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STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 84 Edition 10 ©SS 2025 THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2025

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

50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Navy admiral recommended for a key post in Middle East

By DAN LAMOTHE
AND MISSY RYAN
The Washington Post

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth is backing a Navy admiral as his preferred choice for a key role commanding U.S. military operations in the Middle East, passing over an Army general who had been widely presumed to be the top contender amid an ongoing naval war in the region, according to defense officials and others familiar with the issue.



Cooper

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper is Hegseth's recommendation to head U.S. Central Command over Gen. James Mingus, the officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the Trump administration's personnel considerations. The recommendation will be reviewed by President Donald Trump, who must submit a nomination to the Senate for the job, one of the military's most significant.

The support for Cooper comes as Hegseth's team scrutinizes Pentagon plans for numerous top military roles, in some cases shifting to different options than what had been favored by President Joe Biden's administration, the officials said. Both Cooper and Mingus are seen in the Pentagon as qualified selections for the Central Command post, the officials said, but the choice demonstrates a desire by the Trump administration to continue to shake up the military's senior ranks after ousting several leaders soon after tak-

ing several leaders soon after tak-

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PHOTOS BY PAUL RATJE/For The Washington Post

The U.S.-Mexico border wall is seen reflected in the lens of an advanced camera mounted atop an Army Stryker vehicle.

Cracking down at the border

First migrants are facing criminal charges for entering newly expanded military zone

By MARIA SACCHETTI,
JEREMY ROEBUCK
AND DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

The Justice Department has begun the first criminal prosecutions of migrants who breach a newly expanded military zone at the southern border that is patrolled by U.S. troops, threatening people with additional penalties for crossing the U.S.-Mexico border illegally.

At least 28 migrants were charged Monday with crossing into the 170-mile-long "National Defense Area," a 60-foot strip of land that stretches across the bottom of New Mexico and has effectively been turned into part of a U.S. military installation. Prosecutors added the new charge of violating security regulations in U.S. District Court in Las Cruces to the

SEE ZONE ON PAGE 8



Soldiers deployed as part of Joint Task Force Southern Border scan an area of Sunland Park, N.M., for migrants.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Amazon not planning to share tariff costs online

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Amazon says it's not planning to display added tariff costs next to product prices on its site — despite a report that sparked speculation the e-commerce giant would soon show the new import charges, and the White House's fiery comments denouncing the purported change.

The Trump administration's reaction appeared to be based on a misinterpretation of internal plans being considered by Ama-

zon, rather than a final decision made by the company.

And even those talks were limited. Only Amazon's Haul service — its recently launched, low-cost storefront — “considered the idea” of listing import charges on certain products, company spokesperson Tim Doyle said in a statement sent to The Associated Press. But this “was never approved and is not going to happen.”

Earlier Tuesday, Punchbowl News had reported that Amazon planned to start showing how

much of each product's cost derived from tariffs “right next to” its total listed price, citing an anonymous source familiar with the matter.

The Trump administration was quick to criticize news of the potential move. At a briefing with reporters earlier in the day, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt accused Amazon of taking a “hostile and political act” — and further attacked the company by suggesting it had “partnered with a Chinese propaganda arm.”

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (May 1)	0.86	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8222
British pound (May 1)	\$1.30	Thailand (Baht)	33.37
Japanese yen (May 1)	139.00	Turkey (NewLira)	38.4882
South Korean won (May 1)	1393.00		
Commercial rates		(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769	INTEREST RATES	
Britain (Pound)	1.3323		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3840		
China (Yuan)	7.2695		
Denmark (Krone)	6.5650		
Egypt (Pound)	50.8350		
Euro	0.8797		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7569		
Hungary (Forint)	355.56		
Israel (Shekel)	3.6554		
Japan (Yen)	142.67		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3064		
Norway (Krone)	10.4221		
Philippines (Peso)	55.84		
Poland (Zloty)	3.77		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7515	Prime rate	7.50
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3071	Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50
South Korea (Won)	1427.55	Federal funds market rate	4.38
		3-month bill	4.30
		30-year bond	4.65

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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MILITARY

Hegseth targets ‘woke’ women in security act

Trump signed initiative into law during first term

By CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth moved to cancel a program that promoted the participation of women in national security, claiming the initiative is “woke,” “divisive” and distracts troops.

The Women, Peace and Security Act was signed into law in 2017 by President Donald Trump to recognize the role that women have in achieving security objectives, especially in situations overseas in which men for cultural reasons might not be able to question women, or men for religious reasons would not have direct access to women. The intent of the act was to increase women’s participation in preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism and building post-conflict stability.

“[The Women, Peace and Security Act] is yet another woke divisive/social justice/Biden initiative that overburdens our commanders and troops — distracting from our core task: WAR-FIGHTING. WPS is a UNITED NATIONS

program pushed by feminists and left-wing activists. Politicians fawn over it; troops HATE it,” Hegseth said Tuesday in an X post.

Hegseth followed up two hours later, clarifying the act was not implemented by the Biden administration, but was “ruined” by former President Joe Biden.

The Pentagon’s “Women, Peace, and Security Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan” was signed June 2020. The plan was updated in 2024, promoting three defense priorities: train and equip troops to implement the WPS Act at the tactical, operational, and strategic level; integrate the WPS toolkit objectives into the Defense Department’s operations, activities and investments in peacetime and crisis contexts, and cooperate with allies and partners on WPS.

“The woke & weak Biden Administration distorted & weaponized the straight-forward & security-focused WPS initiative launched in 2017,” Hegseth said in his second X post.

The Defense Department, he said, will fight to end WPS programs across the Pentagon in the next budget.

The Women, Peace and Security Act has largely had bipartisan support from Republican and Democratic lawmakers, including members of the Trump adminis-

tration. The act was co-sponsored by Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem when she was a congresswoman from South Dakota and Secretary of State Marco Rubio when he was a senator from Florida. Mike Waltz, Trump’s national security adviser, was a founding member of the WPS congressional caucus.

Rubio recently praised the legislation as a bill that he was “very proud” to have co-sponsored.

“It was the first comprehensive law passed in any country in the world — the first law passed by any country anywhere in the world — focused on protecting women and promoting their participation in society,” Rubio said April 1 during the 19th Annual International Women of Courage Awards in Washington, D.C.

This month, Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Congress that the program had helped troops in battle.

“When we would go out into the field after concluding an assault, we would have female members who would speak with those women and children who were on the objective and they would help us to understand the human terrain in a new and novel way,” Caine said in April during his Senate confirmation hearing.

Hegseth took aim at the legisla-



ALEXANDER KUBITZA/Defense Department

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth called the Women, Peace and Security Act, which was signed into law in 2017 by President Donald Trump, a “woke” program Tuesday as he moved to cancel it.

tion on the heels of purging diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, which he has said are incompatible with the armed forces.

“We will focus on lethality, meritocracy, accountability, standards and readiness,” Hegseth wrote in a January memo.

The WPS Act is not connected to diversity and equity-based programs, according to a February analysis by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank. Kathleen McInnis, a senior fellow with the think tank, pointed to lessons that can be learned from conflicts around the globe to strengthen U.S. national security through the WPS Act.

In Afghanistan, McInnis said, American female teams helped tactical and operational level commanders better understand the human terrain of battle spaces, therefore improving kinetic and non-kinetic targeting. Simultaneously, partner forces also became

aware that the intentional presence of women in kinetic fights could have a strategic impact.

Kurdish female units fought against the Islamic State in part due to their combat effectiveness but also because of the reputational damage to ISIS fighters being forced to fight — and lose — to women, McInnis said.

In Ukraine, upwards of 60,000 women are serving in the military, including on the front lines, and female networks are critical components of anti-Russian resistance networks.

In bringing women to the table, McInnis said, there is the opportunity for the joint force to utilize WPS to advance U.S. objectives.

“Equally, eliminating these programs could allow adversaries like China to reinforce their global support networks and turn this human terrain advantage against the United States,” McInnis said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Army: AI tool could boost efficiency of ammo supply logistics

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

A new artificial intelligence program could change how the U.S. military manages its ammunition needs by crunching mounds of data to outthink the current approach, Army officials said this week.

Called the Quarterly Resupply Model, it aims to revolutionize the logistics of the military’s expansive ammunition management enterprise, Joint Munitions Command said in a statement Tuesday.

A recent experiment found that a machine learning model generated 27,300 forecasts, achieving a 74% prediction accuracy on ammunition requirements, compared with a 25% accuracy rate for the current system, the command said.

The discovery “represents a significant advancement in ammunition logistics,” Ryan Senkbile, acting director of the command’s munitions logistics distribution division, said in the state-



U.S. Army

An Anniston Munitions Center, Ala., employee moves ammunition for distribution. An artificial intelligence program could alter how the U.S. military manages its ammunition supply needs, Army officials said.

ment.

The milestone was achieved in September after a yearlong development process, the Army said.

The model can account for variations in ammunition consump-

tion, training schedules and installation requirements, the command said.

For years, the military has relied on the Total Ammunition Management Information System

to handle how ammunition is dispersed across the force.

The effort is managed by the Army but relied on by much of the armed forces.

The current web-enabled sys-

tem calculates combat load requirements, validates and routes electronic requests, collects expenditures and prepares forecasts, according to a 2021 Marine Corps summary of the program.

For the military, ensuring adequate amounts of ammunition are fielded to U.S. troops and units worldwide is a multibillion-dollar expense.

The Army didn’t indicate whether the AI tool will ultimately replace the current system.

However, the new machine learning approach can analyze historical data to better predict future ammunition requirements, the Army said.

The aim of the new model is to reduce shipment frequency, optimize inventory levels and enhance forecasting accuracy, Senkbile said.

The model, which is operating at relevant stateside locations, is still having its performance monitored, the Army said, adding that the data-driven approach “allows for continuous improvement.”

MILITARY

DOD: US forces have hit over 1,000 Houthi targets

BY MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — American forces have hit more than 1,000 Houthi targets in Yemen as part of a campaign that began in March to stop attacks by the militants on the shipping lanes of the Red Sea, the Pentagon said Tuesday.

Since March 15, strikes conducted by U.S. Central Command, which oversees military operations in the Middle East, have killed Houthi fighters and leaders and degraded their capabilities, Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a statement to mark the first 100 days of the Defense Department during President Donald Trump’s second administration.

The latest number is an increase from a CENTCOM statement issued Sunday that said U.S. forces have struck more than 800 targets. Dubbed Operation Rough Rider, the strikes have also taken out multiple command-and-control facilities, air defense systems, weapons storage and production sites.

Pentagon officials have said the strikes will continue against the Houthis until the militants halt attacks on military and merchant vessels transiting shipping lanes in and near the Red Sea. Trump



U.S. Navy

An F/A-18E Super Hornet fighter jet prepares for launch on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman on April 1 during flight operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

has also threatened to go after their backers in Iran if the maritime attacks don’t stop.

The operation has been conducted by an assembly of forces that includes the strike groups of two aircraft carriers — the USS Harry S. Truman and USS Carl Vinson.

For years, the Houthis have targeted ships transiting Egypt’s Suez Canal, one of the world’s most used shipping routes because it

bridges the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea. But in the past year, the Houthis have ramped up their attacks, in what they call acts of solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza, where Israel has been at war with Hamas militants, another Iranian ally.

Former President Joe Biden began strikes against the Houthis in January 2024 in a bid to break the group’s attacks on shipping in the Red Sea.

UK military launches airstrikes along with US attacks on Yemen

BY JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The British military launched airstrikes with the United States targeting Yemen’s Houthi rebels, officials said early Wednesday, their first attack in Washington’s new intense campaign targeting the Iran-backed group.

The United Kingdom offered a detailed explanation for launching the strike, in a departure from the U.S., which has offered few details about the more than 800 strikes it has conducted since beginning its campaign on March 15.

The campaign, called “Operation Rough Rider,” has been targeting the rebels as the Trump administration negotiates with their main benefactor, Iran, over Tehran’s rapidly advancing nuclear program.

The U.K. Defense Ministry described the site attacked as “a cluster of buildings, used by the Houthis to manufacture drones of the type used to attack ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, located some 15 miles south of Sanaa.”

Royal Air Force Typhoon FGR4s took part in the raid, dropping Paveway IV guided bombs, the ministry added.

“The strike was conducted after dark, when the likelihood of any civilians being in the area was reduced yet further,” the ministry said.

The British offered no information on the damage done in the strike, nor whether they believed anyone had been killed. The U.S. military’s Central Command didn’t acknowledge the strike.

“This action was taken in response to a persistent threat from the Houthis to freedom of navigation,” U.K. Defense Secretary John Healey said. “A 55% drop in shipping through the Red Sea has already cost billions, fueling regional instability and risking economic security for families in the U.K.”

The Houthis reported several strikes around Yemen’s capital, Sanaa, which the group has held since 2014. Other strikes hit around Sada.

The British have taken part in airstrikes alongside the U.S. since the Biden administration began its campaign of strikes targeting the Houthis back in January 2024. However, this new strike is the first to see the British involved in the campaign under U.S. President Donald Trump.

The joint U.K.-U.S. strike follows an alleged U.S. airstrike on Monday that hit a prison holding African migrants, killing at least 68 people and wounding 47 others. The U.S. military said it was investigating.

House committee approves an extra \$150B for Pentagon

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The House Armed Services Committee on Tuesday advanced legislation that would invest \$150 billion in shipbuilding, a layered missile defense shield and other defense priorities as part of a Republican plan to enact President Donald Trump’s agenda.

The panel voted 35-21 in favor of the bill. It requires the Pentagon to spend the additional funds by October 2034, including nearly \$9 billion on renovations to barracks and unaccompanied housing, allowance increases and other quality-of-life improvements for service members.

The bulk of the legislation focuses on boosting the military’s capabilities.

It would provide \$34 billion to increase the Navy’s fleet and expand capacity at shipyards, \$25 billion to develop a “Golden Dome” system that could defend the U.S. from ballistic missiles that travel at hypersonic speeds, and \$20 billion to develop and acquire munitions.

“The time for this level of investment is long overdue,” said Chair-

man Mike Rogers, R-Ala. “We are currently at the lowest level of defense spending as a percentage of GDP since before World War II. That’s unacceptable. And it must change.”

The measure represents a portion of a massive Republican legislative package tackling immigration enforcement, energy provisions for oil and gas production, the extension of Trump’s 2017 tax cuts, and domestic spending reductions.

Republicans are pushing the bill through Congress using the reconciliation process, which will allow them to bypass Democratic opposition and pass the legislation with a simple majority vote.

Rep. Adam Smith of Washington, the top Democrat on the committee, said he would not support the overall bill, which is projected to add trillions to the deficit and cut into safety-net programs such as Medicaid, and could not trust the Pentagon’s leadership with an additional \$150 billion.



Rogers

“They have not even begun to prove that there is a chance in hell that they will spend this money intelligently, efficiently and effectively,” he said. “Secretary [Pete] Hegseth has proven himself to be completely incapable of doing the job of secretary of defense.”

Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass., a former Marine Corps officer, said he wouldn’t trust Hegseth with \$20.

“We should not give him a \$150 billion blank check,” he said.

Democrats took turns Tuesday criticizing Hegseth for sharing sensitive information on unsecured platforms, purging top staff and presiding over a Defense Department that has banned books and removed photographs in a bid to wipe out all mentions of race and gender.

“The fact that Secretary Hegseth is spending precious time, energy and resources on erasing the history and diversity of our great nation instead of on critical readiness or taking seriously the handling of sensitive national security information only serves to set us back,” said Rep. Sarah Elfreth, D-Md.

Elfreth introduced an amend-

ment to prohibit the censorship or destruction of historical artifacts and documents without an expert review but it failed to pass the committee.

Democrats put forward about 20 amendments to take digs at Hegseth and express their frustration with the Trump administration.

The proposals included reducing Hegseth’s salary to \$1, putting him through a managerial training program, blocking money for a makeup studio for Hegseth at the Pentagon, and preventing the rumored consolidation of certain combatant commands.

All were shot down.

Republicans lauded the legislation that they crafted as a historic effort to modernize the military after what they said was years of underinvestment. They also said the bill would strengthen deterrence against China, Russia, Iran and North Korea and revive an atrophied defense industrial base.

About \$20 billion would be spent on restocking munitions and ex-



Smith

panding the domestic production and refinement of rare earth and critical minerals that are primarily sourced from China and used to build fighter jets, submarines and other weapons.

The bill notably allocates billions to accelerate the deployment of low-cost drones, Rogers said.

“These unmanned air, surface and underwater systems are the key to victory on future battlefields,” he said. “I am pleased we are making such a significant investment in them today.”

Other spending would include \$11 billion to provide more resources to the Indo-Pacific Command, \$7 billion to acquire and modernize aircraft, and \$5 billion to pay for the military’s role in helping the Department of Homeland Security secure the U.S.-Mexico border.

The \$9 billion earmarked for service members and their families would pay for housing renovations, provide supplemental payments of basic housing allowances, extend eligibility for the temporary lodging expense allowance from 14 to 21 days, and expand various programs for education, child care and professional licenses.

PACIFIC

Marine indicted on sexual assault charges

Recent incident in restroom adds to strain over presence of US troops on Okinawa

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

NAHA CITY, Okinawa — Japanese prosecutors have indicted a U.S. Marine on charges of sexually assaulting a Japanese woman and injuring another in a restroom on a Marine Corps base in March.

Pfc. Austin R. Wedington, 27, of California, was charged with forcible sexual intercourse, committing an indecent act, and causing injury, according to a copy of the indictment from the Naha Public Prosecutors Office.

The case is one of several involving U.S. military personnel accused of sexual assault on Okinawa over the past year, incidents that have reignited public concern over the American troop presence on the southern island

prefecture.

The alleged assault occurred on Camp Foster, where Wedington serves as a correction and detention specialist with the Headquarters and Service Battalion, said 1st Lt. Grant Hoel, a spokesman for Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

Wedington was being held Wednesday at the Camp Hansen brig and will be transferred to Japanese custody at the Naha Detention Center, Hoel said by email that day.

Wedington worked at the Hansen brig before being reassigned to Foster, Maj. Brett Dornhege-Lazaroff, another command spokesman, said by phone Wednesday.

Prosecutors allege that Wedington grabbed a woman by the neck, forced her against a toilet

stall door and penetrated her with his fingers. A second woman, who tried to intervene, was allegedly stomped in the face and then placed in a rear chokehold, causing bruising, a neck sprain, and a shoulder abrasion.

The first woman is a Japanese civilian employee on the base, Japanese public broadcaster NHK reported April 24.

An unidentified Marine heard the incident and “rushed to assist, preventing possible further action by the alleged perpetrator,” Hoel said.

Under the U.S.-Japan status of forces agreement, Japanese authorities have primary jurisdiction over criminal cases involving Japanese citizens or property.

“The U.S. will monitor the trial proceedings without interfering in the Japanese judicial process,”

Hoel said. “The alleged behavior does not reflect the core values of the U.S. Military, nor does it represent the conduct of the overwhelming majority of Okinawa-based service members.”

The indictment follows several recent cases involving U.S. service members on Okinawa. In December, a Japanese court convicted Senior Airman Brennon R.E. Washington of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a minor.

He was sentenced to five years in prison with labor and has appealed.

Two Marines — Lance Cpls. Jamel Clayton and Michael Hofmaster — face separate sexual assault charges from last year.

Clayton is scheduled to go on trial June 2 in Naha District Court. Hofmaster’s court date has not been set.

On April 7, Okinawa police referred Wedington and another Marine to prosecutors on separate sexual assault allegations. Prosecutors dropped the second case on April 24.

In response to mounting public criticism, U.S. Forces Japan introduced new liberty restrictions in October, barring service members from visiting off-base drinking establishments between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.

On April 18, U.S. military officials joined Okinawa police and government leaders in a joint patrol of a nightlife area outside Kadena Air Base — the first such patrol since 1974, according to prefectural police.

The first formal forum for cooperation between U.S. military and Okinawan leaders is slated for May 9, according to USFJ.

DOD, Okinawa to hold first forum amid rising tensions over assaults

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY
Stars and Stripes

The first formal forum between U.S. military and Okinawan leaders is set to convene May 9, a move proposed last year in response to a series of sexual assault allegations involving American service members on the island.

The forum aims to enhance communications and build mutual understanding between U.S. forces and the Okinawa community, U.S. Forces Japan said in a statement Tuesday.

Representatives from Okinawa’s prefectural government, local police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Okinawa Liaison Office, the Okinawa Defense Bureau, the U.S. Consulate General in Naha, and all U.S. service branches are expected to attend.

USFJ declined to disclose the forum’s location in an unsigned email to Stars and Stripes on Wednesday. A spokeswoman for Okinawa’s Military Base Affairs Division also would not provide details during a phone call that day.

U.S. Ambassador to Japan George Glass said the forum reflects the two countries’ commitment to listening to host communities and strengthening relations through “sincere and open communication.”

“In this new golden age of U.S.-Japan relations, we continue to nurture our bonds of friendship and respect through sincere and

“Strong relationships with the communities where we live and work is essential for fostering trust.”

Lt. Gen. Stephen Jost
U.S. Air Force

open communication and a culture of cooperation,” he said in USFJ’s release.

The U.S. consul general on Okinawa, Andrew Ou, echoed that sentiment in a Wednesday email to Stars and Stripes, adding that he and his team will attend the meeting.

The idea for the forum was first introduced in July by then-USFJ commander Air Force Lt. Gen. Ricky Rupp, following a sexual assault conviction and a separate attempted assault allegation involving U.S. personnel. Since then, charges have been brought in two additional cases involving U.S. Marines.

Most recently, Pfc. Austin R. Wedington was indicted Wednesday on charges of sexually assault-



Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki, left, Okinawa city Mayor Daisuke Hanashiro, in vest, join the commander of Marine Corps Installations Pacific, Maj. Gen. Brian Wolford, for a joint patrol of Gate 2 Street near Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, on April 18.

ing a Japanese woman and injuring another at Camp Foster in March.

Marine Lance Cpls. Jamel Clayton and Michael Hofmaster are facing trial in separate sexual assault cases from last year. Clayton is scheduled for trial June 2 in Naha District Court. A date has not been set for Hofmaster.

In December, Air Force Senior Airman Brennon R.E. Washington was convicted of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a minor in 2023. He was sentenced to five years in prison with labor and has appealed.

The forum is expected to address a range of issues, including joint patrols by U.S. military and Okinawa officials in nightlife districts, such as one conducted April 18-19 in Okinawa city, according to USFJ.

Additional topics are under discussion, and the forum is expected to meet regularly, the command said.

A charter for the initiative was created after several consultative meetings between U.S. and Japanese officials, though USFJ declined to provide details.

Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki told reporters Wednesday in Naha that the group will discuss preventing incidents involving U.S. military personnel at the forum, the

prefecture’s spokeswoman said by phone Wednesday. It’s customary that some Japanese government officials speak to the media on the condition of anonymity.

USFJ’s commander, Air Force Lt. Gen. Stephen Jost, called the meeting “essential for advancing the U.S.-Japan alliance” and that he is “optimistic about the potential for positive outcomes through this forum.”

“Strong relationships with the communities where we live and work is essential for fostering trust,” he said in the release.

Stars and Stripes reporter Keishi Koja contributed to this report.

PACIFIC

Air Force upgrades fitness centers

New cardio gear, weights added in S.Korea, Japan

By ERIC MENDIOLA AND JEREMY STILLWAGNER
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — Hundreds of thousands of dollars in renovations and new equipment are beefing up workout and exercise routines at air base fitness centers here and in Japan.

At Osan, a \$400,000 remodel at the 51st Fighter Wing Fitness Center meant a fresh coat of interior paint, a complete update of the main weight room with new strength-building equipment, mended portions of the aging indoor track and a new stroller and wheelchair lift.

The 72 new pieces of equipment include plate-loading machines, ellipticals, stationary bikes and selectorized machines — weight training equipment that uses a built-in weight stack to adjust resistance. Dumbbells and free-weight plates were included, too, said Shengo Sheffield, Osan's fitness center director, by phone Wednesday.



JOSEPH DITZLER/Stars and Stripes

A fitness group works out last week on free weight equipment recently installed in the Samurai Fitness Center at Yokota Air Base, Japan.



ERIC MENDIOLA/Stars and Stripes

New dumbbells were recently added to the fitness center at Osan Air Base, South Korea.

At Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, home of the 374th Airlift Wing, the Samurai Fitness Center

this month installed \$100,000 worth of new weight machines and stationary bicycles, Tech. Sgt. Daryl Delosreyes, the fitness operations manager, said by phone Monday.

The center's indoor basketball court is undergoing a \$600,000 renovation, fitness and sports superintendent Master Sgt. Faith Donovan said Thursday by Facebook Messenger. That job began Feb. 24 and is expected to conclude in the fall, according to notices posted at the fitness center.

Plus, the base recently resurfaced an outdoor basketball court and is resurfacing an adjacent tennis court. The cost of that work was not immediately available Friday, Donovan said.

None of the upgrades are part of a specific Air Force plan to spend more on keeping base populations fit and active, Delosreyes said.

At Osan, Col. Jeff E. Elliott, commander of the 51st Mission Support Group, and Lt. Col. Annabelle Hill, commander of the 51st Force Support Squadron, decided the facility needed a makeover after they walked through it together in late March, according to an email Thursday from wing spokesman Wooil Ahn.

It closed for 10 days last month for the renovations.

Obtaining new equipment for the Osan center took over a year from the first request, Sheffield added.

N. Korea tests new destroyer's firepower

By YOOJIN LEE
Stars and Stripes

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called on his navy to accelerate its nuclear armament as the country's newest warship conducted a series of weapons tests this week, state media reported Wednesday.

Kim observed the tests from Nampo Shipyard, where the 5,000-ton destroyer Choe Hyon — launched on Friday — began live-fire drills on Monday, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

The vessel reportedly fired a supersonic cruise missile, a strategic cruise missile, an anti-aircraft missile, and a 127 mm automatic naval gun. The tests have not been independently verified.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff and Ministry of National Defense did not respond to phone calls seeking comment Wednesday.

Satellite imagery posted Wednesday by the monitoring group 38 North showed the Choe Hyon had returned to dry dock just days after its unveiling. The post did not elaborate on the circumstances.

The destroyer, described by North Korean state media as "multipurpose," is the first of a new class of warship, according to KCNA.

The agency quoted Kim as saying the ship's weapons system effectively combines "the strongest strike measures," including supersonic cruise missiles, strategic cruise missiles and tactical cruise missiles with conventional defense methods.

Kim said the time has come to "make a responsible choice to accelerate the navy's nuclear armament to defend our country and keep maritime sovereignty from current and future threats." KCNA did not elaborate on the specific tasks he proposed to achieve that goal.

Officials from North Korea's Missile Administration, Defense Sciences, and the Electronic Warfare Administration were reportedly present during the tests.



KCNA

Pyongyang's new destroyer, unveiled Thursday in Nampo, North Korea, reportedly fired a series of missiles in a test Monday.

Restoration starts on quays that tethered USS Arizona

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Visitors to the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, will get an extra eyeful in coming months as crews work to restore a pair of historic quays where the doomed battleship was moored on the morning of the 1941 Japanese surprise attack.

The National Park Service Historic Preservation Training Center began restoration work Monday on the second of three pairs of historic quays being rehabbed in a multiyear project.

Work is expected to be completed on the Arizona quay in 2026, with full restoration of all the quays expected by 2028, the Park Service said in a news release Friday.

The USS Arizona and the USS Vestal, a repair ship, were docked at the quays on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, when Japanese torpedo bombers laid waste to the Pacific Fleet's Battleship Row.

Japanese aircraft ignited ammunition stored near the Arizona's forward turrets, setting off a massive explosion that quickly sank it, taking the lives of 1,177 crew members.

The battleship's sunken hulk lies almost entirely submerged on the harbor floor — beside



DIANA QUINLAN/U.S. Navy

The National Park Service has started work to restore the pair of white quays that anchored the USS Arizona on the day of the Dec. 7, 1941, surprise attack by Japan.

the pair of quays — and is now part of the USS Arizona Memorial. The monument draws about 2 million visitors a year.

The Park Service completed preservation work in 2024 on the first pair of quays, which had moored the USS West Virginia and USS Tennessee at the time of the attack.

The third set of quays had secured the USS Nevada on Dec. 7.

Along with the partially exposed hulls of the Arizona and the USS Utah, the quays are

among the few landmarks remaining in the harbor that harken back to the day of the attack when the waters were covered with oil, fire and smoke.

As crews abandoned the blazing, sinking ships on Battleship Row, the concrete pillars served as staging areas from which men either climbed aboard small rescue boats or dived into the harbor to swim to safety.

The restoration of the aging quays is intended to both extend their lifespan and preserve the features of their original construction and the scars left from the attack.

The project removes ship names that were added to quays in the 1980s and replaces them with the Navy nomenclature they carried in 1941.

The Park Service plans to erect non-permanent banners carrying the names of ships anchored to each quay the morning of the attack.

The banners will "allow visitors to connect with the name and location of the ship that was there but not hinder our mission to preserve and protect the historic features that we maintain on site," David Kilton, a spokesman for the Pearl Harbor National Memorial, told Stars and Stripes in February.

MILITARY

US soldiers in Italy connect with WWII past

BY REBECCA HOLLAND
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — Just over 80 years ago, American troops entered this Venetian city and defeated a ragged but determined German force to reclaim it for an alliance on the cusp of victory in Europe.

On Monday, a slate of reminders sought to drive the story of Vicenza's liberation home for those serving today.

"You can't go very far in Vicenza without tripping over our historical past," said Kevin Shea, a U.S. Army Reserve officer and field historian working at Caserma Ederle as a contractor.

A small group of soldiers toured World War II battle sites around Vicenza on Monday, with Shea providing narration.

Vicenza was a major transport and communications hub for the Germans thanks to its new roads, rail line and telegraph lines. It also had an air base at what is now Caserma Del Din.

In April 1945, the war was coming to a close. Allied forces were racing north to secure Italian borders and capture Germans, ideally in the Po Valley before they could reach the Alps and retreat.

American forces liberated Bologna before pushing toward Verona, where they had a brief but fierce engagement, then headed toward Vicenza, according to Shea.

That set the stage for the Battle of Vicenza on April 27-28.

Bob Holt, historian of the 752nd Tank Battalion based in Connecticut, has dedicated decades to studying this portion of the war, partly because his father fought in it.

The disorganized German forces were falling apart and had resorted to horse-drawn carriages, he said. But there were still thousands of them streaming toward Vicenza, often in ad hoc units.



KYLEJIAN FRANCIA/U.S. Army

Italian re-enactors form a convoy in World War II-era U.S. Army vehicles as part of Liberation Day celebrations in Montecchio Maggiore, Italy, on Sunday.

"In many cases, they were totally unaware that U.S. troops were already in the towns they were streaming toward," Holt said.

After a vicious engagement outside Vicenza on April 27, the 88th Division Task Force Frye prepared to enter the city.

On the following morning, the Americans had about four tanks moving along the SR11 regional road when they were ambushed. From that point on, it was a tough fight through the city.

"From a tanker perspective, urban combat is the worst possible scenario," Holt said.

American troops were attacked by German snipers hiding in buildings, targeted with hand grenades thrown from roofs, and shot with panzerfaust, a weapon similar to a bazooka that fires projectiles that enter a tank and then destroy it from the inside out.

On top of that, they were forced to drive with their hatches open, heads fully exposed. Three Americans died in the battle, all from



ROBERT SCHMIDT/U.S. Signal Corps

American tanks roll into Vicenza, Italy, after units captured the town from Axis forces April 28, 1945.

head wounds.

For the 752nd Tank Battalion, it was the worst casualty day of the entire war. Sixteen American soldiers were wounded in addition to the three killed, and five tanks were destroyed.

Eight Silver Stars and three Bronze Stars were awarded for actions in Vicenza that morning.

The entire unit was awarded a distinguished unit citation.

"The spirit of these people needs to be remembered," Holt said. "It wasn't just a bunch of guys sending their men forward into battle. These were officers right up to the colonel of the infantry. These guys led from the front."

After the battle, American forces continued their race toward the border, leaving Vicenza to rebuild. It was the most heavily bombed city in the Veneto region, with destruction to homes and iconic buildings.

The roof was burned off the Palladian Basilica in the center of town, and the main church was almost completely destroyed.

"Our front yards were a front line," said Randall Jackson, chief of command information for U.S. Army Garrison Italy, who recently recorded a podcast about the battle. "New soldiers can't relate without hearing these stories."

The 80th anniversary remembrances in and around Vicenza over the weekend also offered cause for jubilation.

In Montecchio Maggiore, just a few miles west of Vicenza, Army Sgt. William Cantrell of the 173rd Brigade Support Battalion was watching a group of Italians dancing in celebration Sunday and suddenly was pulled into the action himself, according to a U.S. Army Garrison Italy statement.

"I was on the side and this little old lady just took my hand," said Cantrell, a Tennessee-born paratrooper. "I couldn't say no."

Italian re-enactor Enrico Ricci was also on hand, wearing an American military uniform with a unit patch from the Army's tank destroyer battalion.

"It's important because it's been a long time since the war," Ricci said, according to the garrison statement. "We can't lose the stories."

Also taking place Monday was a screening of "The Lost Mountaineers," a documentary about the 25 men of the 10th Mountain Division who lost their lives in Lake Garda at the end of World War II.

A brief film that highlighted the Battle of Vicenza and included archival footage was played before the documentary.

AFN cuts 4 radio programs, all commercial podcasts on app

BY PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

The American Forces Network is cutting several of its radio programs and will stop offering commercially produced podcasts on its AFN Go streaming service starting Thursday, as part of broader Defense Department cost-saving measures, officials said.

"We looked at radio programs that had redundancies in music formats, niche audiences, or diminishing listenership," AFN's chief of radio, Tom Arnholt, said in an email Tuesday when asked about the cuts.

"The goal was to preserve our

most popular radio services, while leveraging our AFN Go playlist capabilities to continue providing the widest variety of popular music choice we could."

The Defense Department announced April 21 that the programs AFN Legacy, Freedom Rock, The Blend and Joe Radio would stop airing in May.

Despite removing their classic and modern rock stations — Legacy and Freedom Rock — AFN is working on a new streaming-only offering that will combine classic, modern and alternative rock genres, Arnholt said.

"Unfortunately, the Legacy and Freedom Rock stations were experiencing diminished listener-

ship and were evolving into niche listenership," Arnholt said. "Combining the formats to create an AFN-managed rock playlist station is a more cost-effective way to provide listener favorites from across the most popular rock sub-genres."

A rollout date for the new streaming-only service was not available.

Meanwhile, The Blend Hot Adult Contemporary format was seen as too similar to AFN The Eagle. Fans of Joe Radio can find similar music on the Hall of Fame playlist station, which features a variety of Billboard No. 1 hits from the past five decades, AFN said.

Joe Radio should not be con-

fused with "The Joe Show," which broadcasts live from Rose Barracks in Vilseck, Germany, and provides listeners with information about news and events in the European theater.

The network confirmed that no AFN stations, including AFN Vilseck, will be closing as part of its cost-cutting measures. Only the four radio programs are being discontinued, in addition to the podcasts being removed from AFN Go.

The podcasts include "The Brian Kilmeade Show," "The Sean Hannity Show," NPR's "Consider This," "The Mark Levin Podcast" and others.

AFN began offering podcasts on

AFN Go in 2022, after the app — formerly called AFN 360 — was rebranded.

The app has seen audience growth of more than 30% in the past year, according to the Defense Department's statement. But AFN officials say podcast listenership has been lower than expected.

"The cost of maintaining the platform and podcasts was increasingly difficult to support given the relatively low listenership," Arnholt said. "The majority of the political opinion podcasts on AFN Go are available on other popular, commercial platforms that target specific (demographics) for that type of content."

MILITARY

Zone: Attorney for migrants says new charge 'is just piling on'

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more common misdemeanor of entering the United States illegally.

Both crimes are classified as misdemeanors. But the new charge increases the possible penalties to up to a year in custody and \$100,000 in fines, whereas the traditional illegal-entry charge carries only a maximum six-month jail term and up to \$5,000 in fines.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth warned during a visit to the border in New Mexico last week that migrants could face more prison time for illegal crossings. Standing on a dusty stretch along the border Friday, he held up signs he said were being posted in English and Spanish warning migrants against entering the military zone.

"You cross our border illegally, you will see them," he said of the signs, wearing olive drab and a baseball cap and speaking to cameras in footage later posted to the Defense Department's X account. "It's clearly posted. And when you ignore them, you will be prosecuted."

Hegseth said Friday that he met the U.S. attorney in New Mexico, Ryan Ellison, and that the prosecutor "can't wait" to begin charging those who cross into the area. Spokespeople for Ellison's office and the Justice Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the new charges.

Details on the initial charges filed are sparse in court records, but the locations where the migrants were apprehended are indicative of the routes that migrants have traversed for years. Instead of being charged only with one count of "illegal entry without inspection," they now face a second charge: "penalty for violation of security regulations."

The defense-related charge alleges that migrants "willfully vio-



ANDRES LEIGHTON/AP

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth shakes hands with a soldier while visiting the U.S.-Mexico border in Sunland Park, N.M., on Feb. 3.

lated the order issued on April 18, 2025, by the U.S. Army Garrison Fort Huachuca military commander designating the New Mexico National Defense Areas, also known as the Roosevelt Reservation, as both a restricted area and a controlled area under Army Regulation 190-13," which prohibits unauthorized entry.

Fort Huachuca is in Arizona, where a military unit known as Joint Task Force-Southern Border has its headquarters and is overseeing the military buildup across much of the border.

The Trump administration has surged thousands of troops and armored Stryker combat vehicles to the southern border in Hegseth's goal to obtain "100%" operational control of the boundary with Mexico.

The transfer of the Roosevelt Reservation land from the Interior Department to the Defense Department expanded the Pentagon's authorities to patrol the land, allowing U.S. troops to temporarily detain migrants they encounter rather than simply calling law enforcement authorities.

Hegseth has said the goal is to curb illegal border crossings and to stop the flow of illegal drugs, though most such drugs are smuggled in through legal ports of entry.

Defense officials had said the plan was for U.S. troops to temporarily hold migrants rather than detain them. After President Donald Trump approved the plan for the national defense area last month, however, defense officials shifted language, saying they will temporarily detain migrants. A defense official familiar with the issue, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, said there's no fundamental difference, but defense officials initially used "hold" to indicate their role will be narrow in scope.

The Trump administration has pledged mass deportations of "millions" of people in the first year of the president's second term, with the goal of removing at least 1 million of the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants, though experts say he is unlikely to reach that benchmark,

in part because of lower border crossings.

U.S. Border Patrol apprehensions of migrants crossing illegally sank to 7,000 in March after Trump took office, the fewest since at least 2000, according to the Migration Policy Institute, a think tank in Washington. Shortly after taking office, Trump declared the nation was under an "invasion" and dispatched 10,000 military troops to the border. Trump's actions have drawn criticism from immigrant rights groups that say he has further curtailed access to asylum and other humanitarian protections.

The American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico said the military's expanded powers allow service members to "detain civilians, conduct physical searches, implement crowd control measures, and assist with barrier installation" in the New Mexico National Defense Area.

Rebecca Sheff, senior staff attorney at the ACLU of New Mexico, said in a statement last week that the expansion "represents a dangerous erosion of the constitutional principle that the military should not be policing civilians."

"By authorizing service members to detain, search, and conduct 'crowd control,' these new authorities undermine our state's values of dignity, respect, and community," she said. "We don't want militarized zones where border residents — including U.S. citizens — face potential prosecution simply for being in the wrong place."

She compared the New Mexico effort to a state border security program in Texas that also seeks to expand criminal charges against people who cross illegally, calling it "Texas's Operation Lone Star on steroids."

Carlos Ibarra, the court-appointed defender for several of those charged, said at least some of those who attempted to cross

were from Mexico. He said the additional military-related charges were unnecessary because the migrants had already been charged with illegally entering the United States.

"This is just piling on," Ibarra said.

He said his clients are unlikely to be able to pay the fine if they are convicted. "If these folks had \$100,000, they wouldn't be coming over here."

Hegseth visited the border while under increasing scrutiny for national security breaches, including his use of the commercial messaging app Signal to share classified information. In a recent interview with the Atlantic, Trump acknowledged the concern over the defense secretary.

"I think he's gonna get it together," Trump said of Hegseth in the interview last week. "I had a talk with him, a positive talk, but I had a talk with him."

On the border, Hegseth said migrants may face an array of criminal charges for breaching the military zone. Anyone who saws through a border fence could be charged with destruction of government property, he said, and if someone flees, that person could be charged with evading law enforcement.

"You add up the charges of what you can be charged with, misdemeanors and felonies, you could be looking up to 10 years in prison when prosecuted," he said.

He said troops were working with homeland security agencies to arrest migrants, giving an incorrect name for Customs and Border Protection (he called it Customs and Border Patrol) and incorrectly saying the nation "had an invasion of 21 million people" under President Joe Biden.

Apprehensions under Biden averaged 2 million a year for the first three years of his administration, and more than 3 million people were released into the U.S.

Troops not involved in prosecutions for entering military zone

By ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Troops patrolling a new military zone at the U.S. border with Mexico have yet to detain anyone, even as federal charges move forward against more than two dozen migrants for illegally entering the strip of land in New Mexico.

Service members on April 21 were granted the authority to detain and search people for entering the 170-square-mile area that is now considered Army property, according to U.S. Northern Command, the combatant command overseeing the deployment of about 6,600 troops across the entire southwest border. Troops can also render medical treatment to

anyone found in distress.

"To date, Joint Task Force Southern Border has not detained any unauthorized trespassers within the New Mexico National Defense Area," said Army Maj. Geoffrey Carmichael, spokesman for the joint task force. "Whether U.S. citizens or not, those apprehended for trespassing (or committing other criminal offenses) on the military installation will be transferred over to appropriate non-[Defense Department] law enforcement authorities."

Service members remain in close partnership with Customs and Border Protection for the patrols, he said. Outside of the zone, troops do not have authorization to conduct law enforcement. In-

stead, they support federal immigration agents with monitoring and detection of potential illegal activity.

The military zone is about 60 feet wide and stretches across New Mexico's border with Mexico. The Department of the Interior handed ownership of the federal land to the Defense Department for the next three years, according to the Pentagon. Army Secretary Dan Driscoll put it under the authority of Fort Huachuca in Arizona.

The federal land, known as the Roosevelt Reservation, does stretch into Arizona, but no land outside of New Mexico has been transferred to the Defense Department so far. An order signed

by President Donald Trump would allow for this.

Twenty-eight migrants were charged Monday in U.S. District Court in Las Cruces, N.M., for crossing into the area, The Washington Post reported.

Court records for the migrants did not offer many details, according to the Post.

However, each has the defense-related charge that migrants "willfully violated the order issued on April 18, 2025, by the U.S. Army Garrison Fort Huachuca military commander designating the New Mexico National Defense Areas, also known as the Roosevelt Reservation, as both a restricted area and a controlled area under Army Regulation 190-13,"

which prohibits unauthorized entry.

To prepare for patrols in the zone, troops participated in training on how to temporarily apprehend trespassers, Carmichael said.

"This training prepares our personnel to operate under the authorities to prevent unauthorized access and to detect and deter potential security threats to maintain security, order, and discipline, which may include apprehending those who enter without authorization," he said.

The Army also began installing signs and barriers to inform and deter potential trespassers, said Capt. Victoria Goldfedib, an Army spokeswoman.

MILITARY

CrossFit announces new military-centric contest

By LYDIA GORDON
Stars and Stripes

A CrossFit competition designed to honor and include service members will kick off this fall, the fitness company announced this week.

The CrossFit Everyday Hero Service Cup and Games will unfold in two phases beginning with a virtual competition, the Service Cup, scheduled for Sept. 15-22.

Top performers will advance to the in-person Service Games in Cookeville, Tenn., from Nov. 15-17, according to a statement Monday.

The concept originated at CrossFit Mayhem in Tennessee, where a community-based version of the event has welcomed service members and first responders for the past three years.

Registration also will be open to medical personnel, firefighters, law enforcement officers and educators. Participation fees have not yet been announced.

The virtual competition will feature a series of workouts that athletes must complete, time, record on video and submit for review. Competitors participating in person will not learn the workouts until they are revealed during the event.

Service branches across the Defense Department have increasingly emphasized total fitness, with CrossFit and similar training styles playing a central role in tactical and combat readiness.

“Today’s military is becoming smarter about training for the modern battlefield,” Master Gunnery Sgt. Sarah Nadeau, a Marine Corps Force Fitness instructor, told Stars and Stripes on Monday.

Nadeau added that programs like CrossFit’s blend of metabolic conditioning and diverse training styles “can build balanced, combat-ready fitness ... when proper

movement mechanics, strict form and progressive overload are the foundation.”

Historically, the Marine Corps has embraced combat-focused disciplines similar to CrossFit, such as the High Intensity Tactical Training program, which has recently evolved into the Warrior Athlete Readiness and Resiliency program.

Meanwhile, the Army has allowed soldiers to use Army Credentialing Assistance funds to become certified CrossFit trainers.

CrossFit says it has more than 11,000 affiliated gyms around the world and that many of the earliest gyms were established on military bases.

Online registration for the Everyday Hero Service Cup will open in August. While service supporters are encouraged to take part in the virtual phase, they will not be eligible to advance to the Service Games.



U.S. ARMY

Capt. David Winne, carrying the American flag, is a competitor in bodybuilding and CrossFit competitions. CrossFit has announced the new Everyday Hero Service Cup and Games, taking place later this year, to celebrate service members and others.

Post: General previously presumed to take role before being passed over

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ing office in January.

Cooper, a surface warfare officer, has served as Central Command’s deputy commander since February 2024, and previously led all U.S. naval forces in the Middle East. Those posts have put him in an influential position as both the Biden and Trump administrations have dealt with an array of challenging issues, including the war in the Gaza Strip, tension between Iran and Israel, and the ongoing U.S. military campaign against Houthi militants in Yemen.

If confirmed, Cooper will be promoted to four-star admiral and replace Gen. Michael “Erik” Kurilla, who has served as the head of Central Command since April 2022 and is expected to retire this summer. The position is typically held for about three years, indicating that the Trump administration is behind the typical schedule in finding a replacement. Cooper would become just the second Navy officer to hold the post.

Other jobs expected to come open this year include the four-star heads of U.S. European Command, U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Strategic Command.

Spokespeople for Hegseth and the White House did not respond to requests for comment. Spokespeople for Cooper, Mingus and Kurilla declined to comment.

The Trump administration has fired more than a dozen key military leaders this year, including



PARRIS KERSEY/U.S. Army

Gen. James Mingus

the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Charles “CQ” Brown Jr., and the Navy’s top admiral, Adm. Lisa Franchetti, both of whom were selected by Biden. In an unconventional move, Trump in February nominated a retired officer, Lt. Gen. Dan Caine, to replace Brown, and the Senate in April approved both the selection and Caine’s promotion to four-star general.

Kurilla, who had been seen as another potential replacement for Brown, recommended Cooper as his successor at Central Command, people familiar with the deliberations said.

Before Trump’s return to office, Biden administration officials hoped to nominate Mingus but ultimately decided to leave the decision to the incoming administration, officials familiar with the issue said. A person familiar with Mingus’s thinking said they told him he was their choice.

Several officials familiar with the issue said Mingus may have lost out on the Central Command job because of his association with retired Gen. Mark A. Milley, the influential former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff whom Trump and Hegseth have repeatedly cast as a political adversary.

Admirers of Milley, who retired in 2023, have commended the brash Boston-area native for playing a leading role in guiding the military through Trump’s tumultuous first term, while critics have accused him of violating Trump’s trust by discussing the president’s behavior with journalists and describing him as a “fascist to the core” once in retirement.

Hegseth’s team took action against Milley in January, suspending his security clearance, revoking his security detail and ordering the Pentagon’s inspector general to review his behavior as the Pentagon’s top general. Administration officials also had Milley’s official portrait taken down at the Pentagon.

While Mingus has steered clear of politics, he served as director of operations for Milley’s Joint Staff

from October 2020 to June 2022 and director of the Joint Staff from June 2022 to January 2024. Mingus was promoted to four-star general last year and became vice chief of staff of the Army, the service’s No. 2 post. He now expects to serve in that position for at least another year and then retire, officials said. A person familiar with his thinking said that he always believed that his current position could be his last one, and he is happy to serve in that role.

Other people familiar with the deliberations said Hegseth’s recommendation of Cooper was not made because of Mingus’s association with Milley.

It was not immediately clear why Hegseth favors Cooper over Mingus, but the general’s time on the Joint Staff coincided with the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021. The time period marked a low for both the Biden administration and the 20-year war, with U.S. troops undertaking a chaotic evacuation in which the U.S. military airlifted more than 120,000 people to safety from a single commercial runway.

The operation was marked by scenes of violence that included civilians, desperate to flee the Taliban, overrunning the airport in Kabul; an errant drone strike in which U.S. forces killed 10 civilians; and an Islamic State bombing that killed 13 U.S. troops and about 170 Afghans on the outskirts of the airport.

Hegseth has promised repeatedly that there will be “accountability” in the Pentagon over the fall of Afghanistan, without clarifying what that means. Most senior officers involved at the time, including Milley and Marine Corps Gen. Kenneth “Frank” McKenzie, who oversaw the withdrawal as the head of Central Command, have since retired.

During last year’s presidential campaign, Trump leveraged the fall of Afghanistan repeatedly to attack Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, who replaced Biden at the top of the Democratic ticket in July. Harris and her supporters countered that Trump’s negotiations and deal with the Taliban in 2020 promising to withdraw all troops by May 2021 left Biden with few good options and set in motion the later crisis.

U.S. military officials, including Milley, have defended their actions through the fall of Afghanistan, noting that the Biden administration did not accept the Pentagon’s recommendation to keep a force of about 1,500 troops in Afghanistan to buttress the U.S.-backed government in Kabul. Several commanders involved at the time later voiced exasperation with Biden administration officials, saying it did not appear they all understood the gravity of the situation in summer 2021 as the Taliban began to seize control of cities across the country.

Trump focuses on grudges at 100 day rally

BY WILL WEISSERT, JOE CAPPELLETTI AND SEUNG MIN KIM
Associated Press

WARREN, Mich. — President Donald Trump on Tuesday celebrated the 100th day of his second term — yet spent much of his rally marking it in campaign mode, fixated on past grudges and grievances.

He repeatedly mocked his Democratic predecessor, Joe Biden, attacking his mental acuity and even how he appears in a bathing suit. He again uttered the lie that he won the 2020 presidential election. And he attacked polling and news coverage not favorable to him.

And Trump again and again returned to immigration, his signature issue, at the rally that marked his largest political event since returning to the White House — boasting about his administration’s “mass deportation” efforts that have sent arrests for illegal crossings along the U.S.-Mexico border plummeting.

“Removing the invaders is not just a campaign pledge,” Trump said in his 90-minute speech. “It’s my solemn duty as commander-in-chief. I have an obligation to save our country.”

He paused his remarks to play a video of migrants who Trump asserts are gang members arriving at a notorious prison in El Salvador, with rallygoers cheering as images of deportees having their heads shaved were played. And while Michigan has seen unemployment rise since Trump re-

claimed the White House, Trump used his speech to defend his administration’s steep tariffs on cars and auto parts — hours after the White House announced it was softening those.

“We’re here tonight in the heartland of our nation to celebrate the most successful first 100 days of any administration in the history of our country,” Trump said, standing before large electronic screens reading “100 Day of Greatness.” He later added: “We’ve just gotten started. You haven’t even seen anything yet.”

His Republican administration’s strict immigration policies have pushed the boundaries of the judiciary, and its protectionist import taxes imposed on America’s trade partners have also sought to reorder a global economy that the U.S. built in the decades after World War II.

Trump has also championed sweeping expansionism, refusing to rule out military intervention in Greenland and Panama, suggesting that American developers could help convert the war-torn Gaza Strip into a Riviera-like resort and even suggesting annexation of Canada. Meanwhile, government-slashing efforts led by billionaire adviser Elon Musk have shaken Washington to its core.

“After a lifetime of unelected bureaucrats stealing your paychecks, attacking your values and trampling your freedoms, we are stopping their gravy train, ending their power trip and telling thousands of corrupt, incompetent and



President Donald Trump arrives to speak on his first 100 days at Macomb County Community College Sports Expo Center, on Tuesday, in Warren, Mich.

unnecessary deep state bureaucrats, ‘You’re fired!’” Trump said.

Yet only about 4 in 10 Americans approve of how Trump is handling the presidency, and his ratings on the economy and trade are lower than that. Additionally, 46% of U.S. adults approve of Trump’s immigration policies, with about half of Americans saying he has “gone too far” when it comes to deporting immigrants living in the country illegally.

Typically, presidents use the 100-day mark to launch multiple rallies. But Trump is doing only the Michigan stop.

Administration officials say Trump is at his most effective when staying at the White House, having meetings and speaking to reporters nearly every day. Indeed, the speech in Macomb County was one of the few large political crowds he’s addressed since Inauguration Day on Jan. 20.

When Trump arrived in Michigan, he announced a new fighter jet mission for an Air National Guard base in the state, allaying

fears that the base could close and delivering a win for a longtime antagonist, Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. The two even shared a hug.

Whitmer has softened her stance toward Trump in hopes of finding common ground, with securing a new mission for Selfridge Air National Guard Base a top priority. Their embrace as the Republican president arrived in Michigan was a remarkable development given how unpopular the president remains with Democrats and the rancor of last year’s hard-fought campaign.

Whitmer, when asked about their hug, described the encounter differently, telling The Associated Press: “I was the first one he greeted. We shook hands and he leaned in to tell me, you know, congratulations and that I was a big reason that we were making an announcement today. And I was grateful for that.”

Michigan was one of the battleground states Trump flipped in 2024 from the Democratic column. But it’s also been deeply affected by his tariffs, including on

new imported cars and auto parts.

Automaker Stellantis halted production at plants in Canada and Mexico after Trump announced a 25% tariff on imported vehicles, temporarily laying off 900 U.S. employees. Industry groups have separately urged the White House to scrap plans for tariffs on imported auto parts, warning that doing so would raise prices on cars and could trigger “layoffs and bankruptcy.”

That seemingly would make the state an odd choice for Trump to hail his accomplishments.

Luis Guevara, of Grosse Pointe Farms, said outside Trump’s rally that he’s “cautiously optimistic” about Trump’s first 100 days in office but noted that change can be hard.

“We don’t look at our 401(k) or our portfolio on a daily, weekly, monthly basis or even year to year. I think the market is very skittish,” Guevara said. “Now is certainly not the time to mimic the market and be skittish. I think we have to hold tight. It’s going to be a rough ride. Change is difficult for a lot of people.”

White House ordered to restore \$12M for Radio Free Europe

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge on Tuesday ordered the Trump administration to restore \$12 million that Congress appropriated for Radio Free Europe, a pro-democracy media outlet at risk of going dark for the first time in 75 years.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth also tucked a lesson on the three branches of government inside Tuesday’s ruling, cautioning that the system of checks and balances established by the U.S. Constitution must remain intact if the nation is going to continue to thrive.

Lamberth granted the temporary restraining order for the U.S. Agency for Global Media to disburse money for April 2025 for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty pending the outcome of a lawsuit seeking to keep the station on the air. He said the Trump administration could not unilaterally revoke funding approved by Congress.

“In interviews, podcasts, and op-eds, people from both inside and outside government have variously accused the courts — myself included — of fomenting a constitutional crisis, usurping the Article II powers of the Presidency, undercutting the popular will,

or dictating how Executive agencies can and should be run,” wrote Lamberth, who was appointed by President Ronald Reagan.

Those notions reflect a “fundamental misunderstanding” of the role of the federal judiciary and of the Constitution itself, he said.

“Reasonable people can reach different conclusions in complicated legal disputes such as this,” Lamberth wrote, and that’s why the appellate courts exist. The administration could also ask Congress to pull back the funds, he noted.

Attorneys for the media outlet say President Donald Trump’s administration has terminated near-

ly all of its contracts with freelance journalists, missed payments on leases and furloughed 122 employees. They warn that more employees will be furloughed and more contracts will be canceled on May 1 if funding isn’t restored.

“By the end of May, RFE/RL will be forced to cancel the contracts supporting its core live news broadcasting and reporting operations. In June 2025, RFE/RL will almost entirely cease its operations,” plaintiffs’ lawyers wrote.

Government attorneys argued that the judge doesn’t have jurisdiction over what amounts to a

contract dispute that belongs in the Court of Federal Claims.

“Plaintiff seeks to place this Court as the arbiter of the grant agreement terms between the parties. But doing so would put the Court in an improper policymaking role,” they wrote.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty started broadcasting during the Cold War. Its programs are aired in 27 languages in 23 countries across Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East. Its corporate headquarters are in Washington; its journalistic headquarters are based in the Czech Republic.

NATION

Economy feels pinch from Trump's tariffs

Commerce report shows first quarter losses; businesses brace for impact

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — American businesses are canceling orders from China, postponing expansion plans and hunkering down to see what trade policy surprises President Donald Trump plans to spring on them next.

The president's massive and unpredictable taxes on imports seem likely to mean emptier shelves and higher prices for American shoppers, perhaps within weeks.

And the higher costs and paralyzing uncertainty could exact an economic toll: U.S. consumers are in the biggest funk since COVID-19 hit five years ago, and economists say recession risks are climbing.

An early sign of the damage emerged on Wednesday when the Commerce Department released its first look at first-quarter economic growth.

The U.S. economy shrank 0.3% from January through March, the first drop in three years. Gross domestic product — the nation's out-

put of goods and services — was down from 2.4% in the last three months of 2024. Imports shaved 5 percentage points off first-quarter growth. Consumer spending also slowed sharply.

Asked how much of deterioration in the world's biggest economy could be traced to Trump's erratic policies, Boston College economist Brian Bethune said: "All of it."

As he promised on the campaign trail, Trump has upended decades of American trade policy. He's been imposing — then sometimes suspending — big import taxes, or tariffs, on a wide range of targets. He's currently plastered a 10% levy on products from almost every country in the world. He's hit China — America's third-biggest trading partner and second-biggest source of imported goods — with a staggering 145% tariff.

China has responded with retaliatory tariffs of its own — 125% on American products. The take-no-prisoners trade war between the world's two biggest economies has



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

A customer checks his shopping receipts last month while waiting in line at the food court at Costco Wholesale store in Glendale, Calif.

shaken global financial markets and threatened to bring U.S.-China trade to a standstill.

Gene Seroka, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, warned last Thursday within two weeks arrivals to the port "will drop by 35% as essentially all shipments out of China for major retailers and manufacturers has ceased." Seroka added that cargo from Southeast Asia also "is much softer than normal with tariffs now in place."

After Trump announced expansive tariffs in early April, ocean container bookings from China to the United States dropped 60% —

and stayed there, said Ryan Petersen, founder and CEO of Flexport, a San Francisco company that helps companies ship cargo around the world. With orders down, ocean carriers have reduced their capacity by canceling 25% of their sailings, Flexport said.

Many companies tried to beat the clock by bringing in foreign goods before Trump's tariffs took effect. In fact, that is a big reason that first-quarter economic growth is expected to come in so low: A surge in imports swelled the trade deficit, which weighs on growth.

By stockpiling goods ahead of the trade war, many companies "will be positioned to ride out this storm for a while," said Judah Levine, research director at the global freight-booking platform Freightos. "But at a certain point, inventories will run down."

In the next few weeks, Levine said, "you could start seeing shortages ... it's likely to be concentrated in categories where the U.S. is heavily dependent on Chinese manufacturing and there aren't a lot of alternatives and certainly quick alternatives." Among them: furniture, baby products and plastic goods, including toys.

Wisconsin high court suspends Milwaukee judge arrested by FBI

Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — The Wisconsin Supreme Court suspended a judge accused of helping a man evade immigration authorities, saying Tuesday that it is in the public interest to relieve her of her duties as she faces two federal charges.

The FBI took Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Hannah Dugan into custody Friday at the county courthouse. She has been charged with concealing a man to prevent his discovery and arrest and obstructing or impeding a proceeding.

In its two-page order, the court said it was acting to protect public confidence in Wisconsin courts during the criminal proceedings against Dugan. The order noted

the court was acting on its own initiative and was not responding to a request from anyone. Liberal justices control the court 4-3.

"It is ordered ... that Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Hannah C. Dugan is temporarily prohibited from exercising the powers of a circuit court judge in the state of Wisconsin, effective the date of this order and until further order of the court," the justices wrote.

In a statement, Dugan's legal team said it was disappointed "that the Court acted in unilateral fashion. We continue to assert Judge Dugan's innocence and look forward to her vindication in court."

A state court spokesperson said that a reserve judge began filling in for Dugan on Monday for an in-



Hannah Dugan

definite period.

Dugan is accused of escorting Eduardo Flores-Ruiz and his lawyer from her court through the jury door last week after learning that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents were in the building and seeking his arrest. Flores-Ruiz, who court documents say illegally reentered the U.S. after being deported in 2013, was taken into custody outside after a foot chase.

Dugan's arrests has sparked outrage among Democrats, who have accused the Trump administration of trying to chill the judiciary. She is set to appear in court for arraignment May 15.

Harvard pledges reforms after internal bias reports

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Harvard University is promising to review its academic offerings and admissions policies in response to a pair of internal reports on antisemitism and anti-Arab prejudice at the Ivy League campus commissioned in the aftermath of last spring's pro-Palestinian protests.

Harvard released the reports on Tuesday while the university simultaneously battles the Trump administration over demands to limit campus activism — reforms the government says are necessary to root out campus antisemitism. The administration has frozen \$2.2 billion in federal funding and Harvard responded with a lawsuit in a clash that is being watched closely across higher education.

In a campus message, Harvard President Alan Garber said Harvard has made "necessary chang-

es and essential progress" over the last year but promised further action.

Garber convened two panels to study campus antisemitism and anti-Muslim bias last year, with an initial round of recommendations released last June. The final reports total more than 500 pages and include dozens of recommended changes.

Harvard said it will begin implementing at least some of the recommendations, with potential updates to admissions, hiring and discipline systems.

Republican U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg, chairman of the Education and Workforce Committee, said Harvard's internal reports suggest it tolerated antisemitism.

In his message, Garber said Harvard will accelerate a campus-wide effort to promote viewpoint diversity, though he didn't elaborate.

NATION

Ukraine, US poised to sign mineral deal

By **SIOBHAN O'GRADY**
The Washington Post

KYIV, Ukraine — The United States and Ukraine were expected to sign a deal to establish joint investment in Ukraine's mineral wealth, oil, gas and other natural resources, officials said Wednesday, in a move that would fulfill a key White House request and give Kyiv a degree of much-desired U.S. backing.

But some parts of the deal were still up for debate even as Ukrainian Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko traveled to Washington to sign it Wednesday, a person familiar with the arrangement said, claiming that "the Ukrainians are trying to reopen terms which have already been agreed upon as part of the package."

Svyrydenko, who was expected to sign the deal alongside U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, "was told not to travel to the U.S. unless the agreements were finalized," the person said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to describe sensitive talks. Ukrainian

officials did not immediately return a request for comment on any potential delays.

Further disagreement could once again thwart the signing of the deal, which intends to bring Ukraine and the U.S. closer together but has at times emerged as a major stumbling block to positive ties between the two countries.

The latest version of the deal, reviewed by The Washington Post, falls short of providing any concrete security guarantees to Ukraine, but it states that Kyiv and Washington agree it affirms a "long-term strategic alignment" between the two countries and U.S. "support for Ukraine's security, prosperity, reconstruction, and integration into global economic frameworks."

That language alone marks a win for Kyiv, which has been seeking any show of support from the U.S. since the relationship between the two countries turned rocky under President Donald Trump. Ukraine will seek significantly more tangible security



President Donald Trump, right, meets with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Oval Office at the White House, on Feb. 28, in Washington.

guarantees under any future peace deal.

This agreement makes no mention of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the largest nuclear power plant in Europe, which Russia violently seized in early 2022 and now occupies. U.S. officials have proposed taking control of the plant as part of a future deal to end the war.

Ukraine initially marketed its potentially vast mineral wealth as a possible investment opportunity under President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's "victory plan" that he introduced in September. But an ini-

tial version of such a deal, presented to Zelenskyy by Bessent in February, offered very little to Ukraine and described the arrangement as a means for Washington to recoup the cost of its military aid to Ukraine.

Zelenskyy refused to sign the document, insisting he would not agree to any deal that reclassified aid as debt. He also criticized that version's lack of wording regarding Ukraine's future security.

Ukrainian officials then rewrote the deal and intended to sign a different, initial version when they visited Washington in

February. That plan went haywire when Trump and Vice President JD Vance lambasted Zelenskyy on live TV in the Oval Office, before canceling the rest of his visit to the White House.

Since then, the lack of agreement has hung over U.S. talks with Ukraine over a separate peace deal with Russia. Trump, who prides himself as a dealmaker, has grown increasingly impatient, writing on his Truth Social site last week that the mineral deal "is at least three weeks late."

"Hopefully, it will be signed IMMEDIATELY," he wrote.

Palestinian student activist freed after citizenship interview arrest

Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Vt. — A judge on Wednesday released a Palestinian man who led protests against the war in Gaza as a student at Columbia University and was arrested by immigration officials during an interview about finalizing his U.S. citizenship.

Outside the courthouse in Vermont, Mohsen Mahdawi led supporters in chanting "The people united will never be defeated" "No fear" and "Free Palestine." He said people must come together in the defense of both democracy and humanity.

"Never give up on the idea that justice will prevail," he said. "We want to stand up for humanity, because the rest of the world — not only Palestine — is watching us. And what is going to happen in America is going to affect the rest of the world."

His notice to appear in immigration court says Mahdawi is removable under the Immigration and Nationality Act because U.S.



Mahdawi

Secretary of State Marco Rubio determined his presence and activities "would have serious adverse foreign policy consequences and would compromise a compelling U.S. foreign policy interest."

His lawyers say Mahdawi — a legal permanent resident for 10 years — was detained in retaliation for his speech advocating for Palestinian human rights.

U.S. District Judge Geoffrey Crawford in Burlington, Vt., issued his ruling Wednesday following a hearing on Mahdawi, who was arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents on April 14. He has been held at the Northwest State Correctional Facility in St. Albans.

The government argues his detention is a "constitutionally valid aspect of the deportation process" and that district courts are barred

from hearing challenges to how and when such proceedings are begun.

"District courts play no role in that process. Consequently, this Court lacks jurisdiction over Petitioner's claims, which are all, at bottom, challenges to removal proceedings," Michael Drescher, Vermont's acting U.S. attorney, wrote. His office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

According to a court filing, Mahdawi was born in a refugee camp in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and moved to the United States in 2014. He recently completed coursework at Columbia and was expected to graduate in May before beginning a master's degree program there in the fall.

Speaking to supporters, Mahdawi directly addressed President Donald Trump and his Cabinet, saying "I am not afraid of you."

"If there is no fear, what is it replaced with?" he said. "Love. Love is our way."

Federal workers who also are reservists win pay fight in high court

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court said Wednesday that federal employees who also are in the military reserve must be paid the equivalent of their civilian salaries when called to active duty during national emergencies.

The 5-4 decision could affect hundreds of thousands of people, ensuring that they don't suffer financially when they temporarily leave one form of government service for another.

The justices ruled in an appeal filed by an air traffic controller who spent about five years on active duty in the Coast Guard at a pay rate lower than what he earns as a Federal Aviation Administration employee.

Congress first adopted a differential pay statute in 2009, but the Justice Department argued that it only applied to people whose ser-

vice had a strong connection to a national emergency.

The majority disagreed, finding that any reservist who is called to active duty during a national emergency bolsters the country's defenses and their salary should match what they would have made in their federal civilian jobs. Justice Neil Gorsuch was joined by Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett, as well as Chief Justice John Roberts.

In a dissent, Justice Clarence Thomas pointed out that the country has been under one national emergency or another for decades and the majority's finding will create wider access to differential pay than Congress intended. Thomas wrote that he would have instead sent the case back to a lower court. He was joined by Justices Samuel Alito, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson.

WORLD

50 years after war, celebration in Vietnam stresses peace, unity

Associated Press

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam — Vietnam on Wednesday celebrated the 50th anniversary of the end of the war with the United States and the formation of its modern nation with a military parade and a focus on a peaceful future.

The fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, marked the end of a Vietnam divided into the communist North and U.S.-allied South, and the country's top official told crowds the past decades had led to ever increasing unity.

"All the Vietnamese are the descendants of Vietnam. They have the rights to live and work, to have freedom to pursue happiness and love in this country," said To Lam, the Vietnam Communist Party's general secretary.

"In a spirit of closing the past, respecting differences, aiming for the future, the whole party, the people

and the army vow to make Vietnam become a country of peace, unity, prosperity and development," he added.

Thousands camped overnight on the streets of the former South Vietnamese capital, which was renamed Ho Chi Minh City after it fell to North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops, to get the best vantage point for the parade. Many lingered on the streets later in the afternoon and had picnics while waiting for drone and fireworks shows scheduled for the evening.

The red and yellow of Vietnam's national flag was everywhere in the city — fluttering from buildings, painted on the faces of eager teenagers and on the T-shirts of those who had traveled to the city from all over the country.

"Now it's time for peace," said spectator Nguyen Thi Hue, a city resident. "Peace is the dream that

everyone in the world wants."

One float carried the mythical Lac bird, Vietnam's emblem, another a portrait of Ho Chi Minh.

Chinese, Laotian and Cambodian troops marched behind Vietnamese army formations, including some wearing uniforms similar to what was worn by northern Vietnamese troops during the war. Helicopters carrying the national flag and jets flew over the parade near Independence Palace, where a North Vietnamese tank smashed through the gates on the final day of the war.

And all the while, the crowds soaked it in.

To Lam said beyond a victory over the U.S. and South Vietnam, the fall of Saigon was a "glorious landmark" that ended a 30-year fight for independence that began with the fight to oust French colonial troops.

He said Vietnam owes its position



RICHARD VOGEL/AP

Vietnamese veteran soldiers take part in a parade during the 50th anniversary celebration of the end of the Vietnam War on Wednesday, in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

in the world today to support from the Soviet Union, China and solidarity from Laos and Cambodia, as well as "progressive" people all over the world including the U.S., he said.

For Pham Ngoc Son, a veteran who fought for the communists, today there is "only space for peace and friendship" between the U.S. and Vietnam.

"The war is over a long time ago," said the 69-year-old who, during the war, served as an army truck driver bringing troops and supplies from the north to the south along the Ho Chi Minh trail — the secret supply route used by North Vietnam.

This year also marks the 30-year anniversary of diplomatic ties between Vietnam and the U.S.

Kremlin: Deal to end war with Ukraine can't be achieved quickly

By ILLIA NOVIKOV

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Clinching a deal to end the Russia-Ukraine war "is far too complex to be done quickly," a senior Kremlin official said Wednesday, as the U.S. labors to bring momentum to peace efforts and expresses frustration over the slow progress.

Meanwhile, a nighttime Russian drone attack on Ukraine's second-largest city of Kharkiv wounded at least 45 civilians, officials said. The

United Nations reported that the number of Ukrainian civilian casualties in the more than three-year war has surged in recent weeks amid Washington's attempts to broker a peace agreement.

Russian President Vladimir Putin backs calls for a ceasefire before peace negotiations, "but before it's done, it's necessary to answer a few questions and sort out a few nuances," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Putin also is ready for direct talks with Ukraine without

preconditions to seek a peace deal, he added.

"We realize that Washington wants to achieve quick progress, but we hope for understanding that the Ukrainian crisis settlement is far too complex to be done quickly," Peskov said. "There are many details and an array of small nuances that need to be solved before a settlement."

President Donald Trump has previously expressed frustration over the slow pace of progress in negotia-

tions aimed at stopping the war, which he said he could end in the first 24 hours of his new administration in January. Western European leaders have accused Putin of stalling while his forces seek to grab more Ukrainian land. Russia has captured nearly a fifth of Ukraine's territory since Moscow's forces launched a full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

Trump has chided Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for steps that he said were "prolonging"

the "killing field, and rebuked Putin for complicating negotiations with "very bad timing" in launching deadly strikes that battered the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. Trump has long dismissed the war as a waste of American taxpayer money and of lives lost in the conflict. Senior U.S. officials have warned that the administration could abandon the peace efforts if it sees no solution. That could spell an end to crucial military help for Ukraine and heavier economic sanctions on Russia.

STARS AND STRIPES

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market

Transportation

944

VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

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

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

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Paramedic fatally stabbed during ambulance ride

MO KANSAS CITY — A woman pleaded not guilty Monday to fatally stabbing a Kansas City paramedic as she was being taken to a hospital in an ambulance.

Shanetta Bossell, 39, was arrested Sunday after trying to drive off in the ambulance as others were tending to paramedic Graham Hoffman's chest wound, according to court records. She has been jailed on \$1 million bond on charges of first-degree murder, armed criminal action, assault and resisting arrest.

The 29-year-old paramedic had worked for the Kansas City Fire Department for three years.

Police spotted Bossell walking along the shoulder of a highway early Sunday, her finger cut and bleeding, according to the probable cause affidavit. She had been freed on bond two days earlier in a resisting arrest case that prosecuting attorney Zachary Thompson said involved an assault on a law enforcement officer.

While en route to the hospital, the driver heard Hoffman frantically call for help, saying Bossell had a knife. The driver stopped and then rushed to the back. As he flung open the door, he heard Hoffman say, "She stabbed me in the heart," the affidavit said.



GREGORY BULL/AP

Judge pauses 1985 abortion notification law

NV LAS VEGAS — A long-dormant Nevada law requiring parents or guardians to be notified before a minor can have an abortion will not take effect this week following a federal judge's ruling.

The 1985 law has never before been enforced in Nevada because of court rulings that found it was unconstitutional based on Roe v. Wade, the landmark Supreme Court decision that made abortion access a constitutional right for a half century.

The ban on Nevada's law was set to expire this week under a recent federal court order citing the 2022 reversal of Roe, but abortion rights activists appealed. That led U.S. District Judge Anne Traum to issue an order Friday saying the law won't take effect yet to give Planned Parenthood time to ask the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to keep the law unenforceable while it challenges it.

Death row conviction overturned over forensics

LA NEW ORLEANS — A Louisiana man who has spent nearly three decades on death row has had his conviction overturned by a district judge following a review of forensic analysis that the inmate's legal team argued was based on "junk science."

Jimmie Duncan was originally convicted of first-degree murder in 1998 after being accused by

Bottoms up

A fan drinks beer from a shoe as the San Diego Padres play the Tampa Bay Rays in an MLB game Saturday in San Diego.

prosecutors of raping and drowning his girlfriend's toddler in a bathtub.

Prosecutors relied on bite mark analysis and an autopsy performed by two experts — later linked to wrongful convictions — whom Duncan's legal team described as discredited "charlatans." Duncan has long maintained his innocence.

Fourth Judicial District Court Judge Alvin Sharp threw out Duncan's first-degree murder conviction in a ruling issued last week — first reported by Verite News. The judge heard expert testimony that the bite mark analysis was "not scientifically defensible" and that death appeared to be the result of "accidental drowning."

The judge also received evidence that a jailhouse informant had recanted his testimony and that Duncan received ineffective counsel during his trial.

Historic Memphis church suffers devastating fire

TN MEMPHIS — A historic Black church in downtown Memphis that was the organizing point for Martin Luther King Jr.'s final campaign in 1968 caught fire early Monday morning and suffered significant damage.

"The inside is a total loss, but we're still somewhat hopeful that

some of the facade will be able to be left standing," Memphis Fire Chief Gina Sweat said at a Monday morning news conference about the fire at Clayborn Temple.

She said the blaze was reported at 1:39 a.m. through a commercial alarm service.

King was drawn to Memphis in 1968 to support some 1,300 predominantly Black sanitation workers who went on strike to protest inhumane treatment.

Before the fire, the Clayborn Temple — which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 — was undergoing a \$25 million restoration that was slated for completion in 2026.

Man charged with killing wife in Spain found dead

FL FORT LAUDERDALE — A Florida businessman charged with kidnapping and killing his estranged wife in Spain was found dead from apparent suicide Monday morning in a South Florida federal prison, his defense attorney said.

David Knezevich, 37, was awaiting trial at the Federal Detention Center in Miami. He was charged last year with kidnapping and killing Ana Hedao Knezevich, 40, who went missing in a case that has drawn international media attention.

Ana Knezevich disappeared from her Madrid apartment in February 2024, five weeks after she had moved there. Her body still hasn't been found.

The couple was in the middle of a contentious divorce while fighting over millions of dollars in properties, according to prosecutors. They had been married for 13 years.

Lawmakers agree on plan for school cellphone ban

NY ALBANY — New York state would ban cellphones in public schools "bell to bell" beginning with the next school year under an agreement announced late Monday by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

Hochul, a Democrat, did not immediately detail plans for the ban. Her office has previously said that schools would have some flexibility over how to implement it, with districts deciding how to store students' devices during the school day. There would be exemptions for students who need access for medical reasons, to help with learning disabilities or because they don't speak fluent English, she has said.

If approved, New York would join at least eight states — California, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Ohio, South Carolina

and Virginia — that have enacted measures banning or restricting students' use of cellphones in schools. Nationally, most schools say they prohibit cellphone use except for academic purposes, but educators say the rules are difficult to enforce when students are allowed to have the devices in hallways and at lunch.

Speedboat hits 200 mph, flips, crashes, wins race

AZ LAKE HAVASU CITY — A speedboat went airborne and did a complete backward flip while racing at about 200 mph before crashing into an Arizona lake.

The two racers inside the boat's covered cabin survived the event, which saw the boat go over 30 feet in the air. They wore harnesses and helmets, and "were just a little banged up," according to a social media post on Facebook by the Freedom One Racing team and an account by a race witness.

The Saturday crash took place on a three quarter-mile course at an annual speedboat race.

The flying boat still managed to cross the finish line and win the contest by registering a top speed of 200.1 mph, Speedboat Magazine Publisher Ray Lee said.

FACES

Ballet tiptoes into spotlight

‘Marvelous Mrs. Maisel’ creators hope viewers will give dance-themed ‘Étoile’ a spin on Prime

By JOCELYN NOVECK
Associated Press

Ballet is beautiful. Ballet is ethereal. Ballet is mysterious. Can ballet also be cool?

The creators of the new Prime Video show “Étoile” — Amy Sherman-Palladino and Daniel Palladino, of “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” fame — are betting yes. Or shall we say “oui” — the show is split between New York and Paris as it tracks the story of two ballet companies joining forces to attract audiences and stay afloat.

And “afloat” is a good word to describe the chief appeal of the show: real lifts, not to mention turns and leaps, by real ballet dancers, many of whom are in the cast. Sharp-eyed viewers might notice several New York City Ballet stars in supporting roles. A mix of “Bunheads” (also from the Palladinos), “Emily in Paris” — with way more leg warmers — and perhaps classic ballet movie “The Turning Point,” “Étoile” seems to know it lives and dies by the quality of its dancing.

And that’s because, as actor David Alvarez says, “Ballet is one of those things you can’t fake.”

“You can’t just wing it and pretend you can do it,” says Alvarez, who made his name as one of the original dancing Billy Elliots on Broadway, winning a best-actor Tony along with two other Billys at age 14, and later played Bernardo in Steven Spielberg’s “West Side Story” remake.

“Any dancer will be able to spot from a mile away that you’re not actually a ballet dancer, just by how you walk or your posture,” he says.

Alvarez plays Gael, a dancer who has a stormy relationship with Cheyenne, herself a very stormy prima ballerina — or “étoile,” the French word for “star” — who comes to New York as part of an elaborate talent swap between the two companies.

The gimmick has made uneasy partners of Jack (Luke Kirby), who runs Metropolitan Ballet Theater in New York, and Geneviève (Charlotte Gainsbourg), who runs the top company in Paris. (The troupes are very thinly veiled versions of New York City Ballet and the Paris Opera Ballet.)

Alvarez is one of those hybrids, an actor who also dances. Taïs Vinolo, who plays young dancer Mish, is a real-life ballet dancer who’s

making her acting debut.

Normally, she says, “We express with our body. Expressing with another form, like speaking and acting, was a bit of a challenge.”

Vinolo feels confident that the creators found the truth in ballet. “People don’t have a good idea of what ballet is and how hard it is,” she says. “They see the pink tutu and the pointe shoes. But they don’t see that it’s very physical. And it’s hard. It’s a lot of discipline, and it’s also very hard mentally.”

The physical challenge of ballet was just what Sherman-Palladino was looking to get across. The showrunner trained seriously in ballet from the age of 4, before fate guided her into a writing career.

“And she has the back surgeries to prove it,” quips husband Dan.

“It’s an amazing world,” Sherman-Palladino says. “They’re amazing artists. And it’s literally an art form where you’re just guaranteed not to make any money. So you have to truly just love it.

“You know, they’re trained athletes,” Sherman-Palladino adds. “They’re unbelievably strong, and just the things that they can do with their bodies is ridiculous.”

She sees dance as like “silent movies almost — it’s storytelling, it’s acting, it’s emotion and heartache and happiness and love ... I think that so many people who think that dance is not for them just haven’t seen it.”

Some of the French cast members barely spoke English, and vice versa. The show takes place in two languages — but the signature rat-a-tat Palladino banter can be hard to translate.

“It was tricky because we are very precise with our language, but our language doesn’t exactly translate to French,” Sherman-Palladino says. “Finding a translator may have been the hardest thing that we had to deal with on the entire show — the right translator that caught the essence of our script. So we kept changing translators ’til we finally found one that everybody could agree on.”

For Lou De Laâge, who plays Cheyenne, it was especially challenging because she spoke little English when she was cast. But the writer’s strike gave her nine months to prepare, rather than three, which proved a huge help.



MGM Studios/AP photos

Yanic Truesdale, left, and Charlotte Gainsbourg star in “Étoile,” a streaming show about two ballet companies joining forces.



Luke Kirby rejoins “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” show creators Amy Sherman-Palladino and Daniel Palladino for “Étoile.”

Gainsbourg, a British-French actor and singer-songwriter, spoke English but still found it tricky to get into the Palladino rhythm. “I was very nervous about learning the lines,” she says. “I’m very slow. That was already challenging. Then the rhythm was something completely new. ... in the end, I got to understand the humor and the pace, (but) it took me a little while.”

Kirby, whose Jack runs Metropolitan Ballet Theater, says he knew little about ballet beforehand — but had a cousin who was a dancer, “and so I’d see her putting her body through torment.”

Gainsbourg only spent a year studying ballet when she was 4. She stopped, but did piano in the

same building — the Salle Pleyel in Paris.

As for De Laâge, her mother enrolled her in intensive dance training as a child, but it was a mother’s dream and not the daughter’s.

“So that became a fight between us because she wanted that for me, and I didn’t want that for me,” De Laâge says. As an actor, “I worked with really good dancers, but that wasn’t my passion. I love watching dance.”

What Gainsbourg has taken away from doing a series on ballet is “the fact that it’s so extreme and that everybody is working there for their passion. It’s not about money ... it’s really about the art, and they’re all completely passionate.”

Streisand announces duets album

Associated Press

Barbra Streisand is still a woman in love, and she’ll do anything to get you into her world.

That includes a new collection of duets with some of the biggest names in music. Streisand is preparing to release a new album, “The Secret of Life: Partners, Volume Two,” out in June. Across 11 tracks, she’s joined by heavy hitters Paul McCartney, Bob Dylan,



James Taylor, Sting, Seal, Tim McGraw, Mariah Carey, Ariana Grande and more.

First up is an emotive cover of “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face” with Hozier. The song was originally written by English folk artist Ewan MacColl for his wife Peggy Seeger, but the late Roberta Flack’s cover is the best known.

“I’ve always loved singing duets with gifted artists. They inspire me in unique and different ways ... and make our time in the studio a joy,” Streisand said in a statement. “I admire all of them ... and I hope that you’ll enjoy listening to our collaborations as much as I enjoyed recording with all of my wonderful partners.”

“The Secret of Life: Partners, Volume Two” is due out June 25.

‘War Is Over!’ short film inspires picture book

Sean Ono Lennon and his fellow creators of the Oscar-winning animated short film “War Is Over! Inspired by the Music of John & Yoko” are releasing a picture book edition.

Viking Children’s Books, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers, announced Wednesday that “War Is Over!” will be published Nov. 4. Like the movie, which came out in 2023, the book tells of a wartime carrier pigeon who inspires soldiers on both sides of the battlefield.

The film and book were based on the holiday-anti-war classic, “Happy Xmas (War Is Over),” that Ono’s parents released in 1971. Sean was born to John Lennon and Yoko Ono four years later.

“The tale of our pigeon felt like it needed to be put into an illustrated book,” Sean Lennon said in a statement. “Our wish is that parents will be able to share this story with their kids. War is a difficult subject, and we hope this book will serve as a conversation starter for families and friends.”

The book is written by Sean Lennon, “War Is Over!” writer-director Dave Mullins and producer Brad Booker. The illustrations are by Max Narciso.



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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) published daily (except Saturday, Sunday, 25 December and 1 January) for 50 cents (Monday through Thursday) and one dollar on Friday by Stars and Stripes Pacific, OPC 706 BOX 7, APO AP 96301-9001. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, OPC 706 BOX 7, AP 96301-9001.
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OPINION

Hegseth not alone in seeking SCIF workaround

BY DAVID IGNATIUS
The Washington Post
Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth used poor judgment and sloppy security practices when he sent highly sensitive targeting information to colleagues, friends and family on the Signal commercial messaging app.
But the “Signalgate” flap illustrates a problem that transcends Hegseth’s poor performance at the Pentagon. Government technology for viewing and sending classified information is so cumbersome and outdated that it drives people to use unsecure workarounds such as Signal. Using the government’s current technology, military and intelligence officers simply cannot move at the speed needed to operate most effectively.
The heart of the problem is the requirement to handle classified information in what’s known as a SCIF, or sensitive compartmented information facility. These are often cramped, stuffy, windowless rooms that don’t fit the real-world need for mobile, dispersed, secure communications. Worse, inside a SCIF, military and intelligence officers often can’t use the internet or the newest AI models. The system imprisons information more than it protects it.
“SCIFs as a means to protect classified discussions and systems have been an outmoded security practice for more than 20 years,” argues Aaron Brown, who spent 20 years as a CIA officer and Army Ranger specializing in counterterrorism and now runs a technology start-up called Lumbra. “The SCIF was built for a bygone era in the 1970s and ’80s when communications were easy to control, and the speed of business didn’t require persistent access to the internet.”
Hegseth used Signal because he wanted to keep other senior officials updated on the Trump administration’s plans to bomb Yemen. For speed and simplicity, he used a chat group set up by national security adviser Michael Waltz, called “Houthi PC small group,”

to send information about targets and timing. Inexplicably, he employed another Signal chat to share similar information with his wife, personal lawyer and others. A dozen former military and intelligence officers I’ve talked to say his actions were irresponsible and would normally lead to disciplinary action.
But thousands of military and intelligence officers face similar dilemmas every day. CIA case officers, for example, require fast-moving data from the internet to conduct operations. But if they’re stuck inside a SCIF overseas, or in the vast headquarters complex at Langley, they need special permission to access the internet. Some walk out to their cars to use their phones, according to former officers; others bring their phones inside SCIFs. Both are no-nos.
People break these rules to get the job done. Brown told me during an interview that CIA counterterrorism officers who need to make split-second decisions while running assets are in a no-win situation. “Either one would abide by the rules and risk the operation failing, due to an inability to coordinate at the speed of counterterrorism, or break the rules and bring a forbidden device into the SCIF.” His conclusion, based on experience: “Our best leaders are going to pick the operational pace over the rules every time, setting up an impossible dilemma.”
SCIF-mania also limits the ability to use the latest AI models that are transforming national security — or simple internet tools such as Google search. Brown says he waited 18 months for permission to use Google in a classified space, then gave up. The need for military and intelligence officers to experiment with large-language AI models is acute. But Brown says the Pentagon and the intelligence community, while now accessing earlier AI models, can’t broadly use the latest models, including Open AI’s ChatGPT-4o, Google’s Gemini 2.5, or Anthropic’s Claude 3.7.
“It is not an exaggeration to say that SCIFs are in very large part to blame for the IC’s tech-

nology deficits,” Brown argues. “It means that we now have an entire generation of intelligence and DOD practitioners that have almost never used these advanced AI systems.”
What’s agonizing is that technologies exist that could break the SCIF barrier. But the Pentagon and the intelligence community have been slow to adopt them. Take the problem that Hegseth confronted — the need for a quick, secure mobile device that could be used safely by national security officials around the world. There’s a fix for that, devised by a mobile phone company called Cape, founded by a former special operations sergeant named John Doyle. Cape has devised a virtual mobile network that disappears from the normal cell-phone net. The phone is nearly impossible to hack or trace, according to Doyle.
“Modern mobile is how we all communicate — from teenagers glued to Snapchat to soldiers on the frontline in Ukraine to our nation’s elected officials,” argued Doyle in an email. “It’s a national imperative to make secure commercial mobile work for everyone’s needs, including defense and intelligence professionals.”
Yet government security officials are stuck with legacy systems. “Officers are demanding these new systems and tools, but innovation is blocked by outdated security practices, overly rigid counterintelligence policies, and inefficient acquisition processes,” Brown contends.
There are mobile SCIFs, too — prefabricated units that can be placed in a home or unclassified workspace. But too few are available, and it can take up to a year to get permission to install one, intelligence veterans say.
Hegseth was a poor choice as defense secretary because he lacks the management and technological experience to break through the security logjam. He behaves as though rules don’t apply to “warriors” like him. Rather than using a workaround, a real leader would champion a movement to transform the Pentagon’s archaic technology practices, symbolized by the four confining walls of the SCIF.

Is your favorite influencer’s opinion bought and sold?

BY LEE FANG
Los Angeles Times
Your addictive doomscrolling on X, TikTok or Instagram may also be the latest nexus for millions of dollars in secret political corruption.
Over the last month, the problem has come into sharp relief. Newly surfaced documents show that more than 500 social media creators were part of a covert electioneering effort by Democratic donors to shape the presidential election in favor of Kamala Harris.
Payments went to party members with online followings but also to non-political influencers — people known for comedy posts, travel vlogs or cooking YouTubes — in exchange for “positive, specific pro-Kamala content” meant to create the appearance of a groundswell of support for the former vice president. Meanwhile, a similar pay-to-post effort among conservative influencers publicly unraveled. The goal was to publish messages in opposition to Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s push to remove sugary soda beverages from eligible SNAP food stamp benefits.
Influencers were allegedly offered money to denounce soda restrictions as “an overreach that unfairly targets consumer choice” and encouraged to post pictures of President Donald Trump enjoying Coca-Cola products.

After right-leaning reporter Nick Sortor pointed out the near-identical messages on several prominent accounts, posts came down and at least one of the influencers apologized.
In both schemes, on the left and the right, those creating the content made little to no effort to disclose that payments could be involved. For ordinary users stumbling on the posts and videos, what they saw would have seemed entirely organic.
In the influencers’ defense, they didn’t break any rules — because none exist.
We used to demand minimal levels of transparency for paid endorsements. In the 1970s, the U.S. enacted a series of reforms requiring new disclosures for those seeking to shape elections. Television, radio and print ads for political campaigns must specify the sponsors, and billboards or pamphlets sent by mail also feature small-print reminders of the groups responsible.
Social media, however, is the Wild West of advocacy. Although influencers are generally required by the Federal Trade Commission to disclose paid endorsements for products, politics are a different matter. Most election-related communications fall under the jurisdiction of the Federal Election Commission. But the FEC commissioners debated the issue without resolving the problem. A proposal floated in December 2023 to enact basic rules for in-

fluencers made no headway.
There was a momentary push in 2017 for stricter social media disclosures in the political realm. The discovery of foreign influence campaigns aimed at the 2016 presidential election set off alarm bells. As a result, the major tech platforms began working to track and close so-called sock puppet accounts operated by the Russian and Chinese government. Yet few reforms were institutionalized.
That has left the entire social media landscape vulnerable to hidden manipulation.
Transparency in political influencing requires regulatory action. The Federal Election Commission must act and establish clear disclosure requirements for paid political communications on social media. Congress should expand the definition of electioneering and political-payola disclosure to include influencer content. Platforms must implement more robust paid content and disclosure tools.
Most importantly, we as citizens must demand reform. If we fail to address the growing influence of secret money in the digital public square, we will surrender our collective decision-making ability and our democracy to whoever can afford to purchase the most compelling voices.

Lee Fang is an independent journalist. He publishes an investigative newsletter at leefang.com.

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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

ACROSS

- 1 Trade
- 5 Poetic contraction
- 8 Silicon Valley execs
- 12 "See ya!"
- 13 Actor Linden
- 14 "— be in England ..."
- 15 Oodles
- 16 Genetic letters
- 17 Get bigger
- 18 Zodiac twins
- 20 Locales
- 22 Gut-punch reaction
- 23 Attorney's field
- 24 Wimbledon divisions
- 27 South American lake
- 32 Köln cry
- 33 Biblical verb suffix
- 34 Feminine principle
- 35 Passageway
- 38 Jr.-year exam
- 39 Tire filler
- 40 Wise bird
- 42 "Fantasia" studio
- 45 Prickly plant
- 49 Stadium cheers
- 50 Suitable
- 52 Pepsi rival
- 53 Writer James
- 54 Seminary subj.

- 55 "Yeah, right"
- 56 Lincoln in-law
- 57 Scot's refusal
- 58 Pedestal part

- 25 Green prefix
- 26 Defeated soundly
- 28 Olympic skater Midori
- 29 Engine valve
- 30 Espionage org.
- 31 Hill dweller
- 36 Sudsy no more
- 37 Fury
- 38 Calm
- 41 You and I
- 42 "Phooey!"
- 43 Shakespearean villain
- 44 Knitting fiber
- 46 Japanese noodles
- 47 Squeezed (out)
- 48 "Fight Club" actor Jared
- 51 Pot pie morsel

DOWN

- 1 Men-only
- 2 Corduroy ridge
- 3 Fermi's bit
- 4 Cookout spots
- 5 Bought in a secondhand shop
- 6 Author Fleming
- 7 Balkan native
- 8 French brandy
- 9 Some toll roads
- 10 Oklahoma tribe
- 11 Scatters seeds
- 19 "Forget it!"
- 21 Football's Manning
- 24 Pouch

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

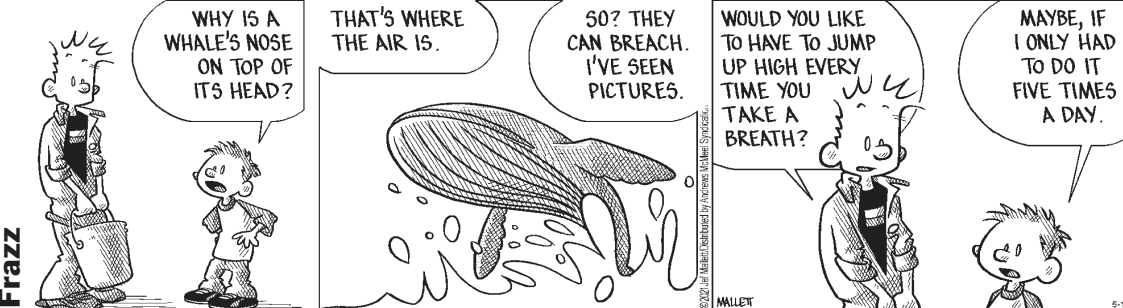
5-1

CRYPTOQUIP

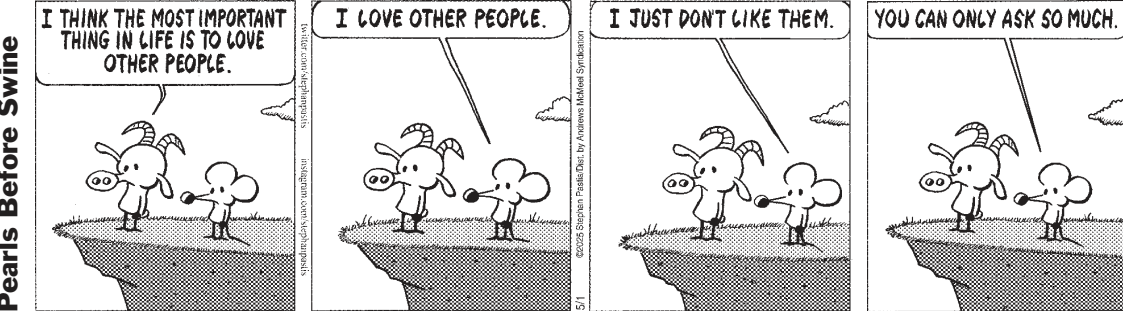
RT TDXLD C MILUGEGU JGAX
TE DTCMR OLLE, G ZLCDX C
OGMRDT ICRDTA UCWW TNR
"UZNUJ, IWLCML!"
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE NEW GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO CALL THEMSELVES SOCIAL VEGANS? THEY AVOID MEET.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals C

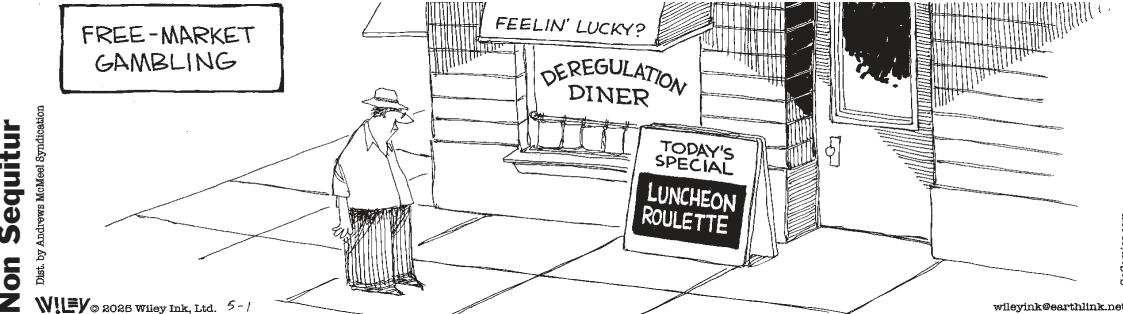
Frazz



Pearls Before Swine



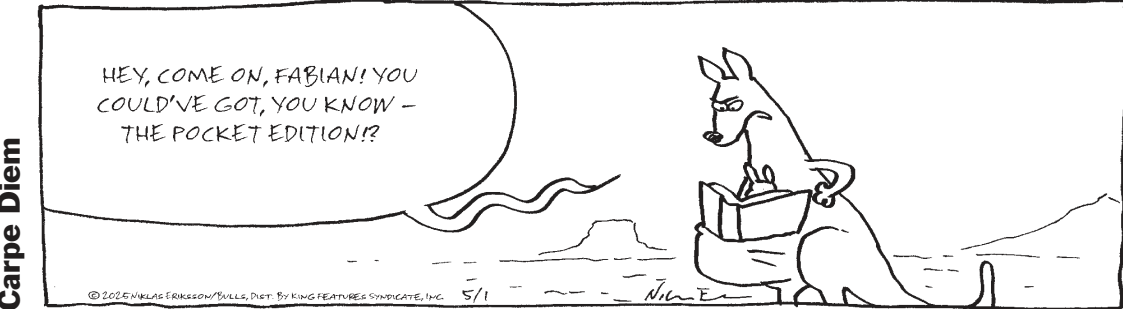
Non Sequitur



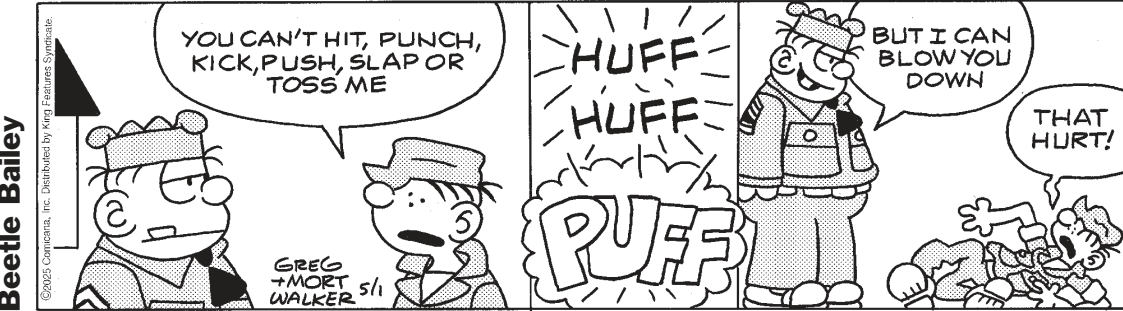
Wumo



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



MLB

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	18	12	.600	—
Boston	17	14	.548	1½
Tampa Bay	14	15	.483	3½
Toronto	13	16	.448	4½
Baltimore	11	18	.379	6½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	18	12	.600	—
Cleveland	16	13	.552	1½
Kansas City	15	15	.500	3
Minnesota	13	17	.433	5
Chicago	7	22	.241	10½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	17	12	.586	—
Houston	16	13	.552	1
Texas	16	14	.533	1½
Athletics	15	15	.500	2½
Los Angeles	12	16	.429	4½
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	21	9	.700	—
Philadelphia	16	13	.552	4½
Atlanta	14	15	.483	6½
Washington	13	17	.433	8
Miami	12	17	.414	8½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	18	12	.600	—
Cincinnati	16	13	.552	1½
Milwaukee	15	15	.500	3
St. Louis	12	17	.414	5½
Pittsburgh	11	19	.367	7
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	20	10	.667	—
San Francisco	19	11	.633	1
San Diego	18	11	.621	1½
Arizona	15	14	.517	4½
Colorado	4	25	.138	15½

Tuesday's games	
Cleveland 2, Minnesota 1	N.Y. Yankees 15, Baltimore 3
Boston 10, Toronto 2	Kansas City 3, Tampa Bay 1
Milwaukee 7, Chicago White Sox 2	Texas 15, Athletics 2
Houston 6, Detroit 4	Seattle 5, L.A. Angels 3
Chicago Cubs 9, Pittsburgh 0	N.Y. Mets 8, Arizona 3
Philadelphia 7, Washington 6	Atlanta 8, Colorado 2
San Diego 7, San Francisco 4	L.A. Dodgers 15, Miami 2
St. Louis at Cincinnati, ppd.	
Wednesday's games	
St. Louis at Cincinnati, 2	Detroit at Houston
Atlanta at Colorado	Miami at L.A. Dodgers
L.A. Angels at Seattle	San Francisco at San Diego
Minnesota at Cleveland	N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore
Chicago Cubs at Pittsburgh	Washington at Philadelphia
Kansas City at Tampa Bay	Boston at Toronto
Arizona at N.Y. Mets	Milwaukee at Chicago White Sox
Athletics at Texas	
Thursday's games	
Chicago Cubs (Rea 1-0) at Pittsburgh (Skenes 3-2)	St. Louis (Liberatore 2-2) at Cincinnati (Greene 3-2)
Arizona (Gallen 1-4) at N.Y. Mets (Senga 3-1)	Kansas City (Lugo 2-3) at Tampa Bay (Baz 3-0)
Minnesota (Woods Richardson 1-2) at Cleveland (Lively 1-2)	Milwaukee (Patrick 1-2) at Chicago White Sox (Burke 1-4)
Athletics (Springs 3-3) at Texas (Mahle 3-0)	Washington (Lord 0-3) at Philadelphia (Walker 1-2)
Boston (Houck 0-2) at Toronto (Berríos 1-1)	Detroit (Mize 4-1) at L.A. Angels (Hendricks 0-3)
Colorado (Freeland 0-4) at San Francisco (Verlander 0-2)	
This date in baseball	
May 1	
1920 — Babe Ruth hits his first home run as a Yankee as New York beats the Boston Red Sox 6-0 at the Polo Grounds.	
1991 — Rickey Henderson surpasses Lou Brock as the career stolen base leader with his 939th steal as the Oakland Athletics beat the New York Yankees 7-4.	
1991 — Nolan Ryan pitches his seventh no-hitter, striking out 16 and shutting down the best-hitting team in the majors, as the Texas Rangers beat the Toronto Blue Jays 3-0.	

ROUNDUP

Yanks hit 6 solo homers to rout O's

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Trent Grisham, Aaron Judge and Ben Rice led off the game with consecutive home runs, and the New York Yankees battered the Orioles' beleaguered pitching staff in a 15-3 victory over Baltimore on Tuesday night.

Carlos Rodón (4-3) retired the first 15 Orioles he faced and eventually yielded two runs and two hits in six-plus innings. Rodón took a perfect game into the sixth before Emmanuel Rivera led off with a walk. Jorge Mateo followed with a double.

Kyle Gibson (0-1) allowed five home runs in the first two innings in his first big league start of the season. He was finally pulled with two outs in the fourth after allowing nine runs and 11 hits.

Cody Bellinger, the game's fifth batter, also hit a solo homer in the first, and Rice homered again in the second. Austin Wells hit New York's final home run — all six came with nobody on — with two outs in the ninth.

Gunnar Henderson hit a solo shot for Baltimore.

Cubs 9, Pirates 0: Seiya Suzuki hit a two-run homer and fell a single short of the cycle as visiting Chicago went deep four times in a win over Pittsburgh.

Shota Imanaga (3-1) gave up six hits with three strikeouts in five scoreless innings before leaving with leg cramps after a leadoff double from Andrew McCutchen in the sixth.

Royals 3, Rays 1: Freddy Fermin had three hits and an RBI, Kyle Isbel and Salvador Perez each drove in a run and Michael Lorenzen (3-3) pitched six innings of one-run ball for his 50th career win as visiting Kansas City beat Tampa Bay.

Perez's two-out double drove in Jonathan India in the first. One inning later, Fermin poked a single to right that allowed Drew Walters to advance from first to third, setting up Isbel's sacrifice fly.

Red Sox 10, Blue Jays 2: Willyer Abreu hit a three-run homer, one of five long balls for visiting Boston in a win over struggling Toronto.

Alex Bregman, Rafael Devers, Jarren Duran and Kristian Campbell all had solo homers as the Red Sox won their third straight. Boston leads the majors with 142 runs scored in April.

Mets 8, Diamondbacks 3: Francisco Lindor and Starling Marte each hit an early two-run homer, and host New York put on a dazzling display of sparkling defense in its victory over Arizona.

Pete Alonso also went deep off an ineffective Eduardo Rodriguez (1-3) as the Mets improved to 21-9,



STEPHANIE SCARBROUGH/AP

The New York Yankees' Aaron Judge, right, celebrates with Ben Rice after hitting a home run during the first inning against the Orioles on Tuesday in Baltimore. Judge and Rice combined for three homers in the win.

the top record in the majors. They are 13-1 at Citi Field, the best home start in franchise history.

Handed a 7-0 cushion after the third, David Peterson (2-1) yielded one run in five innings to help deal the Diamondbacks their fifth loss in six games. He was boosted by highlight-worthy plays in the field from Tyrone Taylor in center field, Lindor at shortstop and Alonso at first base.

Phillies 7, Nationals 6: Bryson Stott scored on a wild pitch with two outs in the ninth to cap a zany final inning, and host Philadelphia beat Washington.

Johan Rojas made up for a defensive miscue in the top of the ninth that allowed a run with a sacrifice fly off Kyle Finnegan (0-1) that tied the game at 6-all. Rojas homered in the third, and Kyle Schwarber also went deep for the Phillies, who have won three straight. Trea Turner contributed four hits.

Nathaniel Lowe hit a go-ahead three-run homer for the Nationals on a 1-2 pitch from Orion Kerkering (3-1) with two outs in the ninth. Luis Garcia Jr. also homered, and CJ Abrams had four hits and was a homer shy of the cycle.

Brewers 7, White Sox 2: Caleb Durbin hit a two-run single in a four-run sixth inning as visiting Milwaukee beat Chicago.

Isaac Collins hit his first career homer for the Brewers, and Freddy Peralta pitched six innings of two-run ball. The Brewers improved to 3-5 on a season-long 10-game road trip.

Rangers 15, Athletics 2: Two-

time Cy Young Award winner Jacob deGrom struck out seven in six scoreless innings for his first win in more than two years and host Texas had its best offensive game this season to beat the Athletics.

The 36-year-old deGrom (1-1) had gone 737 days since also beating the A's on April 23, 2023, then made only more start in his debut season with the Rangers before Tommy John surgery.

Astros 6, Tigers 4: Yainer Diaz hit RBI singles in consecutive innings, rookie Ryan Gusto matched a season high with six strikeouts and host Houston beat Detroit.

Diaz hit a two-run single that bounced just in front of center fielder Riley Greene, giving Houston its first lead at 3-2 in the sixth. He singled in Isaac Paredes in the seventh.

Braves 8, Rockies 2: Matt Olson had a season-high three hits, Michael Harris II drove in three runs and visiting Atlanta rolled past Colorado.

The loss was the Rockies' eighth in a row and their 16th in their past 17 games. It's the first time in franchise history Colorado has gone 1-16 over a 17-game stretch.

Guardians 2, Twins 1: Kyle Manzardo homered to right field to lead off the ninth inning as host Cleveland snapped a three-game losing streak.

Manzardo connected on a change-up down the middle by Louis Varland (1-2) for his eighth homer of the season and the first walk-off hit of his career.

Ty France had three hits for

Minnesota, which had its four-game winning streak snapped.

Mariners 5, Angels 3: Jorge Polanco hit two home runs and drove in five runs as host Seattle beat Los Angeles.

The first blast from Polanco was a three-run shot in the second to give the Mariners a 3-0 lead. Polanco then had a two-run shot off reliever Jose Fermin — his ninth homer of the season — to make it 5-1 in the seventh. Polanco — the AL's reigning player of the week — was already on a tear, going 8 for 17 with two doubles, four home runs and eight RBIs in five games last week.

Padres 7, Giants 4: Xander Bogaerts went 2 for 4 with three RBIs, Nick Pivetta struck out nine in 5½ innings and host San Diego beat San Francisco.

Bogaerts' second hit was a two-run shot in the seventh — his first homer of the season.

Dodgers 15, Marlins 2: Teoscar Hernández had two RBI doubles and two run-scoring singles to take over the major league lead with 31 RBIs, Andy Pages homered among his three hits, and host Los Angeles beat Miami.

The Dodgers finished with 18 hits while winning their fourth straight game.

Dodgers right-hander Matt Sauer (1-0), recalled from Triple-A on Tuesday, gave up one run and five hits, in five innings in relief. Sauer struck out four and walked none to earn his first big-league win and give a bullpen that leads the major leagues with 133 innings a much-needed breather.

WNBA/NHL PLAYOFFS

Stronger: Clark’s influence on sports still as big as ever

FROM PAGE 24
her No. 1 overall and 13 days after that, training camp opened.
Following a brief preseason, Clark made her regular-season debut May 10. That started a grueling 42-game grind during which the Fever overcame a 1-8 start to finish 20-20. Then they were swept out of the playoffs.
The only real stoppage for Clark during that 81-game, 10½-month span was the monthlong Olympic break.

Clark’s impact

Clark turned sellouts at college and WNBA games into the norm as she found her every move scrutinized on social media. Fans complained she was being treated poorly by the league’s older players and some even argued the physical play was racially motivated. Her friendships and relationships became all the rage, and nothing seemed to be off limits.
But Clark never complained, never bowed to the pressure and used this seven-month break to focus on being herself. She completed one bucket list item — attending the final round of The Masters earlier this month — and had her college jersey retired. She attended a Taylor Swift concert, an NFL game with Swift and, of course, Pacers games.

Now, though, she sounds refreshed as she sings the praises of a veteran team full of title dreams and championship resumes from coach Stephanie White to teammates Natasha Howard and 37-year-old DeWanna Bonner.

The early returns seem to show the personalities are a perfect match.
“Everything is just absolutely good,” All-Star guard Kelsey Mitchell said. “It feels fresh. It feels kind of like when you take your clothes out of the dryer. It just feels different and it feels good because we have new leadership.”

New look
It’s not just the overhauled roster, either.



Former Iowa guard Caitlin Clark speaks during a ceremony in which her No. 22 jersey was retired Feb. 2 in Iowa City, Iowa.

Mitchell, one of the few holdovers left from last season, also sees a different version of Clark, one showcased in a photo posted on social media last month.

“From a physical standpoint, her strength and her ability to make plays that people don’t think about — that skip pass from here to here,” she said. “A person of her caliber, it seems small but it’s going to help her go from having 10 assists to 12. And then after that the professional learning, watching film, knowing what you need.”

Just the thought of an improved Clark this season could make opponents jittery.

Clark led Indiana in minutes (35.4 per game) and steals (1.3), shared team scoring honors with Mitchell (19.2 points), and broke the WNBA’s single season mark for assists with 337.

Not bad for a rookie trying to fit in and find her way.

But the intensity and passion Clark plays with, even in practice, seem to have her more comfortable playing the leading role from the start of this season, too.

“She doesn’t waste reps and she literally embodies the value that how you do anything is how you do everything — whether it’s a ball-handling drill or a shooting drill or setting screens,” White said. “She approaches it with such a discipline that she doesn’t waste time, and I appreciate that.”

Big goals

Clark, meanwhile, is just focused on winning games.

The Fever will play at Clark’s alma mater and Notre Dame in the preseason, with the real tests set to begin with Indiana’s season opener May 17 at Chicago and her old rival, Angel Reese. You can bet, Clark will be just as eager to celebrate then as she was in practice.

“Don’t get me wrong, I love basketball, like that’s one of the most fun things in the world,” she said. “We had a great year and eventually getting away from that, I came to a point where I was itching to get back in here after like a month. So I’m happy to be back.”



KARL B. DEBLAKER/AP

The Carolina Hurricanes’ Sebastian Aho (20) celebrates his game-winning goal during the second overtime period of Game 5 of a first-round playoff series against the New Jersey Devils in Raleigh, N.C., on Tuesday.

Aho pushes Canes past Devils in 2OT to advance

BY AARON BEARD
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Rod Brind’Amour had just watched his Carolina Hurricanes skate through a debacle of a first period, putting them in a three-goal hole on a night they had a chance to advance in the NHL playoffs on home ice.

So what was he hoping to see in the second period? “Anything,” he said matter-of-factly.

He got it and more, all the way through to Sebastian Aho’s ticket-punching goal that finally buried the New Jersey Devils.

Aho hammered a one-timer past Jacob Markstrom at 4:17 of the second overtime to help the Hurricanes beat the Devils 5-4 on Tuesday night to clinch their first-round playoff series in five games.

Aho’s score off a feed from Shayne Gostisbehere came with Carolina on a four-minute power play on a double-minor high-sticking penalty by Dawson Mercer that sent Jesperi Kotkaniemi skating off to the tunnel with a towel to his right eye.

Aho provided the capper, the only lead the Canes would have in a wild game that pushed them into the second round.

“Unreal,” Aho said. “Obviously you almost like black out for a second there. The crowd goes nuts, guys are jumping on you and it’s unreal. Yeah, really good feeling.”

Carolina is the first team to advance to the second round, and next faces the winner of the Montreal-Washington series. The Capitals lead 3-1 in that one.

The Hurricanes are also the fourth team in league history to win a series in seven consecutive postseasons, first since the Canadiens went 10 straight from 1984-93.

New Jersey skated out to a 3-0 lead in the opening 10 minutes, only to see Carolina erupt for four goals in a chaos-filled second period to level the game. But things settled down into a tough grinding finish for

the third period and extra periods, capped ultimately by Aho’s second goal on the power play on the night.

Aho also had the goal that tied it 4-4 with 8:33 left in the second period with the Canes holding a two-man advantage.

Taylor Hall, Jackson Blake and Andrei Svechnikov also scored for Carolina, which is one of four teams in the playoffs for at least seven straight years. But the Hurricanes are the only one of that group to win at least one postseason series each time.

“Proud of the group for digging in,” Brind’Amour said. “I think it could’ve been easy to go, ‘Well, it’s 3-nothing, we’ve got two more games we could play (to advance).’ But they didn’t.”

“That’s just not the way we are,” said the 21-year-old Blake, who squeezed one shot between the left post and Markstrom’s right shoulder for his first career playoff goal. “I think it’s really cool the way we won tonight, so it was awesome.”

It also marked the second time in three seasons Carolina had eliminated the Devils in a five-game series that ended with a sudden-death goal in Raleigh. The other came in the second round in 2023.

The Canes had won the first two games of this series at home, while New Jersey punched through in two overtimes to win Game 3. But Carolina put the Devils on the brink with Sunday’s Game 4 win after taking a 3-0 lead and losing starting goalie Frederik Andersen to an injury on a skating-in hit by Timo Meier.

Injury-riddled New Jersey gave the Hurricanes fits on their home ice in Game 2 and again in Game 5, only to come up empty

“We played two pretty good road games in Games 2 and 5 here, so to not get one is tough,” first-year Devils coach Sheldon Keefe said. “But I thought our guys gave everything they had. We were on fumes in overtime. But our guys just kept fighting, hanging on, Marky’s battling. So there’s lots to like about it.”

NHL PLAYOFFS



MATT KROHN/AP

Aaron Ekblad had to sit out Game 5 of the Panthers' series against the Lightning on Wednesday.

Panthers' Ekblad suspended two games

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Florida Panthers defenseman Aaron Ekblad has been suspended for two games for elbowing Lightning forward Brandon Hagel in the head midway through Game 4 of Florida's first-round series against Tampa Bay.

The NHL's Department of Player Safety announced its ruling after a phone hearing with Ekblad earlier Tuesday. He will be out for Game 5 and either Game 6 of this series or the Panthers' first game next round.

No penalty was called when Ekblad hit Hagel in the chin with his right elbow and forearm with just under nine minutes left in the second period on Monday night. Hagel left the ice and did not return, and Ekblad scored the first of two goals in 11 seconds late in the third to give the defending Stanley Cup champions a comeback victory and a 3-1 series lead.

Coach Jon Cooper said Hagel would not play in Game 5. Hagel was suspended for Game 3 for his late hit that knocked Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov out of Game 2.

Ekblad missed the final 18 games of the regular season and the first two games of this series after being suspended for violating the performance-enhancing drug policy. Florida got accustomed to playing without Ekblad.

"If it's the first time it happens, there's even questions from the coaching staff about what's the right adjustment to make in your lineup and how will that play out — there's a lot of unknown," coach Paul Maurice said. "Because we've been through it so much when Aaron's out we know what the D-pairs are — let's assume — if he's out of the lineup."

Another Panthers defenseman, Niko Mikkola, was fined \$5,000 for boarding Tampa Bay's Zemgus Girgensons in Game 4.

ROUNDUP

Janmark's goal gives Oilers 3-2 edge

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Mattias Janmark scored the tiebreaking goal in the third period, and the Edmonton Oilers beat the Los Angeles Kings 3-1 Tuesday night for their third consecutive victory and a 3-2 lead in their first-round series.

Evander Kane and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins also scored and Calvin Pickard made 20 saves for the defending Western Conference champion Oilers, who can advance with a win in Game 6 in Edmonton on Thursday.

Edmonton was finally rewarded for dominating possession and shots throughout Game 5 when Janmark converted a rebound of Viktor Arvidsson's shot with 12:48 to play.

After some fraught final moments, Nugent-Hopkins added an empty-net goal to finish the Oilers' franchise-record third consecutive comeback playoff victory.

"I think the feeling was really there after the first period that we're outplaying 'em, we got them where we want, and now we've just got to push," Janmark said. "Keep pushing the gas. And even when they scored, just try to get back, and Kaner got it right back, and away we went."

Andrei Kuzmenko scored and Darcy Kuemper stopped 43 shots for the second-seeded Kings, who are one loss away from their fourth consecutive first-round playoff exit at Edmonton's hands despite winning the first two games at home and holding third-period leads in the next two. Los Angeles led in the final minute of Game 4 before losing in overtime.

After a slow start, the Oilers have tilted the series decidedly in their favor. Edmonton has outshot the Kings 79-35 since the start of the third period of Game 4.

"They executed way better than us tonight," Kings coach Jim Hiller said. "They were stronger. They beat us in every area of the game, except for the special teams, oddly enough. The goaltender was great for us to give us a chance. They were just better in every way. We can't look to one part of our game and think that was acceptable."

Kuemper made 19 saves in the first period, and Los Angeles went ahead early in the second when Kuzmenko tipped home captain Anze Kopitar's shot during a power play. Kuzmenko recorded his sixth point of the postseason and his 23rd point in 27 games since joining the Kings less than two months ago.

The Oilers answered less than three minutes later with Kane's goal from the slot. Kane went unpunished later in the period for a



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Edmonton Oilers center Mattias Janmark, left, celebrates his goal with right wing Vasily Podkolzin during the third period in Game 5 of their first-round playoff series against the Kings on Tuesday in Los Angeles.

knee-on-knee hit on Kings scoring leader Adrian Kempe.

Edmonton's 33 shots in the first two periods were the most allowed all season by Los Angeles, which was shut down after scoring 19 goals in the first four games of the series.

"We wanted to be desperate, like we were in the third period and overtime the last game," Pickard said. "And we did it for 60 minutes."

Golden Knights 3, Wild 2 (OT): It appeared in the closing two minutes that host Vegas would be heading back to Minnesota on the brink of elimination.

But in a crazy sequence in which the Wild's potential winning goal was at first upheld on video review and then overturned on a Vegas challenge, the Golden Knights had new life and forced overtime.

Brett Howden then scored 4:05 into the extra period to put Vegas one game away from advancing out of the Western Conference first round.

"It saved our (butt)," Golden Knights coach Bruce Cassidy said of the offside challenge. "We've got a minute left in the game. I'm not saying we couldn't have come back, but that's tough, right?"

The Golden Knights take a 3-2 series lead back to St. Paul for Thursday night's Game 6. Vegas, which had the second-best record in the Pacific Division this season and won the Stanley Cup in 2023, will try to advance to at least the second round for the fifth time in their eight-year history.

Minnesota will attempt to avoid another first-round series exit. The Wild's last series victory oc-

curred in 2015. They could already have wrapped up this series, but Vegas has won back-to-back overtime games.

"The game was another 50-50 game," Wild coach John Hynes said. "It's the playoffs. Sometimes it goes well for you and sometimes it doesn't, but we've got another one coming up, and there's where our focus is."

William Karlsson and Mark Stone also scored goals for the Golden Knights, and Jack Eichel had two assists. Eichel had just one assist in the first four games. Adin Hill made 20 saves.

Kirill Kaprizov and Matt Boldy scored for the Wild and Joel Eriksson Ek had assists on both.

Filip Gustavsson recorded 23 saves on 25 shots before being replaced by former Golden Knight Marc-Andre Fleury to open the third period. The Wild said Gustavsson had an illness.

Senators 4, Maple Leafs 0: Linus Ullmark made 29 saves for the first playoff shutout of his career as visiting Ottawa blanked Toronto to cut the deficit in the teams' first-round series to 3-2.

Thomas Chabot and Dylan Cozens gave the Senators a 2-0 lead before Tim Stutzle and Brady Tkachuk added empty-net goals for Ottawa, which once again staved off elimination after picking up a 4-3 overtime victory in Game 4 at home Saturday. Tkachuk and Stutzle added two assists each for three-point performances.

Only four NHL teams have come back from a 3-0 deficit to win a series — the 1942 Leafs, 1975 Islanders, the 2010 Flyers and the 2014 Kings.

Scoreboard

First Round

Best-of-seven; x-if necessary
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Florida 3, Tampa Bay 1

Florida 6, Tampa Bay 2
Florida 2, Tampa Bay 0
Tampa Bay 5, Florida 1
Florida 4, Tampa Bay 2
Wednesday: at Tampa Bay
x-Friday: at Florida
x-Sunday: at Tampa Bay

Washington 3, Montreal 1

Washington 3, Montreal 2, OT
Washington 3, Montreal 1
Montreal 6, Washington 3
Washington 5, Montreal 2
Wednesday: at Washington
x-Friday: at Montreal
x-Sunday: at Washington

Carolina 4, New Jersey 1

Carolina 4, New Jersey 1
Carolina 3, New Jersey 1
New Jersey 3, Carolina 2, 2OT
Carolina 5, New Jersey 2
Tuesday: Carolina 5, New Jersey 4, 2OT

Toronto 3, Ottawa 2

Toronto 6, Ottawa 2
Toronto 3, Ottawa 2, OT
Toronto 3, Ottawa 2, OT
Ottawa 4, Toronto 3, OT
Tuesday: Ottawa 4, Toronto 0
Thursday: at Ottawa, AFN-Sports2, 1
3:30 a.m. Friday CET, 9 a.m. Friday JKT
x-Saturday: at Toronto

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Dallas 3, Colorado 2

Colorado 5, Dallas 1
Dallas 4, Colorado 3, OT
Dallas 2, Colorado 1, OT
Colorado 4, Dallas 0
Monday: Dallas 6, Colorado 2
Thursday: at Colorado
x-Saturday: at Dallas

Edmonton 3, Los Angeles 2

Los Angeles 6, Edmonton 5
Los Angeles 6, Edmonton 2
Edmonton 7, Los Angeles 4
Edmonton 4, Los Angeles 3, OT
Tuesday: Edmonton 3, Los Angeles 1
Thursday: at Edmonton
x-Saturday: at Los Angeles

Vegas 3, Minnesota 2

Vegas 4, Minnesota 2
Minnesota 5, Vegas 2
Minnesota 5, Vegas 2
Vegas 4, Minnesota 3, OT
Tuesday: Vegas 3, Minnesota 2, OT
Thursday: at Minnesota, AFN-Sports2, 3:30 a.m. Friday CET, 11:30 a.m. Friday JKT
x-Saturday: at Vegas

Winnipeg 2, St. Louis 2

Winnipeg 5, St. Louis 3
Winnipeg 2, St. Louis 1
St. Louis 7, Winnipeg 2
St. Louis 5, Winnipeg 1
Wednesday: at Winnipeg
Friday: at St. Louis
x-Sunday: at Winnipeg

NBA PLAYOFFS



RICK SCUTERI/AP

Spurs guard Stephon Castle, left, was named NBA Rookie of the Year, winning by a wide margin with 92 of 100 first-place votes.

Spurs' Castle wins Rookie of the Year

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

Stephon Castle made no secret about it: He wanted to be rookie of the year.

And he got it done — by a wide margin.

The San Antonio Spurs now have back-to-back winners of the award, with Victor Wembanyama last year and Castle this season. Castle was the fifth rookie in Spurs history to score more than 1,000 points.

It was one-sided in the voting. Castle got 92 first-place votes, easily topping runner-up Zaccharie Risacher of the Atlanta Hawks and third-place finisher Jaylen Wells of the Memphis Grizzlies. Risacher got five first-place votes, Wells got the other three.

“Coming in with all the confidence that I had in myself as a player, that was definitely a goal of mine from Day 1,” Castle said on TNT, which broadcast the unveiling of the results. “I’m just happy I was able to execute it.”

Castle’s win marked the second time in more than a half-century that one franchise went back-to-back with the top-rookie honor. Minnesota’s Andrew Wiggins (now of Miami) and Karl-Anthony Towns (now of New York) were voted rookies of the year in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

Wembanyama, on social media, paid tribute to Castle’s accomplishment. “Hustle, heart & just pure talent ... all year long, you showed why you deserved this title !! So proud of you,” Wembanyama posted on X shortly after the results were revealed.

The last instance of a team going back-to-back before that: 1973 and 1974, when Bob McAdoo and Ernie DiGregorio pulled it off for the Buffalo Braves.

“I get so excited watching him play,” said Chris Paul, Castle’s

backcourt mate this season in San Antonio. “The first thing that I want to see in a teammate or anybody is how competitive they are. That’ll take you further than talent any day. And I saw immediately was that he was competitive. I was like, ‘OK, cool. This is going to be easy.’”

Castle led all rookies this season in points (1,190) and steals (74). Risacher finished strong, winning Eastern Conference rookie of the month for both February and March. Wells led all rookies in games started (74) and 3-pointers made (138, matching the total posted by Washington’s Bub Carington).

Risacher — who hails from France, like Wembanyama — was looking to give the NBA the first instance of international players winning the award in consecutive years since Australia’s Ben Simmons and Slovenia’s Luka Doncic in 2018 and 2019. Wells was bidding to be Memphis’ first rookie of the year since Ja Morant in 2020.

The Rookie of the Year award was voted on by a global panel of 100 writers and broadcasters who cover the league and cast ballots shortly after the end of the regular season.

Washington’s Alex Sarr was fourth in the voting, followed by Memphis’ Zach Edey in fifth and Miami’s Kel’el Ware in sixth. Philadelphia’s Jared McCain — who was off to a great start before getting hurt — and Chicago’s Matas Buzelis finished tied for seventh in the voting.

The other awards that were part of that voting process and have already had their results unveiled: Cleveland’s Evan Mobley winning Defensive Player of the Year, New York’s Jalen Brunson winning Clutch Player of the Year, and Boston’s Payton Pritchard winning Sixth Man of the Year.

ROUNDUP

Murray erupts for 43 points, lifts Nuggets over Clippers

Associated Press

DENVER — Nuggets interim coach David Adelman sensed that one of Jamal Murray’s patented playoff performances was coming, and he was right on the money — just like his point guard.

Murray’s 43-point outburst powered Denver’s 131-115 win over the Clippers on Tuesday night that handed Los Angeles its first back-to-back losses since March 4 and put the Nuggets one victory away from a Round 2 matchup with Oklahoma City.

Murray was 17-of-26 shooting, including 8 for 14 from long range.

“Tonight, he played great,” Kawhi Leonard said. “He came out, made shots, got hot, found his teammates and we pretty much couldn’t stop him. He played amazing. Russ (Westbrook) came in and played great, as well.”

Westbrook scored 21 points in his return from a left foot injury, including 16 of them in 12 first-half minutes as Denver led wire-to-wire.

Adelman said that some of Murray’s shots “were absolutely ridiculous. And I said before the game it’s coming with him. You know it is, in these big moments, these situations. He was born for this.”

This marked Murray’s best scoring game outside the Disney World bubble during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“When he’s aggressive, we’re a different team,” Westbrook said. “When he’s got that swagger and he’s going out and competing at the level he did tonight, we’re a tough team to beat.”

Murray got plenty of help, including 23 points from Game 4 hero Aaron Gordon and Nikola Jokic’s 21st career playoff triple-double (13 points, 10 rebounds, 12 assists) to go with Christian Braun’s double-double (11 points and 12 rebounds).

Braun also provided stellar defense of James Harden, who scored 11 points on 3-for-9 shooting with four turnovers.

For the second straight game, Harden didn’t speak with reporters afterward.

Pistons 106, Knicks 103: The players the Pistons put together to turn a 14-win team into a playoff squad aren’t ready to split up for the summer.

Instead, they’re going back to Detroit together — and maybe back to New York after that.

Cade Cunningham had 24 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, and the Pistons stayed alive in their first postseason appearance since 2019 by beating the Knicks in Game 5 of their first-round series.



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Nuggets guard Jamal Murray reacts after hitting a basket as center Nikola Jokic cheers in Game 5 of the series against the Clippers on Tuesday. Murray scored 43 points and Denver took a 3-2 series lead.

“Everybody’s got a back’s-against-the-wall type of mentality, but the group really loves being around each other and I think that was one of the biggest things,” forward Tobias Harris said.

“Like, we don’t want this thing to stop. Like, we’ve got to keep on fighting.”

Ausar Thompson added 22 points and Harris had 17 for the Pistons, who will have a chance to even things up Thursday night at home in Game 6. If they win that, the deciding game would be back at Madison Square Garden on Saturday.

Not surprisingly, they still like their chances in the series.

“Confident,” Cunningham said. “We’ll be back.”

OG Anunoby scored 19 points for the Knicks, who were trying to reach the Eastern Conference semifinals for the third straight season but never fully recovered from a poor start. Karl-Anthony Towns and Mikal Bridges each had 17, but Jalen Brunson had his worst game of the postseason with 16 points on 4-for-16 shooting.

“We just put ourselves in a deficit early,” Towns said.

The game was tied at 95 before Jalen Duren made consecutive baskets and Cunningham scored for a six-point lead. The Pistons got a good break when Brunson and Josh Hart both left the game with injuries with 2:57 remaining and play went on for a while without a stoppage when they were ready to return. By the time they could, there were 27 seconds left.

Scoreboard

First Round

Best-of-seven; x-if necessary
Eastern Conference
New York 3, Detroit 2

New York 123, Detroit 112
Detroit 100, New York 94
New York 118, Detroit 116
New York 94, Detroit 93
Tuesday: Detroit 106, New York 103
Thursday: at Detroit, **AFN-Sports, 1:30 a.m. Friday CET, 9:30 a.m. Friday JKT**
x-Saturday: at New York

Cleveland 4, Miami 0

Cleveland 121, Miami 100
Cleveland 121, Miami 112
Cleveland 124, Miami 87
Cleveland 138, Miami 83

Indiana 4, Milwaukee 1

Indiana 117, Milwaukee 98
Indiana 123, Milwaukee 115
Milwaukee 117, Indiana 101
Indiana 129, Milwaukee 103
Tuesday: Indiana 119, Milwaukee 118, OT

Boston 4, Orlando 1

Boston 103, Orlando 86
Boston 109, Orlando 100
Orlando 95, Boston 93
Boston 107, Orlando 98
Tuesday: Boston 120, Orlando 89

Western Conference Golden State 3, Houston 1

Golden State 95, Houston 85
Houston 109, Golden State 94
Golden State 104, Houston 93
Golden State 109, Houston 106
Wednesday: at Houston
x-Friday: at Golden State
x-Sunday: at Houston

Denver 3, L.A. Clippers 2

Denver 112, L.A. Clippers 110, OT
L.A. Clippers 105, Denver 102
L.A. Clippers 117, Denver 83
Denver 101, L.A. Clippers 99
Tuesday: Denver 131, L.A. Clippers 115
Thursday: at L.A. Clippers, **AFN-Sports, 4 a.m. Friday CET, noon Friday JKT**
x-Saturday: at Denver

Oklahoma City 4, Memphis 0

Oklahoma City 131, Memphis 80
Oklahoma City 118, Memphis 99
Oklahoma City 114, Memphis 108
Oklahoma City 117, Memphis 115

Minnesota 3, L.A. Lakers 1

Minnesota 117, L.A. Lakers 95
L.A. Lakers 94, Minnesota 85
Minnesota 116, L.A. Lakers 104
Minnesota 116, L.A. Lakers 113
Wednesday: at L.A. Lakers
x-Friday: at Minnesota
x-Sunday: at L.A. Lakers

NBA PLAYOFFS



Indiana Pacers guard Andrew Nembhard shoots the ball over Milwaukee Bucks guard Gary Trent Jr. during the second half in Game 5 of a first-round playoff series in Indianapolis on Tuesday.

Pacers feel eager to start Eastern semis vs. Cavaliers

BY MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press
INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana Pacers went toe-to-toe for five games with one Central Division rival, the Milwaukee Bucks.

They finally delivered the knockout punch Tuesday night — with an 8-0 closing rally to secure a 119-118 overtime victory and a 4-1 series win on Tyrese Haliburton’s layup with 1.3 seconds to go. Naturally, they weren’t quite ready to discuss starting all over against another division foe, the Cleveland Cavaliers. “It wasn’t pretty, but we’ll take it and, you know, celebrate this for the night and get ready for the next one,” Haliburton said after finishing with 26 points and 10 assists. Some didn’t expect the Pacers to still be standing at this point — even with the Bucks’ All-Star guard Damian Lillard missing the first game as he continued to recover from one ailment before leaving Game 4 with a torn left Achilles tendon. Of course, they also weren’t supposed to beat higher-seeded Milwaukee in last year’s first round or the New York Knicks in Game 7 of the conference semis at Madison Square Garden, either. The critics contended their road to the conference finals came courtesy of two injury-depleted teams. Indiana players took umbrage

with that notion, and Haliburton didn’t mince words in September when he said the goal this season was to prove last year was not a fluke and that the Pacers could win an NBA title. Since January, Indiana has been playing a different brand of basketball. Sure, they’re still one of the highest scoring teams in the league. But now they’re not afraid to mix it up as they did against the Bucks and they’re better defensively than they were a year ago. Without it, the Pacers couldn’t have clawed their way back from a 20-point first-half deficit. They held the Bucks to just nine points in a 9½-minute span in the second quarter to get back in the game. They forced overtime by contesting a baseline jumper from two-time league MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, forcing a miss. They also forced two turnovers in the final 29 seconds of overtime to complete the improbable rally. “We were in this situation many times (this season), maybe not quite this dire. I don’t know if we were down seven with 40 seconds to go but were down seven with under 2 minutes,” coach Rick Carlisle said. “It’s very difficult to overcome that, and we’ve done it a couple times. And regardless of who we did it against, we had guys that got experience with that kind of pressure and having had that kind

of toughness and resilience.” Tuesday’s highlight reel included Haliburton’s block of Bobby Portis at the rim, Andrew Nembhard’s uncanny steal of an inbound pass and Myles Turner defending Antetokounmpo down in overtime after Pascal Siakam had drawn his fifth foul. Only three teams entered the playoffs with a better record since January — Oklahoma City, the top seed in the West, defending champion Boston and, yes, top-seeded Cleveland which swept Miami in historic fashion. Next up are the Cavaliers, who Indiana is 3-1 against this season. They split two games in January and the Pacers won both earlier this month when Cleveland played backups both times. Carlisle rested his starters in the regular season finale against the Cavs. And while Cleveland finished with the league’s second-best record, the Pacers believe the great equalizer could be depth. “We’ve got players who can chip in on any given night and I think that’s what happened throughout the first four games of this series,” Haliburton said. “I think everybody talks about depth and how much team basketball we play. We need play off passes, assists, everything. We just just enjoy playing on the same team and playing the right way.”

Celtics’ focus on rest with Knicks or Pistons next

BY KYLE HIGHTOWER
Associated Press
BOSTON — The Boston Celtics are a step closer to repeating as NBA champions. And they showed they have a path to getting there that doesn’t revolve around them just making a bunch of 3-pointers.

Boston’s 120-89 victory over the Orlando Magic in Game 5 on Tuesday night earned it a 4-1 series win and a second-round matchup with either the New York Knicks or Detroit Pistons. New York currently leads that series 3-2. “Here in Boston, it’s about winning,” Celtics forward Jaylen Brown said. “It’s not about just getting out of the first round.” Boston was solid throughout Tuesday’s win, outplaying a physical Orlando team that showed why it was the best in the NBA defending against the 3-point shot the Celtics thrive on. Boston was 0 for 6 from 3 in the first half before making 13 in the second half. They did it by creating opportunities via their defense and while adjusting to how the Magic employed different methods to limit them offensively. Those are two things coach Joe Mazzulla believes will be key for them moving forward. “We’ve dealt with a variety of matchups and coverage puzzles, and we have to solve those, and so it’s the most important thing. Our guys did a great job of that,” Mazzulla said. Tatum said adjusting their style of play is something they’re always capable of doing. “We’re very talented. We can win a bunch of different ways,” he

said. But the Celtics didn’t make it out of the first round completely unscathed. Boston’s health will be in the spotlight as it attempts to return to the Eastern Conference finals with Tatum and fellow starters Brown and Jrue Holiday all managing injuries. Tatum missed Game 2 of the Orlando series after suffering a bone bruise in his right wrist. The good news is he was productive over the final three games, scoring 36, 37 and 35 points. He also had his best shooting performance of the series in Game 5, going 10 for 16 from the field. Brown missed the final three games of the regular season dealing with a right knee impingement. He began the playoffs still managing pain from the issue, but like Tatum mostly hasn’t let it hinder his impact. He had 23 points on 9-for-18 shooting in the close-out win. Mazzulla said it’s how Brown’s played on the other end of the floor that stuck out against the Magic, though. “His defense is back to where it was throughout the season,” Mazzulla said. “I think he’s been tremendous in all areas. ... He has the ability to take it to another level mentally and physically.” Then there’s Holiday, whose status seems to be a lot more concerning after he missed the final three games of the series with a strained right hamstring. “He’s day to day, just doing everything he can to come back, doing everything he can to put himself in position and be a little bit better the next day,” he said.



Celtics forward Jayson Tatum celebrates with teammate Derrick White while leading the Orlando Magic during the second half in Game 5 of a first-round playoff series Tuesday in Boston. The Celtics won 120-89.

SPORTS



Late thriller
Hurricanes advance over Devils as Aho scores in 2OT » **NHL playoffs, Page 20**



WNBA

Year 2

Stronger Clark eager to get back to work with revamped Fever

By MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Fever star Caitlin Clark slapped the court with both hands and started gesturing in her side’s direction after forcing a 5-second call near the end of Tuesday’s practice.

It was only Day 2 of training camp, yet this is what Clark has yearned for these past seven months — going back to work with a new coach, a revamped roster and even higher expectations in her second WNBA season.

After leading the Fever to their first playoff berth in eight years, winning the league’s Rookie of the Year Award, being named Associated Press 2024 Female Athlete of the Year and Time magazine’s 2024 Athlete of the Year, Clark returned to Indianapolis a stronger, wiser player, more determined to win the championship that eluded her in college.

“It was an adjustment sure, because I was so used to playing minutes for, well, basically a year of my life. That’s all I did,” Clark said. “So the rest was good. I thought it was going to feel long and it really didn’t. We were in here all the time. But that rest aspect, just getting my body where it needed to be and really on things I needed to work on was super important. But I’m ready to compete again.”

It was a well-deserved vacation for perhaps the busiest player in women’s basketball.

Clark capped her final college season by playing a 39-game schedule while leading Iowa to a second straight national championship game. One week after losing to South Carolina, Indiana drafted

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In her second WNBA season, Caitlin Clark will look to help lead the Indiana Fever deeper into the playoffs after they were swept out of the first round last year.

JESSICA HILL/AP

Murray scores 43 as Nuggets top Clippers » **NBA playoffs, Page 22**

