Volcanic activity beneath Iwo Jima, site of a defining World War II battle between American and Japanese forces, is pushing sunken naval vessels to the surface. Two dozen World War II-era ships in the water just off the island's black-sand beaches were photographed from above and reported Oct. 18 by the All-Nippon News Network. Although the ships have resurfaced previously, according to reports, a video posted online by the network brought fresh attention to the ghost fleet.

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Reports differ as to who owned the ships. The U.S. Navy sank them to create a breakwater to shield an artificial harbor where other vessels unloaded troops and supplies, according to an Oct. 23 report by the Weather Channel. Other reports indicate Imperial Japan sank the vessels for the same purpose prior to the cataclysmic battle in February and March 1945. "The ships were used by Japan to prepare for an invasion of U.S. troops," the newspaper USA Today reported Oct. 22.

Sunken naval vessels are rising to the surface 76 years after the Battle of Iwo Jima.

**By Jonathan Snyder and Hana Kusumoto**
*Stars and Stripes*

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By Corey Dickstein
*Stars and Stripes*

Twenty-six Navy SEALs and nine other special operations sailors asked a federal court to shield them from the Pentagon’s coronavirus vaccine mandate, claiming in a lawsuit Tuesday that it unconstitutionally infringes on their religious rights.

The suit from the unnamed sailors filed in the U.S. District Court’s Northern Texas division charges the Pentagon does not take seriously their religion-based objections to the coronavirus vaccine, which Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin mandated for troops in August. The plaintiffs — the SEALs, five special warfare combatant craft crewmen, three Navy divers, and one explosive ordnance disposal technician — had each formally sought a religious exemption to the coronavirus vaccine mandate from the Navy, which had either been denied or remained open as of Tuesday, according to the First Liberty Institute, a Christian conservative legal group based in Texas that filed the lawsuit for the sailors.

"[The] plaintiffs’ sincerely held religious beliefs forbid each of them from receiving the [coronavirus] vaccine for a variety of reasons based upon their Christian faith as revealed through the Holy Bible and prayerful discernment," the lawsuit reads.

The suit claims the sailors have different reasons for believing the vaccines violate their religious beliefs — among them that they believe taking it would cause them to “participate in the abortion enterprise” or the immune response that the vaccines produce do so in “a manner not designed by God.”

The lawsuit also states, “Multiple plaintiffs hold to the sincere religious belief that, upon seeking guidance from God as to
After Twitter poll, Musk sells $5B in Tesla shares

Associated Press

DETROIT — After making a promise on Twitter, Tesla CEO Elon Musk has sold about 4.5 million shares of the electric car maker’s stock, raising over $5 billion.

The sales, disclosed in 10 regulatory filings late Wednesday, amounted to about 3% of Musk’s stake in the company.

About $1.1 billion will go toward paying tax obligations for stock options granted to Musk in September.

Last weekend, Musk said he would sell 10% of his holdings in the company, worth more than $20 billion, based on the results of a poll he conducted on Twitter. The sale tweets caused a sell-off of the stock Monday and Tuesday, but it recovered some on Wednesday.

The shares were up 2.6% to $1,096 in extended trading Wednesday, and they have risen more than 50% this year.

The filings also disclosed that Musk exercised options to buy just over 21 million shares for $6.24 each. The company’s stock closed Wednesday at $1,067.95 per share.

The sales, disclosed in 10 regulatory filings, were “automatically effected” as part of a trading plan adopted on Sept. 14 to sell options that expire next year, according to forms filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

After the transactions, Musk still owns about 167 million Tesla shares.

Wedbush Analyst Daniel Ives calculated that Musk has about $10 billion in taxes coming due on stock options, based on the results of a poll he conducted on Twitter. The sale was “automatically effected” as part of a trading plan adopted on Sept. 14 to sell options that expire next year, according to forms filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

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Biden orders VA to review burn pits, cancer link

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes
WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Thursday ordered the Department of Veterans Affairs to review research into several rare cancers to determine whether they could be caused by exposure to toxins during military service.

If the VA determines there’s enough evidence to support a connection, the department could create a fast track to health care and disability compensation for veterans suffering from the cancers. Biden gave the agency 90 days to provide its recommendations.

The conditions include rare respiratory cancers, such as squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx and salivary gland tumors, as well as lung cancers and constrictive bronchiolitis.

“We know there can be too long of a delay in scientific evidence that demonstrates conclusive links between exposures and their health impacts,” said a senior administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity. “This can leave many veterans without access to VA benefits and high-quality treatment. The administration is moving forward with several steps to provide more timely answers.”

Throughout the 1990s and the post-9/11 wars, the military used open-air pits to burn materials such as garbage, jet fuel, paint, medical waste and plastics. Veterans diagnosed with cancer, respiratory issues and lung disease at young ages have blamed exposure to the toxic fumes. They have sought VA benefits and health care, but the department contended for years that there wasn’t sufficient evidence to support their claims.

Biden’s administration said the 90-day review is part of its new approach to consider conditions for inclusion on the department’s presumptive list, which lowers the amount of evidence that veterans must provide to receive benefits.

While previous efforts relied heavily on studies from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, the new approach looks more broadly at research and data from other sources, as well as claims being filed by veterans, VA Secretary Denis McDonough has said.

Using this approach, the VA decided in August to add three conditions to the presumptive list: asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis. The department said there was enough evidence to link the conditions to airborne toxins from burn pits during overseas deployments.

The senior administration official said the three conditions acted as a “proof of concept” for the new decision-making model.

“As we go through this process and as our data set grows from veterans submitting claims, that’s going to help our knowledge grow to be able to get these additional conditions,” the official said. “We’re going to start with rare forms of respiratory cancers, move on to constrictive bronchiolitis and move forward from there.”

The administration made several other announcements on Veterans Day regarding veterans suffering from military toxic exposures. A senior administration official said it was “a high priority for President Biden.”

“It’s personal to him,” the official said.

Biden’s son, Beau, was a post-9/11 veteran and a member of the Delaware Army National Guard who served in Iraq in 2008. Beau Biden died of brain cancer in 2015, and his father suspects exposure to airborne toxins from burn pits in Iraq could have been to blame.

In addition to the review of rare cancers, Biden announced the VA would stand up a new call center in 2022, which veterans can call with questions about environmental exposures. The department also plans to create a team of 40 medical providers next year who specialize in environmental health issues. The providers will work with veterans and be a resource for other doctors, the administration said.

Biden also urged Congress to pass legislation that would extend the “enhanced eligibility period” for VA health care. The enhanced eligibility period allows combat veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan to receive free VA health care for up to five years after they’re discharged without having to prove a service-connected disability. Biden wants to extend the period to 10 years.

“We know it can take time for conditions to manifest,” the senior administration official said. “Some veterans do not have concerns about their health until several years after deployment.”

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Thousands come to lay flowers on Tomb of Unknown Soldier

By Nikki Wentling
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY — Thousands of people with flowers in hand approached the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Wednesday, walking closer to the tomb than members of the public have been able to at any point in recent history.

“It’s wonderful to see everybody out here,” said Pam Morris, 71. “I think there are not enough remembrances given on a regular basis to people who offered up their lives for service of the country.”

Morris traveled from Yardley, Pa., to lay a flower at the tomb. Her parents and grandparents were all interred at Arlington National Cemetery. Her grandfather, a World War I veteran, and her father, a World War II veteran, were both buried with full military honors.

Many visitors placed their flowers at the base of the tomb. While most continued across the plaza, some people hesitated long enough to salute or give the sign of the cross. Within an hour, the flowers were stacked so deep that a half-dozen soldiers had to gather them by the armful and move them closer to the tomb to make room for more.

The crowds at Arlington on Tuesday and Wednesday were there to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the tomb. On Nov. 11, 1921, the unidentified remains of a World War I soldier were entombed at Arlington, creating the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The tomb now includes the remains of soldiers from World War II and the Korean War, and it’s become a symbol of American service and sacrifice.

The flower-laying ceremony — and the chance to approach the tomb — was “a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity” for the people who participated, said Karen Durham-Aguilera, executive director of Army National Military Cemeteries.

The crowd on Wednesday included veterans, active-duty service members, large groups of school children, Boy Scouts, toddlers, seniors, tourists and people taking a break from their workday to participate.

As a special gesture, Morris said she wore her father’s “miraculous medal,” a necklace worn with the belief that it will provide protection. Her father, a bomber pilot, wore it throughout his military service.

“He carried it on all of his missions — 69 of them, including D-Day,” she said.

More than 13,000 people registered to attend both days of the flower-laying ceremony, but the true number of visitors is expected to be much higher, said Amber Vincent, a public affairs specialist with Arlington. The cemetery didn’t turn away anyone who wanted to participate.

Though many people waited in line Wednesday and dozens more watched from around the tomb, the atmosphere was quiet and reflective.

“It’s always so solemn,” said Deborah Coyer, 60, a retired Air Force chief master sergeant who watched visitors lay flowers.

Brian Silbernagel, 54, who was visiting from Oregon, said he watches the broadcast of the Veterans Day events at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier every year. “I’ve always wanted to come and see it,” he said. “It was great. I just have a great respect for the military.”

Arlington National Cemetery will continue the centennial commemoration on Thursday with a procession that is intended to evoke elements of the unidentified soldier’s funeral procession in 1921. There will be a flyover at 9 a.m., the same time the procession begins.

Following the events on Veterans Day, the flowers placed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier will be distributed among headstones throughout the cemetery.

USAf B-1s fly over Horn of Africa to commemorate Veterans Day

By Chad Garland
Stars and Stripes

A pair of Air Force B-1 Lancers, flanked by six fighter jets, made a low pass over the only permanent low pass over the only permanent flanked by six fighter jets, made a USAF B-1s fly over Horn of Africa (Grand Bara Range before overfly- ing Camp Lemonnier in the coun-

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KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Members of the Kaiserslautern military community faced near freezing temperatures to hold a Veterans Day march on Thursday, which helped raise money for former service members.

The event was organized by the Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps at Kaiserslautern High School and held at the school’s track at Vogelweh.

About 120 JROTC cadets, their family members and others from the community walked 22 laps around the track, which was blanketed in fog, to spotlight the 22 veterans who die by suicide every day.

“Our event is a little somber,” said William J. Conley, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel and teacher at Kaiserslautern High School who helped the cadets organize the walk. But it was seen as an appropriate way to honor the memory of those who died by suicide and raise funds for veterans, Conley said.

Each cadet was asked to find a sponsor who would donate a minimum of $22, some of which will go to a yet-to-be-decided charity and some to support other cadet activities.

At the start of the event, over $10,000 had been collected, with more expected to be raised throughout the day from shirt sales and other fundraising activities.

“With each step you take, think about that one life lost is too many,” Wagers said. “And what you can do to create that sense of connection and meaning for others.”

Isaac Wu, right, walks with his flight of Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets during a Veterans Day march at Kaiserslautern High School on Thursday.

PHILIP WELLMAN/Stars and Stripes
Report: Military doesn’t give all victims proper resources

By ROSE L. THAYER

The military is failing to provide all victims of specially defined crimes, including sexual assaults, appropriate criminal investigators and prosecutors as outlined by federal law, according to a report from the Defense Department’s inspector general.

The findings call into question whether those victims received thorough investigations and support services, according to a report.

“We found that the [Defense Department] cannot ensure that all victims of sexual assault are receiving support services available to them. We also found that the DoD cannot ensure that all commanders and investigators are making decisions based on the best possible information because of, among other things, inexperienced or untrained prosecutors,” Sean O’Donnell, the acting Defense Department Inspector General, said in a statement provided with the report Wednesday.

Federal law requires the Defense Department and the criminal investigative agencies for each military service branch to provide victims with specially trained personnel in cases involving child abuse, serious domestic violence, or sexual offenses. The inspector general determined the investigative agencies did not consistently assign certified lead investigators to those cases.

The IG reviewed 447 cases that occurred between June 2018 and May 2020 from across the services in which the nature of the case called for specialized personnel.

The Air Force had the worst record for assigning appropriate lead investigators and prosecutors. It failed to ensure it assigned special-victim prosecutors in 94% of its cases, according to the report. The Army failed half of the time, the Navy failed 59% of the time and the Marine Corps did not do so in 11% of cases.

“Further, the prosecutors assigned to handle the cases we reviewed were generally junior in grade, less experienced, and lacking specialized training specific to special victims cases. This occurred because the number of available specially trained special-victim prosecutors has not kept pace with the increased number of special-victim investigations,” according to the report.

When it comes to sexual assault, the military has seen the cases more than double from fiscal year 2011 to 2019. However, the report found there haven’t been a corresponding increase in the necessary resources and personnel.

The criminal investigative agencies, which include the Army Criminal Investigation Division, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, had slightly better records of providing lead investigators who were certified for special victims’ cases. The Army did so 91% of the time and the Navy, which also conduct criminal investigations for the Marines, did so 84% of the time. However, the Air Force lagged with just 34% of cases getting a certified lead investigator.

The Air Force agency’s director of law enforcement cited a lack of resources among increased cases as the problem, according to the report.

Vic tims are also required to get support from a certified victim advocate, which the report found was done in all cases reviewed for the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

The IG report offered three recommendations to help the military meet its federal mandates, and some agencies have already begun to make progress toward meeting them.

1. It called on each investigative branch to review the resource requirements to train, certify and assign additional criminal investigators when necessary and the service secretaries use their authorities to provide the additional resources.

2. Army CID agreed with the recommendation, but it did not address the resource review, while the leaders of NCIS and Air Force OSI agreed and recently completed resource reviews, according to the report. NCIS is scheduled to receive additional personnel and funding in fiscal year 2022 and the Air Force has requested additional personnel.

A second recommendation called for the investigative agencies to develop procedures to standardize how their investigators document and communicate with special-victim personnel, to determine whether to reestablish the Department of Defense requirement that special-victim prosecutors participate in certain notifications, collaborations and consultations. The recommendation is under review, according to the report.

In a Wednesday news conference that preceded the report’s release, chief Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had yet to see the full report.

“Obviously, the secretary takes very seriously the scourge of sexual assault and sexual harassment on the force,” he said. “The secretary has made clear we have to stop kicking the can down the road on this. It’s time for innovative solutions."

The IG will continue its review of how special victims are treated in the military, particularly when it comes to sexual assault. On Monday, it announced it will begin an evaluation of how the military investigative agencies conduct sexual-assault investigations involving adult victims. It will review cases opened and closed between Jan. 1, 2019, and Dec. 31, 2020, according to a memo written by Randolph R. Stone, assistant inspector general for evaluations of space, intelligence, engineering and oversight.

The evaluation aims to understand the extent to which these crimes are investigated.

Iwo Jima: US, Japan keeping eye on changes that may affect training

Iwo Jima is used by U.S. Navy pilots based at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni to qualify for carrier landings prior to shipping out aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, homeported at Yokosuka Naval Base.

“Carrier Air Wing 5 continually monitors events that could impact training and readiness and works closely with the Government of Japan to always remain ready to operate as part of the U.S. Navy’s only forward-deployed Carrier Strike Group,” Lt. Cmdr. Joe Keiley, Task Force 70 spokesman, told Stars and Stripes by email Oct. 25.

Japan’s Defense Ministry said the volcanic activity, the rising island and hulks on the beach do not affect its operations at Iwo Jima, a ministry spokesman said on Nov. 1.

Japan’s Self-Defense Forces hold disaster relief and flight training on the island, the spokesman said.

“We have been observing closely for any effects it may have on the Self-Defense Force facility and will continue to monitor the situation,” she said.

The Navy and Japanese government have been looking for an airfield other than the one at Iwo Jima, where bad weather and logistics challenges sometimes mean the Navy’s landing practice must be relocated.

The Japanese government is developing a Self-Defense Force facility on Kagoshima prefecture’s Magoshima island in western Japan to relocate the Navy’s landing practice. The ministry has acquired most of the land but when it will be available for use is unclear, according to the spokesman.

Iwo Jima is a battle between American and Japanese forces, is pushing sundown naval vessels to the surface.

Volcanic activity beneath Iwo Jima, site of a defining World War II battle between American and Japanese forces, is pushing sundown naval vessels to the surface.

Iwo Jima lies in the western Pacific, about 760 miles south of Tokyo.

The meteorological agency tracks volcanic activity around the island, including reports of water columns along its coast, the official said.

How the island rises is unclear but it may be due to magma accumulating beneath the island and forcing it to rise, the official said.
Vaccine: No branch has yet granted religious exemption

FROM PAGE 1

whether to receive a [coronavirus] vaccine, God instructed them not to do so.”

To date, none of the military services have disclosed granting a waiver to the vaccine mandate for religious reasons. The Navy said Wednesday that it had granted six medical exemptions, though it had not issued a religious exemption.

The service has given active-duty service members until Nov. 28 to be fully vaccinated, which is considered to be two weeks after completing their shot regimen. Navy reservists have until Dec. 28.

“The fact that the government has not granted a single religious exemption from the vaccine mandate shows that [President Joe Biden’s] administration does not care about religious freedom,” said Mike Berry, First Liberty’s lead attorney for the lawsuit. “Instead, this appears to be an attempted ideological purge. Forcing a service member to choose between their faith and serving the country is abhorrent to the Constitution and America’s values.”

The Navy did not disclose how many requests it has received from sailors seeking exemption for religious reasons, but officials said such requests would be considered on a “case-by-case basis” and “given full consideration.” A Navy spokesman declined further comment Wednesday, citing the open lawsuit.

Navy data showed 96% of its active-duty force had been fully vaccinated as of Wednesday. The service said 99.5% of its active-duty force had been fully vaccinated, and 84% was fully vaccinated, according to the data.

The lawsuit asks a judge to declare the troops’ rights under the Constitution and America’s values.

None of the three coronavirus vaccines approved for use in the United States contain fetal cells, but fetal cell lines — laboratory-grown cells derived from abortions performed several decades ago — were used during the testing and development of the vaccines, according to the National Institutes of Health. Several religious authorities, including the Vatican, have said the vaccines were morally acceptable for their constituents.

In the lawsuit, the attorneys wrote that their clients object to the vaccine mandate but not other safety measures intended to limit the spread of the coronavirus, such as mask-wearing, social distancing, teleworking or regular coronavirus tests.

The lawsuit said the names of their clients would not be made public.

The plaintiffs do not believe their rights under the Constitution have been violated. It asks the judge to issue a preliminary and permanent injunction stopping the Pentagon from enforcing its vaccine mandate on them. It names Biden, Austin and Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro as defendants.

The lawsuit said the names of the plaintiffs cannot be made public for “significant risk of compromising their missions, operational security, and personal safety.”

Speaking last week alongside Republican lawmakers on Capitol Hill, Berry said he believed the Pentagon would ultimately not grant any religious exemptions from getting the coronavirus vaccine. He would not say whether his clients objected to any of the other vaccines mandated for service members by the Defense Department.

In the lawsuit, however, he and other First Liberty attorneys wrote that some of their clients opposed the coronavirus vaccine because of the use of “aborted fetal cell lines” in the development of the vaccines, and they now objected to the use of any vaccines or medications that use such cell lines in their production.
Biden says infrastructure bill will fix economy

Associated Press

President Joe Biden touted his $1 trillion infrastructure plan Wednesday as an eventual fix for the nation’s inflation and supply chain woes — if Americans just have the patience to wait for the construction to begin.

The president toured the Port of Baltimore on Wednesday that he intends to sign on Monday. He declared that the spending would improve transportation of products and supplies from overseas and within the U.S. to help lower prices, reduce shortages and add union jobs.

That message is becoming more critical as the government reported Wednesday that consumer prices in October climbed 6.2% from a year ago. Inflation has intensified instead of fading as the economy reopens after the coronavirus pandemic, creating a major challenge for Biden whose administration repeatedly said that the price increases were temporary. During remarks at the port, the president acknowledged that consumer prices remained “too high.”

“Everything from a gallon of gas to a loaf of bread costs more,” he said. “We still face challenges and we have to tackle them … we have some store shelves depleted ahead of the holiday shopping season. Many people remain unsettled about the economy and we all know why,” Biden said.

He offered his infrastructure plan as the solution, albeit one that will take time to manifest. Better infrastructure — whether roads, bridges, ports or whatever — would give more capacity and resilience for the supply chain. There would be more capacity to unload ships and move goods, which in turn would reduce price pressures and shortages.

Biden said the infrastructure spending would create jobs paying $45 an hour, nearly 50% above the current national average. It would create a wealth of jobs to fix aging pipes, bridges and roads, and boost clean energy and cybersecurity. And most wouldn’t require college degrees.

“This is a once in a generation investment,” he said.

The president pointed to Baltimore’s port as a blueprint on how to reduce shipping bottlenecks that have held back the economic recovery. The facility is adding container cranes as well as a 50-foot berth where ships can be unloaded. Baltimore’s port is also benefiting from grants to upgrade the Howard Street Tunnel, a brick-lined underpass for trains that opened in 1895. The tunnel would be expanded so that shipping containers could be double-stacked on railcars, making it easier to move goods out of the port.

The president, who consulted with the CEOs of Walmart, Target, FedEx and UPS on Tuesday, emphasized that these investments are part of a national effort to relieve supply chain bottlenecks in ways that can aid broader growth.

His administration also announced new investments to reduce congestion at the Port of Savannah in Georgia, nearly a month after the administration helped broker a deal for the Port of Los Angeles to operate nonstop.

Gerrymandering surges as states redraw maps for House seats

Associated Press

North Carolina Republicans are well positioned to pick up at least two House seats in next year’s election — but it’s not because the state is getting redder.

The state remains a perennial battleground, closely split between Democrats and Republicans in elections. In the last presidential race, Republican Donald Trump won by just over 1 percentage point — the narrowest margin since Barack Obama barely won the state in 2008.

But, last week, the GOP-controlled legislature finalized maps that redraw congressional district boundaries, dividing up Democratic voters in cities to dilute their votes. The new plan took the number of GOP-leaning districts from eight to 10 in the state. Republicans even have a shot at winning an eleventh.

North Carolina’s plan drew instant criticism for its aggressive approach, but it’s hardly alone. Experts and lawmakers tracking the once-a-decade redistricting process see a cycle of supercharged gerrymandering. With fewer legal restraints andamped up political stakes, both Democrats and Republicans are pushing the bounds of the tacit long used to draw districts for maximum partisan advantage, often at the expense of community unity or racial representation.

“In the absence of reforms, the gerrymandering in general has gotten even worse than 2010, than the last round of redistricting,” said Chris Warshaw, a political scientist at George Washington University who has analyzed decades of redistricting maps in U.S. states.

Republicans dominated redistricting last decade, helping them build a greater political advantage in more states than either party had in the past 50 years. Just three months into the mapping process, it’s too early to know which party will come out on top. Republicans need a net gain of just five seats to take control of the U.S. House and effectively freeze President Joe Biden’s agenda on climate change, the economy and other issues.

But Republicans’ potential net gain of three seats in North Carolina could be fully canceled out in Illinois. Democrats who control the legislature have adopted a map with lines that squiggle snake-like across the state to sweep up Democratic voters and relegate Republicans to a few districts.

In the 14 states that have passed new congressional maps so far, the cumulative effect is essential- ly a wash for Republicans and Democrats, leaving just a few toss-up districts. That could change in the coming weeks, as Republican-controlled legislatures consider proposed maps in Georgia, New Hampshire and Ohio that target Democratic-held seats.

Ohio Republicans have taken an especially ambitious approach, proposing one map that could leave Democrats with just two seats out of 15 in a state that Trump won by 8 percentage points.

Gerrymandering is a practice almost as old as the country, in which politicians draw district lines to “crack” opposing voters among several districts or “pack” them in a single one to limit competition elsewhere. At its extreme, gerrymandering can deprive communities of representatives reflecting their interests and lead to elections that reward candidates who appeal to the far left or right — making compromise difficult in Congress.

While both parties have gerrymandered, these days Republicans have more opportunities. The GOP controls the line-drawing process in states representing 187 House seats compared with 75 for Democrats. The rest of the states use either independent commissions, have split government control or only one congressional seat.

Former Attorney General Eric Holder, who leads the Democrats’ effort, has called for more states to use redistricting commissions, and a Democratic election bill stalled in the Senate would mandate them nationwide.
SpaceX crew launch marks 600 space travelers in 60 years

By Marcia Dunn

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A SpaceX rocket carried four astronauts into orbit Wednesday night, including the 600th person to reach space in 60 years.

The repeatedly delayed flight occurred just two days after SpaceX brought four other astronauts home from the International Space Station. They should have been up there to welcome the newcomers, but NASA and SpaceX decided to switch the order based on Monday’s ideal recovery weather in the Gulf of Mexico and pulled it off.

“It was a great ride, better than we imagined,” mission commander Raja Chari said shortly after the spacecraft reached orbit.

The launch was just as riveting for spectators at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center, as well as along the East Coast, as the Falcon rocket thundered through clouds on its way to space, turning night into day.

Germany’s Matthias Maurer claimed the No. 600 position, according to NASA, based on his mission assignment. He and his three NASA crewmates should arrive at the space station in under 24 hours, well over a week late.

Bad weather contributed to their flight delays. Chari said trying to launch on Halloween left them with “a trick instead of a treat.” It was also drizzling Wednesday night when the four astronauts said goodbye to their families for six months — with everyone huddling under umbrellas — but it cleared up by launch time.

“Enjoy your holidays among the stars. We’ll be waving as you fly by,” SpaceX launch director Mark Soltyseck radioed to the crew.

The list of 600 travelers ranges from those who have barely scratched space — like actor Willaim Shatner last month — to U.S. and Russian astronauts who have spent a year or more in orbit. This year’s surge in space tourists helped push the tally over the 600 mark.

That averages out to 10 people per year since Yuri Gagarin’s pioneering flight in 1961, Maurer noted.

Because the GI benefits we received 70 years ago.

The legislation would extend the VA Loan Guaranty Program and GI Bill educational assistance to Black WWII veterans and their descendants who are alive at the time of the bill’s enactment. It would also create a panel of independent experts to study inequities in how benefits are administered to women and people of color.

Black WWII veterans who were lucky enough to have gained full access to GI Bill benefits succeeded at building good lives for themselves and their families, said Matthew Delmont, a history professor at Dartmouth College.

“Because the GI benefits weren’t distributed more evenly among Black veterans, we lost an entire generation of Black wealth builders,” Delmont said. “After the war, we could have had even more doctors, lawyers, teachers and architects.”

Capitol rioter who hit officer gets over 3 years in prison

Associated Press

A New Jersey gym owner who punched a police officer during the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol was sentenced Wednesday to more than three years in prison, a likely benchmark for dozens of other rioters who engaged in violence that day.

Scott Fairlamb, 44, was the first person to be sentenced for assaulting a law enforcement officer during the Capitol riot. His 41-month prison term is the longest among 32 riot-related sentences handed down so far.

Fairlamb’s punishment likely will guide other judges who sentence rioters who clashed with police at the Capitol. U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth said it was significant that his sentencing of Fairlamb was the first for assaulting an officer, with more guilty pleas likely in the coming months.

Lamberth said Fairlamb’s actions struck at “the heart of our democracy.” He had pleaded guilty, avoiding a trial.

“Had you gone to trial, I don’t think there’s any jury that could have acquitted you or would have acquitted you,” the judge said.

Fairlamb, a boxing coach and former mixed martial arts fighter, apologized and expressed remorse for actions that he described as irresponsible and reckless.

“I take full responsibility for what I did that day,” Fairlamb said. “That’s not who I am. That’s not who I was raised to be.”

Justice Department prosecutors recommended a prison sentence of three years and eight months for Fairlamb, saying he was among the first rioters to breach the Capitol and incited others to be violent.

A New Jersey gym owner who punched a police officer during the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol was sentenced Wednesday to more than three years in prison, including the 600th person to reach space in 60 years.

The repeatedly delayed flight occurred just two days after SpaceX brought four other astronauts home from the International Space Station. They should have been up there to welcome the newcomers, but NASA and SpaceX decided to switch the order based on Monday’s ideal recovery weather in the Gulf of Mexico and pulled it off.

“It was a great ride, better than we imagined,” mission commander Raja Chari said shortly after the spacecraft reached orbit.

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By Molly Hennessy-Fiske
Los Angeles Times

HOUSTON — Conservative fur-
ror over what is taught in public
school libraries has been made
available to students in Texas
public schools is a clear violation
of the First Amendment, his third
direction to schools to host vaccine
clinics around the state.

The estimated increase in vacci-
nations in elementary school age
children appears similar to a jump
seen in May, when adolescents aged
12 to 15 became eligible for shots.

Among the books cited as pos-
sible pornographic are “Laven
Boy,” which refers to oral sex be-
tween boys, and the other, "Los-
ing the Girl," which features
LGBTQ characters.

Texas state lawmakers last
summer banned public schools
from teaching "critical race theo-
ry," a decades-old academic the-
ory that is not taught in any public
school. In addition to a call to re-
move books from library shelves,
Texas conservatives have also
moved to ban books that deal with
race and gender. Since then,
school board meetings have
grown heated across the country,
including the politically mixed
suburbs of Texas’ largest cities,
as conservative parents attempt
to challenge and remove books
they claim are critical race theo-
ry or obscene.

Opponents of the book chal-
lenges say their real intent is to
excise stories by and about mi-
norities and those who are
LGBTQ. Richard Price, political
science professor at Weber State
University in Ogden, Utah, and
author of the Adventures In Cen-
sorship blog, said the attacks
amount to a “war on books.”

As some schools have caved to such challenges, Price said, the ap-
peal has only grown for more.

“Appeasement of censors only
encourages more censorship,”
Price wrote in the blog Wednes-
day.

Abbott orders criminal probe into ‘pornography’ in school books

Judge approves $626M settlement in lawsuit over tainted Flint water
Stars and Stripes is helping to send your wish list to Santa!

**Step 1**
Write your letter.
Don’t forget to decorate it!

**Step 2**
Address it to Santa Claus c/o Stars and Stripes North Pole.

**Step 3**
Drop it in any US or APO mailbox.*

For more info, visit letterstosanta.stripes.com

*Postmark by Dec. 20, 2021 and Santa may have time to send a note in return!
China’s leader warns against ‘Cold War’ in Asia-Pacific

Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — Chinese President Xi Jinping warned against “Cold War” in the Asia-Pacific region, saying that the U.S. and China should avoid adopting ways of thinking that could lead to a relapse into the Cold War.

Xi said China will remain firm in advancing reform and opening up so as to add impetus to economic development, and should not relapse into the Cold War and confrontation. “The Asia-Pacific region cannot and should not relapse into the confrontation and division of the Cold War era,” Xi said.

In his speech, Xi said attempts to draw boundaries in the region along ideological or geopolitical lines would fail. His reference to the Cold War echoes Beijing’s oft-stated position that the U.S. should abandon that way of thinking in dealing with China.

“The Asia-Pacific region cannot and should not relapse into the confrontation and division of the Cold War era,” Xi said.

Xi also said the region should make sure to keep supply lines functioning and to continue liberalizing trade and investment.

“China will remain firm in advancing reform and opening up so as to add impetus to economic development,” he said.

The most pressing task in the region is to make an all-out effort to fight the pandemic and to emerge from its shadow as soon as possible, he said.

Meanwhile, the Southeast Asian delegate, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren’t authorized to publicly discuss the issue, said Russia had refused to support the U.S. bid unilaterally.

Humans rights lawyer Amal Clooney also spoke at the CEO summit, saying she believed that liberal democracies could improve global human rights by pressuring autocratic nations. She said businesses also needed to play a role.

“If you can’t battle evil, you can at least try to tackle apathy,” Clooney said. “And if you can’t rely on liberal governments to solve global issues, you have to try and inspire the private sector to step in.”

In all, APEC members account for nearly 3 billion people and about 60% of the world’s GDP. But deep tensions run through the unlikely group of 21 nations and territories that include the U.S., China, Taiwan, Russia, and Australia.

China claims vast parts of the South China Sea and other areas and has moved to establish a military presence, building islands in some disputed areas as it asserts its historic claims.

Both Taiwan and China have applied to join a Pacific Rim trade pact, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, with Beijing saying it will block Taiwan’s bid on the basis that the democratically governed island refuses to accept that it’s part of communist-ruled China.

Officials say they have made significant progress during some 340 preliminary meetings leading up to this week’s leaders’ meeting. APEC members have agreed to reduce or eliminate many tariffs and border holdings on vaccines, masks and other medical products important to fighting the pandemic.

Polish nationalists march amid crisis with Belarus

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Thousands marched in Warsaw on Thursday against letting tensions in the Asia-Pacific region cause a relapse into a Cold War mentality.

His remarks on the sidelines of the annual summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum came weeks after the U.S., Britain and Australia announced a new security alliance in the region that would see Australia build nuclear submarines. China has harshly criticized the deal.

Xi spoke in a pre-recorded video to a CEO Summit at APEC, which is being hosted by New Zealand in a virtual format. Xi is scheduled to participate in an online meeting of the Asia-Pacific Rim leaders including U.S. President Joe Biden on Saturday.

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The most pressing task in the region is to make an all-out effort to fight the pandemic and to emerge from its shadow as soon as possible, he said.

Meanwhile, the Southeast Asian delegate, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren’t authorized to publicly discuss the issue, said Russia had refused to support the U.S. bid unilaterally. Some of its diplomats were removed from a U.S. blacklist or allowed to enter the U.S. to participate in the APEC meetings.

The delegate said the U.S. is unlikely to agree to Russia’s demands because issues involving America’s security are considered “non-negotiable.” The delegate added that China had stayed silent on the U.S. offer.

If the 21 APEC leaders fail to reach a consensus on the U.S. bid by Friday, the delegate said, a paragraph in a draft of the summit communiqué warning the U.S. offer would have to be deleted.

New Zealand’s Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta said earlier this week that APEC was founded on consensus and that there was not yet a confirmed host for 2023.

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**AMI**

**PARCHMENT** — A Michigan high school runner who finished second in a state championship race was disqualified for expressing four-letter words of joy as he crossed the finish line.

Garrett Winter, a senior at Parchment High School, ran the 3.1-mile course in 15 minutes, 27 seconds, a personal best. But officials said his profanities at the end of the Division 2 race violated a national rule that governs conduct in high school running.

Cody Inglis, assistant director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association, said Winter’s words could be heard 50 yards away. Winter said he regretted putting race officials “in the position to make this call.”

**HI**

KAHULUI — A police department is using Hawaii’s creole language and some humor to get motorists to slow down, with signs like, “Eh slow down. No drive like one clown.”

The Maui Police Department’s anti-speeding campaign using Hawaii Pidgin hopes to ease a serious problem. So far this year, Maui police have pulled over nearly 5,000 people for speeding — a 40% increase from the year before, Hawaii News Now reported. Pidgin is a mix of the grammar and words from languages spoken by Hawaiian, Filipino, Chinese, Puerto Rican and other workers who toiled in Hawaii’s sugar plantations.

**IN**

LAPORTE COUNTY — A 47-year-old Illinois man wearing body armor was arrested after leading state police on a high-speed chase in northwestern Indiana.

The chase started when a trooper attempted to stop an SUV that was traveling east on Interstate 94 near 93 mph, police said. State police were able to puncture the SUV’s tires and forced it to stop in Laporte County.

The driver from Harvey, Ill., faces charges including resisting law enforcement with a vehicle, wearing body armor while committing a felony and reckless driving.

**MI**

Cubs of food-raising grizzly trapped, collared

JACKSON — Wildlife managers in northwestern Wyoming have put tracking collars on two of four cubs belonging to a well-known grizzly bear that has been raiding human sources of food.

Wildlife watchers have been familiar with Grizzly No. 399 for years, following her movements and offspring closely. Lately the grizzly and her current litter of cubs have run into trouble getting into garbage, apiaries and animal feed in the Jackson area.

The grizzly is a “preventive step” meant to help the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service address future problems involving grizzly No. 399 and her cubs, the agency’s acting regional director, Matt Hagan, said in a statement.

Grizzlies in the Yellowstone region of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho are protected as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

**AZ**

MESA — A high school in Mesa was put on lockdown after a former employee threatened to shoot a janitor in the parking lot. They said the ex-employee also is a school cafetera manager.

Mesa police said the Eastmark High school resource officer learned that a former cafeteria worker verbally threatened to shoot the janitor in the parking lot.

The disgruntled former employee had recently been let go by the high school, authorities said.

Police said the cafeteria manager wanted to press charges while the janitor declined.

**IL**

CHICAGO — Federal agents last week seized 220 pounds of cocaine in Chicago.

**THE CENSUS**

**33K**

The approximate dollar amount a Florida woman left in her will to help her local sheriff’s office obtain, train and protect K-9 units. The Volusia County Sheriff’s office on their Facebook page thanked Daytona Beach resident Pamela Mobbs, who was 90 years old when she died last month. The will specified the money be equally divided to buy bulletproof vests for the dogs and to purchase and train more dogs. Pamela fell in love with law enforcement K-9s after her daughter, Jane Mobbs, took her to a K-9 demonstration in Daytona Beach.

**3**

A 37-year-old woman was getting out of her car near her home when two males approached on Monday night. The woman told police the 13-year-old pulled a gun and demanded her car keys and her money.

As the second suspect was trying to start the car, the woman told police the 13-year-old was still pointing the gun at her but became distracted, so she pulled out her own gun and shot him.

Police later found the boy with a gunshot wound to the leg. The second suspect remains on the loose.

**MO**

ST. LOUIS — A 13-year-old boy carjacking suspect is hospitalized in stable condition after being shot by the alleged victim of the crime.

A 37-year-old woman was getting out of her car near her home when two males approached on Monday night. The woman told police the 13-year-old pulled a gun and demanded her car keys and exploitation,” said Elise Bennett, an attorney for the Center for Biologial Diversity, whose organization sued for protection for the species.

Alligator snapping turtles can live 80 years, with males known to weigh up to 249 pounds with shells up to 29 inches long. Their jaws are strong enough to snap bone.

An estimated 360,000 exist in 12 states, but without protection their numbers are likely to plummet to 5% of that or less in 30 to 50 years, the Fish and Wildlife Service said in an online preview of a Federal Register notice.

**LA**

NEW ORLEANS — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said Monday that it is proposing threatened status for alligator snapping turtles — huge, spike-shelled reptiles that lurk at the bottom of lakes and slow waterways, luring prey to their mouths by sticking out a wormlike lure.

Every state in their range now protects them, but without protection their numbers are likely to plummet to 5% of that or less in 30 to 50 years, the Fish and Wildlife Service said in an online preview of a Federal Register notice.

**From The Associated Press**

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**Threatened status sought for snapping turtle**

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**From The Associated Press**
Chris Stapleton was the big winner with six trophies including song and album of the year and Luke Combs claimed the biggest prize with entertainer of the year at the Country Music Association Awards on Wednesday night.

Stapleton won song and single of the year for “Starting Over” and album of the year for his record of the same name. He walked away with two more trophies as a producer on the single and album.

He then won male vocalist of the year for the fifth time and it appeared he would sweep the night before Combs swooped in and kept it from becoming a coronation.

“I don’t deserve to win it,” an emotional Combs said as he accepted the entertainer of the year trophy from Alan Jackson, “but I’m sure as hell glad that I did.”

At times it seemed Stapleton, who also performed twice, was on the stage all night.

“Man, amazing,” the soft-spoken singer with the long beard, never one for speeches, said after he won his last award. “I’m running out of words.”

He came into the night the top nominee along with Eric Church, who was shut out.

With Stapleton and Church, Combs beat out Carrie Underwood and Miranda Lambert, who opened the ABC telecast with a medley of her hits, including “Kerosene,” “Mama’s Broken Heart” and “Gunpowder & Lead.”

It was a night of big emotions for many winners.

The Osborne Brothers won vocal duo of the year for the fourth time. Lead singer T.J. Osborne, who came out as gay this year, appeared to be holding back tears as he accepted.

“It’s been a roller coaster of a year, especially for me emotionally, and for you all to support me, it’s been incredible,” he said from the stage.

Jimmie Allen was openly tearful as he became the second Black performer to win new artist of the year. “I want to thank my father who’s no longer with us for introducing me to country music,” Allen said.

He recalled spending the last of his money to be able to see pioneering Black country artist Charley Pride at the CMAs in 2016, then getting to perform with Pride on last year’s show. Pride died of COVID-19 a month later.

Darius Rucker in 2009 was the first Black artist to win the award.

Old Dominion won vocal group of the year for the fourth straight time. Carly Pearce wept as she won female vocalist of the year for the first time.

Pearce, competing in an all-female category, was the only woman to take the stage and claim an award during the ceremony, now in its 55th year.

Gabby Barrett was the night’s most nominated woman with four nods, but the “American Idol” alum was shut out.

The ceremony represented a return to normal for the show. It was back in front of an audience at its usual home, the Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, after last year’s ceremony was held at a crowd-free Music City Center because of the coronavirus pandemic.

“We’re following all the health protocols to keep everyone safe,” host Luke Bryan said during his opening monologue. “And we’re all vaccinated,” he said, “or not,” asking the awkwardly laughing audience, “anyone?”

Moments later he was joined on stage by his “American Idol” co-hosts Lionel Richie and Katy Perry, who sneaked up on him from behind.

“I have hosted other awards shows,” Bryan told his “Idol” co-hosts, pretending to be surprised. “I can handle this myself!”

Perry answered, “Yeah, we’ve seen them; that’s why we’re here.”

They then helped him present the first award to Stapleton.

The CMAs are always heavy on performances and this year was no exception, with more songs than awards.

Church was surrounded by flames on the stage as he belted out “Heart on Fire.”

Pearce and Ashley McBryde then took the stage for a duet of “Never Wanted to Be That Girl.”

Underwood and Jason Aldean dueted on their current hit “If I Didn’t Love You” and real-life friends Kane Brown and Chris Young sang their hit duet “Famous Friends,” which was nominated in three categories but failed to take an award.

In winning album of the year, the Stapleton beat nominees including Morgan Wallen, who was caught earlier this year yelling a racial slur. The CMA Board of Directors disqualified Wallen from individual awards, but he could still win for his work.

Wallen, who was not in attendance, got the biggest cheer by far of all the album nominees from the arena crowd.

Had he won, it would have come during a show that featured diversity and inclusiveness in country music.

In addition to the speeches by Allen and Osborne, who also brought up his sexuality during the duo’s performance, Stapleton joined Jennifer Hudson to pay tribute to Aretha Franklin and the country songs she recorded with a rousing, gospel-style rendition of Willie Nelson’s “Night Life.”

And Mickey Guyton was joined by Brittney Spencer and Madeline Edwards for her anthem of Black self-acceptance, “Love My Hair.”

Brian Williams says he’s leaving NBC News at end of year

From wire reports

Brian Williams, who remade his career as an MSNBC host after losing his job as NBC’s “Nightly News” anchor for making false claims about a wartime story, is leaving the network after 28 years.

Williams said in a note to colleagues that “following much reflection,” he had decided to exit when his contract ends in December.

Williams, 62, said he will take a few months off to spend time with his family.

Williams was NBC News’ top anchor from 2004 until 2015, when he was suspended for falsely claiming that he had been in a helicopter hit by enemy fire during the Iraq War. A subsequent investigation found that he had made other inaccurate statements about his experiences covering events, and he lost the job.

He was later given the 11 p.m. hour at MSNBC, which he turned into a fast-moving, entertaining newscast summing up the day’s news.

**Rosa Parks documentary coming to Peacock**

Rosa Parks’ life is coming to the small screen.

Peacock announced Wednesday that production has begun on “The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks,” a full-length documentary about the life of the civil rights icon. The doc is slated to premiere on the streaming platform in 2022.

“Rebellious Life” is being directed by Yoruba Richen (HBO’s “Black and Missing”) and Johanna Hamilton. Soledad O’Brien is executive producing.

The documentary, which promises to go beyond Parks’ historic 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala., is based on Jeanne Theoharis’ 2013 biography, “The Rebelious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks.”

“Tars and Stripes” is coming to Peacock on Peacock on November 12, 2021.

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What would Powell say about Taiwan?

By Erik Gartzke
Special to Stars and Stripes

The peace of Colin Powell, a significant American leader whose funeral was held on Friday, is reason to pause and reflect about many things, not least of which is what his foreign policy wisdom can teach us about current problems.

Perhaps the most important, and coherent, aspect of Powell’s policy advice is what became known as the “Powell doctrine.” This doctrine states that unless there is a serious threat from a preventable situation on both sides of the Taiwan Straits, Powell would probably advocate quieter diplomacy; private conversations allow Beijing’s leaders to assess the situation dispassionately, without “talking war” by appearing cowed by public rhetoric.

Second, it is not clear that U.S. officials are likely to munter the level of public support Powell advocated when posturing for a possible military contest, especially one involving two of the most powerful nations on Earth going head-to-head.

When discussing conventional military might, few believe China’s military in its own backyard is far from a foregone conclusion. Add nuclear weapons to the equation, and the situation becomes utterly unpredictable. Committing to a massive military buildup in order to achieve the effective defense of Taiwan will take time and resources far in excess of those being publicly contemplated today. More to the point, it will be a commitment lasting a generation or more. Perhaps America can have its way as a vis-a-vis China on the cheap, “detering” China without being forced to make the kind of commitment Powell advocated.

There are important reasons why Powell formulated his doctrine in the way he did. Winning wars is one thing; you have to go big or go home in a major military contest.

Too often of late, the United States has tried to win small wars, wars that it considered small but which adversaries did not. They out-fought or out-lasting American capabilities or resolve.

America does not deserve to set ourse vels up for yet another defeat. Nor should we drag a friendly nation through a horrible and possibly unnecessary military contest because pundits like to talk big and sound aggressive.

The thought of deterrence as a cheaper way to prevail is a pervasive but dangerous fiction that haunts the halls of America’s defense establishment.

Deterrence works to the degree that an adversary perceives that war is too risky or too costly to fight. If at the outset America makes clear that it seems deterrence as preferable because someone thinks it will be cheaper or easier, this is precisely the conundrum that Powell’s doctrine seeks to avoid.

War becomes much more likely when a side believes its target lacks the will to prevail.

It is often attractive to express casual preferences in foreign policy. In the best of all worlds, it would be nice if China would lay off Taiwan.

But what is America actually willing to do about it, and will this be enough? Powell’s advice, then and now, is to walk this path with caution, but also with firmness. Powell was clear about the steps one is taking and, if sufficiently determined, stack the deck to ensure victory and prevent defeat. And if confronted with Chinese喝 soda, under-determined or just not certain about whether it is committed to war, it’s preferable to take another path.

War is a tough game, one with little sympathy for good intentions, or a weak hand.

Erik Gartzke is professor of political science and director of the Center for Peace and Security Studies (CASS) at the University of California, San Diego.

China’s tech retreat may play out US

By David Ignatius
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON

Napoleon is said to have advised his commanders: Never interrupt your adversary when he is making a mistake. Some American officials follow a similar admonition as they watch President Xi Jinping’s heavy-handed regulation of China’s tech sector.

Over the past year, Xi has conducted a mini-purge against internet entrepreneurs whose companies had been the darlings of the tech world. The question puzzling U.S. analysts is whether Xi’s leftward turn is an attempt to assess any permanent damage to China’s tech sector, or whether the Chinese economy is so strong and dynamic that it can absorb Xi’s mistakes and keep rolling.

China’s economic strength or weakness will loom in the background next week as President Joe Biden talks with Xi during a virtual summit. Clearly, China’s growth is slowing, as indicated in an article last month with the provocative title, “The End of China’s Rise.”

But past experience suggests it would be a mistake to bet on China’s inability to solve problems.

Kevin Rudd, a former Australian prime minister who is also a China expert, says of Xi’s recent crackdown on Chinese tycoons: “His economic position is strong. But it’s going to slow the goose.” A senior U.S. official offers a similar view: “Xi is taking incredible risks” in his recent economic direction setting, “a very dangerous era for error.”

Like the U.S. is in its heyday, China can absorb failure.

China’s internet bubble certainly has deflated. Jack Ma, founder of Alibaba, was silenced a year ago after he dared to criticize Chinese authorities; regulators halted the initial public offering planned for his Ant Group last November. Advance orders for the stock had reached $3 trillion before Beijing pulled the plug. China’s antitrust regulator subsequently levied a $2.8 billion fine against Alibaba.

Investors have suffered from Xi’s tech putch. Shares in Alibaba Holding, the flag-ship of Ma’s empire, have declined nearly in half since the middle of last year. Did Global, a Chinese ride-hailing company, has fallen 47% from its peak in February.

Caution is now the watchword in a sector that was once as freewheeling and risk-tolerant as Silicon Valley.

As Alibaba was being fined in April, anti-trust regulators summoned 34 internet companies and demanded self-criticism against state-owned enterprises, or “little giants,” that accept Communist Party author-

In the United States, the potential for a possible military contest, especially one involving two of the most powerful nations on Earth going head-to-head.

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Eugene Sheffer Crossword

ACROSS
1 USMC rank
4 Hero sandwich
7 Pedro’s pal
12 Bathroom, to a Brit
13 Rock producer Brian
14 Hen pens
15 Mode lead-in
16 “Back to Black” singer Amy
18 Little louse
19 Public outburst
20 Pear choice
22 Takeoff stat
23 Diner orders
27 Klutz
29 Try hard
31 Theme
34 Parson’s home
35 Fissures
37 “Get comfy”
38 Allows
39 Dead heat
41 Slender
45 Sacred scroll
47 Gymnast Raisman
48 Drink served by the glass
52 “— so fast!”
53 Cuaty course
54 High school subj.
55 Cigar residue
56 Bit of mischief
57 — Majesty
58 TGIF part

DOWN
1 Second strategy
2 Page number
3 Layers of paints
4 Stitches
5 Relief org. for kids
6 Actress Lisa
7 Massage target
8 Cow’s greeting
9 Debtor’s letters
10 Family docs
11 Sugar suffix
12 — 1547
13 — 1547
14 — 1547
15 — 1547
16 — 1547
17 — 1547
18 — 1547
19 — 1547
20 — 1547
21 — 1547
22 — 1547
23 — 1547
24 — 1547
25 Sports bar sets
26 Observe
28 Astern
30 Texter’s “Enough!”
31 Roman 1150
32 Flamenco cheer
33 Asian holiday
36 Pack cargo
37 Spooky gathering
40 From Dublin
42 Island porch
43 Short concession
44 Legends
45 Ship wood
46 Estate recipient
48 With it, once
50 Olympics chant
51 Wd. from Roget

Answer to Previous Puzzle

AMQCAEAN
BATIRANOGRE
CATSCANSMOCS
OSEDELTIG
CAMELSLIN
EVAYPLLEADS
LINEWIGFTR
SASSYGUMTRY
STEEPERNOS
CAPEVETERANS
AMPMBETNEA
MessaTssex

11-12
CRYPTOQUIP
KOZKTTCDRXJJMDAR, YGKO
KPHOYSOGLVRQKOPSLR
YSDFMQPSAKAMB
HLZSBXLV? PGBOCGLFLASSTH.
Yesterday’s Cryptquip: WEIRD YEARLY CONTEST TO SEE WHO HAS THE GREATEST ABILITY TO DETECT AROMAS: THE SMELLING BEE.

Today’s Cryptquip Clue: T equals Z
COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Wednesday's scores

**MIDWEST**
- Cincinnati (9-1) at South Florida (2-7)
- Loyola-Chicago (7-2) at Wisconsin (6-5)
- Western Michigan (6-5) at Toledo (6-5)
- Northwestern (7-4) at Iowa (7-4)
- Minnesota (7-4) at Nebraska (6-5)
- Purdue (7-4) at Michigan (8-1)
- Michigan State (5-6) at Wisconsin (6-5)
- Illinois (5-6) at Ohio State (9-1)
- Indiana (6-5) at Penn State (9-2)
- Akron (4-6) at Northern Illinois (5-5)
- Ball State (5-7) at Eastern Michigan (6-5)
- Miami (Ohio) (4-7) at Central Michigan (6-4)
- Eastern Kentucky (6-4) at Western Kentucky (8-0)
- South Alabama (2-9) at Troy (7-5)

**SOUTH**
- Mississippi State (6-4) at Auburn (6-4)
- New Mexico State (1-1) at New Mexico (6-6)
- East Carolina (6-6) at Memphis (7-4)
- Southern (6-4) at Louisiana-Lafayette (8-1)
- Kansas State (4-6) at Texas Tech (7-4)
- Texas Christian (6-4) at Kansas State (7-4)
- Oklahoma State (6-4) at Oklahoma (10-0)
- Grambling (5-6) at Bethune-Cookman (5-6)
- Arizona State (6-4) at Arizona (5-6)
- Idaho State (4-7) at Idaho (5-5)

**SOUTHWEST**
- New Mexico (6-5) at LSU (10-2)
- Nevada (5-6) at Nevada (7-4)
- Louisiana-Lafayette (6-5) at Louisiana (5-6)
- South Alabama (5-6) at South Alabama (7-4)
- Southern (5-6) at Louisiana (5-5)
- Tennessee-Martin (1-9) at Kentucky (7-5)

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**
- Arizona State (8-1) at Stanford (6-4)
- Colorado (7-4) at Utah (7-6)
- Utah (7-6) at Colorado (7-4)
- Washington (7-5) at UCLA (6-6)
- Oregon (6-6) at Arizona (7-5)
- UCLA (6-6) at Stanford (7-5)
- Washington (7-5) at Washington State (8-3)

**NFL**
- New York Jets: 1-2-0 (.500) vs. Miami (1-5-0)
- New England Patriots: 1-2-0 (.500) vs. Buffalo (2-3-0)
- Buffalo Bills: 2-1-0 (.667) vs. Cleveland (2-2-0)
- Los Angeles Rams: 2-1-0 (.667) vs. Seattle (3-2-0)
- Chicago Bears: 2-0-0 (1.000) vs. Minnesota (3-2-0)
- San Francisco 49ers: 1-2-0 (.500) vs. Arizona (1-3-0)
- Tampa Bay Buccaneers: 3-0-0 (1.000) vs. New Orleans (2-2-1)
- Green Bay Packers: 3-0-0 (1.000) vs. Chicago (2-2-0)

**NFL INJURY REPORT**
- Los Angeles Rams: LB Micah Kiser (knee), RB Malcom Brown (Achilles), TE Gerald Everett (ankle), TE Tyler Higbee (ankle), WR Breshad Perriman (ankle), WR Odell Beckham Jr. (hamstring), TE Austin Seifert (ankle), LB Ashley Davis (back), CB Davontas Blue (shoulder), LB Jordan Hicks (knee), LB Chris.security (ankle)
- Denver Broncos: QB Drew Lock (ankle), LB Austin Calitri (concussion), TE Logan Withers (knee), LB Zaire Franklin (ankle), LB Darrius Shepherd (shoulder), WR Michael Perriman (ankle), CB Isaac Yiadom (ankle)
- Carolina Panthers: RB Christian McCaffrey (ankle), WR Robby Anderson (ankle), LB Cayman Davis (knee), OG Andrew Norwood (knee), TE David Andrews (knee), CB James Bradberry (hamstring), DT Derrick Nnadi (rib), DT Kevin Osemele (knee), WR Caton Chester (knee), WR Jaylen McCants (ankle), WR Dewayne Washington (ankle), CB Robby Anderson (ankle)

**COLLEGE BASEBALL**
- Texas A&M-Corpus Christi (28-24) at Texas A&M (32-19)
- Old Dominion (21-29) at Virginia Tech (29-16)
- Florida State (21-19) at Florida (36-11)
- Oklahoma State (21-20) at Oklahoma (36-11)
- West Virginia (19-22) at Kentucky (31-21)
- Arkansas (15-25) at South Carolina (22-22)
- Mississippi State (19-25) at Ole Miss (23-25)
- Georgia Tech (18-21) at Clemson (21-18)
- Duke (15-27) at Virginia (30-17)

**PRO FOOTBALL**
- Open: Cincinnati, Houston, Chicago, Giants, NY Jets
- Monday’s game: L.A. Rams at San Francisco
- Thursday, Nov. 18: New England vs. Atlanta

**SUNDAY**
- Washington vs. Cleveland
- Detroit vs. Cincinnati
- Tennessee vs. Jacksonville
- Indianapolis vs. Los Angeles Chargers
- Dallas vs. Las Vegas

**NFL**
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S

NHL/SPORTS BRIEFS

the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the
Campbell stopped 36 shots for his
Nylander scored twice, Jack
Tavares and won for the sixth time
Auston Matthews had a pair of as-
Nylander fired a wrist shot from
originally was ruled no goal by the
flected puck went off his right toe
iting Minnesota got its fourth
seconds left after Dallas cut a 3-0
scored an empty-net goal with 43
the Predators, who are 6-1-1 in
prizov also scored for the Wild.

From left, the Toronto Maple Leafs’ Nick Ritchie, Auston Matthews, William Nylander and Mitchell Marner celebrate Nylander’s goal during the third period of Wednesday’s game in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

Tony Gutiérrez/AP

The Nashville Predators’ Tanner Jeannot celebrates his goal during Wednesday’s game in Dallas. The Predators won 4-2.

Nylander scores twice, lifts Leafs

no, Dmitry Kulikov and Kirill Ka-

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — William
Nylander scored a pair of as-
and Wedgewood stopped all eight
and an assist — giving him points
in his last two games — and An-
drew Ladd also scored for Arizo-
a, which trailed 2-0 after 9 min-
utes.

Shayne Gostisbehere had a goal
and an assist — giving him points
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**Warriors’ Wiggins scores 35 against ex-Wolves mates**

**By Janie McCauley**

**Associated Press**

SAN FRANCISCO — Andrew Wiggins drove the baseline for an emphatic one-handed slam right over old teammate Karl-Anthony Towns, and it sure felt sweet.

“That’s my guy,” Wiggins said, noting it was better coming against Towns. “Oh, for sure. He got me last year, so I got him back.”

Wiggins had two dunks over Towns and dominated his former teammates with a season-high 35 points, leading the Golden State Warriors to a 123-110 victory over Minnesota on Wednesday night.

“No, not a revenge game, a well-played game against a former team,” Wiggins said. “A fun game. The game of basketball’s fun. Facing your former team is always one you wake up excited for.”

Anthony Edwards scored a career-high 48 points for the Timberwolves, hitting seven three-pointers in the team’s sixth straight loss.

Wiggins, traded by Minnesota to Golden State in February 2020, made his initial 10 shots and scored 22 of his points on 9-for-9 shooting and Charlotte won at Memphis to back in visiting Milwaukee’s favor.

The 7-foot Kaminsky continued a stellar stretch of production, making 12 of 18 shots and grabbing seven rebounds. **Hornets 118, Grizzlies 108:** Kelly Oubre Jr. scored a season-best 37 points on 13-for-17 shooting and Charlotte won at Memphis to snap a five-game losing streak.

Nuggets 101, Pacers 98: Will Barton scored a season-high 30 points, helping to make up for the absence of suspended star Nikola Jokic, and host Denver beat Indiana.

Celtics 104, Raptors 98: Jayson Tatum had 27 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists as host Boston’s victory over Toronto.

Bulls 117, Mavericks 107: Zach LaVine scored 23 points and Lonzo Ball made seven of Chicago’s 15 three-pointers in a win over visiting Dallas.

Wizards 97, Cavaliers 94: Kyle Kuzma hit a go-ahead three-pointer with 12 seconds left and Washington scored the final five points to win at Cleveland.

Pistons 112, Rockets 104: Jerami Grant scored a season-high 35 points to help Detroit win at Houston in a matchup of two of the worst teams in the NBA.

Spurs 136, Kings 117: Dejounte Murray made 26 points and San Antonio never trailed, overcoming De’Aaron Fox’s season-high 37 points in rolling past visiting Sacramento.

Thunder 108, Pelicans 100: LaDell Dort scored 27 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 24 points and Oklahoma City won at New Orleans for its third straight victory.

**Warriors forward Andrew Wiggins dunks Wednesday against Timberwolves center Karl-Anthony Towns and guard Patrick Beverley.**

Wiggins shot 14-for-19, and he is the first Warriors player to go at least 9-for-9 in a half since Monta Ellis made all 10 of his shots in the first half against Memphis on Jan. 11, 2008, according to Elias.

**Roundup**

Duran, Harden help Nets rout Magic

**Associated Press**

ORLANDO, Fla. — Kevin Durant scored 30 points and James Harden had his 59th career triple-double in the Brooklyn Nets’ 123-90 victory over the Orlando Magic on Wednesday night.

Durant, the NBA’s leading scorer at 29.5 points per game, made 11 of 12 shots, including both of his three-point attempts, to help Brooklyn win for the sixth time in seven games.

Harden had 17 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists to help. The two stars sat out the fourth quarter, with the Nets up 94-75 after three.

LaMarcus Aldridge came off the bench with 18 points and seven assists for the Nuggets.

Thrice Ross led the Magic with 17 points.

Lakers 120, Heat 117 (OT): Monk Monk scored five of his season-high 27 points in overtime, and host Los Angeles rallied from a big deficit in the final minutes of regulation before surging past Miami in overtime.

Russell Westbrook had 25 points, 14 assists and 12 rebounds for the Lakers, who improved to 2-2 while LeBron James is sidelined by a strained abdominal muscle.

Bucks 112, Knicks 100: Pat Connaughton scored a season-high 23 points, making three late three-pointersto, to swing a wild second half back in visiting Milwaukee’s favor.

Less than a week after New York came from 21 down to win 113-98 at Milwaukee, the Bucks opened a 70-46 cushion midway through the third quarter. But the Knicks’ reserves wiped that away and the game was tied with five minutes to play.

Suns 119, Trail Blazers 109: Frank Kaminsky scored a career-high 31 points, Chris Paul added 21 and host Phoenix beat Portland for its sixth straight victory.

The 7-foot Kaminsky continued a stellar stretch of production, making up for the recent absence of injured starter Deandre Ayton. Kaminsky has at least 10 points in four of the past five games and was at his best Wednesday, making 12 of 18 shots and grabbing seven rebounds.

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Nuggets 101, Pacers 98: Will Barton scored a season-high 30 points, helping to make up for the absence of suspended star Nikola Jokic, and host Denver beat Indiana.

Celtics 104, Raptors 98: Jayson Tatum had 27 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists as host Boston’s victory over Toronto.

Bulls 117, Mavericks 107: Zach LaVine scored 23 points and Lonzo Ball made seven of Chicago’s 15 three-pointers in a win over visiting Dallas.

Wizards 97, Cavaliers 94: Kyle Kuzma hit a go-ahead three-pointer with 12 seconds left and Washington scored the final five points to win at Cleveland.

Pistons 112, Rockets 104: Jerami Grant scored a season-high 35 points to help Detroit win at Houston in a matchup of two of the worst teams in the NBA.

Spurs 136, Kings 117: Dejounte Murray made 26 points and San Antonio never trailed, overcoming De’Aaron Fox’s season-high 37 points in rolling past visiting Sacramento.

Thunder 108, Pelicans 100: LaDell Dort scored 27 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 24 points and Oklahoma City won at New Orleans for its third straight victory.
NFL

Less is more: Cards balance practice, health

By David Brandt
Associated Press
TEMPE, Ariz. — Kliff Kingsbury learned some hard lessons last year while coaching his Arizona Cardinals through a late-season collapse from a 6-3 record to 8-6 and just missing a spot in the playoffs.

Arguably the most important: In the NFL’s regular-season grind, less is sometimes more when it comes to the practice field.

This is one of those times for the NFC West-leading — but very banged up — Cardinals.

“I don’t want to give away our secret right now, but we’ve definitely made some adjustments at this juncture in our season to Wednesday more than anything,” Kingsbury said Wednesday, “This is one of those times for our guys who have played nine games before their long-awaited bye week over Thanksgiving.

They didn’t have a full practice on Wednesday, but if they had, the injury report said 12 players would have missed and four more would have been limited. That’s nearly a third of the active roster.

“We’ll continue to be smart and monitor who’s up, who’s not and really try to get to the bye week with that in mind,” Kingsbury said. “After the bye week, once we’re fresh and energized, we’ll take it from there.”

Murray missed the first game of his three-year-NFL career on Sunday because of his ankle. He watched from the sideline as backup quarterback Colt McCoy, earned one of its most impressive wins of the season by beating the San Francisco 49ers 31-17.

Murray said he hopes to play Sunday against the Carolina Panthers and added that he’s “made crazy strides in a positive direction” since last week.

Whether it’s Murray or McCoy under center on Sunday, the Cardinals will likely still be formidable. The 35-year-old McCoy was excellent in his first start this season, completing 22 of 26 passes for 249 yards and a touchdown.

Patriots focus on slowing Browns’ stellar run game

By Kyle Hightower
Associated Press
FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Throughout Don’ta Hightower’s nine seasons in New England, the veteran linebacker said the identity of the Patriots’ defense has always been predicated on two things — being physical and stopping the run.

Both will need to be on display this week as the Patriots prepare for a Cleveland Browns offense that has earned one of its most impressive wins of the season by beating the San Francisco 49ers 31-17.

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Chargers’ league-worst run defense to be tested again by Vikings’ Cook

By Joe Reedy
Associated Press
COSTA MESA, Calif. — Trying to fix a porous run defense is challenging enough in the middle of a season. The Los Angeles Chargers are looking for ways to improve while facing some of the top running backs in the league.

The Chargers (5-3) are tied for the AFC West lead but are last in the league at stopping the run, and this week they have to face Dalvin Cook and the Minnesota Vikings.

Cook is eighth in league in rushing with 554 yards. He will be the fifth running back the Chargers have faced this season who’s currently in the top 10.

“It’s a challenge like it is every week. If we go out there and we stop the run and make them be one-dimensional — meaning, make them have to ball — we’ll be in a good situation,” said defensive tackle Linval Joseph, who played six seasons with the Vikings (2014-19).

Los Angeles is allowing 161.6 rushing yards per game, 24 yards more than the next-worst team. Opponents are averaging 5.03 yards per carry, and three players have rushed for 100 yards.

First-year coach Brandon Staley, who was hired after coordinating the Rams’ top-ranked defense last season, said he believes his team can force more negative run plays.

“‘You could just never take a play off,’” Mayo said. “‘He’s one of these guys that he’ll go for 2 yards, 3 yards, 4 yards, and then all of a sudden busts out a 70-yard run on you. So there are no plays off when he’s in the backfield.’

Over their past five games, the Patriots have allowed just two teams to eclipse the 100-yard mark.

Hightower said since Week 1 keeping that number low has been something the defense has harped on.

“Reputation and intimidation only gets you so far,” he said. “All that stuff is cool. But at the end of the day, when it comes down to game day, it comes down to execution.”

Minnesota Vikings (3-5) at Los Angeles Chargers (5-3)
AFN-Sports
10 p.m. Sunday CET
6 a.m. Monday JKT
on early downs. The Chargers have held teams to no gain or negative yards on 25 rushes on first and second down, tied for fourth fewest in the league.

“I think that we’re really learning a lot about our run front. I think the last two weeks we really settled into how we want to play,” Staley said. “I think, up front, we’re really getting into a comfort zone, our second and third level into a comfort zone. Now, it’s just taking that growth and improvement to the game and being even more aggressive on first and second down.”
Three things and belonging through just the wear and tear of the regular season,” Vrabel said. “That’s definitely the biggest thing is trying to be creative and trying to find ways to improve but also ways to take care of guys and also get some other guys some work.”

The Titans also have one of the latest byes, in Week 13 (and remember there are 18 weeks this season), which raises the question of whether those teams (Week 14 is the latest) will have an advantage with the latest regular-season finish (Jan. 9) in league history. The Super Bowl also is later than ever, with Feb. 13, or 267 days (29 weeks and change) after the first day that the first teams, Dallas and Pittsburgh, could officially report for training camp. The preseason was shortened by one game.

“You definitely got to focus on recovery,” said Tennessee right tackle David Quessenberry, who has yet to play a full season but is still on track for it this year. “That’s a big part of being able to play week in, week out in this league. But for me, it’s always just focus about the next game. Be completely 100% in to play every game. That’s probably a better way to focus.”

Quessenberry is especially in need of a break. He’s spent nearly a quarter of the high draft picks not playing this season, and he’s among the players that only know taking a bye, most of the teams are now after making final roster cuts, the Tennessee Titans put three players on injured reserve.

And they haven’t stopped. Derrick Henry is just the biggest name in a revolving door that has seen the Titans make 19 moves putting players on injured reserve and play a NFL-high 80 different players — 11 more than the next closest teams, Indianapolis and Carolina (69 apiece).

With Tennessee currently atop the AFC with a 7-2 record halfway through the season, general manager Jon Robinson doesn’t even want to comment on the roster or on any specific injury. He’s not used to playing such a long season. According to Sportradar, the Ravens, Titans, and the AFC West have the most players on injured reserve at some point since the preseason, and every team has used at least 55 different players already.

The ability of having somebody huge allowing the Ravens to have kept only 50 or 51 on their roster. They’ve never played football this long. The coaches also want to make sure the rookies and others aren’t overwhelmed by their responsibilities.

“Your’re always mindful of where they are,” McCarthy said. “They’re not used to playing such a long season. The reality of it is, I don’t think it’s the length of it, it’s the intensity and the fact that the urgency has to be there every week.”

Just this once, the rookies and veterans who make it all the way without some sort of interruption will share something new — a 17th regular-season game.

Revised injured reserve rules have given teams flexibility to remain competitive.
The Roadrunners are enjoying a dream season after trusting in what could be when few others were as hopeful.

Basking in a 9-0 record and the first national ranking in the program’s 10-year history, the Roadrunners are rolling ahead of Saturday’s home game against Southern Mississippi.

“I’d be lying if I didn’t say this is almost surreal, a dream,” coach Jeff Traylor said. “Enjoy these moments. These are special moments. We’ll look back in time one day and go, ‘Wow, that was an incredible ride.’ I hope we’ve got many, many more of those in front of us.”

How the Roadrunners are accomplishing this dream is a tale of taking some chances.

UTSA hired Lisa Campos, whose career began in student affairs, as athletic director in 2018. Campos is one of only two Latinas in charge of athletics among the nation’s 130 FBS schools.

Her first major move was trusting her instincts and hiring Traylor, a relatively unknown commodity, as the team’s third head coach.

Traylor had coached in five state championships at Gilmer (Texas) High School, winning three state titles and 12 district titles and going 175-26 in 15 years. He then had a successful career as an assistant coach at Texas, SMU and Arkansas before joining UTSA in December 2019.

The biggest risk was taken by a growing list of local football standouts who decided to remain in San Antonio rather than join more established programs.

Junior linebacker Rashad Wisdom of nearby Converse said he kept a low profile as a freshman athlete while working toward his major in cybersecurity.

“I’m new, so I’m not really saying anything,” Wisdom recalled. “People were in there (a class he was attending), ‘Are you going to the football game?’ I remember like it was yesterday, one girl was like, ‘Ah, no. Our football team sucks.’ I was like, ‘Man!’

Wisdom can laugh after facing some initial criticism for choosing the school with nearly 35,000 students in Texas’ largest city.

“Now, everybody loves talking about UTSA football and say they love going to UTSA,” Wisdom said. In the past three months, UTSA has opened a $40.4 million athletic training facility, upset Illinois for its first victory against a Big Ten school, has the best start in school history, is bowl eligible for the second straight season, received its first national ranking and announced last month that it will soon join the American Athletic Conference.

What drew the most excitement among players and staff was Campos’ announcement that Traylor had signed a 10-year extension worth $28 million amid rumors that he might leave for a more established program.

“Jeff is a builder,” Campos said. “He’s a builder of culture. He’s a builder of aspirations and belief. That team is totally behind him, believing in what they can do.”

The 53-year-old Traylor has elevated the program at a faster pace than its mascot. UTSA has consecutive winning seasons under Traylor rather than join more established programs.

Traylor also has his staff and players vote in the fall on which players will wear single-digit jerseys during the season. Nos. 2, 1 and 0 — San Antonio’s area code — are the most prestigious. Local athletes Wisdom (No. 0), running back Sincere McCormick (3) and quarterback Frank Harris (0) are among those in single digits.

McCormick, on the 2021 Walter Camp Player of the Year watchlist, has rushed for 1,060 yards and 10 touchdowns on 211 carries.

“Coach Traylor is great at coaching football, but he’s a great life coach, too,” Wisdom said. “He does a great job with making sure that we are good football players, but also better men at the end of the day.”
**ACC title race still wide open**

**By Hank Kurz Jr.**
Associated Press

The Atlantic Coast Conference divisional races are far from decided and several schools still have a shot at winning the league crown.

Virginia defensive lineman Mandy Alonso is enjoying the journey.

"This is like what you train for and all season, you want to be in these positions," Alonso said. "We put our team in a good enough position to have our goals in reach."

The Cavaliers are not alone.

Wake Forest remains the only unbeaten team in the Atlantic Division, but after allowing 330 rushing yards in its 58-55 loss to North Carolina, a Coastal Division team, the No. 13 Demon Deacons may have exposed the blueprint to beat them.

Coach Dave Clawson's team (8-1, 5-0) still has to play North Carolina State (7-2, 4-1) and at Clemson (6-3, 5-2) — both still in the race for the division crown.

"Big game ahead of us — I think everyone knows that," Wake Forest offensive lineman Sean Maginn said this week.

The No. 21 Wolfpack, 27-21 winners in double-overtime against Clemson earlier in the season, play in Winston-Salem on Saturday and could gain a tiebreaker advantage over Wake Forest and the Tigers with a win. N.C. State closes out the season, playing at Virginia Tech and hosting No. 7 Notre Dame.

"We need to focus on just getting better and staying in the moment as a team and not allowing what we want at the end of the season to get in the way of how we get to that place," Wolfpack coach Dave Doeren said.

Clemson, a member of the last six four-team playoff fields, likely won't make it seven straight but hasn't written off another trip to the ACC championship game.

**Notre Dame (8-1) at Virginia (6-3, 4-2 ACC)**
AFN-Atlantic
1:30 a.m. Sunday CET
9:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

**N.C. State (7-2, 4-1 ACC) at Wake Forest (8-1, 5-0)**
AFN-Sports
1:30 a.m. Sunday CET
9:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

In the Coastal Division, No. 25 Pittsburgh (7-2, 4-1) can win it simply by winning out, but the Panthers' path isn't easy. They hosted North Carolina (5-4, 3-3) on Thursday night before facing Virginia, also at home, then visiting Syracuse.

Pitt leads the nation with an average of 45 points, but the Tar Heels' 58-55 victory caught coach Pat Narduzzi's eye. North Carolina has been up and down all season but has scored 58 or more three times.

Virginia (6-3, 4-2) will play another nonconference game when it hosts No. 7 Notre Dame on Saturday night, then has its fate in its hands at Pittsburgh and at home against Virginia Tech (4-5, 2-3), which has struggled this year but also has beaten the Cavaliers in 16 of the past 17 meetings.

Cavaliers coach Bronco Mendenhall said he doesn't expect to hold injured players out against the Fighting Irish with an eye toward the pivotal ACC finish, but he hinted a few that are ailing and well below 100% could be spared.

Miami (5-4, 3-2), meanwhile, has won three straight, including a 38-34 victory at Pittsburgh, and finishes at Florida State, at home against fading Virginia Tech and at Duke.

**AP sports writers Pete Iacobelli in South Carolina and Aaron Beard in North Carolina contributed to this report.**
In for the long haul

League’s first 17-game season looms as teams contemplate rest, recovery

By Schuyler Dixon
Associated Press

Dak Prescott won’t suit up every week in the NFL’s first 17-game regular season because he’s already had to sit once with a strained right calf.

The star Dallas quarterback can still see the big picture of the added game.

“Just making sure that we stay locked in and focused,” Prescott said before the Cowboys’ six-game winning streak ended with a thud in a 30-16 loss to Denver. “I think when you’re having the success we’re having, guys are excited for that extra game just to get out there, continue to build on what we have going right now and propel us into the tournament.”

Coaches and players still say “long season” a lot on a variety of topics. It’s just harder to tell if they’re using the same old cliche or thinking about adding a week to get within a few days of four full months of football before the playoffs even start.

The consensus: It’s probably too early to tell, but it’s not something they’re completely ignoring.

“I cut some things back in training camp,” Dallas coach Mike McCarthy said. “The initial plan that I put together, we probably hit about 90% of that as far as workload capacity.”

Several years before the 17th game was added, McCarthy was still in Green Bay when he changed the weekly routine to make Friday more about rest and recovery before a final practice Saturday. The 17th game is a perfect fit for that.

Tennessee coach Mike Vrabel lightened the load for the Titans last week before the latest in a series of impressive wins, 28-16 at the Los Angeles Rams. The closest thing to a practice came Friday after lighter workouts the previous two days.

“There are so many ... guys that are working their way through

SEE LONG ON PAGE 21

Right: Dallas Cowboys QB Dak Prescott rolls out to pass in Sunday’s 30-16 loss to the Denver Broncos in Arlington, Texas.

Matt Patterson/AP

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Revised injured reserve rules keeping teams competitive
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SEC leaders Georgia, Alabama not quite in the clear

Friendly fire
Warriors’ Wiggins dominates former Timberwolves teammates

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