LESSONS LEARNED

Information derived from USS Roosevelt outbreak helped USS Kidd

By Robert Burns
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Navy destroyer USS Kidd was heading east across the Pacific from Pearl Harbor when it added an unusual twist to its transit — a quarantine-and-isolation drill. The practice was part of a new protocol built on lessons from a coronavirus outbreak aboard an aircraft carrier soon to be sidelined with sickness.

“That ... actually helped us quite a bit to prepare for what was to come,” the Kidd’s commanding officer, Cmdr. Nathan Wemett, said in a telephone interview Thursday from aboard the ship.

What was coming a few weeks later for Wemett and his crew of about 330 was a COVID-19 outbreak that is just the second aboard a Navy ship at sea. Nearly one-quarter of the Kidd’s crew has the virus. Still,

LESSONS LEARNED

Information derived from USS Roosevelt outbreak helped USS Kidd

By Robert Burns
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Navy destroyer USS Kidd was heading east across the Pacific from Pearl Harbor when it added an unusual twist to its transit — a quarantine-and-isolation drill. The practice was part of a new protocol built on lessons from a coronavirus outbreak aboard an aircraft carrier soon to be sidelined with sickness.

“That ... actually helped us quite a bit to prepare for what was to come,” the Kidd’s commanding officer, Cmdr. Nathan Wemett, said in a telephone interview Thursday from aboard the ship.

What was coming a few weeks later for Wemett and his crew of about 330 was a COVID-19 outbreak that is just the second aboard a Navy ship at sea. Nearly one-quarter of the Kidd’s crew has the virus. Still,

LESSONS LEARNED

Information derived from USS Roosevelt outbreak helped USS Kidd

By Robert Burns
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Navy destroyer USS Kidd was heading east across the Pacific from Pearl Harbor when it added an unusual twist to its transit — a quarantine-and-isolation drill. The practice was part of a new protocol built on lessons from a coronavirus outbreak aboard an aircraft carrier soon to be sidelined with sickness.

“That ... actually helped us quite a bit to prepare for what was to come,” the Kidd’s commanding officer, Cmdr. Nathan Wemett, said in a telephone interview Thursday from aboard the ship.

What was coming a few weeks later for Wemett and his crew of about 330 was a COVID-19 outbreak that is just the second aboard a Navy ship at sea. Nearly one-quarter of the Kidd’s crew has the virus. Still,
Apple tests feature to recognize masks

As masks become required or strongly recommended across the country amid the spread of the novel coronavirus, many people have felt the now familiar frustration. While users fumble at a grocery store or out on a run to unlock their device, the phone gets confused until finally presenting a keypad to unlock it.

Stevie Johnson, a 19-year-old Target employee in San Bernardino, Calif., has been repeatedly frustrated by his facial unlock in recent weeks, especially at work. He is required to use a mask and often pulls out his phone to check inventory or find the right aisle for a customer.

“It will say failed, then failed again, then finally give you an option to enter a code,” he said. “It gets kind of annoying. I wish there was a faster way.”

Apple did not respond to a request to confirm the feature. It’s unclear when or if it would become available on iPhones.

The Washington Post

As masks become required or strongly recommended across the country amid the spread of the novel coronavirus, many people have felt the now familiar frustration. While users fumble at a grocery store or out on a run to unlock their device, the phone gets confused until finally presenting a keypad to unlock it.

Stevie Johnson, a 19-year-old Target employee in San Bernardino, Calif., has been repeatedly frustrated by his facial unlock in recent weeks, especially at work. He is required to use a mask and often pulls out his phone to check inventory or find the right aisle for a customer.

“It will say failed, then failed again, then finally give you an option to enter a code,” he said. “It gets kind of annoying. I wish there was a faster way.”

Apple did not respond to a request to confirm the feature. It’s unclear when or if it would become available on iPhones.

The Washington Post

As masks become required or strongly recommended across the country amid the spread of the novel coronavirus, many people have felt the now familiar frustration. While users fumble at a grocery store or out on a run to unlock their device, the phone gets confused until finally presenting a keypad to unlock it.

Stevie Johnson, a 19-year-old Target employee in San Bernardino, Calif., has been repeatedly frustrated by his facial unlock in recent weeks, especially at work. He is required to use a mask and often pulls out his phone to check inventory or find the right aisle for a customer.

“It will say failed, then failed again, then finally give you an option to enter a code,” he said. “It gets kind of annoying. I wish there was a faster way.”

Apple did not respond to a request to confirm the feature. It’s unclear when or if it would become available on iPhones.
Army return to major training exercises

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army believes many of the service’s large fighting formations can return to critical, high-level training exercises in the coming weeks at their home stations and the service’s combat training centers, senior service officials said Thursday.

The Army has developed a rough framework meant to guide commanders through the processes of safely returning to field training operations across the force, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said Thursday in a news briefing from the Pentagon. Defense Secretary Mark Esper was recently briefed about the framework for his approval and the plan could soon be finalized, McCarthy said.

“The Army continues to need a manned and ready force,” he said.

Ultimately, the decisions to return to large-scale training exercises for battalion- and brigade-sized units at their home stations will be left to those formations’ commanders, according to a senior Army official. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the plan before it is finalized and announced publicly.

The Army wants local commanders to understand the risks of coronavirus infections to their troops and have plans in place to monitor soldiers’ health before beginning any training exercises. Commanders must also have plans to procure testing supplies quickly and test widely in units if training is crucial, McConville said.

The official said Thursday that training phases are set to begin in June are expected to be halted or delayed as a result of the pandemic, and the next training rotations could be delayed in the future, McCarthy said. The JRTC rotation is critical for that new unit of 800 soldiers specially trained to advise and assist Afghan forces.

The official said, “But there are varying states of training going on across the Army. The Army never stopped.”

Among the units set for a June rotation to a combat training center is the 4th Security Forces Assistance Brigade from Fort Carson, Colo., which is to train at JRTC to prepare for a deployment to Afghanistan in the summer.

The official played down the impact on the Army’s overall combat readiness caused by the pause in large training operations at JRTC, NTC and other locations throughout the world. Small unit tactical training has continued at home stations in many places, the official said.

“Things did slow down,” the official said. “But there are varying states of training going on across the Army. The Army never stopped.”

Air Force bombers continue US show of force in South China Sea

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military continued its weeklong show of force in the South China Sea with a sortie over the contested waters on Thursday by two Air Force bombers.

The B-1B Lancers from the 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., flew a 32-hour round trip to conduct operations over the sea as part of a joint bomber task force by the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and U.S. Strategic Command, the Air Force said in news release Thursday.

The mission further demonstrated the service's new “dynamic force employment model,” which is intended to make its global bomber presence less predictable, the Air Force said.

China has claimed sovereignty over much of the South China Sea, an assertion disputed by other claimant nations that have experienced large outbreaks of the virus, the areas around Fort Polk had not.

The post, about 220 miles north of New Orleans, is located in a largely rural area near the town of Alexandria.

“We’re going to live in the [coronavirus] world for a while,” the general said. “We have to train, and that’s why we’re putting these safety procedures in place.”

McConville visited Fort Polk, La., this week to meet with officials who run that post’s Joint Readiness Training Center, one of the Army’s two major training locations in the continental United States, where brigade-sized units rotate in and out of every month to test their combat skills.

Those rotations to JRTC and the service’s National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., often serve as mission rehearsals for combat or deployments to areas such as Europe or Africa.

Those two training ranges were closed down in March as part of the military’s efforts to thwart the virus’ spread, resulting in the cancelation of planned rotations for four brigades. The senior Army official said those brigades were expected to make up those rotations in the future, and the next training rotations set to begin in June are expected to be held.

The official played down the impact on the Army’s overall combat readiness caused by the pause in large training operations at JRTC, NTC and other locations throughout the world. Small unit tactical training has continued at home stations in many places, the official said.

“Things did slow down,” the official said. “But there are varying states of training going on across the Army. The Army never stopped.”

The official played down the impact on the Army’s overall combat readiness caused by the pause in large training operations at JRTC, NTC and other locations throughout the world. Small unit tactical training has continued at home stations in many places, the official said.

“Things did slow down,” the official said. “But there are varying states of training going on across the Army. The Army never stopped.”
Coalition strikes pound ISIS caves in Iraq

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

The U.S.-led coalition in Iraq destroyed caves sheltering Islamic State militants in a series of airstrikes this week, as Iraqi security forces ended April with nearly 100 operations against the group.

On Thursday, Operation Inherent Resolve released strike videos and a statement saying the raid a day earlier took out 10 caves in northern Iraq’s Hamrin Mountains, killing an estimated five to 10 ISIS fighters.

“Strikes like these help our Iraqi partners maintain relentless pressure on the Daesh scourge, no matter where these terrorists hide,” said Maj. Gen. Eric Hill, commanding general of the coalition’s special operations joint task force, using an Arabic acronym for ISIS.

Initial estimates of the death toll were expected to be revised later, based on a ground search still being conducted by Iraq’s 18th Army Division and security forces, the statement said. Though much of the cave complex was “inaccessible” after the strike, Iraqi forces had already discovered ISIS documents, electronic devices and weapons fragments, it said.

New estimates were not available early Friday, a coalition military official told Stars and Stripes via text message, adding that the strike had been conducted Thursday night, killing an estimated five more fighters.

“Operations will continue throughout Ramadan,” the official said, referring to the Muslim holy month.

The northern Iraqi mountain range has for years been a safe haven for the militants. It’s “one of their last remaining operating areas in Iraq,” where they use “intricate tunnel and cave systems” to smuggle weapons, move senior leaders and plot operations, the earlier coalition statement said.

The militants have continued to carry out insurgent attacks in the region since losing the last of the territory they once claimed in Iraq in late 2017.

On Tuesday, about 60 miles to the northeast of where the cave system was destroyed, an attacker blew himself up outside the Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Directorate in Kirkuk, wounding at least two security personnel in the blast, the Iraqi government has said.

The militants have also taken refuge in the country’s sprawling western desert in Anbar province, officials have told Stars and Stripes in recent months.

Iraqi air assault infantry cris-crossed that desert searching for ISIS hideouts this week, coalition spokesman Col. Myles B. Cagings III said Friday on Twitter.

Iraqi security forces conducted a total of 59 anti-ISIS operations in April, the coalition said in a social media post also on Friday.

“The presence of Daesh in Iraq continues to diminish, thanks to the efforts and sacrifices of our Iraqi partner forces,” Hill said.

---

Navy awards contract for next generation of guided-missile frigates

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy has agreed to spend an initial $800 million on the newest class of guided-missile frigates as the service looks to replace a more flexible surface fleet to take on other naval powers around the globe, the service announced Thursday.

“The Navy’s guided-missile frigate will be an important part of our future fleet,” Adm. Mike Gilday, the chief of naval operations, said in a prepared statement. “[The guided-missile frigate] is the evolution of the Navy’s small surface combattant with increased lethality, survivability, and improved capability to support the National Defense Strategy across the full range of military operations.”

The Pentagon’s 2018 National Defense Strategy shifted the military’s focus from counterterrorism operations to “great-power competition” with China and Russia. The Navy has aligned its budget, ship building, and training with the strategy.

The new ship is the next generation of frigates for the Navy, improving on the capabilities of littoral combat ships. The frigates will be capable of conducting multiple missions, including anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare and electronic warfare.

The new ships will be part of the Navy’s ongoing effort to grow their battle force fleet to 355 ships by 2030.

The ship will be constructed by Marinette Marine Corporation of Marinette, Wisc. The design is by Fincantieri based on a frigate design used by the French and Italian navies, according to U.S. Naval Institute News. The company owns the shipyard in Wisconsin where it will be built.

“[The guided-missile frigate] is going to be a real workhorse for the United States Navy, supporting distributed maritime operations in the future. So, we are super excited about this ship,” said Vice Adm. Jim Kilby, the deputy chief of naval operations for warfighting, requirements, and capability acquisition.

The initial contract for $795 million for the shipbuilder Marinette Marine Corp. is for the design and production of the first ship in the class. The contract has the option to allow for production of up to 9 additional ships as well as provide several supplies and services including training equipment and post-delivery availability support.

The total cost for the first ship is $1.281 billion, which includes the $795 million for the shipbuilder for design and construction.

The contract is being awarded three months ahead of schedule despite the coronavirus pandemic, said James Geurts, the assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition.

Detailed design for the ship will start in May and construction on the first frigate for the class will start no later than April 2022, with its delivery to the Navy in 2026, according to Geurts. The ship is expected to reach full operational capability between 2031 and 2032.

---

Watchdog: Taliban increased attacks on Afghan forces immediately after deal

FROM FRONT PAGE

all international troops out of Afghanistan by late spring 2021, provided the Taliban meeting all of its obligations under the agreement. Those include beginning negotiations with the Kabul government, disbanding terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and removing all its groups on Afghan soil from threatening the security of the United States and its allies.

But the Taliban ramped up attacks on Afghan forces immediately after signing the deal on Feb. 29, Sopko wrote in the report.

“Although not all such attacks are expressly prohibited by the text, U.S. officials had said they expected the level of violence to remain low after the agreement came into effect,” Sopko wrote.

Under the deal, the U.S. began drawing down from about 13,600 troops to 6,600. But despite more than $86 billion in U.S. security assistance funding, Afghan security forces remain deeply dependent on U.S. and coalition forces. Even elite special operations troops needed support from international forces on about half of their ground operations during the first three months of 2020, SIGAR said.

Within days of the Feb. 29 deal being inked, U.S. aircraft bombed the insurgents in defense of Afghan forces, but it remains unclear whether the U.S. has carried out further strikes. NATO officials in Kabul have declined to discuss the matter with Stars and Stripes. They also have not published a tally of U.S. airstrikes for the month of March.

U.S. officials have declined to discuss what would constitute a violation of the deal, and some observers fear the U.S. will bury or ignore information that might jeopardize the pact. In a Foreign Affairs magazine article last month criticizing the agreement and highlighting difficulty Washington will likely face in enforcing it, former Afghanistan commander and CIA director David Petraeus wrote that U.S. decision-makers have a tendency “to downplay or disregard information that seems to unpick a favored relationship or policy.”

---

Kenney.caitlin@stripes.com
Twitter: @caitlinmkenney

garland.chad@stripes.com
Twitter: @chadgarland

wellman.phillip@stripes.com
Twitter: @pwwellman
VIRUS OUTBREAK

Navy: More than 1,150 Roosevelt sailors infected

BY CAITLIN DOORNbos
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — More than 1,100 sailors assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt have tested positive for the coronavirus, according to the Navy's latest update Thursday.

After more than a month of isolating sailors, sanitizing the ship and testing every crew member, there are 1,102 active cases of coronavirus among Roosevelt sailors, three of whom are hospitalized at U.S. Naval Hospital Guam, the Navy said. An additional 53 sailors have recovered and one has died.

The numbers have been increasing as previously negative sailors test positive for coronavirus in “exit tests” before leaving isolation despite not having symptoms, the service said.

The aircraft carrier was patrolling the Western Pacific when it diverted to Guam on March 26 after several of its sailors tested positive.

The prevalence of asymptomatic sailors with coronavirus has emphasized the importance of testing, Task Force 70 spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Sean Brophy said in an email Tuesday.

An undisclosed number of sailors assigned to the carrier USS Ronald Reagan showed no coronavirus symptoms but tested positive in pre-boarding tests. The Reagan, in port at Yokosuka, is preparing for a deployment.

Brophy said catching the positive cases among sailors who otherwise appear healthy “highlights how our measures are working as they were designed.”

As of Thursday, the Navy reported 1,822 cases of coronavirus service-wide, according to a Defense Department daily update. That means about two-thirds of all coronavirus cases among active-duty sailors are associated with the Roosevelt.

Officials began moving sailors who have tested negative three times for the virus back onto the carrier Wednesday, according to a statement this week from the Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office in Guam.

On Friday, chief of naval operations Adm. Mike Gilday directed vice chief of naval operations Adm. Robert Burke to “conduct a follow-on command investigation into the events surrounding the [coronavirus] outbreak aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt,” Gilday spokesman Cmdr. Nate Christiansen said in a statement Friday.

He said the investigation will expand on a recently completed preliminary inquiry prompted by the removal of the Roosevelt’s commanding officer after a letter he sent pleading for additional help for his ship was leaked to the public.

The investigation, due to Gilday by May 27, will “provide a more robust documentation of events and give a fuller consideration of the circumstances surrounding the matter,” Christiansen said.

In San Diego, the guided-missile destroyer USS Kidd continued to battle an outbreak among its sailors. There were 78 active cases among its crewmembers as of Thursday, according to the Navy. None were hospitalized.

Kidd sailors have disembarked and will be required to spend “at least 14 days in quarantine or isolation and achieve two negative tests before returning to the ship,” the Navy said in its update.

Because all sailors on the Roosevelt and Kidd have been tested, the Navy will no longer provide daily tallies, instead reporting only “significant changes on these vessels and new cases on other deployed vessels,” according to its Thursday update.

doornbos.caitlin@stripes.com

As of Thursday, 78 members of the Kidd’s crew had tested positive. None is hospitalized.

Not all aspects of the medical and operational response taken aboard the Roosevelt are known publicly, and that entire episode is now under investigation, including questions about how the virus got aboard in the first place. Just over 1,100 members of the Roosevelt crew have tested positive, and one died of complications from the disease. The Roosevelt’s skipper, Capt. Brett E. Crozier, was fired for distributing a letter pleading for faster Navy action to protect his crew, and the official who ordered his removal from command, Thomas Modly, resigned a few days later as the acting Navy secretary.

At the outset of the Roosevelt’s problem, senior Navy officials appeared to underestimate their ability to contain it and keep the warship from being sidelined.

Touting the Navy’s response, Modly told reporters on March 24, two days after the first case was confirmed: “This is an example of our ability to keep our ships deployed at sea, underway even with active COVID-19 cases.”

In contrast, the Kidd ended its Central America mission shortly after getting its first coronavirus case, based on a plan made in advance by the U.S. Navy 4th Fleet organizers of the counterdrug operation. Once a ship had a certain number of symptomatic sailors, it was headed for the nearest appropriate U.S. port. Wemett declined to be more specific than to say the triggering number was less than 10.

The Kidd headed for San Diego, where it arrived Tuesday and moved most of the crew ashore to off-base housing.

The paths of the Kidd and the Roosevelt diverged in a more literal sense. They initially deployed together on Jan. 17 after the Kidd, homeported at Everett, Wash., joined up with the Roosevelt and the rest of its strike group in San Diego. But the Kidd made it no further than Hawaii, ordered to break off from the strike group and head east again to participate in the Central America counterdrug operation. The Roosevelt and the rest of its strike group, meanwhile, headed to East Asia.

Kidd: Navy destroyer directed to nearest US port after virus found aboard

FROM FRONT PAGE

The ill sailor was medically evacuated to a medical facility in San Antonio two days later for testing, and the following day a positive result was reported. By this time the ship was putting its at-sea drills to use by placing some crew members in isolation.

Even before the first test result was known, the Navy assembled a medical team in the United States and dispatched it to the Kidd. The team leader, Cmdr. Michael Kaplan, the director of medical services at Naval Hospital Jacksonville in Florida, said he was not standing by in anticipation of such a mission.

“We had no heads up whatsoever,” Kaplan said.

But the team was on its way in a few hours and arrived aboard the Kidd by helicopter the same day. By evening the doctors had tested about 25 people, and within 24 hours nearly a quarter of the crew had been tested. The Navy also diverted an amphibious assault ship, the USS Makin Island, to provide additional support to the Kidd. The Makin Island has fully equipped medical facilities, including an intensive care unit.

Kaplan said his team also made a point of testing sailors without coronavirus symptoms, drawing on the Roosevelt experience, which initially tested only those with symptoms, not realizing that asymptomatic people can be transmitters of the virus. Kaplan had the asymptomatic cases isolated on board.

“We didn’t know how long it would take to get back on land, and we wanted to do everything we could to try to minimize the spread on the ship,” Kaplan said.

As of Thursday, 78 members of the Kidd’s crew had tested positive. None is hospitalized.

Not all aspects of the medical and operational response taken aboard the Roosevelt are known publicly, and that entire episode is now under investigation, including questions about how the virus got aboard in the first place. Just over 1,100 members of the Roosevelt crew have tested positive, and one died of complications from the disease. The Roosevelt’s skipper, Capt. Brett E. Crozier, was fired for distributing a letter pleading for faster Navy action to protect his crew, and the official who ordered his removal from command, Thomas Modly, resigned a few days later as the acting Navy secretary.

At the outset of the Roosevelt’s problem, senior Navy officials appeared to underestimate their ability to contain it and keep the warship from being sidelined.

Touting the Navy’s response, Modly told reporters on March 24, two days after the first case was confirmed: “This is an example of our ability to keep our ships deployed at sea, underway even with active COVID-19 cases.”

In contrast, the Kidd ended its Central America mission shortly after getting its first coronavirus case, based on a plan made in advance by the U.S. Navy 4th Fleet organizers of the counterdrug operation. Once a ship had a certain number of symptomatic sailors, it was headed for the nearest appropriate U.S. port. Wemett declined to be more specific than to say the triggering number was less than 10.

The Kidd headed for San Diego, where it arrived Tuesday and moved most of the crew ashore to off-base housing.

The paths of the Kidd and the Roosevelt diverged in a more literal sense. They initially deployed together on Jan. 17 after the Kidd, homeported at Everett, Wash., joined up with the Roosevelt and the rest of its strike group in San Diego. But the Kidd made it no further than Hawaii, ordered to break off from the strike group and head east again to participate in the Central America counterdrug operation. The Roosevelt and the rest of its strike group, meanwhile, headed to East Asia.

Essential watch standers and a cleaning team conduct a crew swap aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt at Apra Harbor, Guam, on Wednesday.

Kidd sailors test positive for coronavirus symptoms, drawing on the Roosevelt experience, which initially tested only those with symptoms, not realizing that asymptomatic people can be transmitters of the virus. Kaplan had the asymptomatic cases isolated on board.

“We didn’t know how long it would take to get back on land, and we wanted to do everything we could to try to minimize the spread on the ship,” Kaplan said.

As of Thursday, 78 members of the Kidd’s crew had tested positive. None is hospitalized.

Not all aspects of the medical and operational response taken aboard the Roosevelt are known publicly, and that entire episode is now under investigation, including questions about how the virus got aboard in the first place. Just over 1,100 members of the Roosevelt crew have tested positive, and one died of complications from the disease. The Roosevelt’s skipper, Capt. Brett E. Crozier, was fired for distributing a letter pleading for faster Navy action to protect his crew, and the official who ordered his removal from command, Thomas Modly, resigned a few days later as the acting Navy secretary.

At the outset of the Roosevelt’s problem, senior Navy officials appeared to underestimate their ability to contain it and keep the warship from being sidelined.

Touting the Navy’s response, Modly told reporters on March 24, two days after the first case was confirmed: “This is an example of our ability to keep our ships deployed at sea, underway even with active COVID-19 cases.”

In contrast, the Kidd ended its Central America mission shortly after getting its first coronavirus case, based on a plan made in advance by the U.S. Navy 4th Fleet organizers of the counterdrug operation. Once a ship had a certain number of symptomatic sailors, it was headed for the nearest appropriate U.S. port. Wemett declined to be more specific than to say the triggering number was less than 10.

The Kidd headed for San Diego, where it arrived Tuesday and moved most of the crew ashore to off-base housing.

The paths of the Kidd and the Roosevelt diverged in a more literal sense. They initially deployed together on Jan. 17 after the Kidd, homeported at Everett, Wash., joined up with the Roosevelt and the rest of its strike group in San Diego. But the Kidd made it no further than Hawaii, ordered to break off from the strike group and head east again to participate in the Central America counterdrug operation. The Roosevelt and the rest of its strike group, meanwhile, headed to East Asia.
Army stands by cadet ceremony at West Point

By Lolita C. Baldor  Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Army’s top leaders on Thursday defended their decision to bring 1,000 cadets back to the Military Academy at West Point for graduation, where President Donald Trump is slated to speak, saying that despite the coronavirus risk students would have had to return anyway to prepare for their next duty assignment.

The announcement has been criticized as a political move to get Trump on the academy, where he hasn’t yet given a graduation address. But Army officials said the students must return for final medical checks, equipment and training.

“We can’t telecommute to combat,” Gen. James McConville, the chief of staff of the Army, told Pentagon reporters when asked about the decision, which forces cadets spread out across the U.S. to travel, risking exposure on public transportation, and then land in New York, a coronavirus hot spot.

Cadets have been home since spring break in March, with their return to school delayed because of the outbreak. Only the seniors will return, and the graduation is set for June 13.

Lt. Gen. Darryl Williams, academy superintendent, said the students must return for medical and other required tasks that can only be done at the academy before they can be turned over as new officers to the Army.

He said the school will create a “safety bubble” around the cadets and build a staging base where they will arrive. All cadets will be screened and tested for the virus at the staging area and then separated into five groups that will eat and live separately. They will be quarantined for 14 days.

Williams said Keller Army Community Hospital at the base now has all the needed testing equipment and was converted to be able to handle and quarantine virus patients.

Asked if cadets will face discipline if they can’t or don’t want to come back because of the virus, he declined to give a case-by-case basis.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., a member of West Point’s Board of Visitors, said she expressed her concerns about the decision to Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy in a call this week.

“Trump’s reckless decision to gather 1,000 Cadets at West Point for a speech puts our future military leaders at increased risk — all to strike his own ego,” said Duckworth, a retired Army helicopter pilot.

McCarthy told reporters the Army wants to have a “small, safe graduation ceremony” for the cadets to celebrate.

In contrast, the U.S. Naval Academy has announced it will hold a virtual graduation and postpone other traditional milestone events until large-scale gatherings are allowed. The academy’s superintendent, Vice Adm. Sean Buck, called it a difficult decision but necessary to safeguard the health and welfare of the entire Naval Academy family and local community.

USAA to return additional $280M to auto policy holders

By James Bolinger  Stars and Stripes

An additional $280 million will be returned to USAA auto policy holders amid continued coronavirus lockdowns, the company announced late Thursday afternoon.

This brings the company’s total rebates since the start of the pandemic to $800 million.

To return financial services and insurance company, which provides insurance and banking services to more than 13 million active-duty military members, veterans and their families, returned $580 million in auto policy rebates in April totaling 20% of members’ monthly premiums.

The most recent rebate reflects an additional 20% discount on a third month’s worth of premiums, according to a statement emailed Thursday to Stars and Stripes. The newly announced rebates apply to policies in effect as of April 10.

The company said its members continue to drive less due to shelter-in-place procedures enacted to combat the virus.

Policyholders should see the rebates on their next billing statement, which will be available at the end of May.

Members do not need to call, and no further action is required to receive the dividend, the statement said.

Col. Vincent Ciuccoli, commander of Camps Foster and Lester on Okinawa, purchases groceries at the Foster commissary for people who requested items through Fidelis Rides’ new U-Shop service, Tuesday.

Marine volunteers offer free grocery shopping on Okinawa

By Aya Ichihashi  Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Fidelis Rides, a volunteer program on Okinawa that provides service members with free rides after a night on the town, now offers a curbside grocery-delivery service called U-Shop.

Fidelis Rides was created in March 2019 by Marine 1st Sgt. Jacob Karl to help Marines without cars or a lot of spending money. Volunteers provide free lifts on Friday and Saturday nights to any service member who request them.

So far, the program has given rides to over 4,500 people, according to volunteer Cpl. Christopher Madero of Headquarters & Support Battalion, Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

Fidelis Rides started up its U-Shop program after a weeklong pause of its ride service April 1 due to coronavirus concerns.

“At first, we thought we should focus on single-parent households, dual military service member families or families with immune disorders,” said Col. Vincent Ciuccoli, commander of Camp Foster and Camp Lester, who has been leading the group.

“Then we realized that we should extend the service to help anyone who needs our help to shop.”

On Wednesday evening, Ciuccoli and Madero waited in front of the Camp Foster commissary. With them were three more volunteers: group coordinator Cpl. Derrick Ngeuede Tallah of 3rd Marine Division, Camp Foster; Gunnery Sgt. Michael Diggas of Headquarters and Support Battalion, Camp Foster; and Lance Cpl. Luis Flores Gonzalez of the Provost Marshal Office at Camp Butler.

“I always wanted to volunteer and now I have so much time. I wanted to help others rather than wasting it,” Flores Gonzalez said.

Anyone older than 16 with a commissary privileges can volunteer for the U-Shop program, Ciuccoli said, adding “we see some high school volunteers now.”

He explained how the operation works. First, the person who wants their grocery shopping done contacts U-Shop via Messenger on Fidelis Rides’ Facebook page.

“They then will need to send us a shopping list with their name and phone number. We connect our volunteer and the requestee,” Ciuccoli said. “Our volunteers will be their personal shopper.”

The volunteers stay in contact with the client via text messages to make sure they pick up the correct items, he said.

Fidelis Rides has its own check-out line, No. 8, at the commissary. Customers pay at the register over a phone provided by the volunteer.

“This way, we don’t have to get involved in the money transaction,” Ciuccoli said. “As Fidelis Rides, we do not touch cash, so implementing the payment system was the most challenging part of this program, but we were thrilled to have [the commissary agency’s] full support on this.”

Shaun Bullman, commissary officer for Camp Foster, on Wednesday said the store is the first in the region to implement the volunteer shopping system.

“Kadena was the second commissary, now Camp Courtney, and Kinser is a work in progress,” he said. “We are happy to work with Fidelis Rides to support our military families.”

Delivery is also available anywhere within 15 minutes of Camp Foster, including Camp Lester, Plaza Housing, Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and off-base homes.

People can use the free service as often as needed; however, the group will monitor for abuse of the system. Forty items per request is the current limit with up to a 30-minute shopping time.

Fidelis Rides plans to keep the U-Shop program until coronavirus restrictions end on Okinawa, but it may become a permanent service.

Ichihashi.aya@stripes.com

Twitter: @ayaichihashi
Jobless Americans fret as rent comes due

By Anita Snow
Associated Press

PHOENIX — Rent and mortgage payments are due again for more than 30 million people around the U.S. who have filed for unemployment benefits after losing work in the coronavirus pandemic.

Jason W. Still has been waiting six weeks for his first unemployment check since losing his job as a cook at an upscale restaurant in Spokane, Washington. Out-of-work bartender Luke Blaine got his first check three weeks ago, but now has to pay his landlord again.

And Eli Oderberg in Denver has his mortgage due after being swept up in a later wave of layoffs as the pandemic’s effects spread from restaurants to corners of the economy, like the oil company where he had worked on apps to track spills and leaks.

Federal data released this week show the U.S. economy contracted at a 4.8% annual rate last quarter as the pandemic put the nation into a recession. Economists expect January-March to be just a taste of the widespread pain being recorded for April-June. And while a record number of people have applied for unemployment insurance payments, there are many other out-of-work people who don’t qualify or couldn’t get through the states’ overwhelmed systems.

More than three dozen cities and states, including San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York state, have put in place their own policies to halt evictions, foreclosures and utility shutoffs out of concern that the economic fallout from massive job losses will push many people to the brink of homelessness at a time when they need to stay in their houses and apartments.

But all this really means is that deputies won’t be knocking at their doors, for now. The money is still due, and delaying the payments just puts off the pain.

Still said he’s filed for unemployment every week, with nothing yet to show for it, since he was first interviewed by The Associated Press a month ago, just before he paid April rent. His wife still had her job in the legal marijuana industry, and his $1,200 stimulus check helped pay an assortment of bills. “But I’m about to hit my savings and I really don’t want to do that,” he said.

“I’ve made about 900 calls over the last month trying to find out what’s going on,” Still said. On April 24, he finally got into an on-hold queue behind 83 other callers to Washington state’s unemployment office, and after hours of waiting, he was transferred to a claims specialist, but then the call was dropped.

It took him until this week to reach a human, who said there seemed to be a minor glitch in his file that needs to be worked out.

“From my job, I’m accustomed to planning everything six months in advance. So we’re going to be OK, for now at least.”

Eli Oderberg
Denver resident

“From my job, I’m accustomed to planning everything six months in advance. So we’re going to be OK, for now at least.”

Eli Oderberg, center, sits with Katie Evers, left, their 4-year-old daughter, Everlee, and the couple’s goldendoodle outside their home in southeast Denver on Thursday. Oderberg, like 30 million people around the United States who have filed for unemployment benefits after losing their jobs during the coronavirus pandemic, is facing the specter of paying the monthly rent with the flip of the calendar.

“It seems to be getting closer, but it’s not clear to me what’s going on at that end,” said Still. “I think I’m the last person who was laid off at my restaurant who hasn’t gotten an unemployment payment yet.”

The restaurant, Clover, remains in limbo, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee this week announced a partial opening May 5 of some recreational offerings like state parks, fishing and golf courses, but restaurant dining rooms and most other businesses will remain closed for now.

Blaine counts himself lucky: He started receiving unemployment checks three weeks after being laid off on March 17. Several coworkers are still waiting for their money after losing their jobs at Fez, a popular restaurant in Phoenix.

“I feel very fortunate based on what I’ve heard from my friends here and around the country,” said Blaine, who also was interviewed by the AP a month ago. His boyfriend, Kyle Schomer, still has his job in the tech industry and is working from their home in a trendy neighborhood of adobe homes. They have a huge vegetable and flower garden out back.

Blaine also said that he and everyone else he knows has received their stimulus money. With that and the unemployment checks, which through July include an additional $600 per payment, Blaine has made ends meet, for now.

“We will be back,” Fez management promised on the restaurant’s Facebook page. “We hope sooner rather than later.”

Applying for unemployment but an opening soon is unlikely to resolve the anxieties of people whose savings are running out as the initial wave of service industry layoffs sweeps up other hard-hit sectors, like energy.

Oderberg lost his job in Denver on April 19, as global oil futures plunged into negative territory following the shutdowns of air travel, factories and commuting around the world.

He said his wife got her first unemployment check after losing her job in retail, but he’s still waiting for his. The Colorado website for benefits has confirmed he is eligible, “but I haven’t been able to get through to talk to anyone after making about 100 calls each time I tried.”

In the meantime, Oderberg has been lining up job interviews in information technology, including at least four this week, and hopes to land something quickly, before he has to scramble for their next mortgage payment for the house he shares with his wife, who is pregnant, and their 4-year-old daughter.

“My job, I’m accustomed to planning everything six months in advance,” said Oderberg. “So we’re going to be OK, for now at least.”

DEA agent accused of stealing protective gear from agency

By Joshua Goodman and Jim Mustian
Associated Press

MIAMI — A U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent and a telecommunications specialist accused of stealing protective personal equipment, toilet paper and other supplies from a high-profile warehouse in South Florida amid shortages caused by the coronavirus pandemic, law enforcement officials told The Associated Press.

The officials, who were not authorized to discuss the case and spoke to AP on condition of anonymity, say it was not clear exactly how much of the supplies the men took or what they intended to do with them but the matter was serious enough that both were suspended and the agent was asked to hand over his gun pending an internal review.

Special Agent Javier Hernandez and the telecommunications specialist whose name was not disclosed are just the latest employees of the DEA’s high-profile Miami field division to be accused of misconduct.

Hernandez is suspected of swiping an array of items including PPE, toilet paper and batteries from storage in the early weeks of the pandemic, the officials said, and the telecommunications specialist also took materials from the warehouse but returned them after a supervisor confronted him about a missing supply of toilet paper.

It’s not clear whether the men are accused of acting together. The incident raises questions about security measures at the DEA facility in Weston, about 20 miles west of Fort Lauderdale, and how the case was handled. The Broward County Sheriff’s Office said it had no record of the allegations, which federal authorities instead referred to the DEA’s Office of Professional Responsibility for an internal investigation.

The DEA declined to comment on the allegations. Asked about the case in a recent interview, Acting DEA Administrator Uttam Dhillon told the AP he couldn’t talk about “specific situations” but that the “DEA has the highest standards for its personnel and we intend to maintain those standards.”

Hernandez declined to comment. His attorney, Louis Robbio, said it’s possible Hernandez had been retaliated against for filing an Equal Employment Opportunity complaint involving his earlier transfer from Puerto Rico to the DEA’s tech division in Miami.

“Mr. Hernandez emphatically denies any wrongdoing at any time in his entire career with DEA or as an officer in the Army,” Robbio said in a statement. “Any allegations you may have been told about are rumors and innuendo and not based on facts.”
VIRUS OUTBREAK

May Day labor protests unfold amid lockdowns

Associated Press

ATHENS — No job at all, or a job without enough virus protection — millions of workers around the world are marking international labor day trapped between hunger and fear, as more countries and states reopen for business even as the pandemic is far from vanished.

Beijing’s Forbidden City cracked open its doors and shopping malls from Texas to Indiana were set to do the same Friday, as world leaders try to find a way to salvage virus-battled economies while unloading unleashing new waves of infections.

With traditional May Day marches curtailed by confinement, Turkish protesters tried a wildcat protest, California activists planned street art, Czecks honked car horns and French workers sung from balconies to plead their causes: workplace masks, health insurance or more government aid for the jobless.

It’s a melancholy May Day for millions of garment industry workers across southeast Asia like Wiryono, a father of two in Indonesia’s capital Jakarta who lost off last month as retailers slashed orders. His side gig delivering workers across southeast Asia millions of garment industry workers and contractors.

May Day protests started in the 19th century in the U.S., where the number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits surpassed a staggering 30 million this week. Economists say joblessness in April may have reached numbers not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Essential workers participatd in strikes around the U.S. on Friday to demand safer conditions during the coronavirus pandemic, while other groups planned rallies against stay-at-home orders they say are crippling the U.S. economy.

May Day is a state holiday in many countries, and lockdowns meant that Hollywood was set to do the same Friday, as the May Day holiday was also when the country began easing its strict lockdown. People were permitted to walk outside for exercise, and some began returning to work in small batches.

China’s ancient, majestic Forbidden City opened Saturday with all tickets for the May 1-5 holiday sold out, and a limit of 5,000 visitors a day, down from the earlier maximum of 80,000. The Chinese capital reopened its parks and museums, with crowds. About three months after hundreds of millions of people were ordered into a near lockdown as the coronavirus outbreak erupted in the central city of Wuhan.

Thailand allow most business activities to resume Monday but keep schools and houses of worship shut. South Korea was preparing to end the latest wave of some retails, hair salons and restaurants, while keeping a night-time curfew and a ban on alcohol sales.

In the U.S., Louisiana restaurants were allowed Friday to add outdoor tables to their setups, though hard-hit New Orleans will remain shut.

President Donald Trump chose not to march in Washington, D.C., in a protest of U.S. mall operator Simon Property Group Inc., planned to open 49 shopping centers across 12 states.

The U.S. was providing funding to the Wuhan lab for its research on coronaviruses, Michael Morell, former acting director and deputy director of the CIA, said Thursday.

He said State Department cables indicate that there have been concerns in past years among U.S. officials about the safety protocols at that lab. If the virus did escape from a Chinese lab, it not only reflects negatively on China but also on the United States for providing research funding to a lab that is not a global facility, Morell said during an online forum hosted by the Michael V. Hayden Institute for Strategic and International Security at George Mason University.

"So if it did escape, we’re all in this together," Morell said. "This is not a gotcha for China. This is a gotcha for both of us."
VIRUS OUTBREAK

GOP lawmakers reject call to extend Michigan order

Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. — The Republican-led Michigan Legislature refused Thursday to extend Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s stay-at-home order due to the coronavirus pandemic. The governor, unfazed, repeated all the orders stating under one law that an emergency still exists while declaring a new 28-day state of emergency under another law. The declarations are important because they are the foundation for Whitmer’s stay-at-home measure, which will remain in effect through May 15, and other directives aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus. The virus that causes COVID-19 has infected more than 11,000 Michigan residents and contributed to the deaths of 3,789, many in the Detroit area.

Whitmer accused GOP lawmakers of “putting their heads in the sand and putting more lives and livelihoods at risk. I’m not going to let that happen.”

The legislative pushcame as a wave of protesters converged on the state Capitol, including some who were openly carrying assault rifles, returned to the Capitol to denounce the Democratic governor’s stay-at-home order. Whitten wanted legislators to extend the emergency before it was set to expire late Thursday. But at the same time, she believes she has other powers to respond to the crisis and does not need a legislatively-approved extension — which Republicans dispute and appeared poised to challenge in court.

Alabama

MONTGOMERY — Alabamians filed onto beaches and into previously shuttered retail stores Thursday evening as a state stay-home order expired, although salons, on-site restaurant dining and other places remained closed under a new state health order.

A state stay-home order expired at 5 p.m. and retail stores and public areas and classrooms, and non-emergency medical procedures are also being allowed to proceed. The governor, unfazed, repeated all the orders stating under one law that an emergency still exists while declaring a new 28-day state of emergency under another law.

The declarations are important because they are the foundation for Whitmer’s stay-at-home measure, which will remain in effect through May 15, and other directives aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus. The virus that causes COVID-19 has infected more than 11,000 Michigan residents and contributed to the deaths of 3,789, many in the Detroit area.

Whitmer accused GOP lawmakers of “putting their heads in the sand and putting more lives and livelihoods at risk. I’m not going to let that happen.”

The legislative push came as a wave of protesters converged on the state Capitol, including some who were openly carrying assault rifles, returned to the Capitol to denounce the Democratic governor’s stay-at-home order. Whitten wanted legislators to extend the emergency before it was set to expire late Thursday. But at the same time, she believes she has other powers to respond to the crisis and does not need a legislatively-approved extension — which Republicans dispute and appeared poised to challenge in court.

Alabama

MONTGOMERY — Alabamians filed onto beaches and into previously shuttered retail stores Thursday evening as a state stay-home order expired, although salons, on-site restaurant dining and other places remained closed under a new state health order.

A state stay-home order expired at 5 p.m. and retail stores and public areas and classrooms, and non-emergency medical procedures are also being allowed to proceed. The governor, unfazed, repeated all the orders stating under one law that an emergency still exists while declaring a new 28-day state of emergency under another law.

Whitmer accused GOP lawmakers of “putting their heads in the sand and putting more lives and livelihoods at risk. I’m not going to let that happen.”

The legislative push came as a wave of protesters converged on the state Capitol, including some who were openly carrying assault rifles, returned to the Capitol to denounce the Democratic governor’s stay-at-home order. Whitten wanted legislators to extend the emergency before it was set to expire late Thursday. But at the same time, she believes she has other powers to respond to the crisis and does not need a legislatively-approved extension — which Republicans dispute and appeared poised to challenge in court.

Texas

AUSTIN — Texas’ coronavirus death toll hit a single-day high of 50 on Thursday, just as the state was preparing for a slow rebooot of one of the world’s largest economies by reopening retail, restaurants, salons and movies to limited amounts of customers.

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott’s stay-at-home order expires Friday. The state-reported death toll of 119 over the past three days marks the deadliest stretch since Texas’ first fatality in the pandemic was recorded March 17. Thursday’s 1,033 new cases is the first time the state has been over 1,000 since April 10.

The number of infections is thought to be far higher because many people have not been tested and studies suggest people can be infected without feeling sick.

Abbott has pushed for the reopening to rescue a state economy whalloped by staggering unemployment. Labor advocates have criticized the plan as short on safety for workers, and questioned by some Democrats, notably the leadership of the state’s largest cities, as too soon.

Washington

WALLULA — A Tyson Fresh Meats beef plant near the Tri-Cities will remain closed for a while longer as county health officials await test results on all the approximately 1,400 workers.

Walla Walla County health officials reported Wednesday afternoon the coronavirus test results are still pending.

“One of the test results are received, positive cases will be handled by the county in question and the employee residing,” said the agency, according to the Tri-City Herald.

A Tyson Fresh Meats facility on Monday, 130 people — both employees and others linked to the plant outbreak — have tested positive.

One Tyson worker, a 60-year-old butcher who lived in the Tri-Cities, has died.
Biden goes on TV to deny woman’s assault allegation

By Alexandra Jaffe
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden denied a former Senate staffer’s allegation of sexual assault on Friday, saying the accusation is “not true.”

“This never happened,” Biden said in a statement. It’s Biden’s first public comment on an accusation of sexual assault by his former Senate staffer, Tara Reade. He later appeared on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” to discuss the allegation for the first time on television.

Biden said he will also ask the National Archives to determine whether there is any record of such a complaint claiming that he assaulted Reade in the basement of a Capitol Hill office building in the 1990s. His office issued a statement in early April denying the allegation, and a number of former Biden staffers have denied it to reporters as well.

The accusation, which first emerged in a report by The New York Times, has led numerous women, allegations he denies.

Stacey Abrams, the former Georgia Democratic governor candidate who issued a statement of support for Biden, cited a New York Times investigation that she said exonerated him.

“Women deserve to be heard,” she said, “but I also believe that those allegations have to be investigated by credible sources.”

That echoed talking points issued by the Biden campaign to surrogates last week that were obtained by The Associated Press. They pointed to investigations by The New York Times, The Washington Post and the AP that found no other allegation of sexual assault and no pattern of sexual misconduct.

On Thursday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi also defended Biden. Speaking on CNN, she said she was “satisfied with how he has responded,” even as she acknowledged “it’s a matter that he has to deal with.”

Democratic donors and fundraisers say the issue has not come up in calls with party financiers. Others worry that it could cost Biden votes. Some Democratic donors worry about President Donald Trump’s increasingly precarious political standing is seizing on the allegation to portray Democrats as hypocrites who only defend women who allege wrongdoing against conservatives. They are digging in despite the fact that it could renew attention on the multiple sexual assault allegations lodged against Trump.

Democrats, meanwhile, are in an awkward position of vigorously validating women who come forward with their stories while defending the man who will be their standard-bearer in what many in the party consider the most important election of their lifetimes.

By Alex Sorkin and Claire Spagnol, The Associated Press

Democratic nominee for governor of Florida, said she was “not happy” to read about the allegations against Biden.

Some, most notably women, say they are paying close attention to the allegations, which gave them pause.

Alex Sink, a donor and former Democratic nominee for governor of Florida, said she was “not happy” to read about the allegations against Biden.

While she still plans to vote for him, her campaign was too quick to categorically deny Reade’s story.

“They put themselves immediately out on a limb by saying, ‘It didn’t happen, we categorically deny it,’ ” Sink said.

Some female Democratic operatives expressed concern the allegation is particularly damaging because it is an indictment of Biden’s central campaign rationale: that he provides a moral counter to Trump and that the election is a “battle for the soul of America.”

“This is a battle for the soul of America,” Sink said.

While he wrote the Violence Against Women Act as a senator, he also came under heavy criticism for his handling of Anita Hill’s Senate testimony in the 1990s. Just before he launched his 2020 campaign, several women accused him of unwanted touching, behavior for which he apologized.

Biden has pledged to pick a woman as a running mate, and the allegation has left those thought to be in contention in a tough spot.

The future of “Remain in Mexico” asylum seekers delayed until June 1

SAN DIEGO — The Trump administration on Thursday suspended immigration court hearings for asylum-seekers waiting in Mexico through June 1, bowing to public health concerns while extending a state of limbo to those locked down in Mexican migrant shelters.

With an order suspending hearings through Friday set to expire, the Homeland Security and Justice departments said that asylum-seekers with hearings through June 1 should appear at a border crossing when instructed, to get new dates. They said in a joint statement that authorities will review conditions related to the coronavirus and proceed “as expeditiously as possible,” raising the prospect of additional delays.

While it is difficult to know precisely, the Justice Department estimated in late February that there were 25,000 people waiting in Mexico for hearings in U.S. court.

A woman who fled Nicaragua with her 9-year-old son said Thursday that the delays mean more time locked down in a Tijuana shelter, which, like many in the Mexican border city, stopped accepting new migrants and won’t let anyone already there leave to work or shop to prevent the virus from spreading. She moved to the shelter in March after a family that subsidized her rent ended their support due to a job loss.

Mileidy, the woman’s middle name, said she showed up at a San Diego crossing for her fifth hearing as a child — hearing under heavy rain at 3 a.m. on April 7, an hour ahead of the appointed time. She said she was unable to reach U.S. officials for a new date but learned online that her next hearing was May 7.

About a week ago, Mileidy’s attorney got notice that her hearing was delayed again, this time to June 16. She spoke on condition that her full name not be published due to fears for her personal safety.

“All of this time in Mexico is nerve-wracking,” said Mileidy, who has been unable to get a new supply. More than 60,000 asylum-seekers have returned to Mexico to wait for hearings in U.S. court since January 2019, when the U.S. introduced its “Migrant Protection Protocols” policy, known informally as “Remain in Mexico.” It became a key pillar of the administration’s response to an unprecedented surge of asylum-seeking families at the border, drawing criticism for having people wait in highly dangerous Mexican cities.

The future of “Remain in Mexico” has become less certain after the administration temporarily suspended immigration laws using a 1944 public-health law, whisking Mexican and Central Americans to the nearest border to be returned to Mexico without a chance to seek asylum. Nearly 10,000 people were “expelled” in less than three weeks after it took effect March 21.

The sounds may be familiar for Derby fans: Triple Crown announcement Larry Collmus is calling the race and bugler Steve Bittleman will serenade viewers prior to the turtles taking off. The turtle race will actually be pre-taped in Chicago, with the likes of Sir-Hides-A-Bunch, American Tortuga and Galapago! in the field.

“It is weird, but there’s been a lot of weird going on the last couple of months in this country,” Collmus said. “It will be like the Derby broadcast. Just turtles instead.”

And one big shell-abration at the end.

Turtles to race on traditional Kentucky Derby date in May

By Dan Gelston
Associated Press

Losing the Kentucky Turtle Derby has left race fans shell-shocked.

The first Saturday in May has yielded to the legs of a bunch of slowpokes: Seattle Slow headlines a field of turtles — yes, turtles — that will race in the Kentucky Turtle Derby.

Call it the slowest eight minutes in sports.

The race is more methodical marathon that mad dash to the finish — though the victor can win at the line by a turtleneck rather than a nose — and is just one more offbeat sport that has had a moment during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Derby, America’s longest continuously held sports event, had been scheduled for May 2. It will now be run Sept. 5, kicking off Labor Day weekend. It’s the first time the Derby won’t be held on its traditional first Saturday in May since 1945, when it was run June 9.

The federal government suspended horse racing nationwide for most of the first half of the year before World War II ended in early May, but not in time to hold the first leg of the Triple Crown that month. Looking for a slower substitute, the first Kentucky Turtle Derby was hatched.

A woman who fled Nicaragua with her 9-year-old son said Thursday that the delays mean more time locked down in a Tijuana shelter, which, like many in the Mexican border city, stopped accepting new migrants and won’t let anyone already there leave to work or shop to prevent the virus from spreading. She moved to the shelter in March after a family that subsidized her rent ended their support due to a job loss.

Mileidy, the woman’s middle name, said she showed up at a San Diego crossing for her fifth hearing as a child — hearing under heavy rain at 3 a.m. on April 7, an hour ahead of the appointed time. She said she was unable to reach U.S. officials for a new date but learned online that her next hearing was May 7.

About a week ago, Mileidy’s attorney got notice that her hearing was delayed again, this time to June 16. She spoke on condition that her full name not be published due to fears for her personal safety.

“All of this time in Mexico is nerve-wracking,” said Mileidy, who has been unable to get a new supply. More than 60,000 asylum-seekers have returned to Mexico to wait for hearings in U.S. court since January 2019, when the U.S. introduced its “Migrant Protection Protocols” policy, known informally as “Remain in Mexico.” It became a key pillar of the administration’s response to an unprecedented surge of asylum-seeking families at the border, drawing criticism for having people wait in highly dangerous Mexican cities.

The future of “Remain in Mexico” has become less certain after the administration temporarily suspended immigration laws using a 1944 public-health law, whisking Mexican and Central Americans to the nearest border to be returned to Mexico without a chance to seek asylum. Nearly 10,000 people were “expelled” in less than three weeks after it took effect March 21.

The sounds may be familiar for Derby fans: Triple Crown announcement Larry Collmus is calling the race and bugler Steve Bittleman will serenade viewers prior to the turtles taking off. The turtle race will actually be pre-taped in Chicago, with the likes of Sir-Hides-A-Bunch, American Tortuga and Galapago! in the field.

“It is weird, but there’s been a lot of weird going on the last couple of months in this country,” Collmus said. “It will be like the Derby broadcast. Just turtles instead.”

And one big shell-abration at the end.
New signs of life

Wastelanders propels Fallout 76 with addition of NPCs, more activities

BY BRIAN BOWERS
Stars and Stripes

With the advent of COVID-19, the postapocalyptic world of Fallout 76 seems much less alien. As I don a hazmat suit to wander the depopulated landscape of West Virginia to search for essential supplies and deal with unexpected creatures, I get a feeling of deja vu. Only a day before, I was wearing a face mask while scouring the depopulated shopping centers of Northern Virginia for toilet paper and removing a snake from our front steps. The only differences: Fallout features more gunplay — and more available toilet paper.

When Bethesda Softworks released Fallout 76 about a year and a half ago, it featured a world where all the game’s humans were the avatars of other players. There were robots, mutants and ghouls shriveled by radiation, but no “living” humans other than other players. Since interaction with nonplayer characters was one of the vital elements in previous Fallout games, Fallout 76 seemed somewhat hollow.

That changed in mid-April with the release of the massive update Fallout 76: Wastelanders. Bethesda dropped hundreds of new characters into the hills of West Virginia and breathed new life into the game. Fallout 76 is set in the early 2100s, three decades after nuclear war has devastated America. As the game opens, you climb out of a crashed space station and face a world where the only humans around are your fellow vault-dwellers — who are controlled by other players. Wastelanders is set about a year later. By that time, you have found an inoculation and are able to start a new life. The rest is set in the southern end of the game’s sprawl.

The game is rated M for violence — expect to see heads and arms laying around after a nasty firefight. Wastelanders marks a major step forward for Fallout 76. However, it does more to whet the appetite than to satisfy it. I’m eager to see a more robust set of missions and characters — most like those offered in Bethesda’s other online adventure, Elder Scrolls Online.

Overall grade: A–

Bottom line:
Platforms: PlayStation 4, Xbox One, PC
Online: fallout.bethesda.net

Switch consoles in high demand, shorter supply

BY AUSTIN CARR
Bloomberg

I was late to the whole Animal Crossing thing, but a few days ago I, too, decamped for a digital island utopia, where I can breathe fresh digital air, chase butterflies, plant bright tulips and fish for sea bass (so many sea bass). Thanks to best-selling (and surprisingly therapeutic) games like Animal Crossing: New Horizons, the Nintendo Switch has become a massive hit during the pandemic. There’s just one problem for Nintendo: It can’t make them fast enough.

The inventory crunch serves as a reminder of how crucial supply chain management is in the COVID-19 era. From PCs and smartphones to tablets and wearables, the current batch of winners and losers of the hardware market will likely be decided by which companies can build enough products to meet demand.

Nintendo was unprepared for the sales surge and is now said to be scrambling to ramp up production and procure key electronics. The big question: Will the Japanese company be able to fix its supply chain woes before demand wanes?

In February, as the coronavirus was spreading around the globe, Nintendo started to see early indications of supply constraints. Component shortages in China were reportedly affect ing factory output in Vietnam. Switch shipments to Nintendo’s home country of Japan were delayed due to supplier bottlenecks, an alarming prospect for the half-billion-dollar business, which had potential blockbuster games like Animal Crossing and Minecraft Dungeons coming out in the spring.

By the following month, the hardware shortages followed the virus’ spread around the world. The Switch was nowhere to be found in North America at Amazon, Best Buy, Target or Walmart.

Nintendo is now purportedly aiming to boost its production to 22 million units this fiscal year, a remarkable uptick considering the Switch is already three years old. That’s more than Nintendo sold in the U.S., its biggest market, from the console’s debut in 2017 to last year. However, one analyst suggested retail stock might not catch up to demand until June.

While sold-out inventory is a good problem for Nintendo to have, it could fail to fully capitalize on the moment. Many people bored at home may opt instead to purchase a PlayStation from Sony or Xbox from Microsoft, which said it has managed to resolve its supply chain challenges.

Meanwhile, I’ll be living a sun kissed life in Animal Crossing, where, incidentally, I was just gifted a virtual Nintendo Switch. Apparently, it’s far easier to get one on my digital island paradise than it is in real life.
If movie theaters don’t reopen this year, a critic’s guide to the next awards show

John Magaro appears with the title character in Kelly Reichardt’s “First Cow.”

By Justin Chang
Los Angeles Times

Six weeks and an eternity ago, when movie theaters were about to shut down due to the coronavirus outbreak, a few industry observers quipped that Elisabeth Moss was clearly now a shoe-in to win the Academy Award for lead actress. It wasn’t an entirely facetious suggestion: Moss is unsurprisingly superb in “The Invisible Man,” an above-average studio genre film that, in a more straightforward year, might be a long shot for awards consideration.

But in a moviegoing season that was cut abruptly short in March, the joke goes, “The Invisible Man” is suddenly not a long shot but a potential front-runner. Not just one of the year’s early critical and commercial standouts, it may also be one of the only ones.

That assumed two unfortunate outcomes: First, that movie theaters don’t reopen this year at all. Second, that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, which requires features to play in theaters to qualify for Oscar consideration, wouldn’t adjust its rules, dates and deadlines accordingly. On this latter front, the academy has shown flexibility: On Tuesday, the group’s 54-member board of governors voted on a series of rule changes in response to the global pandemic that will temporarily relax the normally strict requirements for Oscar consideration, including the requirement for a theatrical release.

What will this year in film look like, with major studio titles pushed back to fall and winter release dates (for now), major festivals like Cannes eyeing postponement or cancellation, and innumerable independent films in even worse danger than usual of not finding their audiences?

I haven’t a clue, and I suspect that anyone who claims they do is being either naïve or disingenuous. The old industry maxim beloved by the late screenwriter William Goldman — “Nobody knows anything” — has rarely seemed more apropos.

One thing I do know: You could, in theory, hold the Oscars (on Zoom) next month, restricting voters only to movies newly released in U.S. theaters in the first three months of 2020, and still emerge with a solid, even commendable, slate of nominees. The simple reason for this is that Hollywood studios have never cornered the market on cinematic quality, and well before the awards-season grind kicks in, every month brings brilliant work from filmmakers who rarely land on Oscar’s radar — and are no less deserving of attention for it.

Yes, you have to look harder for these movies, using a finer-toothed comb than you might in November or December. You have to put anti-genre snobbery aside and be comfortable with subtitles (horror!!) and actors with unfamiliar names and faces. It takes discernment to find worthwhile achievements, to look beyond the scope of the obvious and the overhyped. And discernment too often goes missing when the industry’s annual gala-groping, screener-cramming, popularity contest gums gets underway.

I have my own means of combating the Hollywood bias that often creeps in during those fall months. Every January, I start a fresh list of every good movie I see, logging performances, screenplays and directorial achievements that I think may be worth remembering at year’s end. I do this not because I want to think about awards season year-round, but because I don’t want anything to slip through the cracks when it finally arrives.

So, let’s take a look at my 2020 list as it currently stands.

Note that while the New York/Vulture writer Nate Jones recently conducted his own thought experiment in this vein — a smart, amusingly exhaustive speculation on how the 2020-21 awards season would play out if no more theatrical releases were to emerge for the rest of the year — my version of this exercise has zero predictive value. It’s simply what I would personally single out in the top eight feature categories: best picture, directing, acting and writing. It is also my early memo to myself and others: No matter what the future holds, these films and performances will still be worth seeing and remembering.

One ground rule: I am excluding 2019 movies that were re-released earlier this year.

**Best picture**

Under the circumstances, it wouldn’t be unreasonable to cap this category at five, going back to decades of historic academy practice. But why impose limits when the year has already given us more than five terrific movies? In keeping with the academy’s preferred number of late, let’s go with eight.

“The Assistant,” Kitty Green’s riveting sidelong view of workplace sexual abuse in the entertainment industry, is as essential a #MeToo movie as Leigh Whannell’s expertly crafted thriller “The Invisible Man”; in both movies, the bullying enemy is both unseen and inescapable.

“Bacurau,” Kleber Mendonca Filho and Juliano Dornelles’ rich, strange genre mashup set in a futuristic Brazilian backwater, deservedly won a major prize at Cannes last year, as did “Beanpole,” a shattering drama of postwar reckoning from the scarcely known 28-year-old Russian director Kantemir Balagov.

If forced to pick a winner at this point, I’d have a hard time choosing between two new American indie classics: “First Cow,” Kelly Reichardt’s tale of two friends on a mission between two new American indie classics; and “Never Rarely Sometimes Always,” Eliza Hittman’s tale of two friends on a mission in contemporary Pennsylvania and New York.

And finally, two masterly meditations on grief from Europe: “I Was at Home, But...” from German director Angela Schanelec, and “Vitalina Varela,” from Portuguese auteur Pedro Costa.

**Director**

The academy didn’t nominate any women for best director in its most recent edition, despite having no shortage of opportunities to do so. This year, even with a tight three-month window, it could make considerations by nominating an established American master like Kelly Reichardt (“First Cow”), an out-of-the-box talent like Angela Schanelec (“I Was at Home, But...”), who hails from the rigorous Berlin School, and gifted up-and-comers like Kitty Green (“The Assistant”) and Eliza Hittman (“Never Rarely Sometimes Always”).

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 13**
Two young women (Vasilisa Perelygyna, left, and Viktoria Miroshnichenko) search for meaning and hope in “Beanpole.”

Supporting actress
All hail the Brazilian leged Sonia Braga and her fierce turn as a small town’s mean, boozy conscience in “Bacurau.” Andrea Riseborough, one of the medium’s great chameleons, brings her signature ferocity to bear on her role as a woman rejecting a community’s racism in “Burden,” while Talia Ryder, using just a few words and a lot of expressive silence, etches an indelible portrait of a friend indeed out of a few words and silent gestures in “Never Rarely Sometimes Always.”

I was equally impressed with Mia Goth’s exquisite vulnerability and Miranda Hart’s delightful comic dithering in “Emma,” in which both actresses remind us that Jane Austen’s characters are at once familiar and inexhaustible.

Supporting actor
I didn’t much care for “The Gentlemen,” but I loved Colin Farrell’s performance (a shade more than Hugh Grant’s) as one of the many men caught up in Guy Ritchie’s warmed-over Cockney caper. I also loved Josh O’Connor’s hilarious work in “Emma” — he’s like Gumby in a priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar — and Udo Kier doing what only Udo Kier can as a gunman with the priest’s collar.

Adapted screenplay
Here’s where my experiment admittedly crashes to earth. The year has already given us three solid possibilities in Eleanor Catton’s sparkling adaptation of “Emma”, Kelly Reichardt and Jon Raymond’s “First Cow,” based on Raymond’s novel “The Half Life”; and Leigh Whannell’s extensive reimagining of “The Invisible Man” from H.G. Wells’ science-fiction classic. Not a bad start, but the pickings are otherwise slim. I’ll leave the other two slots blank for now, in symbolic recognition that — as much fun as it’s been to speculate about an alterna-Oscars — we can’t wait for theaters to reopen, and for the movies to return with a vengeance.
Teeming with violence

‘Extraction’ belongs, in many ways, to another world

By Jake Coyle
Associated Press

‘Extraction’ is set in the Bangladesh capital of Dhaka, one of the most densely populated cities in the world. It’s in this urban sea of people and traffic that Chris Hemsworth’s battle-scarred mercenary engages in a torrent of gun fights, car chases and hand-to-hand combat.

Produced with the Marvel-trained muscle of Joe and Anthony Russo (“Avengers Endgame,” “Captain America”), “Extraction” wasn’t shot in Dhaka but in Thailand and Ahmedabad, India. In India, it was one of the largest Hollywood productions to set down on the subcontinent. The throngs there doubled for Dhaka and populated “Extraction,” a teeming movie made very obviously before the pandemic era of social distancing.

“There were thousands of people watching each day and erupting at the end of each take. It was like being in the Colosseum,” Hemsworth said in an interview by video conference from his home in Australia. “It’s interesting now to go: Would you be able to pull that off post-this? It would be very different.”

“Extraction,” which is currently streaming on Netflix, is the directorial debut of Sam Hargrave, the stunt coordinator on “Endgame” and other films and the former stunt double of Chris Evans’ Captain America. It’s a familiar kind of kinetic action movie featuring lengthy takes and violent choreography, but it benefits greatly from the atmosphere of an exotic, lesser seen and overwhelming locale. And, right now, “Extraction” is easily the biggest new spectacle arriving on any screen anytime soon.

The film re-teams Hemsworth with the Russos, a year after “Endgame,” in a script penned by Joe Russo a decade ago. He adapted it from the graphic novel “Ciudad,” which is set in Paraguay’s Ciudad del Este. But a couple of years ago, when the Russos tapped Hargrave to direct, they went looking for a new city.

“There were a few projects that were circling Ciudad del Este as a location, one in particular at Netflix. When we came up with the idea to flip it to Sam, we started looking for another, fresh location,” said Joe Russo.

“We had spent some time in Mumbai on a promotional tour, and that’s where we got the idea to do it in Bangladesh.”

Hargrave first scouted Dhaka in 2017, in between the shoots for “Infinity War” and “Endgame.”

“It’s very densely populated but it has an energy and vibrancy that’s unique,” said Hargrave. “We had spent some time in Mumbai on a promotional tour, and that’s where we got the idea to do it in Bangladesh.”

Hargrave first scouted Dhaka in 2017, in between the shoots for “Infinity War” and “Endgame.”

“It’s very densely populated but it has an energy and vibrancy that’s unique,” said Hargrave. “We had spent some time in Mumbai on a promotional tour, and that’s where we got the idea to do it in Bangladesh.”

The Russos, they see “Extraction” as an extension of the globe-spanning scale of Marvel, brought to a different genre and a smaller-screen platform.

“Joe and I got to see not just the fandom but the filmmaking community around the world,” said Anthony Russo. “Having opportunities to tie into talented filmmakers from every corner of the globe is very exciting to us.”

The Russo brothers are currently editing their next film, the crime drama “Cherry,” remotely. They say they are, like much of the industry, trying to conceive and plan for how productions of any kind — let alone huge, rough-and-tumble films like “Extraction” — can resume in the months ahead. The Directors Guild recently formed a committee led by Steven Soderbergh to examine possible on-set solutions.

That makes the visceral, peopled realm of “Extraction” a vision of a recent but, at least temporarily, vanished movie world. To Hemsworth, it was a thrilling one.

“It ratcheted up the pressure of shooting within those places being so densely populated,” said Hemsworth. “It was a thrilling one.”

It’s [Dhaka] very densely populated but it has an energy and vibrancy that’s unique. You couldn’t look in any direction that’s not unique to the Western eye.

Sam Hargrave director, “Extraction”
Stuntmen are increasingly Hollywood’s go-to action directors

By Jake Coyle
Associated Press

Some of today’s top action directors were first doubles for Brad Pitt, Neo and Wolverine.

Increasingly, filmmakers are coming from the ranks of stuntmen and stunt coordinators, whose years of accomplishing complicated shots, managing the risks of cast and crew and working intimately with stars have given them a foundation for the task of directing — especially in action movies.

“Extraction” is the directorial debut of Sam Hargrave. Before Hargrave got behind the camera, he doubled for Chris Evans on “Captain America” and Hugh Jackman on “Wolverine,” and coordinated stunts on blockbusters like “Avengers: Endgame” and the “Hunger Games: Mockingjay” movies.

Hargrave is the latest in a lineage of stuntmen who have gone from stepping in for actors to directing them. It’s a fairly recent career pathway thanks largely to the success of Chad Stahelski (“John Wick”) and David Leitch (“Atomic Blonde”).

A brief history of notable stuntmen turned directors:

Hal Needham: A trailblazer for stuntmen-filmmakers, Needham performed stunts on films including “The French Connection” and “How the West Was Won” before he penned the script to “Smokey and the Bandit.” He convinced Burt Reynolds, for whom he had doubled, to let him direct. They remained a regular team, with Needham directing Reynolds in “Hooper,” “The Cannonball Run” and “Stroker Ace.” Needham has been quoted as saying: “Screw the dialogue; let’s wreck some cars.”

Ric Roman Waugh: The son of stuntman Fred Waugh, one of the founding members of Stunts Unlimited, Waugh performed stunt work in “The Last of the Mohicans” (“The Crow” and “Lethal Weapon 2.” He transitioned to directing in 2001’s “In the Shadows,” and followed that up with “Snitch,” with Dwayne Johnson, and last year’s “Angel Has Fallen.”

Chad Stahelski and David Leitch: A chiseled duo with martial arts skills and stunt expertise, Stahelski and Leitch have done more than anyone else to raise the profile of stunt coordinators. They’ve been leaders in the field since founding the action design company 87Eleven in 1997. Leitch was Pitt’s stunt double in “Fight Club” and doubled for Keanu Reeves in “The Matrix.” Stahelski choreographed fights in “300” and coordinated stunts in “The Expendables.”

They stepped into filmmaking with the slickly stylized and hyper-violent “John Wick” franchise (Stahelski directed, Leitch produced). Leitch, himself, helmed “Atomic Blonde,” with Charlize Theron, and “Deadpool 2.”

Nash Edgerton: The brother of actor Joel Edgerton, Nash has been a longtime stuntman, doubling for Ewan McGregor’s Obi-Wan Kenobi, and doing stunt work in “The Thin Red Line,” “Superman Returns” and “Zero Dark Thirty.” But Edgerton also continually made short films, some with his brother, and eventually made his feature directing debut with the 2008 neo-noir “The Square.” In 2018, he directed the comedy “Gringo,” with David Oyelowo and Theron.

Hemsworth finds a worthy action pic in ‘Extraction’

By Lindsey Bahr
Associated Press

A hardened mercenary’s mission becomes a soul-searching race to survive when he’s sent to Bangladesh to rescue a drug lord’s kidnapped son in “Extraction,” with Chris Hemsworth, left, and Rudhraksh Jaiswal.

Tyler Rake sets off to Dhaka to rescue a drug lord’s kidnapped son in “Extraction,” with Chris Hemsworth, left, and Rudhraksh Jaiswal.

The graphic novel origins help explain “Tyler Rake,” but that name is about the extent of the comic book elements in the actual film. And, to be fair, “Extraction” even knows it’s ridiculous, hence the rake and the fact that the 14-year-old asset Ovi (Rudhraksh Jaiswal) walks up to the line of making fun of it at one point.

The film begins at the end, showing Tyler Rake (it just feels more right to say his full name) bloodied, battered and near-death on a bridge, having blurry flashbacks to some feet in the sand before cutting to two days earlier in Mumbai. (Don’t hate “Extraction” for its clichés; they’re just part of the fun).

It won’t shock you to learn that Tyler Rake is a bit of a loner who keeps his living quarters in shambles, but you get the sense that he always knows where the bottle of Oxy is. A woman (Golshifteh Farahani) comes to him with the job to save the kid, whose father is in prison, and Tyler Rake sets off to Dhaka to track him down. There, the criminal underworld plays out in broad daylight, with crime bosses, child soldiers, corrupt police and an overall vibe of instability populating the streets.

Tyler Rake finds the kid easily enough, but then things start to get more complicated when he discovers that he’s not the only one looking for Ovi (and ready to kill to get him).

But don’t despair; Tyler Rake has about two hours of nonstop fight in him before he gets to that bridge and the blurry flashbacks. He’ll fight, and win, against anyone who comes in his way — even a group of kids. He doesn’t kill any of them, though. He just kind of injures and disables the “Goonies from hell.”

The word “distraction” has started to lose all meaning this deep into our home lockdowns, but there is a certain comfort in curling up with a big, silly action pic like “Extraction.” It reminds you of something you might have spent money on to see in an ice-cream shop on a hot summer day.
Police: Kids stole $1M in cars from dealerships

NC — Police in North Carolina have accused a group of teenagers and children as young as 9 of stealing more than $1 million in vehicles from car dealerships. Investigators think 19 suspects ranging in age from 9 to 16 were responsible for taking nearly 50 cars from auto sellers in Winston-Salem and Kernersville during a monthlong string of break-ins, Winston-Salem police told news outlets.

Some of the children accused of involvement had stolen multiple cars before, The Winston-Salem Journal quoted Lt. Amy Gaudlin as saying. Police alleged the suspects stole the keys of new cars or vehicles being serviced at the dealerships and took them on joy rides.

Police: Woman drove car with child on hood

SC — A woman who allegedly recorded a video of herself driving a car while her 5-year-old child was sitting on the hood of the vehicle was arrested in South Carolina. Thrista Miquisha Johnson turned herself in Tuesday after Rock Hill police learned about the video and issued a warrant for her arrest, news outlets reported.

Lt. Michael Chavis told the Rock Hill Herald the video was taken near an apartment building in the city just two days earlier. Chavis said police don’t know how fast the car was moving in the video, but noted the child was not injured.

Man admits fatally shooting therapy dog

NJ — A man who fatally shot his neighbor’s therapy dog last year has pleaded guilty to animal cruelty, authorities said.

William Stroemel, 64, of Maple Shade, also pleaded guilty Wednesday to a weapons possession count as part of a plea deal with Burlington County prosecutors. They will recommend that he receive a five-year state prison term when he’s sentenced July 29.

Stroemel used an air rifle to shoot Toby, a 9-year-old Pomeranian-poodle mix, after the dog escaped from his owner’s home Sept. 17. The dog’s owner is a 9-year-old Pomera-

Robert M. Stroemel

On with the show

Artist Dania Strong adjusts prints of larger works on her front-yard fence as her dog Theo looks on Wednesday in the Koreatown section of Los Angeles. “Road Through Life,” marks the second show that Strong has mounted on her fence since mid-April, as galleries and museums remain closed due to California’s coronavirus-related stay-at-home orders.

City councilman is accused of beef theft

GA — A Georgia city councilman was charged after he allegedly stole a beef tenderloin from a grocery store.

Georgia Bureau of Investigation spokeswoman Nelly Miles told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Clifford Henry Jiles was accused of swapping the price tag of a beef tenderloin with a cheaper pork tenderloin at a Piggly Wiggly grocery store in Franklin on Sunday. Miles said the beef re-tailed for over $83, while the pork was about $12.

The case was given to the bureaucracy after he got into a fight with another driver in Clearwater. Six days later, he was arrested again when police officers saw him driving into oncoming traffic, an arrest report said. Davis has a third DUI arrest in his past from about five years ago in California, according to affidavits.

Reward offered after pets, wildlife poisoned

WI — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is offering a $1,000 reward for information that leads to the arrest of someone who is poisoning pets and wildlife in northern Wisconsin.

Four dogs have died in the past month in Forest County. Testing on two of the pets, a 4-year-old yellow Labrador retriever that died April 24 and a 3-year-old German shepherd that died April 1, confirmed that they died from poisoning. Tests are pending after two more dogs died last weekend.

Officials believe the deaths are related to the ongoing poisonings in Florence, Forest and Marinette counties that have been investigated for about a year, WLUK-TV reported. So far, seven pet dogs have died.

Investigators also found dead coyotes, weasels and wolves, and lab tests confirmed the animals were also poisoned, WSAW-TV reported.

From wire reports
**OPINION**

**Coronavirus is the great unequalizer**

By **Doyle McManus**

*Los Angeles Times*

We live in an unequal society, and coronavirus is making it worse.

The pandemic has struck disproportionately all poorer people in cities, almost as if it were deliberately targeting minorities. In New York, the death rate among African Americans and Latinos has been roughly twice as high as among white people.

The economic impact has been unequal too. A survey released Tuesday by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation reported that more than half of the workers who have lost income because of the pandemic were already below the federal poverty line. Higher-income workers, by contrast, have mostly kept their jobs.

Now add a third, cruel form of inequality: unequal risk.

Knowledge workers who can work at home are riding out the pandemic in relative safety. First responders, health care workers, those who are dying or delivering babies on the front line don’t have that luxury.

To keep their paychecks coming, they have to go out in public and risk infection — even though they generally aren’t as well paid as managers (and journalists) who work at home.

Those are the new facts of American inequality. They’ll persist as long as the coronavirus is large. The economic impact is likely to continue even longer.

“We had a lot of inequality before the pandemic. We’re going to have a lot more before it’s over,” Isabel V. Sawhill of the Brookings Institution, a leading scholar on post-pandemic policy, has said. We are about to be quite scary to think about what will become of the country when the effects are so severe.

The question is: What do we do about it?

---

**Small-business loan program really is working**

**By Andy Puzder**

Special to The Washington Post

Media coverage of the federal government’s efforts to help small businesses has focused too long on big companies’ grabbing loans that were meant to help smaller ones weather the new coronavirus economy.

But the numbers from the CARES Act’s Paycheck Protection Program are coming in, and they’re impressive.

On April 3, the Small Business Administration launched the PPP with $349 billion. The SBA’s most recent report says that through April 16, the agency approved nearly 1.7 million loans through 4,975 lenders, dus the entire fund. According to SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza, the agency “processed more than 14 years’ worth of loans in less than 14 days.” By any measure, that’s lighting speed. And now a new tranche of money is in the pipeline.

It turns out that just 1.6% of PPP loans were for $2 million or more, coming to a total of about $95 billion, according to the SBA — some of those loans presumably going to target the needs of small businesses. More leg
gislation is needed to help small businesses.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program, which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill recommends expanding the low-income safety net with emergency funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding for Needy Families, two programs that got similar boosts during the Great Recession a decade ago.

But Congress needs to put automatic triggers on all these programs, so that funding rises along with job losses. That way, the unemployed wouldn’t have to depend on Congress voting for round after round of new funding amid the polarized debates.

Want to think bigger? Gene Sperling, a former economic adviser to Bill Clinton, is proposing a $20 “living wage” package that would begin with a $15 minimum wage and add child care subsidies and tax credits. Other Democrats hope this will be the moment when voters coalesce around their demands for universal health insurance, so workers don’t lose access to medical care, and reduce the size of their health bills.

Those proposals will remain stretch
equities, and decide to raise the incomes of the no-longer-working poor.

One looming problem: the lack of certainty about how businesses can qualify for loan forgiveness. For example, how much was $20,000 in income? How much did employees spend on payroll, and over what period of time? But there is a sense that the Trump administration recognizes the problems and will soon issue regulatory guidance to clarify the requirements.

We are in a moment of uncertainty on so many different levels, and with so many being disbursed, thousands of small businesses that would otherwise have closed permanently will remain open, their collection efforts still at work or more confident that their employer will be in business and rehiring once the cri
crisis adapts. And Macahn, the PPP has already benefited 30 million workers, and the administration expects “it will be another 30 million workers by the time we get through the second round of new funding and see how that package is doing in the private payroll.” Having these businesses and jobs intact will help smooth the country’s return to economic activity.

In the long term, government intervention is no substitute for the economy. The best way to speed the recovery would be a return to normalcy, to get the economy back in full motion, to get Fannie and Freddie, to get the in the box office, to get theautos back on the road, to get the hotels back open, to get the all-star sports games back on.

And will say that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended employment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance, to provide more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic’s impact on the small business sector.
**Eugene Sheffer Crossword**

**ACROSS**
1 Used a chair
4 Atkins diet no-no
8 Molt
12 “Gross!”
13 “Would — to you?”
14 Jeans maker
15 Arthur of “Maude”
16 Travel permit
17 Skip
18 “Let’s Get Loud” singer who performed at the 2020 Super Bowl
21 Revue segment
22 Trendy
23 Outscores
26 Shack
27 — de mer
30 Bakery buys
31 Towboat
32 Indonesian island
33 Weep
34 Future flower
35 Razzle-dazzle
36 Feedbag bit
37 Pair
38 Former Yankee with 696 home runs
45 Creche trio
46 Cheer (for)
47 Monk’s title
48 Goad
49 Sicilian peak
50 “Alley —
51 RSVP enclosure

**DOWN**
1 Pt. of a sentence
2 Baseball’s Tommie
3 Compared to
4 Social studies course
5 “Can I give you —?”
6 Get up
7 Heard
8 Embrace
9 Sailing vessel
10 Marisa’s “Only Love” role
11 Bubblehead
12 B.C. baseball team
13 Torched
14 English channel?
15 24 Continent north of Afr.
16 Whatever
17 Paul Newman film
18 April follower
19 PC key
20 Actress Taylor
21 Instructed
22 Privately
23 Online journal
24 Rail
25 B.B. King’s instrument
26 Rust, for one
27 Unmanned plane
28 Band boosters
29 News reporter
30 Logan
31 40 Swelled heads
32 41 Lavish affection (on)
33 Sci-fi fleet
34 Love god
35 Microwaves

---

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

```
CP  M  D  HEAPS
H   E  A  D  AGREE
TAN  LenAHorn
ERE  TACOS
FLEATEN AIRS
CDSEG NOG
CACEHP SPOSIT
AMOEBABAN
WIGSTRNAUK
SCARS DYE
GREENHORN DON
ATARI MEAETS
GETATING ROE
```

---

**5-2 CRYPTOQUIP**

```
X J G B O Q C T O Q E I U
G N C T E G N B N X I W Y J G I S N
H J X W I G T H I E J X J Y O Y O W I
M E G O I N W S E M: M O G Y J G
I S N H J G W O E G.
```

Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: WHAT RECIPE INGREDIENTS WOULD BE VERY SUITABLE TO ADD PUNGENCY TO IRISH DISHES? GAELIC CLOVES.

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals L
Get the news that matters to you, from the source you trust.

Daily Headlines | Veterans News | Military History | and more

Sign up now for Stars and Stripes FREE eNewsletters

stripes.com/newsletters
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>Pct</th>
<th>GB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golden State</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.400</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>.438</td>
<td>21½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.A. Lakers</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>.297</td>
<td>23½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>1½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td>12½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.597</td>
<td>1½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>33½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.815</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>16½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>.318</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>7½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.672</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.719</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Banks agree to pay fines in FIFA scandal

Traffic Sports, a Brazilian company, held the rights from 1987-2011. Traffic Sports and Traffic USA reached guilty pleas and were fined a total of $1 million last year.

Full Play is controlled by Hugo Jinkis and son Mariano, who were first indicted in 2015 and have been charged with racketeering conspiracy, wire fraud, wire fraud conspiracy and money laundering conspiracy.

AP sportlight

May 2

1967 — The Toronto Maple Leafs beat the Boston Bruins 3-1 to win the Stanley Cup in six games.

1990 — Mrs. Claudine Durnell becomes the first woman to own a Kentucky Derby entry and winner when long shot Elwood wins the 30th Run for the Roses.

2011 — Former first-round draft pick Charles Harris was traded Friday after three unproductive seasons by the Miami Dolphins to the Atlanta Falcons for a seventh-round choice in 2021.

A defensive end from Missouri, Harris was the 22nd overall pick in 2017 but was traded to the Dolphins in December 2019.

Traffic Sports, a Brazilian company, held the rights from 1987-2011. Traffic Sports and Traffic USA reached guilty pleas and were fined a total of $1 million last year.

Full Play is controlled by Hugo Jinkis and son Mariano, who were first indicted in 2015 and have been charged with racketeering conspiracy, wire fraud, wire fraud conspiracy and money laundering conspiracy.

Full Play had accounts at the banks in the names of subsidiaries Bayan Group, Cross Tradings and York Labs, and Jinkis used those accounts to make at least $35 bribe payments totaling more than $14.02 million from 2010-14 to Bedoya, Chiriboga, Esquivel and Figueredo as part of Full Play’s deal to acquire marketing rights to the 2015, 2016, 2019 and 2023 Copa America, South America’s national team championship.

Banks agree to pay fines in FIFA scandal

Traffic Sports, a Brazilian company, held the rights from 1987-2011. Traffic Sports and Traffic USA reached guilty pleas and were fined a total of $1 million last year.

Full Play is controlled by Hugo Jinkis and son Mariano, who were first indicted in 2015 and have been charged with racketeering conspiracy, wire fraud, wire fraud conspiracy and money laundering conspiracy.

Full Play had accounts at the banks in the names of subsidiaries Bayan Group, Cross Tradings and York Labs, and Jinkis used those accounts to make at least $35 bribe payments totaling more than $14.02 million from 2010-14 to Bedoya, Chiriboga, Esquivel and Figueredo as part of Full Play’s deal to acquire marketing rights to the 2015, 2016, 2019 and 2023 Copa America, South America’s national team championship.
The Masters was moved to San Francisco. The U.S. Open is tentatively set for Aug. 9-12 in on a shortened season. The PGA Championship will be the first since the Briton regained his WBA, IBF and WBO belts by beating Andy Ruiz Jr. in December — would surely be switched from its planned venue, the stadium of English soccer club Tottenham, which can hold more than 60,000 spectators.

The Joshua-Pulev fight had been scheduled for June 20 before being pushed back to an as-yet-unconfirmed date because of the pandemic. A rearranged date of July 25 has been touted.

Joshua wanted the first defense of his belts to take place in London. Eddie Hearn, Joshua's promoter, said his Matchroom Boxing organization was planning to stage “two or three” Saturday night fights in July before returning with a bigger show, provided boxing and other sports get the go-ahead to return from the British government.

Hearn said he wouldn’t want to stage a fight in an enclosed location like a TV studio because he doesn’t see how it “does anything for me.”

“I want to build a fight camp, a different kind of environment, more dramatic,” Hearn said in an interview with the BBC. “It will look spectacular on TV. We need to dramatize it.”

It’s about taking over a hotel, testing all the teams, creating a sterile fight camp where no one goes in and we know they’ve had a negative test. It’s about changing room areas, ring walks. It will add to the story.”

The British Boxing Board of Control said if boxing was to return in July, there would be an emphasis on “minimal numbers” of officials and broadcast personnel. Medical staff were required at ringside, too. Anyone at the events will have to have been in pre-fight quarantine and had tests for COVID-19.

There will initially be a maximum of five fights in a show. The BBBoC said it continues to follow advice from government and medical authorities.

No one loses tour card in shorter PGA season

Scott halves ‘Nine holes with a mate’

The field for the Sentry Tournament of Champions at Kapalua will include everyone who wins a PGA Tour event in 2020, along with players who reach the Tour Championship. That means whoever finished in the top 30 in the FedEx Cup gets into at least three majors in 2021, along with a trip to Maui.

The tournament in the Dominican Republic was canceled and then moved to September, the same week as the Ryder Cup. Because it is not opposite a World Golf Championship, the winner will receive full FedEx Cup points and a trip to the 2021 Masters.

For the rest of this season, Monday qualifiers that can be held will only provide two spots instead of four.

The tour was working on reward- ing the top 10 players, such as Adam Scott’s “Nine holes with a mate” was authentic, if nothing else. With the PGA Tour suspended and sports generally shuttered globally because of the coronavirus pandemic, Scott is back in Australia and looking for a way to keep golf fans engaged.

The 2013 Masters Champion live streamed nine holes of match play against Australian PGA professional Wayne Per- ske on Instagram, commenting on each shot, exchanging banter, telling stories and giving tips and advice as they covered the Maleny Golf Club on Australia’s Sunshine Coast hinterland.

The ever-polite Scott summed up the result at the end of the live stream: “We’ve halved the match. Sorry for the no result.” The conditions were rugged and breezy, with the wind playing havoc with the audio. But considering other live sports options — almost zero — it was a hit with the fans.

Scott grew up north of Brisbane on the Sunshine Coast, where the Maleny club is located.

— Associated Press

By STEVE DOUGLAS
Associated Press

Anthony Joshua's first fight as the restored world heavyweight champion could take place in front of no spectators.

British boxing’s governing body told promoters on Thursday it hopes to be able to have shows back from July after months of inactivity because of the coronavirus outbreak.

Initially, though, Bouts are expected to be held without fans, meaning Joshua’s fight against Kubrat Pulev — the first since the Briton regained his WBA, IBF and WBO belts by beating Andy Ruiz Jr. in December — would surely be switched from its planned venue, the stadium of English soccer club Tottenham, which can hold more than 60,000 spectators.

The Joshua-Pulev fight had been scheduled for June 20 before being pushed back to an as-yet-unconfirmed date because of the pandemic. A rearranged date of July 25 has been touted.

Joshua wanted the first defense of his belts to take place in London.

Eddie Hearn, Joshua’s promoter, said his Matchroom Boxing organization was planning to stage “two or three” Saturday night fights in July before returning with a bigger show, provided boxing and other sports get the go-ahead to return from the British government.

Hearn said he wouldn’t want to stage a fight in an enclosed location like a TV studio because he doesn’t see how it “does anything for me.”

“I want to build a fight camp, a different kind of environment, more dramatic,” Hearn said in an interview with the BBC. “It will look spectacular on TV. We need to dramatize it.”

It’s about taking over a hotel, testing all the teams, creating a sterile fight camp where no one goes in and we know they’ve had a negative test. It’s about changing room areas, ring walks. It will add to the story.”

The British Boxing Board of Control said if boxing was to return in July, there would be an emphasis on “minimal numbers” of officials and broadcast personnel. Medical staff were required at ringside, too. Anyone at the events will have to have been in pre-fight quarantine and had tests for COVID-19.

There will initially be a maximum of five fights in a show. The BBBoC said it continues to follow advice from government and medical authorities.

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

A shorter season brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic means no one will lose a PGA Tour card this year and the Korn Ferry Tour players will have to wait a year before fully joining the big leagues.

A memo sent to players Thursday to outline the changes was another step in the tour trying to figure out what’s equitable in a season that will be without 13 previously scheduled events.

The tour said players exempt for this season will keep the same status for the 2020-21 season that is scheduled to start in September unless they earn a higher ranking after this shortened season.

That could help someone like English, who has posted five top 10s and is No. 150 the previous season. He otherwise would have graduated from the Korn Ferry Tour, no one will graduate to the PGA Tour after the season.

The restart of a season that would have been in late January has been pushed to June 11-14 at Colonial, instead of quadruple points.

In other changes:

This season still offers a $15 million prize to the winner of the Tournament of Champions at Kapalua.

Trophies will be awarded in opposite a World Golf Championship, meaning Joshua’s fight against Kubrat Pulev — the first since the Briton regained his WBA, IBF and WBO belts by beating Andy Ruiz Jr. in December — would surely be switched from its planned venue, the stadium of English soccer club Tottenham, which can hold more than 60,000 spectators.

The Joshua-Pulev fight had been scheduled for June 20 before being pushed back to an as-yet-unconfirmed date because of the pandemic. A rearranged date of July 25 has been touted.

Joshua wanted the first defense of his belts to take place in London.

Eddie Hearn, Joshua’s promoter, said his Matchroom Boxing organization was planning to stage “two or three” Saturday night fights in July before returning with a bigger show, provided boxing and other sports get the go-ahead to return from the British government.

Hearn said he wouldn’t want to stage a fight in an enclosed location like a TV studio because he doesn’t see how it “does anything for me.”

“I want to build a fight camp, a different kind of environment, more dramatic,” Hearn said in an interview with the BBC. “It will look spectacular on TV. We need to dramatize it.”

It’s about taking over a hotel, testing all the teams, creating a sterile fight camp where no one goes in and we know they’ve had a negative test. It’s about changing room areas, ring walks. It will add to the story.”

The British Boxing Board of Control said if boxing was to return in July, there would be an emphasis on “minimal numbers” of officials and broadcast personnel. Medical staff were required at ringside, too. Anyone at the events will have to have been in pre-fight quarantine and had tests for COVID-19.

There will initially be a maximum of five fights in a show. The BBBoC said it continues to follow advice from government and medical authorities.

No one loses tour card in shorter PGA season

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

A shorter season brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic means no one will lose a PGA Tour card this year and the Korn Ferry Tour players will have to wait a year before fully joining the big leagues.

A memo sent to players Thursday to outline the changes was another step in the tour trying to figure out what’s equitable in a season that will be without 13 previously scheduled events.

The tour said players exempt for this season will keep the same status for the 2020-21 season that is scheduled to start in September unless they earn a higher ranking after this shortened season.

That could help someone like English, who has posted five top 10s and is No. 150 the previous season. He otherwise would have graduated from the Korn Ferry Tour, no one will graduate to the PGA Tour after the season.

The restart of a season that would have been in late January has been pushed to June 11-14 at Colonial, instead of quadruple points.

In other changes:

This season still offers a $15 million prize to the winner of the Tournament of Champions at Kapalua.

Trophies will be awarded in opposite a World Golf Championship, meaning Joshua’s fight against Kubrat Pulev — the first since the Briton regained his WBA, IBF and WBO belts by beating Andy Ruiz Jr. in December — would surely be switched from its planned venue, the stadium of English soccer club Tottenham, which can hold more than 60,000 spectators.

The Joshua-Pulev fight had been scheduled for June 20 before being pushed back to an as-yet-unconfirmed date because of the pandemic. A rearranged date of July 25 has been touted.

Joshua wanted the first defense of his belts to take place in London.

Eddie Hearn, Joshua’s promoter, said his Matchroom Boxing organization was planning to stage “two or three” Saturday night fights in July before returning with a bigger show, provided boxing and other sports get the go-ahead to return from the British government.

Hearn said he wouldn’t want to stage a fight in an enclosed location like a TV studio because he doesn’t see how it “does anything for me.”

“I want to build a fight camp, a different kind of environment, more dramatic,” Hearn said in an interview with the BBC. “It will look spectacular on TV. We need to dramatize it.”

It’s about taking over a hotel, testing all the teams, creating a sterile fight camp where no one goes in and we know they’ve had a negative test. It’s about changing room areas, ring walks. It will add to the story.”

The British Boxing Board of Control said if boxing was to return in July, there would be an emphasis on “minimal numbers” of officials and broadcast personnel. Medical staff were required at ringside, too. Anyone at the events will have to have been in pre-fight quarantine and had tests for COVID-19.

There will initially be a maximum of five fights in a show. The BBBoC said it continues to follow advice from government and medical authorities.
NCAA faces lawsuit over violence against women

By Noah Trister
Associated Press

The NCAA is facing a federal lawsuit accusing the organization of failing to address gender-based violence by male athletes against female students at colleges and universities.

Plaintiffs in the suit, filed this week in U.S. District Court in Michigan, include women who have been athletes at Michigan State, Nebraska and an unidentified America East school. Other plaintiffs have been students at Michigan State or Nebraska.

“Defendants routinely issue harsh punishments against student-athletes who accept payments in exchange for use of their likenesses, or who accept free meals, but they have no specific penalty for student-athletes who commit sexual assault,” the suit says. “Defendants have repeatedly and persistently failed to take any meaningful action to mitigate the severe issue of sexual misconduct perpetrated by male student-athletes against women at their member institutions.”

A Nebraska spokesperson said Thursday the school received a copy of the lawsuit against the NCAA and cannot comment on pending litigation. A message was left with the NCAA seeking comment.

A former track athlete at Michigan State, a former volleyball player at Nebraska and a swimmer at an America East school are among the plaintiffs.

The lawsuit accuses the defendants of negligence, intentional infliction of emotional distress, negligent infliction of emotional distress, negligent supervision, fraud, breach of contract with student-athletes and breach of contract with non-student athletes.

The suit accuses a men’s track athlete at Michigan State of rape in 2019, and a men’s basketball player at the America East school of rape in 2015.

The suit includes allegations of rape against three Michigan State basketball players in 2015. The woman who made those allegations spoke about them last year and filed a lawsuit in 2018.

The lawsuit against the NCAA alleges that after the female track athlete at Michigan State was raped by a member of the men’s team, she reported the rape to an assistant coach, who told her “if she pursued any claims against (the man), no one would like her, and that because (she) is ‘pretty,’ she would become a ‘distraction.”

The suit says members of the men’s track team threatened her if she pursued charges. The suit says the woman was removed from the sprint squad so she would not be around the man she said raped her.

The female track athlete also filed her own suit against Michigan State. The school would not comment on the suit against the NCAA, while spokeswoman Emily Guarrant said it would be inappropriate to comment about the suit against MSU.

“The said, we take allegations of sexual misconduct and retaliation very seriously, and our Office of Institutional Equity reviews all allegations it receives,” she said. “In the last several years, MSU has taken significant steps to increase resources for survivors, to revise and to educate the campus community on our policies, as well as to further its prevention efforts.”

The lawsuit against the NCAA says the swimmer at an America East school was raped by a basketball player last year, and that the swimmer’s mother was told by an athletics employee that a formal Title IX investigation would result in an immediate suspension of the basketball player, pending the outcome of the investigation.

According to the complaint, the employee said an informal Title IX resolution process could not result in the player being suspended “because it wouldn’t be fair to other players’ and it would have a negative impact on the community” who attended games expecting to see (him) play.”

The woman did not want to initiate the formal Title IX investigation because she feared retaliation, the suit says. In January, she learned the school was going to be running an ad featuring the basketball player to promote the athletic department.
NASCAR has completed a fully revised schedule but would not reveal it Thursday as so much relies on the pandemic and guidelines in different states.

Darlington will now have three coveted Cup races for the first time in track history. It is also scheduled to open the playoffs with the Southern 500 on Sept. 6. Because the track now has two additional dates, NASCAR will lose two Cup races from its other properties. The same goes for Speedway Motorsports, which gained one additional race so far and will have to forfeit one at another facility.

“Darlington is uniquely positioned to deliver it to our fans without spectators, with plans to race four times in 10 days at a pair of iconic tracks. NASCAR to race — under caution

Season resumes with seven fan-free events in 10 days

BY JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — NASCAR plans to restart its engines with a flurry of races at two historic tracks.

NASCAR said Thursday it is set to return — without spectators — on May 17 with an elite Cup Series race at Darlington Raceway in South Carolina, the first of seven events in an 11-day stretch across the top three series.

There will be no practice, no qualifying and drivers will jump into their cars for the first time since March 8 and attempt to tackle “The Track Too Tough To Tame.”

“Events are going to look different than they have in the past,” said John Bobo, NASCAR executive vice president of operations.

NASCAR has set guidelines to safely hold the events using CDC guidelines on social distancing and personal protective equipment. The entire venue will be used to maintain distancing in garage stalls and where the haulers are parked, while drivers will have to self-isolate in their motorhomes as they prepare to compete.

“Our priority right now is to try and get back racing in a safe way,” said Steve O’Donnell, chief racing development officer.

NASCAR follows the UFC as the first major sports organization to get back to work since the coronavirus pandemic shut down U.S. sports in mid-March. The Professional Bull Riding Series resumed competition last weekend and there has been some horse racing.

NASCAR’s revised schedule goes only through May and has a pair of Wednesday Cup races, fulfilling fans’ long-awaited plans for midweek events. The first of those races will be at Darlington, three days after the return race at the 70-year-old, egg-shaped oval. Charlotte Motor Speedway will then host the Coca-Cola 600 on May 24 to mark 60 consecutive years the longest race on the NASCAR schedule will be held on Memorial Day weekend. The track in Concord, outside NASCAR’s home base of Charlotte, will then host a Wednesday race three days later.

There also will be lower-tier Xfinity and Truck series races at the two tracks. The North Carolina governor has said the the Charlotte races can be held as long as health conditions in the area do not deteriorate.

“This has been a proactive effort to put our motorsports industry back to work and boost the morale of sports fans around the world,” said Marcus Smith, president and CEO of Speedway Motorsports. He said “sports fans around the world need this, a return to some sense of normalcy with live sports on TV, and NASCAR is uniquely positioned to deliver it from a competition standpoint.”

NASCAR suspended its season March 13 with only four of its 36 scheduled races completed. The stock car series, heavily reliant on television money and sponsor payments, has vowed to complete its full schedule. The revised schedule for now stays at tracks within driving distance of Charlotte-based race teams and in states that have started reopening.

O’Donnell said NASCAR wanted to get seven events completed within driving distance of North Carolina before it resumes competition in states that require air travel and hotels.
As the sports world pauses to join the rest of the world in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, you will see fewer sports stories in Stars and Stripes. We look forward to resuming our normal coverage when the leagues and governing bodies determine it is safe for athletes and fans to return to competition.

**VIRUS OUTBREAK**

**Not this year**

Little League World Series canceled for first time

Associated Press

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — This year’s Little League World Series and the championship tournaments in six other Little League divisions have been canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Little League President Stephen Keener announced the cancellations in a Facebook Live broadcast Thursday afternoon from league headquarters in Williamsport, Penn., saying it would be “impossible” to hold the events amid ongoing restrictions on large gatherings and travel.

The Little League World Series has been held every August since 1947 and had never been canceled before. Next year was to be

SEE YEAR ON PAGE 23

‘It would be irresponsible and impossible to bring teams and thousands of people from all over the world into the community of Williamsport.’

Stephen Keener
Little League President, in a Facebook Live broadcast Thursday

**TO OUR READERS**

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