday and Monday for 14 businesses, ordering that anyone calling 911 be asked if anyone near them has symp- toms of COVID-19.

Burgum said that modeling should become more precise once that state tops 100 cases, but revealed estimates Saturday which show the state having anywhere between 600 and 1,300 positive tests three weeks down the road.

He urged residents to follow state guidelines in order to stay on the low end of that model.

Tennessee

MEMPHIS — Tourism offi- cials in Memphis said that the Beale Street Music Festival and the World Championship Barbe- cue Cooking Contest have been rescheduled for the fall after they were postponed by the new corona- virus outbreak.

Memphis in May officials said in a statement Saturday that the barbecue cooking competi- tion has been reset for Sept. 30 through Oct. 3. The music festival will now be held Oct. 16 through Oct. 18.

Both events are the corner- stones of the city’s monthly tourist event in May. They attract music fans and barbecue cooking teams from around the world.

The Lumineers, Three 6 Mafia, The Avett Brothers, Lil Wayne and The Smashing Pump- erts were among the musical acts scheduled to perform at the music festival before the cancel- lation. It was not immediately clear if the performers who were set to appear on the original dates in May will be part of the lineup in September.
Tornado tears through northeast Arkansas

Associated Press

JONESBORO, Ark. — A tornado ripped through northeast Arkansas on Saturday, leaving six people hurt after hitting commercial and residential areas in the college town of Jonesboro.

The six people reported injured were taken to a local hospital with minor injuries, Jonesboro E-911 Director Jeff Presley said. The tornado did major damage at the Mall at Turtle Creek and Jonesboro Municipal Airport.

Like much of the rest of the world, Jonesboro is working to fight the spread of COVID-19. Because of that, most stores in the Mall at Turtle Creek were closed Saturday to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Severe weather could have been much worse if not for that, Presley said. “At 5 o’clock on a Saturday afternoon that place would’ve been packed, and at this point there was hardly anyone in there,” Presley said. “It’s a blessing in disguise.”

Power was out in sections of the city, which affects the city’s traffic lights. Wreckage tossed about by the twister also blocked roads.

The mayor issued a 7 p.m. curfew, and authorities asked people not to drive around.

The storm also derailed a train, warned that a severe weather outbreak was possible later Saturday for much of the central U.S.

The National Weather Service reported other possible tornadoes Saturday in Illinois and Iowa.

Arkansas State Police and other first responders survey the damage in Jonesboro, Ark., on Saturday after a tornado touched down.

Whales face more fatal ship collisions as waters warm

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — Climate change is imperiling the world’s largest animals by increasing the likelihood of fatal collisions between whales and ships that ply the same waters.

Warming ocean temperatures are causing some species of whales to pursue food to stray more frequently into shipping lanes, scientists say.

The phenomenon has already increased ship strikes involving rare North Atlantic right whales on the East Coast and giant blue whales on the West Coast, researchers have said. The number of strikes off of California increased threefold in 2018 — to at least 10 — compared to previous years.

When whales are killed in a ship collision, they often sink and don’t always wash ashore. So scientists and conservationists have said that fatal ship strikes are dramatically underreported.

Vessel strikes are among the most frequent causes of accidental death in large whales, along with entanglement in fishing gear. Conservationists, scientists and animal lovers have pushed for the International Maritime Organization to step up to protect the whales, but it won’t happen without cooperation from the worldwide shipping industry.

For the right whales, which number only about 400 and have lost more than 10% of their population in just a few years, the death toll is driving them closer to extinction, said Nick Record, a senior research scientist at Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences in East Boothbay, Maine.

At least three right whales died from ship strikes in 2019 — a small number, but still dangerous, according to a new report. All three deaths were documented in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence off Canada, where scientists have said that the whales are spending more time feeding as waters off New England warm.

Scientists have said that the changing ocean environment with global warming is causing right whales and some other species to stray outside of protected zones designed to keep them safe from ships.

“When one of their main food resources goes away, it means they start exploring new areas for food,” Record said. “And that means they’re encountering all new sources of mortality because they are going into these places where they are not protected.”

Google, Oracle and Trump put on Supreme Court hold by virus

Bloomberg

The coronavirus pandemic has put a major portion of the U.S. Supreme Court’s docket on indefinite hold, including a multibillion-dollar clash between software giants Google and Oracle Corp. and cases that could affect President Donald Trump’s reelection chances.

What was supposed to have been a drama-filled spring at the high court has instead become a season of waiting, especially for the lawyers and litigants in 20 arguments that had been scheduled for March and April.

The cases include fights over congressional and grand jury subpoenas for Trump’s financial records — clashes that need to be resolved in the court’s current term to give his critics any chance of seeing the documents before the November election. Also on hold is a class action over the Electoral College for presidential elections and an $8 billion copyright dispute between Alphabet Inc.’s Google and Oracle.

It’s not clear whether the justices are still hoping to resolve those cases in their current term, possibly by forgoing argument or by breaking tradition and hearing arguments by phone or online. Lawyers have said that they’ve received no guidance from the court on the subject, though briefing deadlines are still in force. The term normally ends in late June, although that time frame is now in doubt as well.

“As far as oral arguments go, we’re just waiting upon the court,” said Jay Sekulow, the lead lawyer for Trump in the president’s bid to block a New York grand jury subpoena for the president’s financial information. The case had been set for March 31.

The grand jury subpoena case shows the difficulty of holding arguments in the near future. Sekulow’s adversary would be Carey Dunne, a lawyer in the Manhattan district attorney’s office whose city is at the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak. The White House has said that anyone traveling from New York should self-quarantine for 14 days.

And yet the subpoena cases are also among the most time-sensitive, at least from the standpoint of the Democrats seeking the information. Lower courts required Trump’s banks and accountants to turn over the records, which could include his tax returns, but those rulings are on hold.

“Delaying this case is effectively picking a side,” seven liberal groups led by Demand Justice said Wednesday. “Every day that Trump is allowed to keep his tax returns secret is a day that he has won and the public has lost.”
Russian oil company transfers Venezuela assets to state firm

BY VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV AND JOSHUA GOODMAN
Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia’s Rosneft has transferred its assets in Ven-
ezuela to a company fully owned by Vladimir Putin’s government, a move apparently intended to shield Russia’s largest oil produc-
er from U.S. sanctions while Mos-
cow continues showing support for Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in the wake of a U.S. narc-
ocotics indictment.

The sale, announced Saturday, follows the recent sanctioning of
two Rosneft subsidiaries in an ef-
tort to cut a critical lifeline that
Russia extended to Maduro after
the U.S. government made it il-
legal for Americans to buy crude
from Venezuela.

Rosneft, led by longtime Putin
counselor Igor Sechin, said its
move means “all assets and trad-
ing operations of Rosneft in Ven-
ezuela and connected with
Venezuela will be disposed of,
terminated or liquidated.” It did
d not name the new company that
would take over the assets, which
include multiple joint ventures,
field service companies and
trading activities.

“The move comes at a critical
time for Maduro’s government.
The spread of the coronavirus
threatens to overwhelm Ven-
ezuella’s already collapsed health sys-
tem while depriving its crippled
economy of oil revenue on which it
almost exclusively depends for
hard currency.

Maduro said later Saturday
during a call to a state television
program that Putin had assured
him of Moscow’s “comprehens-
ive, strategic support” to Ven-
ezuella “in all areas.” He said the
message was relayed by Russia’s
ambassador to Caracas.

Amid the pandemic, which has
claimed two victims and infected
118 others in Venezuela, the U.S.
is stepping up pressure to remove
Maduro. On Thursday, it made
public indictments against the
socialist leader and several top
aides for allegedly leading a nar-
coterrorist conspiracy that con-
verted the Venezuelan state into
a platform for violent drug cartels,
money launderers and Colombian
guerrillas who sent 250 metric
tons of cocaine a year to the U.S.

Francisco Monaldi, a Venezu-
elian oil expert at Rice Univer-
sity in Houston, said Rosneft’s
move would provide protec-
tion from U.S. retaliation against
the company and its two largest mi-
nority shareholders, BP and the
government-run Qatar Invest-
ment Authority.

“They didn’t want to lose those
assets right now,” Monaldi said.
“It seems like a logical step.”

But Russ Dallen, head of Cara-
cas Capital Markets brokerage,
cautioned that it was too early to
know for sure whether the move
was intended to bolster Maduro.

“We don’t know whether the
new state entity is a cemetery
for Venezuelan companies that go
to die, or whether the Russians
are simply doing it to take Ros-
neft, which is their crown jewel
and provides a large portion of
Russia’s income, out of the way of
sanctions and Putin will use the
new company to continue to help
Maduro,” he said.

In February, the U.S. Treasury
Department imposed sanctions
against a Rosneft subsidiary based in
Geneva that sells crude to Euro-
pean customers. U.S. authorities
vowed to keep applying pres-
sure, and hit a second Rosneft
subsidiary with sanctions earlier
this month. Rosneft spokesman
Mikhail Leontyev said that the
company’s decision was aimed at
“protecting the interests of our
shareholders” and that he expects
the U.S. will now waive sanctions
against its subsidiaries.

“We really have the right to
expect American regulators to
fulfill their public promises,” he
added in remarks carried by Rus-
 sia’s Tass news agency.

The U.S. was first among nearly
60 nations to recognize opposition
leader Juan Guaido a year ago as
Venezuela’s rightful leader. The
international coalition considers
Maduro illegitimate after 2018
elections widely deemed fraudu-
 lent because the most popular op-
opposition candidates were banned
from running against him. Rus-
sia’s support has helped Maduro
to face down U.S.-backed efforts
to unseat him.

Officials: Virus rumors sparked Thailand prison riot

BANGKOK — Officials in
Thailand say a riot at a prison in
a northeastern province was set off
with inmates plotting to escape
spread false rumors that several
prisoners were infected with the
coronavirus.

Fires were set in parts of Burir-
am Prison during a riot Sunday
in which about 100 prisoners took
part, and gunfire was fired in
the operation to quash the vio-
ence. The facility houses about
2,100 inmates.

Corrections Department Direc-
tor-General Narat Sawettanan said
the rumor about coronavirus in-
festations to create a situation in
which they could escape.

Thailand’s Public Health Min-
istry previously announced that
two prisoners at a facility it didn’t
specify were found to be infected
with the virus, and the Corrections
Department on March 18 banned
inmates’ relatives nationwide from
prison visits for 14 days.
**AMERICAN ROUNDPUP**

**Doughnuts with doctor's face selling 'like crazy'**

_**NY**_ ROCHESTER — An upstate New York doughnut shop is featuring the likeness of the doctor leading the country's battle with the coronavirus on its sweet treats. Donuts Delite in Rochester began selling doughnuts with Dr. Anthony Fauci's face, surrounded by white frosting and topped off with patriotic sprinkles.

The exclusive treats have been selling “like crazy” since the store put them on display, according to Nick Semeraro, franchisee of the cafe.

**Ice out comes early in annual contest**

_**VT**_ NEWPORT— A big board has officially gone through the ice on Lake Memphremagog in northern Vermont, ending the sixth annual ice out contest.

The board broke through the ice more than three weeks earlier than last year, the Caledonian Record reported. The contest is a fundraiser for the splash pad project and playground upgrades at a city park, with people buying raffle tickets to guess when the board will fall through the ice.

The person who made the closest guess without going past the past time this year gets a $1,244 cash prize.

**Officials: Men created explosions to rob ATMs**

_**FL**_ TAMPA — Two men are facing federal charges for using small explosions to rob ATMs in the Tampa Bay area, authorities said.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office in Tampa charged Mawdo Malick Sallah, 33, of Clearwater, and Kirk Douglas Johnson, 34, of Anderson, S.C., with conspiring to commit arson. They each face up to 20 years in prison.

Sallah and Johnson took nearby $70,000 from several Florida ATMs between November and January and vandalized others without taking any cash, according to a criminal complaint.

Investigators believe the men injected some type of flammable fuel into the machines and used a spark to ignite it.

**Teen wrestling champ body-slams kidnapper**

_**NM**_ LAS CRUCES — A teen wrestling champion helped stop a kidnapping and assault near Las Cruces by pinning a man to the ground until deputies arrived, authorities said.

Mayfield High School student Canaan Bower, 16, who won the District 3-5A championship in the 285-pound heavyweight division, was lauded as a hero after controlling suspect Daniel Arroyo Beltran, 22, of Phoenix, the Las Cruces Sun-News reported.

Donna Ana County deputies arrested Beltran after witnesses told authorities he tried to kidnap three children at a gas station.

Bower’s dad, Troy Bower, told the Sun-News that his son told him he body-slammed the man and got him in a chokehold until deputies arrived.

**Balancing act**

_**Ny**_ JACKSON — Grizzly bears are emerging from their dens in Grand Teton National Park and a handful of people were able to spot a well-known bear called Bruno a few days before the park closed indefinitely.

Photographer Jack Bayles was among those who saw the big male bear. Grand Teton and nearby Yellowstone National Park have closed to limit the spread of the coronavirus.

Bayles had heard Bruno was out of his den and went to northern Grand Teton, where he saw the bear emerge onto a road.

**THE CENSUS**

The number of students Harvard University accepted out of more than 40,000 applicants for its 2024 graduating class.

The Cambridge, Mass., school said it accepted students from every state and 92 nations. Harvard’s admission rate of 4.92% makes it one of the most selective in the nation.

Officials said the school fielded 40,248 applications this year, down from more than 43,000 last year. Accepted students have until May 1 to decide if they will enroll.

**Flood victims owed over $300 million sue state**

_**LA**_ BATON ROUGE — A group of Louisiana flood victims who have been owed over $300 million for the past decade have filed a lawsuit against the state for failure to pay.

The latest lawsuit comes after residents won a lawsuit in 2003 which found the construction of a local highway blocked drainage of the Tangipahoa River. The court ruled the state failed to conduct needed studies on the river, and ordered Louisiana to pay millions in damages plus other costs and interest.

The state government has not paid the flood victims citing a lack of funds. Now, the total amount owed by Louisiana taxpayers exceeds $320 million.

From wire reports
Englund ready to give up iconic ‘Nightmare’ role

BY ALICIA RANCILO
Associated Press

Robert Englund, the actor who turned Freddy Krueger into a fearsome household name, says he’s looking forward to someone else taking a stab at reviving the “Nightmare on Elm Street” franchise. Englund said it’s time for Krueger’s razor-fingered glove to permanently pass to another actor.

“I’m too old,” said Englund, 72. “I know that everything gets remade eventually.”

Englund played Krueger, a murderous villain who stalks his victims through their dreams, in eight films and occasionally on TV. He acknowledges a few years ago he thought he might’ve had the stamina for one more “Nightmare” movie, but compares the situation to “an athlete who can’t get out of bed Monday morning.”

He’s eager to see someone else up the ante.

“No with the new technologies, films are gonna be different because we can do special effects even better and more sophisticated, and I’m kind of looking forward to seeing a new ‘Nightmare’ film where they can really go crazy with a dream landscape, with the nightmare sequences, using some of the techniques used in ‘Inception’ or in that old Robin Williams film ‘What Dreams May Come.’”

“A Nightmare on Elm Street” was revived in 2010 with Jackie Earle Haley as Freddy and also starring Rooney Mara, Katie Cassidy and Kevin Zegers. It received poor reviews but was a box office success, earning more than $115 million worldwide.

Wes Craven directed the first film in 1984, and one of the stars was a then-unknown named John- ny Depp.

“I wore a very rockabilly costume then. He had the best hair,” recalled Englund. “He called everyone sir and ma’am.”

Englund is currently looking forward to someone else taking a stab at re-creating the “Nightmare on Elm Street” franchise. He said: “It was a little ahead of its time, but after the ‘Scream’ franchise opened, a lot of the fans revisited ‘We Craven’s New Nightmare’ and they really picked up on the hidden Easter eggs and the sort of meta structure of it.”

Englund is currently hosting the new Travel Channel series “True Terror with Robert Englund.” From headlines about haunted houses to accounts of people being buried alive, Englund digs up these old stories with the help of historians.

National Registry adds albums by Dr. Dre, Selena

From wire reports

Dr. Dre’s classic debut rap album “The Chronic,” Selena’s sophomore studio album “The Chase” and the worldwide disco hit “Y.M.C.A.” by the Village People are among 25 record industry inductees to the National Record- ing Registry.

The Library of Congress announced Wednesday that Tina Turner’s “Private Dancer,” Glen Campbell’s “Wichita Lineman” — written by Byrd, Hunton Yellow and cover of Dolly Parton’s “I Will Al- ways Love You” are some of the titles talled for preservation this year.

The library selects titles for preservation because of their cultural and historic importance to the American soundscape. The titles have to be at least 10 years old.

Others that made the list include Russ Hodges’ play-by-play of the National League tiebreaker between the New York Giants and the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1951. The original 1964 Broad- way cast recording of “Fiddler on the Roof”; the announcement of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy by the Boston Symphony Orchestra conductor during the recording of a live per- formance on Nov. 22, 1963; songs from “Mister Roger’s Neighbor- hood”; field recordings of more than 50 hours of tradition Af- ghan music; and albums by Dusty Springfield, Cheap Trick and Maria Schneider.

Country music special lineup announced

The Academy of Country Music announced an all-star list of per- formers for its at-home coun- try music special airing on CBS on April 5, in lieu of its delayed awards show. Shania Twain, Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani, Miranda Lambert, Keith Urban, Carrie Underwood and Eric Church are among 23 perform- ers that will be featured in “ACM Presents: Our Country.”

The ACMs delayed the sched- uled awards show to Sept. 16. Other stars who will be per- forming at home for the special include Kelsea Ballerini, Dierks Bentley, Kane Brown and John and Legend, Luke Bryan, Brandi Car- like, Luke Combs, Sheryl Crow, Florida Georgia Line, Lady Ant- ebellum, Little Big Town, Tim McGraw, Old Dominion, Brad Paisley and Darius Rucker and Thomas Rhett.

Disney Plus to air Markle elephant doc

Meghan Markle has found her first post-Megxit entertainment gig in DisneyNature’s “Elephant,” a documentary launching next month on Disney Plus.

Disney announced March 26 that the film, narrated by Markle, will land on its streaming plat- form April 3, along with a second, previously announced nature documentary, “Dolphin Reef,” narrated by Natalie Portman.

Billed in the announcement as “Meghan, the Duchess of Sus- sex,” the former “Suits” actress will tell the story of “African ele- phant Shani and her spirited son Jomo as their herd make an epic journey hundreds of miles across the vast Kalahari Desert — led by their great matriarch, Gaia.”

Other news

Stage, movie and TV character actor Mark Blum, who had roles in the films “Desperately Seeking Susan” and “Crocodile Dundee,” died last week from complications related to the coronavirus. He was 69.

Richard Reeves, an author and syndicated columnist who wrote about politics for more than 50 years and published books on the 1960s, including several years with The New York Times.

Courteney Cox catching up with ‘Friends’ while in quarantine

BY CHRISTI CARAS
Los Angeles Times

Are you binge-watching “Friends” to stay sane during the coronavirus shut-in?

So is Courteney Cox.

The actress, who played the lovely rigid Monica in the hit sitcom, appeared remotely on the March 25 home edition of “Jimmy Kimmel Live” and re- vealed she’s been making produc- tive use of her time in quarantine by binging up her on her “Friends” knowledge.

“We love the show so much, I decided to binge-watch ‘Friends,’” Cox said, clarifying that she recently purchased the series in full on Amazon Prime.

“I just started Season 1. It’s really good.”

Cox and her former cast- mates — Jennifer Aniston, David Schwimmer, Matthew Perry, Lisa Kudrow and Matt LeBlanc — were supposed to film HBO Max’s “Friends” reunion special last week. That is, until the pan- demic shut down TV production along with just about everything else in entertainment.

The special, executive pro- duced by Cox and the rest of the gang, was billed as an unscripted conversation between the show’s main ensemble, shot on the show’s original soundstage at the Warner Bros. studio lot.

When they do eventually re- unite for the highly anticipated program, it’s safe to say that Cox will be much better prepared.

“I don’t remember even being on the show. I have such a bad memory,” she said. “I remember, obviously, loving everybody there and having fun. And I remember certain times in my life that I was there, but I don’t remember epi- sodes…. I fail every [trivia] test.”

At least she could recall one thing: her character’s name.

“It’s Monica,” she said. “I do know that.”

For the segment, the “Cous- gar Town” alum proved just how limited her “Friends” knowledge is by going head to head in a trivia match against a superfan — who happens to be Kimmel’s cousin.

Despite failing miserably, Cox seemed confident that her new viewing plans would succeed in refreshing her memory.

“By the end of this quar- tine, I’m going to know so much more.”

Actress Courteney Cox is confined to home, just like many others.
How coronavirus infection shrunk my world

BY DAVID DREHLE
The Washington Post

I once received the lavish gift of hearing a sermon preached by the renowned Fred Craddock, whose poetic style inspired generations of Christian ministers, though very few ever approached his seemingly effortless mastery. Craddock believed the lesson best shared through the journey of a story. The lesson he shared that day was the 30th Psalm, as stout a reassurance as human grace ever pounded to beauty. “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.”

I suppose mid-American mountain drawl, Craddock took his congregation back to a long, delicate night in his boyhood, as a fever bailed off terrifying viruses in the trees and mists outside his bedroom window. Ghosts and “haints” stalked the fearful night — restless, relentless spirits known for finding their victims to death by sheer exhaustion.

Oh, a what night it was for the tossing, turning little boy, half-dreaming, half-hallucinating. Each dark hour seemed to unfold into another even darker; the bedheads tangle and clutching; shadows set in on the human bones.

But daylight and the fever finally broke as one. The lonely suffering of the soulby body was as it would be in the end.

How do you let that one die?

The gift of this unpleasant infection has forced me to go past self-pity and weeping to a humbler understanding of myself and my place in a community. My weakness is not a part of my community’s strength. The less I am good for, the more magnificent my family and friends become. The house is full of food. My email is miles deep in attaboys and warm wishes. I ask for a blood-oxygen monitor; 30 minutes later, it’s on the porch. Does it mean something if you never teach me to change a bulb, or to take each step of the recovery. Readers who disagree with every word I write send assurances that they’re praying for me, and friends and family have all said it was a double portion of whatever their strongest mojo might be.

The idea is helping us to see how our individual haint-filled nights are part of a larger life-force. Health is not a purely individual concern. My helplessness in recovery can be precisely what the community needs: I am surviving the virus but not spreading it. Some of us are chosen to suffer, some to console; some to isolate, others to make up for the fray; some to receive; some to be broken, others to be healers. We are still at the beginning of this terrific undoing. We need to respect it and give it the fullness of time. Weeping may tarry for the night.

But joy comes in the morning. Joy comes with the hope of a new day, the love of a new night. Yes, we’re a strong country, with a greater appreciation for the aches and pains of our only community we’ve got. We’ve swelled too long with the dark and fitful shadows of our febrile days. We can rise up from the sickbed and walk into the day.

David Von Drehle is a Washington Post columnist.
He is the author of "Rise to Greatness: Abraham Lincoln and America’s Most Perilous Year."

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The risk in what a Texas official is proposing

OPINION

BY KATHLEEN PARKER
Washington Post Writers Group

South Carolina author Josephine Humphreys recently posed a problematic question on Facebook: If you are a doctor, would you save patients with coronavirus but can only save nine, who do you let die?

It has me wondering: Are we writing to prepare questions that are otherwise incomprehensible. William Styron broke the world’s heart with a similar question in his novel, “Sophie’s Choice.” Set in Nazi Germany, a heart with a similar question in his novel, “Sophie’s Choice.” Set in Nazi Germany, a

What will make a grown man cry is the night — more than one night, through 10 days, now, of doubt and disappointment. It’s not the fever and malaise one cries over, though. It’s the question. Do you let die, tiny 1-year-old Fred Craddock cried in his illness.

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Joseph Cacchio, Washington Bureau Chief

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Europe/Mideast

by email at ombudsman@stripes.com, or by phone at 202-886-0006.

Calvin Alexander, a critical care doctor in Shreveport, La., reported to me by email that he get infrequently” treats critically ill elderly patients in intensive care who, ignorant of advance directives, opt out of ventilator care. We support once their options are explained.

With recent discussions about rationing resources, Alexander urged a national discussion about advance directives. “We need to make sure we use them (ventilators) on patients that want them in the first place.”

No doubt, he’s right about the conversation, but I’m not sure he or Patrick are correct about the degree of surgical altruism, “They are the ones that have been chosen to suffer; some to receive; some to be broken, others to be healers. We are still at the beginning of this terrific undoing. We need to respect it and give it the fullness of time. Weeping may tarry for the night.

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Can Wuhan lead in a good way this time?

By Xinyan Yu
Special to The Washington Post

P

atients waiting to be tested, health care workers making masks and face shields from scratch, people getting laid off, stock market economy stumbles and government leaders struggling to assuage the panic. Now, in South Korea, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak in the United States, looks like today. And this was what my hometown Wuhan, a city of 11 million people in central China, looked like two months ago.

In February, I watched from afar as the coronavirus became a crisis. The city went from the peak, hundreds died each day. Yet for many in the United States and elsewhere, the crisis felt distant and foreign.

It’s painful now to see echoes of what Wuhan went through around the world. On April 8, Wuhan residents were caught off guard in eating SARS-like virus started spreading like wildfire. During the darkest time when people swarmed to the hospitals, I lost count of how many heartbreaking videos I saw on social media of patients lying on the floor, families weeping over relatives who died before they could be tested, and doctors and nurses working with minimal protection.

On Feb. 7, the entire nation mourned Li Wenliang, a 28-year-old ophthalmologist who was reprimanded for police for warning his colleagues about a SARS-like virus. Sadness and anger spread as people demanded apologies from officials who failed to alert the public in time and suppressed the full scale of the crisis.

Wuhan shut down the city on Jan. 23 and sealed off residential complexes as early as Feb. 8. Public transportation was suspended, and private cars were ordered off the roads. The next week, Wuhan registered 15,152 positive cases in a single day.

The city mobilized to build two make-shift hospitals with about 3,000 beds in a fortnight, and turned 16 schools, stadiums and hotels into quarantine centers with about 13,000 beds. Communist Party members like my uncle were sent to guard remote residential complexes to ensure people with no essential duties stayed indoors. More than 20,000 health workers from 29 provinces went to Wuhan to support the city at great personal risk.

As the city focused its efforts on the coronavirus, there were trade-offs and costs. Hospitals, including some treating cancer patients, had to vacate beds to make space for COVID-19 patients, which meant many urgent treatments were disrupted. Some people with even the mildest cold-like symptoms were forced into home quarantine with their doors sealed or loaded into buses headed for quarantine centers.

Eventually, the number of new cases stabilized to a few hundred a day, almost four weeks after total lockdown. Though the numbers might not have captured the full picture — China’s tally does not include asymptomatic patients, for example — the spread of the virus seemed to have subsided.

Two months after the lockdown, there have been 40,000 recoveries and 2,500 deaths in Wuhan. Now, the city is gearing up for a reboot. Last Monday, buses ran empty to test out the routes. Checkpoints were removed, allowing residents to roam freely in the complex. And an inspection team has been evaluating applications to reopen businesses, ensuring offices follow precautionary measures such as temperature-taking at the entrance, social distancing lines in hallways and elevators, and disinfecting routines.

There was a rare moment of relief as things improved, but there are still fears that a second wave of cases could occur. Many are reacting by continuing to self-isolate. Still, as the city slowly recovers from the coronavirus, people are looking to the resilient people of Wuhan for reassurance that when there’s a beginning, there will be an end.

Xinyan Yu is a journalist from Wuhan based in Washington.

We might see a coronavirus baby blip — not a boom

By Richard W. Evans
Special to The Washington Post

T

hanks to the coronavirus, Americans have been locked out of their offices and told to work from home. There’s no eating out, no recreational shopping and no hanging with friends. Almost all events are canceled, and no one can travel. There’s not even live sports on TV.

Of the many questions this extreme situation raises, one will have to wait several months for an answer: Should we expect a coronavirus baby boom? A surprising amount of research has been done on the subject of post-disaster fertility. The headline hypothesis is fairly straightforward: Disasters that (a) result in widespread fear and panic, (b) have a major impact on the incomes of the affected population, and (c) are experienced by large numbers of people at both extremes, a 2% change in monthly births per month this winter, depending on how long the shutdown endures.

That’s enough to suggest that people wondering what to do with their extra time at home might want to take up knitting. There’s no harm in working on that blanket or those booties. Come December, someone you know might need them.

Richard W. Evans is director and senior lecturer in the M.A. program in computational social science at the University of Chicago, director of the Open Source Economics Laboratory and president of Open Research Group.
Eugene Sheffer Crossword

Across
1. Water, in Mexico 15
5. Previously 22
8. Sleek, in 25
12. Gathered one’s 26
14. Streetcar 27
15. Unvarying price 28
16. Eat In style 29
17. Pitcher’s pride 30
18. One of the 31
20. Tennis star 32
23. 36
26. 37
29. 38
30. 39
32. 40
34. 41
35. 42
36. 43
37. 44
40. 45
41. 46
42. 47
43. 48
44. 49
45. 50
46. 51

Across
1. Water, in Mexico 15
2. Canine cry 22
3. Solidify 26
4. “Born in the —” 27
5. Reach 28
6. Genesis 29
7. Belly 30
8. Audition that any- one can attend 31
9. Rocker Clapton 32
10. Hindu royal 33
11. Portent 34
13. Messes up 35
19. Debtors’ notes 36
20. Cave flier 37
21. Norwegian saint 38
22. Bar 39
23. Pivot 40
25. Imaginary 41
26. Forum wear 42
27. Canal zone 43
29. Pesky insect 44
31. Casual shirt 45
33. Beekeeper’s place 46
34. Trife 47
36. Optimum 48
37. Ersatz swing 49
38. Big fuses 50
39. Pile 51
40. Speedy 52
43. Vinyl records 53
44. 1959 Kingston Trio hit 54
45. Not ‘neath 55
46. Bikini top 56

Answer to Previous Puzzle

3-30

3.30

CRYPTOQUIP

VA FX RL K C I FF R A H X G V O D V
HX K T P R F Q Z H X P Q K P T F S H F K F Q
CI IT D GL, V A D X Q S D AF X V
ZH X F A D T: Z H K D Z C K O D.
Saturday’s Cryptoquip: YOU’RE RECOMMENDING WRITING THINGS DOWN TWICE TO AID IN RECALLING THEM LATER? DUALLY NOTED.
Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: I equals F
Every controversial topic has two sides. We look into the ones that matter to you.

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Knicks owner Dolan has coronavirus

By Tim Reynolds
Associated Press

James Dolan, the executive chairman of Madison Square Garden Company and owner of the New York Knicks, has tested positive for the coronavirus.

Dolan is the first U.S. major pro sports owner known to have tested positive for the virus. He also owns the NHL’s New York Rangers, along with other venues like Radio City Music Hall, The Hulu Theatre and The Chicago Theatre.

“The Madison Square Garden Company Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Jim Dolan has tested positive for coronavirus,” the Knicks’ statement said. “He has been in self-isolation since the March 9 announcement that showed he had been in very limited contact with the virus.”

Dolan’s test was negative on March 9, when he was tested or when he received the diagnosis. Dolan is the first U.S. major pro sports owner known to have tested positive for the virus. He also owns the NHL’s New York Rangers, along with other venues like Radio City Music Hall, The Hulu Theatre and The Chicago Theatre.

“The Madison Square Garden Company Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Jim Dolan has tested positive for coronavirus,” the Knicks’ statement said. “He has been in self-isolation since the March 9 announcement that showed he had been in very limited contact with the virus.”
NCAA weighs more eligibility for sports cut short by virus

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

The NCAA Division I Council is scheduled to vote Monday on whether to allow another year of eligibility for spring sport athletes such as baseball, softball and lacrosse players, who had their seasons washed out by the coronavirus pandemic.

Providing similar relief to winter sport athletes, such as basketball and hockey players and wrestlers, will also be considered. According to a memo recently sent to college sports administrators from the NCAA, there does not appear to be support for that.

“(Winter) sports had either concluded their regular-season competition or substantially concluded their regular-season competition,” said the memo.

Division II has approved legislation to provide an extra season of eligibility and financial aid for its spring sport athletes, according to the memo.

Around Division I, conference-level discussions on restoring eligibility have been ongoing.

The Division I Council has representatives from all 32 conferences. After it votes, the Division I Board of Directors, made up of mostly university presidents and chancellors, will have the opportunity to weigh in and could kick back the council for further consideration.

While there is momentum toward giving spring athletes another year of eligibility, there are plenty of administrators with reservations.

“I know I could capably argue either side of it,” Big 12 Commissioner Bob Bowlsby said Thursday during a conference call with reporters.

NCAA bylaws regarding scholarship limits would have to be worked around.

Bowlsby said with so much unknown regarding the outbreak and when sports will be able to resume, delaying a decision on giving back eligibility might be the best option.

“I worry that with the uncertainty of our current circumstances, we might find ourselves with a disruption in the fall or winter next year due to a rebound in the coronavirus,” he said. “If we have that sort of disruption again, then we are going to offer fall-sport athletes another year?”

Wisniewski thrilled to return to Pittsburgh

By WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Six months ago, Stefan Wisniewski’s Sundays consisted of spending the afternoon watching the NFL on TV wondering if his phone was ever going to ring. The veteran offensive lineman tried not to fixate on the circumstances that led to him sitting on the couch.

“You try not to drive yourself crazy with the why,” Wisniewski said. “I’ve kind of learned to not go crazy, trying to figure out why everything is happening.”

So Wisniewski relied on his faith to get him through, optimizing an opportunity would eventually come. It ended up working better than he ever imagined.

And in February, Wisniewski was on the field earning his second Super Bowl ring in three years while starting for the Kansas City Chiefs. This week his nomadic and recently charmed journey through the NFL finally led him home when the Pittsburgh native signed a two-year deal to join the Steelers.

Though the Chiefs expressed interest in keeping the 31-year-old Wisniewski, the opportunity for the player to team up with watching was too good to pass up. He’ll be vying for a chance to replace the recently retired Ramon Foster at left guard.

“I knew it’d be an open job and that was exciting,” Wisniewski said Friday. “It’s even more exciting because it’s not just any starting job, it’s a starting job for the Pittsburgh Steelers … I’d have a few other options but it’s hard to turn down your hometown team.”

Wisniewski grew up in the Pittsburgh suburbs and remembers scrambling home from church every Sunday during the fall in time for kickoffs to catch his favorite team. He played at Heinz Field in high school and daydreamed of one day joining his father Leo and uncle Steve in the NFL. Dressing in black-and-gold seemed to be a bridge too far. Both his dad and his uncle spent their entire careers with one team, Leo with the Baltimore Colts, Steve with the Raiders.

Ovechkin, Crosby favor NHL heading right into playoffs

By JOHN WAWROW and STEPHEN WEYNO
Associated Press

Pittsburgh Penguins captain Sidney Crosby prefers the NHL skip the rest of the regular season and go directly to the playoffs if games resume during this pandemic-interrupted spring.

The two Metropolitan Division rivals shared their views Thursday during a video conference call hosted by the league.

“Of course, you want to score 50, but right now, like everybody is saying, the most important thing is to stay safe and to get this thing done,” Ovechkin said Thursday. “It (stinks) not to score 50 and to not get another milestone, but you have to think about your family, people and fans to be more safe.”

The NHL has not said a time-frame for when play will resume or if decided by points percentage.

With the season on hold, players have been told to self-isolate until at least April 4.

Three NHL players have tested positive for the virus: two in Ottawa and the third with Colorado.

Each of the eight players spoke Thursday from their respective homes, with New Jersey Devils defensemen P.K. Subban having traveled to Los Angeles to be with his fiancée, retired Olympic skier Lindsey Vonn.

The discussion over whether to complete the regular season had at least one amusing moment in highlighting the sibling rivalry between Carolina’s Jordan Staal and older brother, Marc, who plays for the Rangers.

“Yeah, screw the Rangers,” Jordan said with a laugh in noting the Panthers have the slight edge in the standings.

“Boy, it’s hard,” he added. “You can speculate and try to decide what’s fair. But there’s always going to be someone who’s (ticked) off about it. Whatever we do decide, let’s hope it’s for the best of the game.”
With no March Madness, The Associated Press is moving stories and historical pieces to help fill some of the void in college basketball. A panel of AP sports writers voted in March on the top 10 men's basketball games in the history of the NCAA Tournament. They are being republished because the sport has been shut down by the coronavirus pandemic. The following game story, from March 24, 1974, was voted No. 8.

**Streak snapped**

Thompson, Wolfpack put an end to UCLA’s long championship run

**By Ken Rappoport**

Associated Press

GREENSBORO, N.C. North Carolina State brought UCLA down to earth after seven straight national championships, beating the mighty Bruins 80-77 on David Thompson’s crucial points in double overtime in the semifinals of the NCAA basketball playoffs Saturday.

Inspired by a screaming throng of 15,829 at the Greensboro Coliseum, the top-ranked Wolfpack advanced to Monday night’s finals against Marquette. The Warriors earlier beat Kansas 64-51 with a nine-point spree, keyed by Lloyd Walton early in the second half.

The game between the Wolfpack and the Bruins, billed as the headliner of the day, was everything that it was cracked up to be between the nation’s No. 1 and No. 2 teams.

Bill Walton, who scored 29 points for the defending national champions, had helped the Bruins take a seven-point lead early in the second thrilling overtime period.

UCLA led 74-67 and seemed to have the game salted away when the Wolfpack players, with “Pack Power” ringing in their ears, went to work.

Monty Towe, the smallest player on the court at 5-foot-7, triggered N.C. State’s ears, went to work. Monty Towe, the smallest player on the court at 5-foot-7, triggered N.C. State’s ears, went to work.

Thompson then took over the flow of the dramatic game with a field goal at 2:55 that brought N.C. State within four. The crowd then went mad when Tom Burleson scored a field goal and a foul shot for the Wolfpack, trimming the UCLA lead to 75-74 with about a minute and a half left.

UCLA’s Dave Meyers missed the first shot of a one-and-one free throw situation with 1:16 left, the omnipresent Thompson sucked up the rebound and N.C. State had possession of the ball and the opportunity to end the Bruins’ championship skein.

The dazzling forward penetrated UCLA for the go-ahead field goal that put the Wolfpack into a 76-75 lead with 33 seconds left.

The shot pulled most of the fans out of their seats, and the crowd went berserk with the dramatic basket.

With 34 seconds left on the clock, the Wolfpack’s home-state idol tossed in two killing foul shots that finally put UCLA away.

Walton, the nation’s Player of the Year, last two seasons, played his heart out. With 29 points and 18 rebounds, Thompson, another All-American, had 28 points and 10 rebounds for State, which won its 29th game in 30 outings this year.

Burleson, State’s much-maligned center who played in Walton’s shadow throughout his varsity career, scored 20 points and had 14 rebounds.

All-American forward Keith Wilkes added 15 points and Dave Meyers scored 12 for UCLA, 25-4.

North Carolina State wiped out an 11-point UCLA lead in regulation time to gain this revenge victory over the Bruins, who had handed the Wolfpack its only loss 84-66 in St. Louis back in December.

The Walton Gang had taken a 49-40 lead at the start of the second half, but the Wolfpack would not lay down. Behind Thompson and Burleson, N.C. State fought back to tie the score at 53-53 with 4:34 remaining in regulation time.

That man Walton once again asserted himself with a field goal that moved the Bruins into a 65-63 lead with 2:22 left, but Thompson, State’s superman all season, tied the score with a driving shot at the two-minute mark and sent the game into overtime.

The first overtime was just as dramatic, although neither team was able to score much. Burleson and UCLA’s Greg Lee matched field goals. But North Carolina State was unable to cash in on a golden opportunity with 15 seconds remaining and the super-powers went into the second overtime tied at 67-67.

Until this bitter loss, the Bruins had won seven straight national titles and nine in the last 10 years.

**By the numbers**

7 Consecutive titles UCLA had won going into its 1974 tournament loss to N.C. State, the most in NCAA history.

88 Consecutive games won by UCLA from 1971 to 1974, when it lost a regular-season game 71-70, to Notre Dame.

source: NCAA.com, Associated Press
**STARS AND STRIPES**

**OLYMPICS**

**TOKYO —** Tokyo Olympic organizers seem to be leaving away from the scheduled games in the spring of 2021. More and more the signs point toward the summer of 2021.

Organizing committee President Yoshiro Mori suggested there would be no major change from 2020.

“The games are meant to be in summer, so we should be thinking of a postponement,” Japanese news agency Kyodo reported Mori saying on Saturday.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, after the postponement was announced in Switzerland on Tuesday, left open the possibility of spring dates.

The postponed games were to have opened on July 24 and closed on Aug. 9. Mori suggested some decisions could be made as early as this week when the organizing committee’s executive board meets.

Any final decision will be made by local organizers and the IOC, and hundreds of sponsors, sports federations and broadcasters.

Athletes have been left in limbo by the postponement. Many have been forced to step training because of the spreading coronavirus. Even those who can train have no idea about how to schedule training to reach peak fitness at the right time.

**Mori and organizing committee CEO Toshiro Muto have both said the added cost of rescheduling will be “enormous.” Early estimates put costs at between $2 billion-$3 billion with the several levels of Japanese governments likely to foot most of the bills.

Tokyo organizers say they are spending $1.2 billion to stage the games. However, a government audit report said it will cost at least twice that much. All but $5.6 billion is public money.

The Switzerland-based IOC has coughed up $1.1 billion to organize the Tokyo Olympics, according to local organizing committee documents. It has a reserve fund of about $2 billion for such emergencies and also has insurance coverage.

**Who pays for another year?**

**BY STEPHEN WADE**

**Associated Press**

TOKYO — With the Tokyo Olympics postponed until 2021, now comes the multibillion-dollar question: Who pays the bills for the delay, and how long will they be?

The most likely answer is — primarily the taxpayers.

"Of course there will be costs," organizing committee CEO Toshiro Muto said after the postponement was announced. "As for how much, we have no figures with us right now. As for who will shoulder those costs, needless to say, they are not going to be easy discussions, so we are not sure how long they will take.

"The Japanese financial newspaper Nikkei put the added cost at $2.7 billion, citing an estimate from local organizers. Tokyo organizers will have to renegotiate new leases on venues, pay for maintenance at arenas, and maybe find different fields of play. They will also have to deal with real estate developers who are rethinking their plans, and the cost of apartments at what will be the Athletes Village. The organizing committee also employs 3,000 staff members, and some may lose their jobs to cost cutting.

Tokyo, driven by advertising giant Dentsu Inc., has sold $3.3 billion in local sponsorships, more than twice any previous Olympics. Those brands will be clamoring to know what they get for their money. Refunds? Make-good deals? New contracts?

And formula one racing might be done until new dates are set to replace what was to be this year’s Olympics on the calendar.

The total game budget was $58.6 billion, of which $34.8 billion is public funds and $23.8 billion is private funds. Of the public funds, at least $21 billion is expected to come from the national government, $4 billion from local governments, and $1.8 billion from the Tokyo metropolitan government.

Any final decision will be made by local organizers and the IOC, and hundreds of sponsors, sports federations and broadcasters.

Athletes have been left in limbo by the postponement. Many have been forced to step training because of the spreading coronavirus. Even those who can train have no idea about how to schedule training to reach peak fitness at the right time.
Gatlin, Powell hanging on for Games in 2021

By Pat Graham
Associated Press

Highlights of their very best moments are still available on compact discs, maybe even actual video tape. When teammates shout out, “Hey, old man” — well, they know that’s directed at them.

At first glance, America’s Justin Gatlin and Jamaica’s Asafa Powell might seem like relics from a bygone age of sprinting. In reality, they’re still in the mix — and not even a year-long postponement of the Tokyo Olympics is going to shut them down.

“I’m ready for this year,” Powell told The Associated Press in the wake of the IOC’s announcement that the games would be delayed due to the coronavirus. “I definitely have to be ready for next year.”

Make no mistake, they are running out of time.

Gatlin will be 39 when the Olympics finally roll around and Powell, who turns 38 in November, will be steaming toward the same number. Both men were beginning to make a name for themselves in track before a young phenom named Usain Bolt had raced his first Olympics. Bolt, by the way, is 33 and happily retired.

Both Gatlin and Powell are “Jeopardy” questions just waiting to be asked.

The last man to win an Olympic gold medal in the 100 before Bolt? That would be Gatlin.

The last man to hold the 100-meter world record before Bolt? That would be Powell.

Gatlin won the Olympics in 2004. “Feels like five years ago,” he insists.

Powell set a world record in 2007, when he ran 9.74 seconds. Bolt topped it less than a year later and eventually lowered the mark to its current standing of 9.58.

Gatlin and Powell think they could make a different kind of history in 2021.

The oldest Olympic champion in the men’s 100 meters remains Linford Christie, who was 32 when he won at the 1992 Barcelona Games, according to research by Olympic historian Bill Mallon. As for the oldest Olympic medalist in the event, that distinction belongs to Gatlin, courtesy of his silver at the 2016 Rio Games.

SEE OLD ON PAGE 23

American Justin Gatlin, inset, and Jamaican Asafa Powell, right, may be late 30-something sprinters, but there’s no retirement talk, even with the Tokyo Games delayed due to the coronavirus.

As the sports world pauses to join the rest of the world in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, you will see fewer sports stories in Stars and Stripes. We look forward to resuming our normal coverage when the leagues and governing bodies determine it is safe for athletes and fans to return to competition.