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Players confined to strict bubble as tournament returns
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VIRUS OUTBREAK

US cases on rise again, doubling over three weeks
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Poland to beef up defenses with 250 US-made Abrams tanks >> **Page 6**

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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

U.S. Army veteran Andrew Brennan poses with servicemember bracelets in his home in Baltimore last month. The former Army captain who flew combat missions in Afghanistan lost one of his closest friends, pilot Bryan Nichols, who was killed along with the entire crew in 2011.

'What have we ended up with?'

US veterans of Afghanistan weigh in as America's longest war winds down

By JULIE WATSON,
KEN MILLER AND
ELLEN KNICKMEYER
Associated Press

Images of the World Trade Center towers collapsing in New York were still fresh in the minds of the first American troops arriving in Afghanistan, as the U.S. launched an invasion targeting the Afghanistan-based al-Qaida leaders who plot-

ted the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. More than 800,000 U.S. troops have served in the Central Asian country since then, in a war that quickly expanded to confronting Afghanistan's Taliban and to nation-building. On Monday, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Scott Miller, relinquished his command in Kabul, underscoring the winding down of America's longest war.

RELATED

Bush: Afghanistan withdrawal will be 'unbelievably bad'
Page 5

One-third of the roughly 4 million troops who served in the post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan and

Iraq served multiple tours, some in well-secured bases in times of comparative quiet, others facing improvised explosive devices on the roads, mortar and rocket attacks on their positions, and fire-fights. While the U.S. quickly succeeded in quelling the al-Qaida fighters behind the 9/11 attacks, Americans leave with the Taliban

SEE VETERANS ON PAGE 5

US to begin evacuation of Afghans who aided effort

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Flights to evacuate Afghans who assisted the U.S. military are set to begin during the last week of July, a senior Biden administration official said Wednesday.

Operation Allies Refuge will provide relocation flights for Afghan citizens and their families, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

Priority will go to those who have already applied for visas to come to the U.S. through the Special Immigrant Visa program.

The official declined to provide further details on when the flights will depart, or where evacuees will be sent to, citing security concerns.

Advocates for Afghan SIV applicants in Congress and among veterans groups welcomed Wednesday's announcement.

Rep. Seth Moulton, a Massachusetts Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, said the U.S. needed to follow through on its promise to keep allies safe in exchange for their help.

"I'm glad to see President (Joe) Biden following through on that promise," Moulton said in a statement on Twitter.

The Biden administration's announcement comes amid fears of retribution for Afghans who assisted the U.S. and its allies during the last two decades of conflict in Afghanistan. Deadly Taliban offensives have swept the country as the U.S. drawdown from its longest war reaches its end.

More than 18,000 applicants

SEE AFGHANS ON PAGE 5

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EU to unveil tough climate rules, foreign firm tax

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union on Wednesday is unveiling sweeping new legislation to help meet its pledge to cut emissions of the gases that cause global warming by 55% over this decade, including a controversial plan to tax foreign companies for the pollution they cause.

The proposals by the European Commission, which is the EU's executive branch, will cover everything from tougher caps on car pollution to new limits on gases from

buildings. It will see a revamp of the bloc's emissions trading scheme under which companies pay for the gases they send into the air.

The new legislation will involve around a dozen major proposals — most of them building on laws already in place to meet the EU's old goal of a 40% cut in gas emissions by 2030, compared to 1990 levels — and must be endorsed by the 27 member countries and EU lawmakers.

World leaders agreed six years ago in Paris to keep the global warming increase to below 3.6 degrees

Fahrenheit, and ideally no more than 2.7 F by the end of the century. Scientists say both goals will be missed by a wide margin unless drastic steps are taken to begin cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

The European Commission wants to exploit the public mood for change provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic. It's already channeling more than a third of a massive recovery package aimed at reviving European economies ravaged by coronavirus restrictions into climate-oriented goals.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (July 15)	\$1.15	Bahrain (Dinar)	.3769
Dollar buys (July 15)	0.8246	Britain (Pound)	1.3880
British pound (July 15)	\$1.35	Canada (Dollar)	1.2462
Japanese yen (July 15)	108.00	China (Yuan)	6.4570
South Korean won (July 15)	1,120.00	Denmark (Krone)	6.2911
		Egypt (Pound)	15.6848
		Euro	.8459
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7671
		Hungary (Forint)	303.58
		Israel (Shekel)	3.2637
		Japan (Yen)	110.09
		Kuwait (Dinar)	.3007
		Norway (Krone)	8.7347
		Philippines (Peso)	50.17
		Poland (Zloty)	3.87
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7504
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3531
		South Korea (Won)	1,146.79
		Switzerland (Franc)	.9165
		Thailand (Baht)	32.63
		Turkey (New Lira)	8.5943

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

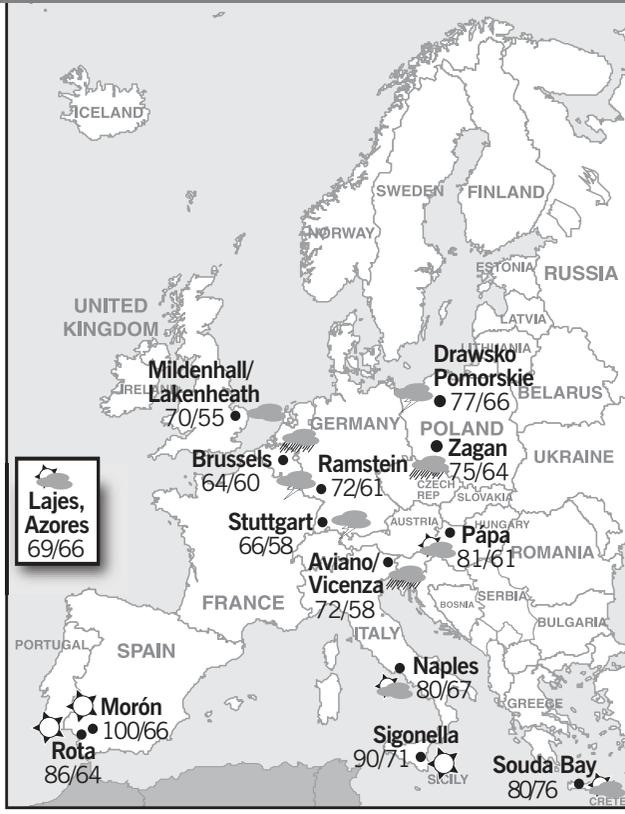
INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	3.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.05
30-year bond	2.04

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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EUROPE

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 314.583.9111

MIDDLE EAST

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 314.583.9111

PACIFIC

PacificAdvertising@stripes.com

+81 (42) 552.2511
DSN: 315.227.7310

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MILITARY

Austin touts AI to help prevent future wars

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Artificial intelligence will be key to preventing future conflicts as China increases its efforts to develop the technology, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Tuesday during a summit on emerging technologies.

Austin, who was speaking at a summit hosted by the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence, said the Defense Department must focus on incorporating AI into all aspects of warfare, especially as “China’s leaders have made clear they intend to be globally dom-

inant in AI by the year 2030.”

“Beijing already talks about using AI for a range of missions, from surveillance to cyberattacks to autonomous weapons,” the defense secretary said.

The Pentagon’s proposed budget for 2022 asked for \$112 billion in research, development, testing and evaluation — the department’s largest-ever request for such priorities.

In the request, “AI is one of the department’s top tech modernization priorities,” Austin said. “Over the next five years, the department will invest nearly \$1.5 billion in the center’s efforts to accelerate our adoption of AI.”

He said the department is focusing on AI development because it will be key to deter adversaries in “the future fight.”

“Tech advances like AI are changing the face and the pace of warfare, but we believe that we can responsibly use AI as a force multiplier — one that helps us to make decisions faster and more rigorously, to integrate across all domains, and to replace old ways of doing business,” Austin said.

In Austin’s speech, he highlighted some of the 600 AI efforts already underway in the Defense Department, including the algorithm-driven Pathfinder project that helps synthesize in-

formation to support joint war-fighting.

“The Pathfinder project ... helps us better detect airborne threats by using AI to fuse data from military, commercial and government sensors in real time,” Austin said.

The Pentagon’s use of AI also expands beyond tactical warfare. Austin said the department recently used AI to help in combating the coronavirus pandemic with Project Salus, “a predictive tool for finding patterns in [virus] data that the department built from scratch with some top Silicon Valley companies starting last March.”

Still, Austin emphasized moving forward with AI ethically, pledging to “watch out for unintended consequences” and “immediately adjust, improve, or even disable any AI system that isn’t behaving the way that we intend.”

“Our development, deployment, and use of AI must always be responsible, equitable, traceable, reliable and governable,” Austin said. “AI is going to change many things about military operations, but nothing is going to change America’s commitment to the laws of war and the principles of our democracy.”

Navy secretary pick backs modernization emphasis in budget

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden’s pick for Navy secretary told senators on Tuesday that he supports the emphasis on new technologies in the Defense Department’s 2022 budget proposal to help challenge the expanding Chinese military.

Carlos Del Toro, a Navy veteran and a CEO for an engineering and consulting firm, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that “we can no longer take U.S. naval superiority for granted” as China continues its rapid military growth.

“I always do believe that it’s incredibly important to make the right investments and modernization,” he said during his first confirmation hearing. “We can’t be fighting the wars of yesterday — we have to fight the new wars of tomorrow. That includes cybersecurity and space and many other challenges that are presented.”

Del Toro, who joined the Navy at 17 and served for 26 years, said he was pleased with the proposed 2022 Navy budget, saying it “recognize(d) this challenge and in-

vests billions of dollars toward improving readiness and for future capabilities.”

“Access to contested waters requires more robust capabilities and capacity,” Del Toro said. “This demands new thinking about how we invest our defense dollars.”

But some lawmakers have criticized the proposed 2022 budget for its poor funding for shipbuilding in favor of research and development of new capabilities such as hypersonic missiles, which China has already developed and travel at five times the speed of sound.

With more than 350 ships, China has surpassed the United States and now has the world’s largest naval fleet. The U.S. has about 296 ships, according to the Navy.

In the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act, an annual law that sets policy and spending for the Pentagon, Congress mandated the Navy attain a fleet of 355 ships as soon as possible. However, the 2022 budget proposal cut four littoral combat ships and pledged to build just eight ships — an amount



Screenshot

Carlos Del Toro, President Joe Biden’s nominee for Navy secretary, speaks to the Senate Armed Services Committee on Monday during a confirmation hearing.

top Navy leaders have said will not be enough to reach the 355-ship goal.

Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., said during the hearing that he had “real concern” about the budget proposal’s funding priorities “in terms of our ability to both maintain our readiness and ... pursue the modernization that we’re going to need to outpace the growing Chinese threat.”

Del Toro said the 355-ship goal would remain, but he told Hawley that it will take more than just

“numbers of platforms” to maintain the Navy’s “capability and lethality.”

“We have to invest in missile technology, hypersonics, computing power — all the cybersecurity, all those other technologies that are going to advance our ability to deter China in the Indo-Pacific,” he said. “If confirmed, I’m going to be exclusively focused on the China threat and exclusively focused on moving our maritime strategy forward in order to protect Taiwan and all of our national securi-

ty interests in the Indo Pacific theater.”

China, which views the self-governed Taiwan as one of its provinces, considers reunification a top priority, and the U.S. has said it would protect the island if Beijing attempted to take it by force.

Del Toro said the U.S. “should be clear about our foreign affairs intentions and our support of Taiwan in every possible way.”

doornbos.caitlin@stripes.com
Twitter: @caitlindoornbos

Third Fort Hood soldier in past year drowns at lake near the base

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

A Fort Hood soldier drowned Saturday in a lake near the central Texas Army base where two other soldiers died nearly one year ago.

Pfc. Gregory Ellis, 21, was swimming at Dana Peak Park on Stillhouse Hollow Lake, according to the Bell County Sheriff’s Department. Ellis went underwater

and never resurfaced, according to police who were alerted at about 5:30 p.m.

Witnesses told police that Ellis had attempted to retrieve a float that had drifted off. But when he swam after it, he began to struggle and disappeared beneath the water.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the park,



Ellis

the same area of the lake where witnesses had observed him go

searched for Ellis along with Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Morgan’s Point Resort Dive Team. They located and recovered his body in

under the water, said Lt. Bob Reinhard of the sheriff’s department.

Ellis, a petroleum laboratory specialist, was assigned to Fort Hood’s 13th Expeditionary Sustainment Command. He joined the Army in 2019 and arrived at Fort Hood in February 2020, according to the base.

Last year, two other Fort Hood soldiers drowned at Stillhouse

Hollow Lake.

On July 17, fishermen found the body of Pvt. Mejhor Morta, 26, in the lake. Spc. Francisco Gilberto Hernandez-Vargas, 24, died Aug. 2 in a boating accident on the lake.

Stillhouse Hollow Lake is about a 20-minute drive from Fort Hood.

Thayer.rose@stripes.com
Twitter: @Rose_Lori

MILITARY

Army's 1st Patriot missile in Australia to be fired in drill

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

A combined task force of 17,000 U.S., Australian, New Zealand, Japanese, South Korean and British troops kicked off the biennial Talisman Sabre drills Wednesday in Australia.

The participants include a U.S. expeditionary strike group from the USS America, the amphibious assault ship based at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, along with 70 fixed-wing aircraft and 50 helicopters, task force commander Australian Army Maj. Gen. Jake Ellwood said in a telephone interview from Royal Australian Air Force Base Amberley in Brisbane.

Live-fire training is scheduled at Shoalwater Bay, Queensland, but participants will range as far afield as Darwin in the Northern Territory and Evans Head, New South Wales.

A Patriot missile defense system will fire from Shoalwater Bay at a pair of drone targets on Friday.

"This will be the first time a Patriot has fired from Australian shores," Ellwood said.

The Patriot was brought south by troops from the 38th Air Defense Artillery Brigade out of Sagami General Depot, Japan, according to deputy exercise director U.S. Army Col. Jerry Hall.

The proposal to deploy the missile defense system to Australia was hatched in 2009, he said during the same interview from RAAF Amberley.

A key part of the exercise is getting U.S. and Australian forces to work together with the Patriot, Hall said. The U.S. Army coordinates its employment of the system closely with the Air Force to integrate air and

missile defense.

Australian Sen. Jim Molan, a retired major general, wrote in The Australian newspaper on May 3 that his country was "more than likely" to experience a missile attack in any conflict between the United States and China.

"Many ordinary Australians, not just those who personally experienced global conflict, are awakening to the somber reality that war is not just possible in our region, but likely," he wrote.

Talisman Sabre will also involve space, cyber, land, air and sea operations, Ellwood said.

U.S., Australian, British and Japanese troops will operate together from Australia's amphibious ship, the HMAS Canberra, he added.

Japanese forces Down Under include the newly formed Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, a force modeled after the U.S. Marine Corps that's charged with defending outer islands. The unit sent troops to Talisman Sabre in 2019.

Australia has developed its amphibious forces in recent years, Ellwood said.

"We are capable of significant amphibious operations," he said, noting the ability of the Canberra and Australia's other amphibious ship, the HMAS Adelaide, to conduct simultaneous operations during the 2019 exercise.

About 5,000 members of the U.S. expeditionary strike group will not go ashore during the training, but about 2,000 other U.S. troops have just emerged from two weeks in quarantine, Hall said.

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1



EVAN PARKER/U.S. Navy

A CH-53E Super Stallion from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 airlifts equipment for the Poseidon's Watchtower exercise on Irisuna Island, Okinawa, on June 3.

Shipping container falls from Marine helicopter into ocean off of Okinawa

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Marine Corps is investigating what caused a steel shipping container to fall from a heavy-lift helicopter into the sea Tuesday off the western coast of Okinawa.

The Tri-Con container — 8 feet long, 6½ feet wide and 8 feet tall — fell from a CH-53E Super Stallion around 12:30 p.m. between Irisuna and Tonaki islands, according to a statement Tuesday from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

"1st MAW takes all aviation related events seriously and will conduct a thorough review to determine the cause of the incident," the statement said.

The helicopter was returning from an exercise at military ranges on Irisuna at the time. No injuries resulted from the incident, according to a report Wednesday by The Okinawa Times, which cited the Okinawa Defense Bureau.

The Marines are assessing whether they can salvage the container, whose depth is unknown, wing spokesman Maj. Ken Kunze

wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes on Wednesday.

An empty Tri-Con container of that size weighs 2,600 pounds, according to oceancontainer.com.

The container held tools, Meals, Ready to Eat and less than 3 gallons of fuel in a sealed vessel and was on its way to a beach landing zone on the Army base Torii Station in Yomitan, Kunze said.

The contents were used in Poseidon's Watchtower 21, an exercise in expeditionary advanced base operations by the 3rd Marine Logistics Group and Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 4 that started June 2 and concluded June 17.

Expeditionary advanced base operations is a relatively new concept that calls for Marines to move inside the range of an adversary's "long-range precision fires" and establish difficult-to-target forward bases.

Okinawa Defense Bureau director general Isao Ono asked Marine Corps Installations Pacific commander Brig. Gen. William Bowers on Tuesday to prevent such oc-

currences, the Okinawa Times said. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also asked the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo for an investigation.

"Objects falling from the sky is something that does not happen in an ordinary living environment," Tonaki village Mayor Suguru Tobaru said, according to Okinawa Times. "The villagers and fishermen must be worried."

This is at least the third incident involving objects falling from Marine Corps aircraft at Okinawa since late 2017.

On Aug. 27, 2019, a Super Stallion lost a cabin window over open water off the Okinawa coast. No injuries or property damage were reported.

In December 2017, a window fell from a Super Stallion and landed on an elementary school sports field near Marine Corps Air Station Futenma's fence line. More than 50 children were playing nearby at the time.

Stars and Stripes reporter Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.
burke.matt@stripes.com
Twitter: @MatthewMBurke1

Bill would allow more overseas service members to vote electronically

By **NIKKI WENTLING**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A bill introduced in Congress on Tuesday would enable all active-duty service members to cast votes electronically while they are stationed overseas.

The bill, called the Reducing Barriers for Military Voters Act, would establish an end-to-end electronic voting system for troops stationed in hazardous duty zones or on rotational deployments. Depending on their



Duckworth

Voting by mail can pose challenges for overseas troops, especially at remote outposts with limited mail service.

Sens. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., and John Cornyn, R-Texas, introduced the legislation in the

state of residence, some service members voting overseas must currently print out their ballots and mail them.

Senate on Tuesday. Reps. Andy Kim, D-N.J., and Joe Wilson, R-S.C., introduced the House version earlier this year.

"Service members face numerous barriers to voting that make it more difficult for them to more fully participate in our democracy by exercising their right to vote," Duckworth said in a statement. "We should be doing everything we can to strengthen voting rights across the country."

Lawmakers hope the change

could improve the turnout of military voters. Since 2014, service members have voted at a rate 15% lower than the general U.S. population.

Twenty-four states allow electronic ballots for overseas residents through the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, and more state legislatures are considering offering the option. Because elections are run by the states, the Reducing Barriers for Military Voters Act would establish an electronic

voting system for service members, and states could choose whether to participate, Duckworth's office said.

The bill orders the Defense Department to develop and implement the plan for electronic voting. The system would be tested in the 2024 federal election with a subset of overseas service members, and it would be expanded in the 2026 election.

wentling.nikki@stripes.com
Twitter: @nikkiwentling

WAR ON TERRORISM

Afghans: Starting last week in July

FROM PAGE 1

have applied for the SIV, which allows those facing threats after aiding the military and U.S. agencies to immigrate with their families.

The SIV program has suffered from yearslong application delays, understaffing, poor coordination and outdated technology, a State Department Inspector General report last year said.

A COVID-19 outbreak at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul also led to the suspension in mid-June of all visa interviews. The Interviews did not restart until a month later.

Moving families out of Afghanistan would allow them to be screened and processed for asylum away from the violence there, advocates have said.

Some lawmakers have said that the U.S. territory of Guam, which has hosted refugees of America's wars before, could be an ideal landing spot for the applicants.

But the Biden administration has narrowed its discussions on potential waiting areas to the central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, Bloomberg reported in early July.

Moving applicants and their families to central Asia would provide them with fewer rights than they would have in Guam, said Sunil Varghese, policy director for the legal advocacy group International Refugee Assistance Project.

"We urge the Administration to relocate evacuees to a location on U.S. soil, where evacuees have access to U.S. courts, including immigration courts," Varghese said.

The administration is weighing using State Department-chartered commercial planes rather than military aircraft to transport the applicants, a second administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, told The Associated Press. But the U.S. military would be ready to assist if the State Department made the request, the official said.

Tracey Jacobson, a veteran diplomat with expertise in central Asia, will helm the initiative, the official said. Jacobson will lead a unit at the State Department that will include representatives from the departments of Defense and Homeland Security.

Advocacy groups for SIV applicants said they are still waiting for details on who will be flown out of the country as part of Operation Allies Refuge, but said the move is a step in the right direction.

"This effort will immediately save lives," said James Miervaldis, chairman of the advocacy group No One Left Behind.



LEFT PHOTO: DAMIAN DOVARGANES; RIGHT PHOTO: JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Left: U.S. Marine veteran Jennifer Brofer will never forget when her convoy rolled over an IED in Helmand province in 2010. Right: U.S. Army veteran Andrew Brennan, 36, lost one of his closest friends, who was killed along with the entire crew when their Chinook helicopter was shot down in 2011.

Veterans: Service members look back on Afghanistan deployments

FROM PAGE 1

rapidly claiming fresh territory. Many Afghans fear the return of civil war, or strict Taliban rule, with the Western troops' departure.

The Associated Press talked to some of the U.S. veterans of Afghanistan as Americans withdraw, after nearly 20 years:

Army veteran

For Andrew Brennan, 36, it's the days the painful memories subside that bother him. A former Army captain who flew combat missions, Brennan lost one of his closest friends, pilot Bryan Nichols, when his Chinook helicopter was shot down in 2011, killing 30 Americans, seven Afghan soldiers and one interpreter. It was the single deadliest day for U.S. troops during the war.

Brennan spent a week helping recover the bodies.

"As much as I hate admitting it, there are days that go by when I don't think about Bryan, our crew, and the team guys on the back of that aircraft. And if I don't think about it and I was that close to it, what do most Americans think?" the Baltimore man wrote in an email to The Associated Press.

Brennan has worn a Killed in Action bracelet in honor of Nichols for nearly a decade. He has worked to get a memorial wall built for 9/11 veterans.

While he honors those who sacrificed their lives, he believes it was a senseless war.

"What have we ended up with at the end of it, other than trillions spent, 7,000+ Americans dead, and more than two broken generations of warriors?" Brennan wrote.

"The only stakeholder group that learned anything through this entire period were politicians: They learned that the American population is so removed from

their modern day 'legions' that they can do anything with our nation's all-volunteer military and no one will pay attention or care enough to change it."

Marine veteran

Marine veteran Jennifer Brofer will never forget the loud, popping noise.

It was on a hot July afternoon in 2010 when her convoy rolled over an IED in Helmand province four months into her deployment to Afghanistan. Her heart froze as she and her fellow Marines stopped and realized what had occurred. But what followed were only the sounds of daily life.

This was a lucky day.

"For some reason it did not detonate," the former staff sergeant said.

It was a defining moment to be that close to death, said Brofer, one of the comparatively few female Marines to serve in America's longest war.

A public affairs officer, Brofer was charged with documenting the stories of troops.

"Those moments in Afghanistan really put everything into perspective for me. Because I really didn't fully appreciate all of the luxuries that I had been afforded prior to my deployment," such as hugs from loved ones, hot showers and driving down a road without fear of her vehicle exploding, she said.

Brofer, 38, who now works in the television and film industries in Hollywood, said she feels proud to have served "shoulder-to-shoulder with my male Marine counterparts" in a time of war.

Still, Brofer can't say whether the war was worth it.

"War is ugly. And sometimes it's necessary and it's not like we can go back and change anything. We can only change how we respond in the future," she said.

"When I was deployed it was already considered then the longest war and I think it's about time that our men and women came home."

National Guard veteran

After the United States launched a second war, in Iraq, in 2003, Oklahoma National Guard Sgt. Eran Harrill was one of hundreds of thousands of guard members called to duty as an all-volunteer U.S. military strained to fight two wars simultaneously.

Harrill fought in 2011 as part of a combat unit in Afghanistan's Laghman province, as the U.S. surged troops in hopes of crippling Afghanistan's Taliban. A marketing director and business development executive in Oklahoma City, he patrolled alongside a mechanic, a K-9 police officer, students and other Oklahomans.

"The very first firefight we got in was certainly an aha moment" for the citizen soldiers, Harrill said. "I think we did some good there, maybe helped some people and prevented some loss of life," said Harrill, 38, who had always wanted to serve in the military.

Back home, Harrill served in jobs that included leading Oklahoma City's Black Chamber of Commerce. He's developing a directory aimed at identifying which employers are most suitable for members of the military.

That's after seeing guard members struggle with bosses unhappy over time away for training and deployment, including managers who reached out to a deployed guard member in the field to threaten him with firing if he didn't return.

"We have a bad habit in this country of putting little yellow ribbons, 'support our troops,' in the window," Harrill said. "But we don't really support our troops as to how it affects us when the rubber hits the road."

Bush pans Afghan exit

Associated Press

BERLIN — Former President George W. Bush criticized the Western withdrawal from Afghanistan in an interview with a German broadcaster released Wednesday, saying he fears that Afghan women and girls will "suffer unspeakable harm."

Asked in an interview with German international broadcaster Deutsche Welle whether the withdrawal is a mistake, Bush replied: "You know, I think it is, yeah, because I think the consequences are going to be unbelievably bad."

The war in Afghanistan began under Bush after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. Washington gave Taliban leader Mullah Omar an ultimatum: hand over al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and dismantle militant training camps or prepare to be attacked. Omar refused, and a U.S.-led coalition launched an invasion in October.

The withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops set in motion earlier this year by President Joe Biden is now nearing completion. Taliban fighters have been surging through district after district, taking control of large swaths of the country.

In the DW interview, which marked outgoing German Chancellor Angela Merkel's final official visit to the U.S., Bush said Merkel had supported the deployment in Afghanistan in part "because she saw the progress that could be made for young girls and women in Afghanistan."

During the Taliban's rule in the late 1990s, women were largely confined to their homes, and girls had no access to education. Despite protestations from the U.S. and Europe, the Taliban enforced its extreme version of Islamic Shariah law.

"I'm sad," Bush said. "Laura (Bush) and I spent a lot of time with Afghan women, and they're scared. And I think about all the interpreters and people that helped not only U.S. troops but NATO troops, and it seems like they're just going to be left behind to be slaughtered by these very brutal people. And it breaks my heart."

WAR/MILITARY

Poland buys 250 US-made Abrams tanks

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — Poland announced Wednesday that it will purchase 250 U.S.-built Abrams tanks, adding significant firepower to a priority area for U.S. and NATO forces seeking to deter Russia.

The first deliveries of the Abrams M1A2 tanks, which will come at a cost of \$6 billion, could arrive as early as 2022, Polish of-

ficials said during a news conference.

“Of course, this is a response to the challenges we face in terms of international security,” Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak told reporters, as quoted by Reuters. “Our task is to deter a potential aggressor. We all know where that aggressor is.”

The U.S. and allies in NATO have made reinforcing Poland and the nearby Baltic states a fo-

cal point since Russia’s 2014 military intervention in Ukraine. Since then, U.S. tanks from units rotating overseas have been a consistent presence in Poland.

NATO also has a U.S.-led multinational battlegroup in Poland’s northeast, roughly 50 miles from the Russian military exclave of Kaliningrad.

Polish leaders said the Abrams tanks will markedly upgrade their ground forces.

“These are state-of-the-art tanks that are able to perform all sorts of maneuvers, conduct combat and fire with great precision and great efficiency,” said Polish Deputy Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski, as quoted by Polish media. The acquisition will enable Poland’s army to create at least four tank battalions, he said.

Poland already has a tank force consisting of various models of the German Leopard 2, the do-

mestically built PT-91 and the aging Soviet-era T-72, the latter of which will likely be replaced by the Abrams tanks. The M1A2 tanks are produced by U.S. contractor General Dynamics Land Systems.

The tank purchase is the latest in a string of moves to muscle up the country’s military. In 2018, Poland reached a deal to spend \$4.75 billion to acquire the U.S.-made Patriot missile system.

Canadian general reflects on Taliban advances

By PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A swift Taliban victory in a district Canadian troops spent years defending has led the country’s top officer to openly acknowledge the struggles of a force questioning the worth of its fight in Afghanistan.

Canadian troops did much of their fighting in Panjwai district, an area considered the Taliban’s spiritual heartland in southern Kandahar province, over a six-year span from 2005. The Taliban took the district July 4 after two nights of heavy clashes with Afghan government forces, local officials said.

“Many of us have been watching the reports out of Afghanistan with dismay,” Lt. Gen. Wayne Eyre, acting head of Canada’s forces, wrote in a two-page open letter posted to Twitter late Tuesday. “The fall of Panjwai ... has



FRANKIE COLBRY/U.S. Navy

Then-Brig. Gen. Wayne Eyre, the Canadian army commander of NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, in 2014.

hit many of us particularly hard, and as we question our legacy, it serves as a harbinger for all Canadians who served in the country, regardless of when and where.

“Our Afghanistan experience has left none untouched, and many, including families, are scarred physically, mentally and morally from it,” Eyre wrote. “Many of us have been asking, some for years, ‘was it worth it?’ Answers will be deeply personal

and not all have reached a final conclusion other than time will tell.”

U.S. and other coalition forces steadily poured into Panjwai as the Taliban reconstituted its forces in the years after its fall from power. The Battle of Panjwai, which was led by Canadian forces in 2006, left 16 Canadian troops killed and dozens more wounded. Two Americans were also killed during the operations.

In 2012, Robert Bales, a former Army staff sergeant, murdered 16 civilians in Panjwai. He pleaded guilty to the related charges and was sentenced to life in prison a year later.

The last Canadian troops left Afghanistan seven years ago. But memories of the district are “indelibly etched into the collective psyche of those who served there,” Eyre said.

Afghan forces still hold the city of Kandahar and most other urban areas, but the Taliban control

more land than they have since 2001, according to Long War Journal, which independently tracks figures. Taliban-run lands include much of the rural territory surrounding the cities. In Panjwai, they’ve secured a 3-mile perimeter around the district center, Panjwai governor Hasti Mohammad told Stars and Stripes.

“While history will be the ultimate judge, the current trajectory of the country leaves us with much pain and doubt,” Eyre said. He compared the sacrifices in Afghanistan to those endured in Europe and Korea, where veterans could put their service in context as they saw nations “rise out of the rubble and ashes.”

“At this moment in time, it is difficult to envision having similar sentiments about our war,” he said.

Eyre’s comments contrast with those of many top U.S. military leaders, who have mostly avoided discussion on the war’s legacy.

But along with his frank assessment, he offered encouragement to those who served, and included several links for support services.

“Should we hang our heads in bitterness and remorse; or should we continue to venerate the sacrifices of so many in our ranks and families, to honour the noble commitment to serve and making the world a better place, and endeavour to lean from our experiences, grow, and become better every day?” Eyre asked.

“While none of us can speak for them, I have to believe that our fallen would want us to pursue the latter.”

Twitter commenters offered some anger and sadness over the war in response. But most, like Annalise Schamuhn, who describes herself as a retired Army officer, thanked Eyre for showing “compassion and care.”

Between 2001 and 2014, 158 Canadian soldiers were killed in Afghanistan.

New DNA techniques helped Army close 34-year-old case

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

It took over three decades, but the killer of an Army specialist in Colorado has been brought to justice.

Michael Whyte was sentenced last month to life in prison for the murder of Spc. Darlene Krashoc in Colorado Springs, Colo., after Army cold case investigators used new DNA techniques to identify him as a suspect in the 1987 killing.

Whyte, a 19-year veteran of the Army who was stationed at Fort Carson at the time of the murder, reached the rank of sergeant first class before retiring in 1998.

DNA evidence collected at the scene and genealogical databases connected Whyte to the murder, Army Criminal Investigation Command, or CID, said in a statement Monday.

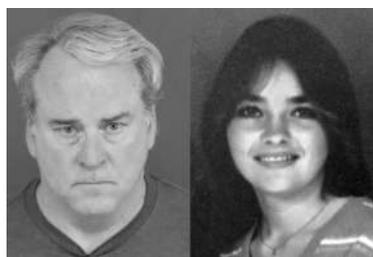
“It feels satisfying to know that the hard work and collaboration among multiple agencies in the

pursuit of justice finally led to a successful resolution,” said CID Forensic Science Officer Jessica Veltri.

Veltri’s efforts revived the probe when she was assigned to it in 2014, while stationed at the 22nd Military Police Battalion at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., CID said. She’d recently graduated from George Washington University’s forensic science program and was interested in cold cases.

Colorado Springs police had found Krashoc’s body early in the morning of March 17, 1987, in a parking lot behind the Korean Club Restaurant. It was about a mile north of where she’d last been seen at a nightclub drinking and dancing with fellow soldiers after midnight.

She was five months shy of her 21st birthday and had been serving on active duty with the 73rd Maintenance Company, 43rd Support Group, based at Fort Carson.



CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION COMMAND

Michael Whyte and Army Spc. Darlene Krashoc.

An autopsy determined she was strangled to death somewhere else before being moved to the parking lot, CID said.

But despite hundreds of interviews by police and Army investigators, and DNA samples pulled in 2003 and 2011, efforts to identify a suspect were stymied as leads went cold.

The murder was nearly 30 years old in 2016 when Veltri completed a review and submitted 27 pieces of evidence to the U.S. Army

Criminal Investigation Laboratory in Forest Park, Ga., for DNA testing not previously available.

That December, CID partnered with Parabon NanoLabs, a Reston, Va.-based company specializing in the relatively new technology of DNA phenotyping, a process that allowed them to develop composite “snapshots” of what the killer might have looked like at age 20 to 25 and 30 years later.

It was the first time CID used the technique, and it released the composites along with an announcement of a \$10,000 reward in 2017, hoping to identify a suspect. Then, in 2019, they got a lead from ancestry research databases.

California police had used similar genetic data collections a year earlier to identify a suspect linked to some 50 rapes and 12 murders in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the high-profile Golden State Killer case.

In Krashoc’s case, the data led to

distant relatives, then to a single name that was compared against military records to identify Whyte as a suspect, CID said.

“I wasn’t sure if we would ever get to this point,” said Jennifer Coslin, a supervisory biologist at the Army lab who had worked on evidence in the case since 2005.

Veltri was both excited and in disbelief that they “finally found him,” Coslin recalled in an Army statement. “We finally had a viable lead.”

Police in Colorado then surveilled Whyte and collected a DNA sample from a fast food cup he’d used and discarded. The samples matched, and he was arrested in June 2019 at his home near Denver.

“I’m so grateful they kept the DNA after all these years,” Krashoc’s sister, Rhonda Lilly, told Army Times after the arrest. “The Colorado Springs police and Army CID never forgot about her.”

VIRUS OUTBREAK

South Korea Army base sees rise in cases

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Thirty-one U.S. service members from a single Army base in South Korea tested positive for the coronavirus last week as the country reached a new record for daily infections.

The 31 new patients, who tested positive between July 5 and 11, are from Camp Casey, a military outpost near the Demilitarized Zone on the border with North Korea.

They are among 58 people from U.S. Forces Korea who tested positive last week, marking the most infections reported by the command during the pandemic. The previous record from early this year was 42 cases recorded over a 12-day span.

Roughly 10,000 people, including retirees and South Korean employees, work at Camp Casey, over 90% of which have been vaccinated against the coronavirus, according to Denver Beaulieu-Hains, a spokeswoman for U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan-Casey.

In contrast, Camp Humphreys, which has over 32,000 people accessing the base daily, had one service member test positive last week. The base, 40 miles south of Seoul, the capital city, is the largest U.S. military installation overseas.

Camp Casey has not announced the vaccination statuses of those who recently tested positive.

Base leaders did not attribute the recent



AMBER SMITH/U.S. Army

Vehicles line up to enter Camp Casey, South Korea, last year.

rise of service member cases to a singular incident, Beaulieu-Hains told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday.

“We are taking an active approach to living our best lives, while we mitigate the spread of COVID,” she said in a statement.

“Our emphasis is to educate personnel that vaccination is only part of the solution, but discipline and social responsibility is

key to our mitigation strategy,” she added. “The idea is to treat everyone as if they have COVID and to protect yourself, which in turn protects others.”

South Korea’s recent COVID-19 surge has continued to break records for more than a week. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported 1,615 new patients Wednesday, the highest number of daily

cases yet, bringing the nation’s total number of infections to 171,911.

Seoul, which recorded 638 new patients Wednesday, accounts for the majority of locally transmitted cases. The metropolitan area has imposed its highest level of social-distancing restrictions, clamping down on gatherings and tightening public transportation schedules.

South Korean health officials have also expressed concern over the virus’ highly transmissible delta variant, which accounted for 374 cases last week and surpassed the 162 cases of the alpha variant within the same period.

USFK has not publicly identified which variants its patients have become infected with.

Over 30% of South Korea’s population has received the first dose of the vaccine and nearly 12% have been fully inoculated, according to KDCA data published Wednesday.

Since the uptick of cases on the peninsula, USFK has reimplemented its policy of limiting nonessential travel.

Service members are banned from visiting Areas I and II, which includes the greater Seoul area, unless they are on official business. Masks are also required indoors on military installations, regardless of whether a person is vaccinated.

choi.david@stripes.com

Okinawa-based sailors, Marines won’t lose leave earned in pandemic

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Navy is allowing sailors and Marines on Okinawa to keep excess use-or-lose leave they accrued during the coronavirus pandemic, according to a recent Navy memo.

Members of the sea service with at least 180 days on Okinawa during the current fiscal year are now

entitled to keep up to 120 days of leave when the fiscal year ends on Sept. 30.

The change was announced by Catherine Kessmeier, acting assistant secretary of the Navy for manpower and reserve affairs, in a memo Friday.

All active-duty service members earn 30 days of annual leave. Any unused leave in excess of 60 days is lost when the fiscal year

ends.

But travel bans, restricted movements and local states of emergency brought on by the coronavirus pandemic meant many sailors and Marines on Okinawa accrued plenty of unused leave over the past year. Many service members’ overseas tours were extended, or they were prevented from making stateside visits.

“The Department of the Navy’s

adherence to the Government of Japan’s Coronavirus Disease-2019 travel restrictions has significantly limited the ability of sailors and Marines permanently assigned to Okinawa, Japan, to take leave during the national emergency,” Kessmeier wrote.

Kessmeier altered the leave policy by designating service on Okinawa as “other duty” for purposes of special leave accrual, the

memo said.

The newly accrued leave must appear on leave and earnings statements at the end of September. Sailors and Marines have until the end of fiscal 2024 to use their excess leave, the memo said.

The U.S. fiscal year begins on Oct. 1 and ends on Sept. 30 of the following calendar year.

burke.matt@stripes.com

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

US cases rising, doubling over 3 weeks

Associated Press

The COVID-19 curve in the United States is rising again after months of decline, with the number of new cases per day doubling over the past three weeks, driven by the fast-spreading delta variant, lagging vaccination rates and Fourth of July gatherings.

Confirmed infections climbed to an average of about 23,600 a day on Monday, up from 11,300 on June 23, according to Johns Hopkins University data. And all but two states — Maine and South Dakota — reported that case numbers have gone up over the past two weeks.

“It is certainly no coincidence that we are looking at exactly the time that we would expect cases to be occurring after the July Fourth weekend,” said Dr. Bill Powderly, co-director of the infectious-disease division at Washington University’s School of Medicine in St. Louis.

At the same time, parts of the country are running up against deep vaccine resistance, while the highly contagious mutant version of the coronavirus that was first detected in India is accounting for an ever-larger share of infections.

Nationally, 55.6% of all Americans have received at least one COVID-19 shot, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The five states with the biggest two-week jump in cases per capita all had lower vaccination rates: Missouri, 45.9%; Arkansas, 43%; Nevada, 50.9%; Louisiana, 39.2%; and Utah, 49.5%.

Even with the latest surge, cases in the U.S. are nowhere near their peak of a quarter-million per day in January. And deaths are running at under 260 per day on average after topping out at more than 3,400 over the winter — a testament to how ef-



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

Thanks to easing restrictions, maskless patrons enjoy cold tropical cocktails in the tiny interior of the Tiki-Ti bar as it reopens on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. The number of COVID cases is rising again.

fectively the vaccine can prevent serious illness and death in those who happen to become infected.

Still, amid the rise, health authorities in places such as Los Angeles County and St. Louis are begging even immunized people to resume wearing masks in public. And Chicago officials announced Tuesday that unvaccinated travelers from Missouri and Arkansas must either quarantine for 10 days or have a negative COVID-19 test.

Meanwhile, the Health Department in Mississippi, which ranks dead last nationally for vaccinations, began blocking posts about COVID-19 on its Facebook page because of a “rise of misinforma-

tion” about the virus and the vaccine.

Mississippi officials are also recommending that people 65 and older and those with chronic underlying conditions stay away from large indoor gatherings because of a 150% rise in hospitalizations over the past three weeks.

In Louisiana, which also has one of the nation’s lowest vaccination rates, officials in the city of New Orleans said Tuesday that they are likely to extend virus-mitigation efforts currently in place at large sporting and entertainment gatherings until fall, including mask mandates or requirements that attendees be vac-

inated or have a negative COVID-19 test. State health officials said cases of the coronavirus are surging, largely among nonvaccinated people.

But the political will may not be there in many states fatigued by months of restrictions.

In Michigan, Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is facing a drive to repeal a law that she used to set major restrictions during the early stages of the pandemic.

And Republican Gov. Kay Ivey of Alabama pushed back against the idea that the state might need to reimpose preventive measures as vaccinations lag and hospitalizations rise.

“Alabama is OPEN for busi-

ness. Vaccines are readily available, and I encourage folks to get one. The state of emergency and health orders have expired. We are moving forward,” she said on social media.

Dr. James Lawler, a leader of the Global Center for Health Security at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, said bringing back masks and limiting gatherings would help. But he acknowledged that most of the places seeing higher rates of the virus “are exactly the areas of the country that don’t want to do any of these things.”

Lawler warned that what is happening in Britain is a preview of what’s to come in the U.S.

“The descriptions from regions of the world where the delta variant has taken hold and become the predominant virus are pictures of ICUs full of 30-year-olds. That’s what the critical care doctors describe and that’s what’s coming to the U.S.,” he said.

He added: “I think people have no clue what’s about to hit us.”

President Joe Biden is putting a dose of star power behind the administration’s efforts to get young people vaccinated. Eighteen-year-old actress, singer and songwriter Olivia Rodrigo will meet with Biden and Dr. Anthony Fauci on Wednesday.

While the administration has had success vaccinating older Americans, young adults have shown less urgency to get the shots.

Some, at least, are heeding the call in Missouri after weeks of begging, said Erik Frederick, chief administrative officer of Mercy Hospital Springfield. He tweeted that the number of people getting immunized at its vaccine clinic has jumped from 150 to 250 daily.

“That gives me hope,” he said.

Tokyo reaches new case peak as opening of Olympics looms

By JOSEPH DITZLER

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Japan’s capital city has announced its highest one-day count of new coronavirus cases since May, a troubling milestone as the nation prepares to host the Olympics in nine days.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government reported another 1,149 new coronavirus cases Wednesday, according to public broadcaster NHK. That’s the highest daily figure since 1,121 on May 8, the peak of the previous wave of COVID-19 cases, according to metro data online.

Meanwhile, U.S. military bases in Japan reported seven new cases of COVID-19, the coronavirus respiratory disease, as of 6 p.m. Wednesday.

For the past 25 days, Tokyo’s daily case numbers have exceeded those from the previous week, NHK reported. The number of new patients Wednesday was 229 more than July 7.

The newly infected individuals bring the city’s pandemic total to 184,119 coronavirus patients, according to metro data. The city also reported four deaths Wednesday for a total of 2,262.

Tokyo is under its fourth state of emergency in hopes of curtailing the latest viral surge. Bars and restaurants are expected to close early and refrain from selling alcohol. Residents are encouraged to avoid unnecessary travel. Mask wearing is nearly universal on city streets and public transportation.

Neighboring Chiba, Saitama and Kanagawa prefectures, all part of the greater metro area, have imposed similar measures.

The Olympics are expected to go on without spectators in the stands or with athletes not permitted much contact with people outside their respective bubbles. The traditional torch run has been trimmed to a series of semi-public events to avoid attracting large crowds to see the Olympic flame pass along Tokyo streets.

Among U.S. bases, Kadena Air Base on Okinawa added three more coronavirus patients to 22 already this month, according to a base Facebook post Tuesday evening. All three became ill with COVID-19 symptoms before testing positive, according to the air base.

U.S. Army Japan had one person test positive for the coronavirus in the past week, according to a news release from Army headquarters at Camp Zama, southeast of central Tokyo. The infected person had recently traveled outside Japan and was still under 14 days’ restricted movement.

Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, south of Hiroshima, reported that two individuals had tested positive there, according to an air station news release Wednesday. Neither case is associated with the U.S. women’s softball and fencing teams, which are at the air station while preparing for the Olympics.

Sasebo Naval Base, on the island of Kyushu, said one person had fallen ill with COVID-19 symptoms and tested positive on

Monday, according to the base Facebook page. The naval base last reported one new patient on May 25.

U.S. case numbers have dropped significantly with the arrival in December of coronavirus vaccines for service members, their families and Defense Department civilian employees. Yokosuka Naval Base has no active cases, according to a statement from the base Tuesday.

The U.S. Navy in Japan, overrun a year ago by the coronavirus, now has only three active cases, Rear Adm. Brian Fort, the outgoing Naval Forces Japan commander, said Wednesday.

NATION



EVAN VUCCI/AP

President Joe Biden delivers a speech on voting rights at the National Constitution Center on Tuesday in Philadelphia.

Biden blasts 'un-American' voting rules, prods Congress

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — President Joe Biden declared preserving voting rights an urgent national “test of our time” on Tuesday but offered few concrete proposals to meet it.

Biden, who has proclaimed protecting ballot access the central cause of his presidency, has faced sharp criticism from allies for not doing more, though political headwinds and stubborn Senate math have limited his ability to act. Despite his ringing words Tuesday, he avoided any mention of trying to alter the Senate filibuster rule that stands in the path of federal legislation.

Speaking at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Biden called state efforts to curtail voting accessibility “un-American” and “un-democratic” and launched a broadside against his predecessor, Donald Trump, who baselessly alleged misconduct in the 2020 election after his defeat. Biden called passage of congress-

sional proposals to override new state voting restrictions and to restore parts of the Voting Rights Act that were curbed in recent years by the Supreme Court “a national imperative.”

Yet instead of raising the possibility of fighting the filibuster, he appeared to tacitly acknowledge the fading hopes for the bills, saying he would launch a nationwide campaign to arm voters with information on rule changes and restrictions ahead of the 2022 mid-term elections.

“We have to prepare now,” the president said.

Biden’s sharp rhetoric drew praise from progressive groups in his party but did little to assuage the mounting pressure on him to throw his weight behind replacing the filibuster.

“The president believes that we have to make the filibuster work the way it used to,” said White House deputy press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, who added Biden has not changed his opposi-

tion to eliminating it altogether.

Some GOP-led states have worked to roll back the vote-by-mail expansion that was put in place in the past presidential election due to COVID-19 fears. Others have tried to strengthen voter identification requirements and curtail hours and locations for early voting and ballot drop-offs.

Democrats on Capitol Hill have tried to respond with a sweeping federal voting and elections bill that Senate Republicans have united to block. Most Republicans have similarly dismissed a separate bill, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would restore sections of the Voting Rights Act that the Supreme Court has weakened.

Those roadblocks have increased focus on Senate filibuster rules, which, if left in place, would seem to provide an insurmountable roadblock, requiring 60 votes in the evenly split, 100-member chamber to even bring up controversial legislation.

Senate Dems' new budget deal backs up Biden's goals

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Democrats say they have reached a budget agreement that envisions spending an enormous \$3.5 trillion over the coming decade, paving the way for their drive to pour federal resources into climate change, health care and family service programs sought by President Joe Biden.

The accord announced Tuesday night marks a major step in the party’s push to meet Biden’s goal of bolstering an economy that was ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic and setting it on course for long-term growth. It includes a Medicare expansion of vision, hearing and dental benefits for older Americans, a goal of progressives.

But Democrats behind the agreement face possible objections from rival moderate and progressive factions, and will have to work hard to convert their plans into legislation they can push through the closely divided Congress over what could be unanimous Republican opposition.

“We are very proud of this plan,” Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., told reporters. “We know we have a long road to go. We’re going to get this done for the sake of making average Americans’ lives a whole lot better.”

Biden will attend a closed-door lunch at the Capitol on Wednesday with Senate Democrats to focus on “getting this wonderful plan” enacted, Schumer said.

All told, the ambitious proposal reflects Biden’s vision for

making the most substantive potential investments in the nation in years, some say on par with the New Deal of the 1930s. Together with a slimmer, \$1 trillion bipartisan effort of traditional road, highway and public works also being negotiated, they represent close to the president’s initial \$4 trillion-plus effort that could reach almost every corner of the country.

The Democrats’ goal is to push a budget resolution reflecting Tuesday’s agreement through the House and the Senate before lawmakers leave for their August recess. The resolution sets only broad spending and revenue parameters, leaving the actual funding and specific decisions about which programs are affected — and by how much — for later legislation.

Nonetheless, approving a budget will be a major boon for the Democrats’ effort to enact their subsequent funding bill. That’s because the budget contains language that would let Democrats move the follow-up spending measure through the 50-50 Senate with just a simple majority, not the 60 votes Republicans could demand by using a bill-killing filibuster.

The actual spending legislation will likely not start moving through Congress until the fall.

Separately, a bipartisan group of senators is working to flesh out a measure that would spend around \$1 trillion on roads, water systems and other infrastructure projects, another Biden priority. Biden and that group had agreed to an outline of that measure last month.

House Republicans post record fundraising ahead of 2022 elections

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The committee charged with helping Republicans wrest control of the House in 2022 raised \$45.4 million over the last three months, a record quarterly haul during a year without a national election.

That total was bolstered by \$20.1 million raised in June, the highest ever monthly off-year total, according to numbers shared with The Associated Press before a public filing deadline.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee last week announced that it had raised \$14.4 million in June, bringing its second-quarter total to about \$36.5 million

— its best ever for that stretch.

The large sums signal that excitement is high among donors to both parties as they prepare for what is expected to be a contentious mid-term election season. Democrats hold a razor-thin majority in the House, but Republicans have history on their side: The party that occupies the White House typically sees large losses in both the House and the Senate.

GOP fundraising has also been bolstered by former President Donald Trump, whose name continues to dominate fundraising pleas for small-dollar contributions, even as he continues to spread lies about the 2020 election, which he lost to Dem-

ocrat Joe Biden.

In its next filing, the National Republican Congressional Committee will report that it raised \$79.2 million during the first half of the year, besting the \$44.5 million raised in 2019 and marking the most ever raised for that period in the committee’s history. The committee now has \$55 million cash on hand, versus more than \$44 million for the DCCC.

But this year’s numbers were also bolstered by major contributions from Republican leadership accounts. House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy has transferred \$12.76 million to the NRCC’s coffers this year, while House Republican

Whip Steve Scalise has sent \$8.39 million.

“We will take back the majority next fall, and voters are doing everything they can to help us accomplish that goal,” NRCC Chairman Tom Emmer said in a statement. “Every vulnerable House Democrat should be eyeing the exits because if they choose to run, they will lose.”

While the DCCC has lagged behind, it, too, has broken records, including logging its best second quarter in committee history.

“Our strong fundraising success shows American voters are rejecting Republican extremism and know just how critical a Democratic

House Majority is to protecting our democracy and delivering for American families,” DCCC Chairman Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney said in a statement announcing the numbers.

The Democratic fundraising totals also benefited from transfers from party leadership, though they were not as hefty as those from top Republicans. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s campaign fund contributed a bit more than \$2 million during the past three months, while Maloney’s provided just shy of \$155,000 over the same period. Another \$283,000 came during the quarter from the campaign coffers of New York Rep. Hakeem Jeffries.

NATION

Western fires threaten parched tribal lands

Associated Press

BLY, Ore. — Fierce wildfires in the northwest are threatening American Indian tribal lands that already are struggling to conserve water and preserve traditional hunting grounds in the face of a Western drought.

Blazes in Oregon and Washington were among some 60 large, active wildfires that have destroyed homes and burned through close to a million acres in a dozen mostly Western states, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

In north-central Washington, hundreds of people in the town of Nespelem on the Colville Indian Agency were ordered to leave because of “imminent and life-

threatening” danger as the largest of five wildfires caused by dozens of Monday night lightning strikes tore through grass, sagebrush and timber.

Seven homes burned but four were vacant and the entire town evacuated safely before the fire arrived, said Andrew Joseph Jr., chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation that includes more than 9,000 descendants of a dozen tribes.

The confederation declared a state of emergency Tuesday and closed the reservation to the public and to industrial activity. The declaration said weather forecasts called for possible triple-digit temperatures and 25-mph

winds on Wednesday into Thursday that could drive the flames.

In Oregon, the lightning-sparked Bootleg Fire that had destroyed at least 20 homes was raging through lands near the California border on Wednesday. At least 2,000 homes were threatened by the fire.

Mark Enty, a spokesman for the Northwest Incident Management Team 10 that is working to contain the fire, said that since he arrived to the area last week the Bootleg Fire has doubled in size each day.

“That’s sort of like having a new fire every day,” Enty said.

The blaze had spread over 315 square miles. Firefighters for the third day in a row had to back off



NATHAN HOWARD / AP

Veterinarian Tawnia Shaw, with The Happy Pet Vet team, examines horses Tuesday that had been left during a Level 3 evacuation during the Bootleg Fire near Sprague River, Ore.

occasionally for their safety.

Crews were facing above-normal temperatures and bone-dry humidity coupled with afternoon gusts that were expected to create dangerous fire conditions, officials said.

In California, progress was reported on the state’s largest fire so far this year. The Beckwourth

Complex, a combined pair of lightning-ignited blazes, was almost 50% contained after blackening more than 145 square miles near the Nevada state line.

Damage was still being tallied in the small rural community of Doyle, Calif., where flames swept in during the weekend and destroyed several homes.



ERIC GAY/AP

Protesters gather Tuesday at the Texas Capitol in Austin to rally against proposed voting bills.

Texas Dems urge quick moves on US voting

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas Democrats who hurriedly took off to Washington to block sweeping new election laws urged Congress on Tuesday to quickly pass legislation protecting voting rights, while Republican Gov. Greg Abbott threatened them with arrest the moment they return.

Speaking to reporters outside the Capitol, the Democrats were realistic about the limits of their gambit, noting they can hold up the GOP-backed proposals at home for only so long and arguing that only federal legislation would prevent some of the new restrictions from becoming law. In Austin, House Republicans authorized state troopers to find and corral missing legislators, while a depleted but still-working state Senate passed new voting restrictions in a show of GOP resolve.

“We can’t hold this tide back forever. We’re buying some time. We need Con-

gress and all of our federal leaders to use that time wisely,” Democratic state Rep. Chris Turner said, gathered with his fellow quorum-breakers outside the U.S. Capitol.

The Democrats’ dramatic exodus was in part aimed at rallying their voters on what they see as a priority issue ahead of the 2022 midterms, and at pressuring President Joe Biden to act as federal voting legislation has stalled for months in the Senate. But just as they began getting settled in Washington, Biden appeared to tacitly acknowledge the fading hopes for the bills during a speech in Philadelphia.

Biden called efforts to curtail voting accessibility “un-American” and “un-democratic” and launched a broadside against his predecessor, Donald Trump, who baselessly alleged misconduct in the 2020 election after his defeat.

Back in Texas, Republicans in the unusually skeletal state Capitol authorized

finding and bringing back more than 50 lawmakers “under warrant of arrest if necessary.” However, because state troopers have no jurisdiction beyond Texas, the move has little practical effect in the short term.

In the state Senate, where nine Democrats didn’t show up — not enough to also deny quorum — Republicans passed their version of a voting bill even though that is now as far as it can go.

The move was expected after Democrats boarded private planes Monday to deny them the quorum necessary to conduct business — namely, passing one of America’s most restrictive voting measures. Other lightning-rod conservative issues that Abbott put on the agenda — including how race is taught in schools and new abortion restrictions — also were shelved with the Legislature now at a standstill.

Feds charge 4 in Iran plot to kidnap US-based activist

Associated Press

NEW YORK — An Iranian intelligence officer and three alleged members of an Iranian intelligence network have been charged in Manhattan with plotting to kidnap a prominent Iranian opposition activist and writer in exile and take her back to Tehran, authorities said Tuesday.

An indictment in Manhattan federal court alleged that the plot was part of a wider plan to lure three individuals in Canada and a fifth person in the United Kingdom to Iran. Victims were also targeted in the United Arab Emirates, authorities said.

The identities of the alleged victims were not released but Brooklyn-based Masih Alinejad confirmed that authorities had told her she was among the targeted victims.

“I knew that this is the nature of the Islamic Republic, you know, kidnapping people, arresting people, torturing people, killing people. But I couldn’t believe it that this is going to happen to me in United States of America,” Alinejad told The Associated Press.

According to the indictment, Alireza Shavaroghi Farahani, 50, an Iranian intelligence official who resides in Iran, and three other defendants tried since at least June 2020 to kidnap Alinejad. If caught and convicted, the four could face life in prison.

Farahani and the network he led on multiple occasions in 2020 and 2021 lied about his intentions as he hired private investigators to surveil, photograph and video record Alinejad and her household members, the indictment alleged. It said the surveillance included a live high-definition video feed of the activist’s home.

The indictment alleged that the government of Iran in 2018 tried to lure her to a third country so a capture would be possible, even offering money to her relatives.

Alinejad’s family has been targeted for harassment by the Iranian government, a separate lawsuit filed by the activist in the U.S. alleges.

The others charged in the kidnapping plot were identified as Mahmoud Khazein, 42, Kiya Sadeghi, 35, and Omid Noori, 45, all from Iran.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Report: Bug zapper caused vision issues

NC DURHAM — A bug zapper that had the wrong kind of light bulb caused vision problems for five people at a veterans medical facility in North Carolina, a spokesperson said.

Yves-Marie Daley from the Durham VA Health Care System said the bulb emitted light that was too strong, impacting the vision of three employees, a resident and a contractor who had a meeting near the device, The News & Observer reported.

The people affected are healing and their vision is improving, according to Daley. She didn't specify the date of the incident or the severity of the vision loss.

Owner sells salon to longtime employee for \$1

CT NEW HAVEN — Salon owner Pio Imperati took a chance and hired hairstylist Kathy Moura right out of technical high school 15 years ago. It has worked out so well that Imperati sold her his venerable New Haven business for \$1.

"She's a good hairdresser, a good barber, she's very nice," Imperati told the New Haven Register about the sale of Pio of Italy Hair Studio.

While Moura will pay rent to Imperati, she avoids a charge that can run into the tens of thousands of dollars to purchase a salon for the equipment, supplies and clientele.

Imperati, 79, is now working there as an independent contractor.

Deputy helps hoof wayward cows home

MI MASON — A sheriff's deputy hoofed it for 3 miles along a two-lane Michigan road to help guide eight wayward cows back to a farm.

The Ingham County sheriff's office transport unit responded to a report of cattle blocking a road near Mason, WLNS-TV reported.

The deputy and two other men spent about two hours rounding up and herding the bovine back home. Part of the trek was recorded by a dashcam in a sheriff's office vehicle.

Hospital: Patient got someone else's kidney

OH CLEVELAND — An Ohio hospital has acknowledged that a patient received a new kidney meant for someone else.

Officials at University Hospitals in Cleveland apologized for the mistake and said two employees have been placed on administrative leave.

The kidney given to the wrong patient is compatible and the person is expected to recover, officials said.

The other patient's surgery has



KRISTOPHER RADDER, THE BRATTLEBORO (VT.) REFORMER/AP

A dip at the dam

Sean Latvis, 13, from Hinsdale, N.H., dives into the waters of the Connecticut River near the Vernon, Vt., Hydro Dam.

been delayed. Officials said the hospital is reviewing how the error occurred to prevent similar mistakes going forward.

Rare historic canoe found in mountain river

SC COLUMBIA — Conservationists pulled a historic canoe from a river at the Georgia-South Carolina line and plan to put it on display.

Volunteers with the Chattooga Conservancy hauled the weathered wooden canoe out of the South Carolina side of the Chattooga River after a group of canoeists headed downstream discovered the craft last fall, The State newspaper in Columbia reported.

Archaeologists at the University of South Carolina said the boat could be 200 to 250 years old, a discovery that could shed light on life in the late 1700s.

Record of annual manatee deaths broken

FL STUART — More manatees have died already this year than in any other year in Florida's recorded history, primarily from starvation due to the loss of seagrass beds, state offi-

THE CENSUS

17M The number of gallons of sewage that were spilled into Santa Monica Bay from a treatment plant, closing several Los Angeles-area beaches to swimmers and surfers. Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn said on Twitter that an unspecified mechanical failure caused the spill at the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant. About four miles of beaches from El Segundo to the southern end of Playa del Rey were closed indefinitely while officials conducted tests on the water.

cials said.

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission reported that 841 manatee deaths were recorded through July 2, breaking the previous record of 830 that died in 2013 because of an outbreak of toxic red tide.

Some biologists believe water pollution is killing the seagrass beds in the area.

Boat strikes are also a major cause of manatee deaths, killing at least 63 this year.

Nearly 10K winners to split \$3.6M jackpot

NC CHARLOTTE — Nearly 10,000 winners of a North Carolina lottery game will split the \$3.6 million jackpot.

The Charlotte Observer reported that the 9,307 players won the Carolina Pick 3 in a drawing last Friday.

All of the winners chose the

same numbers: 0-0-0. Each beat odds of 1 in 1,000.

Prizes will vary depending on how much people pay for a ticket. Players who paid 50 cents get \$250 before taxes. Those who paid \$1 get the top prize of \$500.

Schools pick Phoenix to replace former mascot

KS ATCHISON — The Phoenix will be the new mascot for the Atchison public school district, replacing former mascots tied to Native American imagery.

The Atchison School Board chose the new mascot by a 5-1 vote.

The board voted in April to replace the former mascots — "Redmen" for the high school and "Braves" for the middle school.

That change came after Atchison United, a group that promotes diversity, pushed for a more ra-

cially sensitive mascot.

The image of the Phoenix the school will use has not been chosen but the school colors will remain red and yellow.

Ex-teacher accused of expensing gas for his car

TN NASHVILLE — The Tennessee comptroller's office said a former middle school teacher who also was an assistant baseball coach was indicted on charges that he expensed more than \$10,100 in gas for his personal car.

According to the comptroller's investigation, the former Unicoi County Middle School teacher and coach used the department fuel card at least 169 times to gas up his personal car without permission from June 2015 until early October 2020, including in South Carolina and Florida.

The report said the former teacher was authorized through the coaching position at the Northeast Tennessee school to buy diesel fuel for a school vehicle.

The former teacher was indicted July 9 on one count of theft over \$10,000, the report said.

WORLD

Cuba confirms 1 death in protests

BY ANDREA RODRIGUEZ
Associated Press

HAVANA — Cuban authorities confirmed Tuesday that one person has died during demonstrations that have shaken the island in recent days by protesting over food shortages, high prices and other grievances against the government.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement that Diubis Laurencio Tejeda, 36, died Monday during a clash between protesters and police in the Arroyo Naranjo municipality on the outskirts of Havana. It said an unspecified number of people were arrested and there were some people injured, including some officers.

The statement accused demonstrators of vandalizing houses, setting fires and damaging power lines. It also alleged they attacked police and civilians with knives, stones and other objects.

Demonstrations that erupted Sunday have seen thousands of Cubans in the streets voicing grievances against shortages of goods, rising prices and power cuts, and some protesters have called for a change of government.

Havana still had a heavy police presence Tuesday, with officers particularly guarding key points such as the Malecon coastal promenade and the Capitol. Internet and

cellphone data service continued to be disrupted.

There were no reports of new protests, which the government has sought to blame on Cuban Americans using social media to instigate unrest in Cuba.

The demonstrations in several cities and towns were some of the biggest displays of antigovernment sentiment seen in years in tightly controlled Cuba, which is facing a surge of coronavirus cases as it struggles with its worst economic crisis in decades as a consequence of U.S. sanctions imposed by the Trump administration.

The rare outpouring of dissent led former President Raul Castro to join with other top leaders Monday to discuss the situation.

“On July 11, there were riots, there were disorders on a very limited scale, opportunistically taking advantage of the difficult conditions in which we Cubans are living today,” Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said Tuesday, adding that government experts had found evidence of outsiders using sophisticated equipment to widely broadcast alarmist and inciting messages over social media.

But, Rodriguez said, “On July 11, there was no social explosion in Cuba. There was not because of the will of our people and be-

cause of the support of our people for the revolution and its government.”

Cuba's Roman Catholic bishops issued a call to avoid violence.

“We understand that the government has responsibilities and has tried to take measures to alleviate the aforementioned difficulties, but we also understand that the people have the right to express their needs, desires and hopes,” they said in a statement.

The demonstrations were extremely unusual on an island where little dissent against the government is tolerated. The last major public demonstration of discontent, over economic hardship, took place nearly 30 years ago in 1994. Last year, there were small demonstrations by artists and other groups, but nothing as big or widespread as what erupted this past weekend.

The U.S. has, so far at least, not detected any surge of migrants from Cuba, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told reporters in Washington on Tuesday.

He also cautioned Cubans that any migrants intercepted at sea are returned to their homelands or sent to other countries under long-standing agreements intended to discourage people from trying to make the dangerous crossing.

Unrest persists in South Africa

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — Rioting continued in parts of South Africa Wednesday, in unrest sparked by the imprisonment last week of ex-President Jacob Zuma that has spiraled into days of looting in two of the country's nine provinces.

South Africa's police say 72 people have been killed and 1,234 have been arrested in waves of rioting that have hit the KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces. Many of the deaths were caused by chaotic stampedes as thousands of people stole food, electric appliances, liquor and clothing from stores, police Maj. Gen. Mathapelo Peters said in a statement.

In eastern Johannesburg, some retail centers continued to be under attack Wednesday, while in Soweto township, south of the city, police and army units patrolled malls and streets. Community volunteer groups have begun cleaning up the broken glass and debris caused by the destructive mobs 24 hours earlier.

The violence broke out after Zuma began serving a 15-month sentence for contempt of court last week for refusing to comply with a court order to testify at a state-backed inquiry investigating allegations of corruption while he was president from 2009 to 2018.



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Baron Cohen



Moore

Judge tosses suit over Baron Cohen interview

A federal judge on Tuesday dismissed failed U.S. Senate candidate Roy Moore's \$95 million lawsuit targeting comedian Sacha Baron Cohen filed after Moore complained he was tricked into an interview that lampooned sexual misconduct accusations against him.

Judge John Cronan wrote that Moore signed a clear disclosure agreement that prohibited any legal claims over the appearance. He added that the absurd segment — in which the comic demonstrated a so-called pedophile detector that beeped when it got near Moore — was “clearly a joke” and no viewer would think the comedian was making factual allegations against Moore.

“The court agrees that Judge Moore's claims are barred by the unambiguous contractual language, which precludes the very causes of action he now brings,” Cronan wrote.

The suit centered on Moore's unwitting appearance on the comic's “Who Is America?” show. The segment ran after Moore faced misconduct accusations that he had pursued sexual and romantic relationships with teens when he was a man in his 30s. He has denied the allegations.

Moore, a Republican judge known for stances opposing same-sex marriage and supporting the public display of Ten Commandments, faced the accusations during his 2017 race for U.S. Senate. The accusations contributed to his loss to Doug Jones, the first Democrat to represent Alabama in the Senate in a quarter-century.

■ In another legal matter, Baron Cohen has sued a Massachusetts cannabis dispensary he says used an image of his character Borat on a billboard without his permission, according to documents filed in U.S. District Court in Boston. Baron Cohen and his California-based company Please You Can Touch LLC are seeking \$9 million in damages from Solar Therapeutics, Inc.

Other news

■ **Charlie Robinson**, the versatile and prolific actor whose many credits ranged from stage productions of “Driving Miss Daisy” and “Fences” to such films as “Secret Santa” and “Miss Lettie and Me” to his long-running role as the court clerk Mac Robinson in the sitcom “Night Court,” has died. He was 75.

From The Associated Press



ALEX ANAM, PING PONG PRODUCTIONS/The Washington Post

From left: “Sharknado” stars Tara Reid and Ian Ziering. Ziering took the role in the first film, which became a bonkers franchise for Syfy and a pop-culture phenomenon, because he needed the acting credit to keep his Screen Actors Guild health insurance.

A very special ‘Sharknado’

Shark Week special wants to prove sharks aren't ‘crazed lunatic man-killers’

BY EMILY YAHR
The Washington Post

When shark expert Tristan Guttridge was first approached to participate in a Discovery Channel Shark Week special about “sharknados” — the extreme weather event from the notoriously ridiculous Syfy movie franchise — his reaction was pretty much what you might expect from a scientist.

“I was like, ‘Uhh, I don’t know,’” Guttridge recalled in a Zoom interview. “I mean, ‘Sharknado’ is obviously just insane ... I would like to think that most people that watch it would not believe that this is how sharks act, but you never quite know with people these days.”

Then he heard more details: Not only would he be paired with “Sharknado” stars Tara Reid and Ian Ziering to debunk the wildest aspects of the movies and demonstrate how sharks are not actually “crazed lunatic man-killers,” but the special would also include scientific exploration of how sharks actually behave during storms. Plus, although the franchise was absurd, he had a soft spot for the mindless entertainment it provided millions of viewers.

Thus, “The Real Sharknado” was born, continuing the phenomenon that started with “Sharknado” eight years ago and caused viewers to ask: “Am I hallucinating?” The special is airing Thursday on AFN-Spectrum and will stream on Discovery Plus as part of the network's hugely popular Shark Week. Over the past three decades, Hollywood stars have become increasingly involved in Discovery's annual exploration of the animals, but this is the first time anyone from the “Sharknado” universe has converged with a Shark Week show. The special asks everything from “Are sharks as dangerous and vicious as their films lead us

to believe?” to “Can sharknados exist?”

“Sharknado,” if you recall, started as a throwaway joke in the 2012 Syfy film “Leprechaun's Revenge.” As “Sharknado” writer Thunder Levin recalled, one character said, “Gosh, I hope we don't go the way of that other town. They never recovered after the sharknado hit.” This cracked up the Syfy executives so much that they decided to make a movie about it the following summer. Though the low-budget project aired on a random Thursday night

“‘Sharknado’ is so popular [because] it's escapism; it's fantasy. Everyone has a healthy fear of sharks, because we don't see them and there's a tremendous amount of mystery involved. We brought them to life and put them in a different environment.”

Ian Ziering

with little promotion, it became a Twitter frenzy that turned into a phenomenon, spawning six movies with a slew of celebrity cameos.

When Ziering was initially tapped to star in the first movie, he only said yes because he needed to have enough acting credits to stay on the Screen Actors Guild health insurance plan, he said. He was so mortified by the role that he

didn't tell anyone about it, so he was shocked by the intense social media reaction when it premiered. Syfy re-aired the film throughout the summer as viewers clamored for more.

“‘Sharknado’ is so popular [because] it's escapism; it's fantasy. Everyone has a healthy fear of sharks, because we don't see them and there's a tremendous amount of mystery involved. We brought them to life and put them in a different environment,” Ziering said, ticking off some of the bonkers situations that occurred throughout the films in which he and Reid's characters tried to save the world from cyclones filled with sharks: He used a chainsaw to kill a shark. There were sharks in space. Reid's character had a baby inside a shark.

For the special, Ziering and Reid joined Guttridge near Tiger Beach in the Bahamas, where they interacted with sharks. The first task: Proving that humans “are not on their menu,” as Guttridge put it. “Sharks have no interest in us from a food perspective.”

They sent Ziering and Reid underwater to see sharks close up, which Ziering said was rather tranquil — even when a 13-foot tiger shark headed his way. “I didn't feel threatened, but my heart started to race a little bit,” he said. Then Ziering and Reid got in a glass-bottom kayak with bait tied above them so Guttridge could prove that sharks won't jump extremely high in the air. (This is something that happens frequently in “Sharknado.”)

Ziering can't believe that the movies he was once too embarrassed to talk about fueled a franchise that people still want to discuss.

“It just taught me a lesson me not to really judge a book by its cover,” he said. “Just to be open to whatever the universe has for me, and don't rush to make decisions that could have lifelong consequences.”

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Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
 Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, Europe commander
 Lt. Col. Michael Kerschbaum, Pacific commander
 Michael Ryan, Pacific chief of staff

EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
 leonard.terry@stripes.com

Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
 reid.robert@stripes.com

Tina Croley, Managing Editor for Content
 croley.tina@stripes.com

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

Joe Gromelski, Managing Editor for Digital
 gromelski.joe@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast

Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
 slavin.erik@stripes.com
 +49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
 kidd.aaron@stripes.com
 +81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

Washington

Joseph Cacchioli, Washington Bureau Chief
 cacchioli.joseph@stripes.com
 (+1)(202)886-0033
 Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
 bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast

Robert Reismann, Mideast Circulation Manager
 robert.w.reismann.naf@mail.mil
 xsscirculation@stripes.com
 DSN (314)583-9111

Europe

Karen Lewis, Community Engagement Manager
 lewis.karen@stripes.com
 memberservices@stripes.com
 +49(0)631.3615.9090; DSN (314)583.9090

Pacific

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

CONTACT US

Washington

tel: (+1)202.886.0003
 633 3rd St. NW, Suite 116, Washington, DC 20001-3050

Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts

stripes.com/contactus

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OPINION

America should shift vaccine focus

By MARTY MAKARY

Special to The Washington Post

While the United States is running lotteries and celebrity ad campaigns to convince every American to get vaccinated, other parts of the world are digging mass graves for their victims of COVID-19. Therein lies the greatest failure of the current U.S. pandemic response: It has become fixated on the disease at home while giving lip service and responding slowly to the threat abroad.

In the United States, the COVID-19 threat is currently low. Nearly all at-risk Americans are protected. The virus is now circulating in young people for which the case-fatality rate is similar to seasonal flu, except daily COVID-19 cases are a fraction of the daily influenza cases in a mild flu season (about 20,000 vs. 133,000 per day).

But it's a very different pandemic overseas. Hospitals around the world are overrun, and the morgues are overflowing due to low vaccination rates. More than 70 countries and territories have vaccinated less than 10 percent of their population, with 12 unable to reach even 1 percent. We need to help them get vaccinated.

President Joe Biden declared June a "month of action" in an attempt to reach his ambitious goal of vaccinating 70 percent of American adults with at least one dose by July 4. That effort came up short, but in the process, the government has hoarded vaccines in surplus, putting millions of vaccines on track to expire and end up in the trash, by order of the Food and Drug Administration. They should be on trucks headed to Canada or Mexico.

The waste is expected to continue into the fall. The United States purchased a whopping 200 million additional Moderna doses for boosters and child vaccinations, despite

no evidence that boosters are needed for the general public.

Let me be clear: As many non-immune Americans as possible should still get the vaccine. But spending millions of tax dollars to pay people to get vaccinated — as California is doing — is not the answer. It is financial mismanagement and a tunnel-vision approach to valuing human life.

Biden recently announced a global vaccine sharing program to get more vaccine doses to other countries in need, and his administration plans to purchase an additional 500 million vaccine doses for donation. But this came several months too late and did not come with a global supply chain plan. It's not as simple as ordering an Amazon delivery to Ghana. It takes months to establish distribution channels and set up vaccination sites. The United States planned for six months to distribute the vaccine domestically and still had many hiccups, including nursing homes getting the vaccine a full month after FDA approval. Imagine trying to do the same in a country with less developed infrastructure.

And vaccine supply is not the only issue. I've spoken with some of the leading experts on global logistics. They describe incredible challenges to distributing the vaccine around the world. There's a lack of refrigerated vehicles and on-site cold storage. Transportation can be unreliable and law enforcement isn't always in place to prevent the theft of vaccines.

What's more, systematic corruption and misuse of funds notoriously cripple U.N.-led aid efforts and could threaten Covax, the U.N.'s global vaccine effort. As Ron Cruse, founder and chief executive of the supply-chain service company Logenix International, told me, "The scale of vaccine aid in this instance is not something the U.N. han-

dles well, historically." Already in Kenya, legislators are investigating the misappropriation of \$69 million in Covax aid. Cruse added, "This kind of corruption can lead to a total breakdown in the supply chain of life-saving medicine."

These are the problems the administration should be focusing on. It can help the world learn from our mistakes and incorporate the newest scientific findings on the effectiveness of the first dose and the power of natural immunity.

The administration should also reconsider requiring second vaccine doses for kids under the age of 18.

We know COVID-19 death in healthy kids is extremely rare, and a recent Israeli study of kids 12-15 found that a single dose of the Pfizer vaccine was 100 percent effective after three weeks. Plus, complications with myocarditis in kids after vaccination have clustered immediately after the second dose.

So why is the United States using precious vaccines on second doses for healthy kids when the risk-benefit analysis for that second dose is not yet conclusive?

The domestic threat of COVID-19 is markedly reduced. Given the contribution of natural immunity, the United States has much higher levels of population immunity than our vaccination rates suggest, with upward of 85 percent of adults now immune. If the United States really wants to tackle the coronavirus pandemic and reduce the risk of new variants developing overseas, it should stop running vaccine ads with celebrities and politicians and start turning its attention to the more challenging task abroad.

Marty Makary is a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Bloomberg School of Public Health and Carey Business School.

US needs to stand with Cuba's peaceful demonstrators

By JENNIFER RUBIN

The Washington Post

Cubans are taking to the streets to protest of their Communist rulers, a rare exception to the regime's success in suppressing dissent. How far will the Biden administration go to defend the right to protest peacefully?

The sight of Cubans demonstrating against the incompetence and repression of a dictatorial government provided a rare moment of bipartisan agreement. President Joe Biden on Monday declared: "We stand with the Cuban people and their clarion call for freedom and relief from the tragic grip of the pandemic and from the decades of repression and economic suffering to which they have been subjected by Cuba's authoritarian regime." In a shot across the bow of the island nation's ruling class, Biden asserted, "The Cuban people are bravely asserting fundamental and universal rights. . . . The United States calls on the Cuban regime to hear their people and serve their needs at this vital moment rather than enriching themselves."

Conservatives and liberals in Congress issued similar words of support. Freedom House likewise issued a statement supporting the protesters who have been brutally attacked by police: "In a remarkable and unprecedented demonstration, thousands of Cubans took to the streets on Sunday, de-

manding their fundamental freedoms, economic reforms, and the 'end of the dictatorship.' Paramilitary troops, specialized riot police, and supporters of President [Miguel Díaz-Canel] have injured and arbitrarily detained hundreds of peaceful prodemocracy demonstrators." The organization also called on the international community to "emphatically denounce the 'combat order' issued by President Díaz-Canel," warning that the regime's rhetoric "can push the country into civil war."

It is unclear what the United States can do beyond offering words of support to nurture a democratic movement. Officially, our Cuba policy is under review. Human rights advocates have a number of policy shifts in mind. David Kramer, a human rights guru currently with the McCain Institute said, "We should be crystal clear in standing with the people of Cuba, rally our democratic allies in solidarity, impose sanctions on those cracking down on the protesters, and magnify messaging about the gross mismanagement of the Cuban economy by the government and Communist Party."

This is a perfect opportunity to reinvigorate Radio Televisión Martí, an American state-run broadcaster that transmits news to Cuba, and was a victim of Trump-era budget cuts, right-wing politicization and cronyism. The Cuban regime has long feared its people's access to accurate news

about the outside world and their own disastrously-run country. In particular, the Cuban people should understand that their country's vaccine program is badly deficient and that its regime refuses to join Covax, the World Health Organization vaccine-distribution program that could provide Cubans with vaccines.

A Freedom House spokesperson also suggests that, on a bipartisan basis, the United States should call for "the release of political prisoners in Cuba, an immediate end to violence against protesters, and restoration of internet access." In addition, it urges the Biden administration to work with other democracies in our hemisphere to "support pro-democracy [civil society organizations] and grass-roots movements, calling for reforms and civil society efforts to block against/counteract repression." The United States can also "condemn Cuba's actions at the United Nations and the Organization of American States."

It is not clear whether the demonstrations will continue, but the administration should complete its policy review and seize the opportunity to show that it stands on the side of democracy and is willing to provide humanitarian aid to those abandoned by their own government. If not in Cuba, democracy advocates around the world may be emboldened to defend rights so long as the United States has their backs.

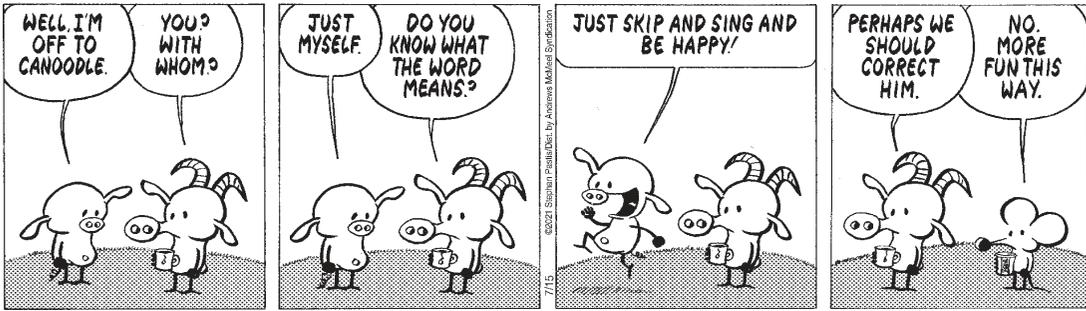
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



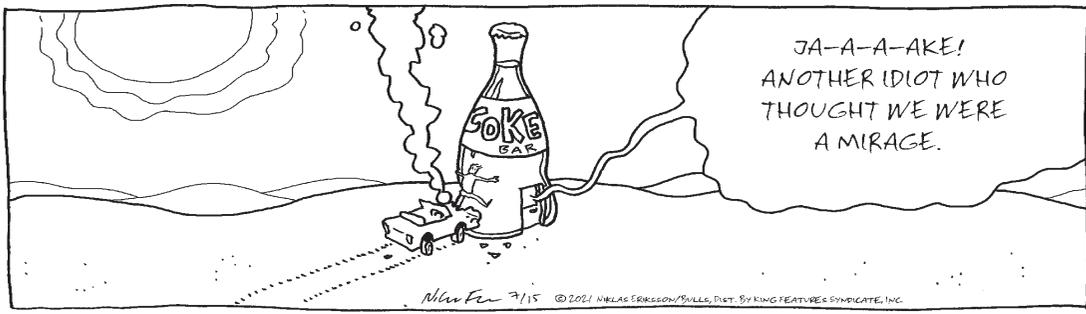
Non Sequitur



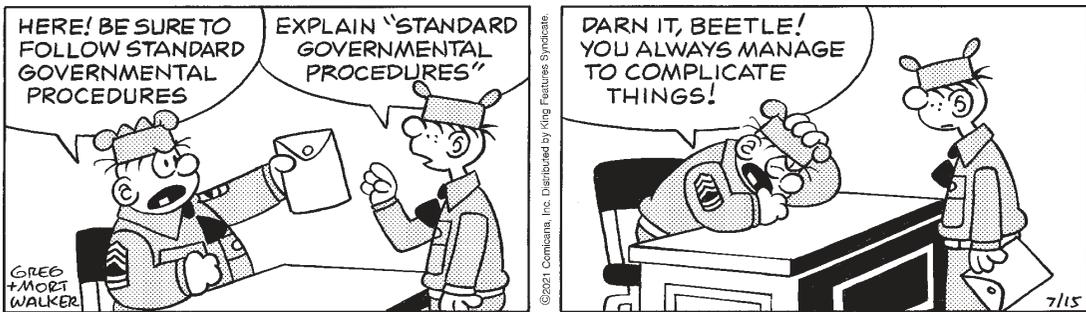
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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

ACROSS

- 1 Wine region
- 5 "GMA" network
- 8 Espy
- 12 Weaving machine
- 13 Brit's restroom
- 14 Baby carriage
- 15 Virgil or Wyatt
- 16 Possess
- 17 Decays
- 18 Lowlife, in slang
- 20 Futile
- 22 Mötley Crüe album of 1989
- 26 Lauder of cosmetics
- 29 Decade parts (Abbr.)
- 30 Actress Hagen
- 31 Cask sediment
- 32 Morsel
- 33 Tizzy
- 34 Solo of "Star Wars"
- 35 Aachen article
- 36 "Selma" actress Thompson
- 37 "No worries"
- 40 Influence
- 41 Brought up
- 45 Nourish
- 47 Online chats, briefly
- 49 Polynesian carving
- 50 Say it's so

- 51 Acapulco gold
- 52 Omelet base
- 53 "I did it!"
- 54 French diarist Anaïs
- 55 Obi

DOWN

- 1 Actor Guinness
- 2 Fly high
- 3 Rent
- 4 Obstructs
- 5 Unfriendly
- 6 Gift topper
- 7 Change a digital file format
- 8 Parsley piece
- 9 She and he, e.g.
- 10 Granola morsel
- 11 Corp. symbols
- 19 Opposite of "post-"
- 21 Gore and Green
- 23 Sizing up
- 24 Elevator name
- 25 Info
- 26 K thru 12
- 27 Pants part
- 28 Bicycle type
- 32 Huge number
- 33 Tranquilizes
- 35 Right angle
- 36 Water tester
- 38 Actress McDonald of "Carousel"
- 39 Director Welles
- 42 Latvia's capital
- 43 Heart charts (Abbr.)
- 44 Platter
- 45 Obese
- 46 Actress Mendes
- 48 Hosp. scan

Answer to Previous Puzzle

	C	A	P			G	O	D				
	U	R	S	A		C	R	A	I	G		
S	P	E	A	R		L	A	S	S	E	S	
C	O	M	P	A	N	Y	P	I	C	N	I	C
I	N	A		S	I	D	E	S		O	L	A
				D	O	T	E		A	M	A	T
	A	G	I	L	E		P	A	G	E	S	
C	F	O	S			M	O	D	E			
E	L	O		S	C	A	L	A		M	O	O
L	A	D	D	E	R	C	O	M	P	A	N	Y
	C	A	R	E	E	R		A	L	U	M	S
		T	O	R	S	O		N	E	V	E	
		P	S	T				T	A	E		

7-15

CRYPTOQUIP

LN VMJPTF'P HUSECK URDUNP
 P CFGP MJS XTRCP MH
 JFPMRTVTSCG CLUTR. T FMD
 VURR ETL JFVRC PXUL.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF SOME STUFFED ANIMALS GOT MADE OUT OF BURLAP FIBERS, I SUPPOSE THEY MIGHT BE GUNNY BEARS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals P

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PRO SOCCER

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
New England	7	3	3	24	22	18
Orlando City	6	3	3	21	20	12
Philadelphia	5	3	5	20	16	12
CF Montréal	5	3	4	19	14	11
Nashville	4	1	7	19	16	13
NYCFC	5	4	2	17	19	13
New York	5	5	2	17	17	15
Columbus	4	3	5	17	13	11
D.C. United	5	6	1	16	17	14
Atlanta	2	3	7	13	13	15
Cincinnati	3	5	3	12	12	20
Chicago	3	7	2	11	13	18
Inter Miami CF	2	7	2	8	9	17
Toronto FC	2	8	2	8	16	29

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Seattle	8	0	5	29	23	8
Sporting KC	8	3	2	26	24	15
LA Galaxy	8	4	0	24	20	18
Colorado	6	3	2	20	18	12
LAFc	5	4	3	18	15	12
Real Salt Lake	4	3	4	16	18	12
Minnesota	4	5	3	15	12	16
Houston	3	4	6	15	16	19
Portland	4	6	1	13	14	19
Austin FC	3	6	4	13	10	14
San Jose	3	7	2	11	14	22
FC Dallas	2	5	5	11	14	20
Vancouver	2	7	3	9	12	22

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

Saturday's games

New England at Atlanta
Miami at New York
Cincinnati at CF Montréal
D.C. United at Philadelphia
New York City FC at Columbus
Orlando City at Toronto FC
Chicago at Nashville
San Jose at Colorado
LA Galaxy at Vancouver
FC Dallas at Portland
Real Salt Lake at Los Angeles FC

Sunday's game

Seattle at Minnesota

Tuesday, July 20

Houston at Vancouver

Wednesday, July 21

Nashville at Columbus
New York at Toronto FC
CF Montréal at New York City FC
New England at Miami
Atlanta at Cincinnati
D.C. United at Chicago
San Jose at Sporting Kansas City
FC Dallas at Colorado
LA Galaxy at Real Salt Lake
Los Angeles FC at Portland

Thursday, July 22

Philadelphia at Orlando City
Seattle at Austin FC

Saturday, July 24

Columbus at Atlanta
Portland at Minnesota
Toronto FC at Chicago
Cincinnati at Nashville
LA Galaxy at FC Dallas
Colorado at Real Salt Lake
Houston at San Jose
Vancouver at Los Angeles FC

Sunday, July 25

CF Montréal at New England
Orlando City at New York City FC
Philadelphia at Miami
New York at D.C. United
Sporting Kansas City at Seattle

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
North Carolina	5	3	1	16	14	6
Orlando	4	2	4	16	13	11
Portland	5	3	1	16	14	6
Washington	4	2	3	15	10	8
Chicago	4	4	2	14	8	14
Gotham FC	3	1	4	13	7	3
Houston	4	4	1	13	11	10
Louisville	3	4	2	11	7	13
Reign FC	3	5	1	10	7	10
Kansas City	0	7	3	3	5	15

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

Saturday's game

Houston at North Carolina

Sunday's games

Gotham FC at Washington
Reign FC at Chicago
Orlando at Portland

Friday, July 23

North Carolina at Kansas City

Saturday, July 24

Portland at Houston
Reign FC at Orlando

Sunday, July 25

Washington at Louisville
Chicago at Gotham FC

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Connecticut	14	6	.700	—
Chicago	10	10	.500	4
New York	10	11	.476	4½
Washington	8	10	.444	5
Atlanta	6	13	.316	7½
Indiana	4	16	.200	10

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	16	5	.762	—
Las Vegas	15	6	.714	1
Minnesota	12	7	.632	3
Phoenix	9	10	.474	6
Dallas	9	12	.429	7
Los Angeles	6	13	.316	9

Monday's games

No games scheduled

Tuesday's games

No games scheduled

Wednesday's games

All-Star Game: Team WNBA vs USAB Women's Nat. Team

Thursday's games

No games scheduled

Friday's games

No games scheduled

DEALS

Tuesday's transactions

BASEBALL

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Sent LF Eloy Jimenez to Charlotte (Triple-A East) on a rehab assignment.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Sent LHP Daniel Tillo to Northwest Arkansas (Double-A Central) on a rehab assignment.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Sent C Mitch Garver and OF Jake Cave to St. Paul (Triple-A East) on rehab assignments. Signed RHP Orlando Rodriguez to a minor league contract.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Sent RHP Casey Sadler to Everett (Triple-A West) on a rehab assignment.

TEXAS RANGERS — Sent C Sam Huff to Frisco RoughRiders (Double-A Central) on a rehab assignment.

National League

ATLANTA BRAVES — Sent RHP Jay Flaa outright to Gwinnett (Triple-A East).

CHICAGO CUBS — Sent 3B Matt Duffy to Iowa (Triple-A East) on a rehab assignment.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Designated RHP Bobby Wahl for assignment. Claimed RHP Jimmie Sherry off waivers from San Francisco Giants.

MIAMI MARLINS — Sent LHP Shawn Morimando and RHP Preston Guilmet outright to Jacksonville (Triple-A East). Sent RHP John Curtiss to Beloit (High-A Central) on a rehab assignment. Optioned RHP Jorge Guzman to Jacksonville.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Sent RHP Justin Topa to Arizona Complex League (ACL) Brewers Blue on a rehab assignment. Acquired LHP Kyle Lobstein from Washington Nationals in exchange for cash and assigned him to Nashville (Triple-A East).

Designated RHP Ryan Weber for assignment. Sent SS Daniel Robertson outright to Nashville.

NEW YORK METS — Sent OF Johneshwy Fargas to Binghamton (Double-A Northeast) on a rehab assignment.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Placed LHP Sam Howard on the 10-day IL, retroactive to July 10.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

EDMONTON OILERS — Acquired C Tim Soderlund and D Duncan Keith from Chicago for D Caleb Jones and a 2022 third-round pick.

NASHVILLE PREDATORS — Announced the retirement of G Pekka Rinne.

SOCCER

Major League Soccer

MLS DISCIPLINARY — Found Cincinnati FC and Columbus Crew SC in violation of the Mass Confrontation Policy in their match on Friday, July 9 and both clubs have been issued a warning for their first violation. The Independent Review Panel has unanimously rescinded the one-match suspension and accompanying fine for the red card issued to Atlanta United FC's Jake Mulraney in the match against Nashville SC on Thursday, July 8.

FC DALLAS — Loaned M Thomas Roberts to SK Austria Klagenfurt in the Austrian Bundesliga for the remainder of 2021-22 season and extended his contract with a club option for the 2023 season.

NEW YORK FC — Named Morten Grahn Academy Director, pending receipt of his work visa.

PHILADELPHIA UNION — Loaned M Matej Oravec to Slovakian side FK Zelezarne Podbrezova on a one-year loan.

COLLEGE

BARUCH — Promoted Nicole Bellini to head softball coach.

EAST CAROLINA — Named Ashley Holland assistant women's soccer coach.

KEENE ST. — Named Justin Blood head baseball coach.

TUSCULUM — Named Trea King head spirit coordinator.

WISCONSIN — Named Kristen Simpson assistant women's golf coach.

TENNIS

Hall of Fame Open

Tuesday

At International Tennis Hall of Fame

Newport, R.I.

Purse: \$466,870

Surface: Grass

Men's Singles

Round of 32

Sebastian Ofner, Austria, def. Yasutaka Uchiyama, Japan, 6-4, 6-4.

Ivo Karlovic, Croatia, def. Bernabe Zapata Miralles, Spain, 6-7 (5), 6-1, 6-4.

Tennys Sandgren (5), United States, def. Joao Sousa, Portugal, 6-4, 7-6 (3).

Jason Jung, Taiwan, def. Brayden Schnur, Canada, 7-5, 6-7 (1), 7-6 (4).

Peter Gojowczyk, Germany, def. Mitchell Krueger, United States, 6-2, 6-2.

Jack Sock, United States, def. Alex Bolt, Australia, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Maxime Cressy, United States, def. Paolo Lorenzi, Italy, 6-1, 6-2.

Men's Doubles

Round of 16

Vasek Pospisil, Canada, and Austin Krajicek, United States, def. Marcus Daniell, New Zealand, and Ben McLachlan (1), Japan, 7-5, 6-3.

Jonathan Erlich, Israel, and Santiago Gonzalez (2), Mexico, def. Treat Conrad Huey, Philippines, and Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela, Mexico, 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Dennis Novikov, United States, and Alexander Bublik, Kazakhstan, def. Robert Galloy and Alex Lawson, United States, 4-6, 7-6 (2), 10-8.

Yasutaka Uchiyama and Yoshihito Nishio, Japan, def. Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, Pakistan, and Ramkumar Ramanathan, India, 1-6, 7-5, 10-7.

Hamburg European Open

Tuesday

At Am Rothenbaum Rot-Weiss Tennis Club

Hamburg, Germany

Purse: Euro 1,030,900

Surface: Red clay

Men's Singles

Round of 32

Juan Pablo Varillas, Peru, def. Sumit Nagal, India, 6-0, 6-4.

Carlos Taberner, Spain, def. Feliciano Lopez, Spain, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

Federico Delbonis, Argentina, def. Zhizhen Zhang, China, 6-1, 5-7, 6-4.

Filip Krajinovic (6), Serbia, def. Daniel Altmaier, Germany, 6-3, 6-7 (3), 6-1.

Alex Molcan, Slovakia, def. Gianluca Mager, Italy, 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (3).

Laslo Djere, Serbia, def. Jan-Lennard Struff (7), Germany, 6-4, 7-5.

Dominik Koepfer, Germany, def. Maximilian Marterer, Germany, 7-6 (2), 2-6, 7-6 (4).

Dusan Lajovic (5), Serbia, def. Lucas Pouille, France, 6-4, 6-4.

Men's Doubles

Round of 16

Michael Venus, New Zealand, and Tim Puetz (2), Germany, def. Stefanos Tsitsipas and Petros Tsitsipas, Greece, 7-5, 7-6 (5).

Horia Tecau, Romania, and Kevin Krawietz (1), Germany, def. Ruben Gonzalez, Philippines, and Hunter Johnson, United States, 6-0, 6-1.

Hungarian Grand Prix

Tuesday

At Europe Tennis Center

Budapest, Hungary

Purse: \$235,238

Surface: Red clay

Women's Singles

Round of 32

Reka Luca Jani, Hungary, def. Elisabetta Cocciaretto, Italy, 6-4, 7-5.

Ana Bogdan (5), Romania, def. Varvara Lepchenko, United States, 6-4, 7-5.

Ivana Jorovic, Serbia, def. Jaqueline Adina Cristian, Romania, 5-7, 7-6 (6), 7-6 (3).

Danielle Collins (2), United States, def. Martina Di Giuseppe, Italy, 6-2, 6-1.

Panna Udvardy, Hungary, def. Mayar Sherif, Egypt, 6-3, 6-1.

Anhelina Kalinina, Ukraine, def. Anna Kalinskaya, Russia, 6-4, 7-6 (5).

Aliaksandra Sasnovich (6), Belarus, def. Tímea Babos, Hungary, 6-0, 2-0, ret.

Olga Danilovic, Serbia, def. Tamara Kor-

AP SPORTLIGHT

July 15

1912 — Jim Thorpe wins the decathlon at the Stockholm Olympics and, in the closing ceremony, Sweden's King Gustav proclaims Thorpe the world's greatest athlete.

1922 — Gene Sarazen shoots a final-round 68 to beat out Bobby Jones and John Black for the U.S. Open golf championship.

1923 — Amateur Bobby Jones beats Bobby Cruikshank by two strokes in a playoff to win the U.S. Open golf title.

1927 — Bobby Jones wins the British Open shooting a championship record 7-under 285 at the Old Course in St Andrews, Scotland. It's the second straight Open title for the amateur, who goes wire-to-wire for a six-stroke victory over Aubrey Boomer and Fred Dobson.

1945 — Byron Nelson defeats Sam Byrd in the final round of the PGA golf tournament.

1961 — Arnold Palmer shoots a 284 at Royal Birkdale to win his first British Open title.

1967 — Argentina's Roberto DeVicenzo wins the British Open by two strokes over defending champion Jack Nicklaus.

1972 — Lee Trevino wins his second consecutive British Open title by beating Jack Nicklaus by one stroke.

patsch, Germany, 6-2, 6-2.

Dalma Galfi, Hungary, def. Aliona Bolsova Zadoinov, Spain, 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Bernarda Pera (3), United States, def. Julia Grabher, Austria, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2.

Women's Doubles

Round of 16

Sara Errani, Italy, and Irina Bara, Romania, def. Ekaterine Gorgodze, Georgia, and Tereza Mihalikova, Slovakia, 4-6, 6-1, 15-13.

Amina Anshba, Russia, and Anastasia Detiuc, Czech Republic, def. Amarissa Kiarra Toth and Natalia Szabanin, Hungary, 6-4, 7-5.

Swedish Open

Tuesday

At Bastad Tennis Stadium

Bastad, Sweden

NHL/BRITISH OPEN

As offseason begins, clubs make moves

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
Associated Press

It's hard for Duncan Keith to say goodbye to yesterday.

Pekka Rinne, too. Even more difficult for Zach Parise and Ryan Suter because it wasn't their call.

Moving on from the past is an early theme of the NHL offseason. Chicago traded Keith after 16 seasons that included three Stanley Cup titles. Rinne retired following 13 full seasons goaltending in Nashville, and Minnesota announced buyouts for Parise and Suter nine seasons into their 13-year contracts.

Consider it like summer cleaning before most of the jumbling for the 2021-22 season happens after the Seattle expansion draft next week.

"These things always have to happen," Wild general manager Bill Guerin said Tuesday. "You see teams constantly changing. You have to try to get better."

Some of the getting better means getting worse in the short term. That's the gamble the Wild took in buying out Parise and Suter. Same for the Blackhawks in trading Keith to Edmonton for defenseman Caleb Jones and a third-round pick.

The Predators hope they have their Rinne replacement in Juuse Saros, who got 35 games to the elder Finn's 21 this past season and was the playoff starter.

"We're really happy we have Juuse," GM David Poile said. "He's played really well behind Pekka, played exceptional this year. I think 'the torch has been passed' is the expression here. But who's not going to miss Pekka?"

Keith will miss Chicago and vice versa after he was one of the most important players of this championship era. But at almost 38 and after going long stretches without seeing his 8-year-old son, Colton, Keith asked for a trade to Western Canada and landed with the Oilers.

"It's a sad day on one end to be leaving Chicago but also an exciting time to be moving to a new team with new teammates," Keith said Monday night. "I want to be at my best. In Edmonton, it's going to be a competitive environment and I'm going to do everything I can to earn the respect of my new teammates and the coaching staff and the organization."

Parise and Suter will get that chance somewhere once free agency opens July 28. Before then, expect a flurry of moves after the Seattle Kraken's expansion draft picks are revealed July 21 leading up to the July 23-24 draft and beyond.

Plenty of conversations are ongoing this week to set the table for that potential frenzy. Philadelphia GM Chuck Fletcher — who was with the Wild when they signed Parise and Suter in 2012 — said he has been busy



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

The Blackhawks traded 38-year-old defenseman Duncan Keith to the Edmonton Oilers after 16 seasons in Chicago.

working the phones this week to lay some groundwork.

"It seems like more teams would prefer to wait until after Seattle makes their decisions," Fletcher said. "But there is a lot of dialogue. Teams are, I think, trying to get a read of the room right now and see who's available, what other teams are trying to do and what options we all may have once we get closer to the draft and free agency."

The busiest GM in the league is Seattle's Ron Francis, who will get to pick one player from the unprotected lists of 30 other teams. Vegas is exempt after the Golden Knights rode their 2017 expansion draft to the Stanley Cup Final in their inaugural season.

Like George McPhee then, Francis is listening in case colleagues want to sweeten the deal to save or get rid of a certain player.

"My sense right now is unless you're probably talking to Ron Francis, there's probably not a lot of chatter," Oilers GM Ken Holland said. "It's teams that might be in a difficult spot (and) are maybe trying to figure out ways to do a deal with Seattle."

The back-to-back champion Tampa Bay Lightning are absolutely involved in those conversations. Fresh off another boat parade that ended with the Stanley Cup dented and sent off for repairs, GM Julien BriseBois said "a lot of that work going on right now" is preparing for expansion.

"This Seattle situation, it's adds a nice wrinkle to our challenge this offseason," BriseBois said. "Will there be deals before that? I would think there might be. We may be one of those teams, maybe not."

AP sports writer Teresa M. Walker in Nashville, Tenn., and freelance writer Mark Dittler in Tampa, Fla., contributed.

Back: Players allowed core group of 4 people

FROM PAGE 24

Off the course? That might be a different story for them.

The players will be confined to a strict bubble, which for PGA Tour regulars will feel like a step back in time.

Under R&A protocols, players are allowed a core group of only four people. That includes the player and caddie. The other two chosen have to be a coach, a trainer or other physical support staff, a family member or a translator. Family members, such as a spouse, are not exempt from U.K. quarantine laws. The others are.

That means Justin Thomas and Jordan Spieth can't share a house as they often do. It means no trips to restaurants or grocery stores, much less a pub. Players are to avoid mixing with the general public, except for those 32,000 fans behind the ropes.

"I feel like a lot of the family restrictions, each player's team restrictions, it's a little too much," U.S. Open champion Jon Rahm said. "But I understand why they want us to stay at home and why they want to keep the players as safe as possible."

"It's the rules they put up, and we just have to deal with it and follow them."

It's a big change for the top players who have spent most of their time in America. COVID-19 testing on the PGA Tour is no longer required for fully vaccinated players, and testing at tournaments will end by the time they get home.

"It seems like us as players, we're jumping through some hurdles and dodging bullets and they're having 32,000 fans a day at the tournament, so I don't know," Rickie Fowler said. "I can't really answer questions clearly with all that going on."

Kevin Na withdrew because of international travel requirements. Three players from Asian countries have withdrawn to concentrate on the Olympics at the end of the month.

"Look, it's one week," PGA

DID YOU KNOW?

Ireland's Shane Lowry has kept the claret jug for two years because the British Open wasn't played last year due to the pandemic. The only player who has held onto it longer is Richard Burton, who won the British Open until 1939 and kept it until 1946 when World War II canceled the tournament for six years.

SOURCE: Associated Press

champion Phil Mickelson said. "It's a major championship and let's just do what it takes to be able to compete."

There also is plenty of uncertainty when it comes to Royal St. George's, starting with a question that never has a reliable answer: Where exactly is the ball going to bounce?

The fairways have so many humps that shots landing in the middle can bounce left or right. That's what led Greg Norman to say ahead of the 1993 British Open, "I'd swear the Royal Air Force used a couple of the fairways for bombing runs."

And then he shot all rounds in the 60s to win and changed his tune, describing a British Open at Royal St. George's as the "world championship of imagination."

Royal St. George's was the first course in England to host the British Open in 1894, and this will be the 15th time it has hosted the Open.

The terrain is so lumpy that Justin Rose once referred to it as "almost playing on the surface of the moon." It can get aggravating, and it's like that for everyone.

"You just pack your patience and understand that it's the same for everyone, and the good and the bad bounces should all level out over 72 holes," Rory McIlroy said.

At least it's being played, and even Lowry is eager for that, even if it means giving back the jug. He kept it for two years, the longest of any British Open champion since Richard Burton. He won in 1939, and then World War II canceled the Open until 1946.



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OLYMPICS

SWIMMING

There's still plenty of star power in pool

Dressel, Ledecky seem ready to step up with Phelps now retired

By PAUL NEWBERRY
Associated Press

Michael Phelps loomed over the pool at the past four Summer Olympics, a figure so transcendent it was hard for anyone else to get their proper due.

He's retired now, leaving a giant void in his wake.

Not to worry.

Even without Phelps, plenty of star power will be on display at the \$515 million, 15,000-seat Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

From Caeleb Dressel to Katie Ledecky, from Adam Peaty to Ariarne Titmus, from Katinka Hosszu to home-country favorite Daiya Seto, myriad swimmers are capable of playing a leading role in the post-Phelps era.

"Obviously, losing Michael was huge for this team, but we haven't had him since 2016," said American breaststroke star Lilly King. "We always do great, so I don't know why we would think it wasn't going to be great just because Michael's not there."

King stirred up the already heated rivalry with the Australians by making a bold prediction for the U.S. women.

"I think the women, if we have the meet we can have, can win every single individual gold," she said. "That would be pretty cool, right?"

Not so cool for the Aussies, who are eager to shine after failing to capture an individual women's gold at the 2016 Rio Games.

They turned in some brilliant performances at their country's Olympic trials, led by Kaylee McKeown setting a world record in the 100-meter backstroke.

But really keep an eye on Titmus, a 20-year-old known as "The Terminator." She made it clear



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Caeleb Dressel of Florida has qualified in three individual events (50 and 100 freestyle and 100 butterfly) and might get to swim in four relays.

she plans to challenge Ledecky's dominance in the freestyle with the second-fastest times ever in both the 200 and 400 freestyles.

"She's not going to have it all her own way," Titmus told Australian media. "I can't control what she does. If I do the best I can and put myself in the position to win a gold medal, it's going to be a tough race."

Ledecky qualified to swim four individual freestyle races at the Olympics — ranging from 200 to 1,500 meters — but her times at the U.S. trials were a bit underwhelming.

"I have big goals for myself, and those goals are the ones that matter," said Ledecky, who won four golds and a silver at the last Olympics. "I stay focused on those, and I don't let any outside kind of expectations enter my mind."

Things to watch for at the pool during the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Games:

Dressel's moment

The 24-year-old Floridian has emerged as the world's best male swimmer since Phelps retired.

Dressel really broke out at the 2017 world championships in Budapest, where he won seven gold medals. He followed up with six golds and two silvers at the 2019 worlds in South Korea, joining Phelps as the only swimmers to win eight medals at a major international meet.

Dressel qualified in three individual events, the 50 and 100 freestyle as well as the 100 butterfly, and he might get a chance to swim on four relays. If he won them all, he would come up just shy of Phelps' iconic record of eight gold medals at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Despite his staggering accomplishments, Dressel doesn't see himself as a one-man team, and he's quick to point out that Phelps always got plenty of help from his American teammates.

"I don't think that falls on my shoulders alone," Dressel said. "Michael was one guy within USA Swimming, but he wasn't USA Swimming, I think that's what makes USA Swimming so strong is the team and as a collective whole."

Unbeatable Adam

There are no sure things at the Olympics, but it's hard to see any-

one beating Britain's Peaty.

He's held the men's world record in the 100 breaststroke since 2015, becoming the first swimmer to break both 58 and 57 seconds. He's the reigning three-time world champion and defending gold medalist from the Rio Games.

There's room to go even faster, Peaty insisted.

"I've got a lot of learning to do, a lot of pacing to do," he said in South Korea. "We've always said, do it once, do it twice, do it better."

The biggest question is not whether Peaty can win another individual gold, but can he lead Britain to an upset of the American men in the 4x100 medley relay?

The U.S. has never lost the event since it was added to the Olympic program in 1960, but a Peaty-led foursome knocked off the Americans at the last world championships.

Home team

It's not unusual for the Olympic host to get a boost in its performance, and the Japanese team certainly has plenty of medal contenders.

Seto swept the men's individual medley races at the last world championships (while also capturing a silver in the 200 butterfly), setting himself up as his country's top contender heading into Tokyo.

Seto also has something to prove after being suspended last year because of an extramarital affair, which also led to him resigning as captain of the national team and cutting ties with a major sponsor.

At a glance

Highlights from Rio: Michael Phelps won five golds and a silver to close out his career as the winningest Olympian in history. American Simone Manuel became the first Black woman to win an individual swimming gold in the 100-meter freestyle. The U.S. topped the medals table, winning 33 overall, including 16 gold. Australia was second with 10 medals (three gold) and Japan was fourth with seven medals (two gold).

What's new: The men's 800-meter freestyle is back in the Olympics for the first time since 1904. Emil Rausch of Germany set the Olympic record of 13 minutes, 11.4 seconds over 880 yards at the St. Louis Games. By contrast, the world record of 7:32.12 was set by Zhang Lin of China in meters at the 2009 world championships during the height of the rubber suit era. The women's 1,500 free will be contested at the Olympics for the first time. Katie Ledecky of the U.S. owns the world mark of 15:20.48 set in 2018. The new mixed 4x100 medley relay features teams of four — two men and two women — racing against each other doing each of the four strokes: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle. The tactics and strategies involved make it an exciting event. The Tokyo Aquatics Centre is newly built in a seaside park for the games.

Tokyo expectations: Finals will be at 10:30 a.m. in Tokyo so NBC can show swimming live at night in the U.S. Preliminaries will be at 7 p.m. in Tokyo. It's a similar format to the 2008 Beijing Games.

Athletes to watch: American Caeleb Dressel has been tabbed as the potential successor to Phelps. Dressel won a record eight medals at the 2019 world meet and is the one to beat in his sprint events in Tokyo. Ledecky tries to equal or better the four golds and one silver she won in Rio. Adam Peaty of Britain defends his title in the 100 breaststroke. He's the first man to swim the event under both 58 and 57 seconds. Sarah Sjöström of Sweden will be a threat in the butterfly and freestyle events depending on her conditioning after breaking her elbow in February. Daiya Seto of Japan will be the hometown favorite in the 200 and 400 individual medley events. Katinka Hosszu of Hungary has not been the dominant swimmer she was in winning three golds at Rio, and it remains to be seen if she can retain her titles at her fifth Olympics.

Gold medal moments: July 26, Ledecky and world champion Ariarne Titmus of Australia face off in the 400 free final. At night, Ledecky returns for the heats of the 200 free and 1,500 free. July 28, Ledecky could swim in the finals of the 200 and 1,500 in the morning and the 4x200 free relay heats at night. July 31, mixed 4x100 medley relay final could pit Peaty against American star Lilly King in the breaststroke leg.

"I would like to seriously face swimming with determination to start over so that I can regain the trust of my family who have been deeply hurt by my irresponsible behavior and be recognized as a swimmer by both my family and everyone," Seto said.

Race of champions

For the first time, a swimming event will feature its last three Olympic champions.

The women's 200 freestyle includes 2016 winner Ledecky; fellow American Allison Schmitt, who took gold at the 2012 London Games; and 2008 gold medalist Federica Pellegrini of Italy.



CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/AP

Katie Ledecky, who won four golds and a silver at the last Olympics, has qualified in four individual events at the Tokyo Olympics.

OLYMPICS

WATER POLO

HIGHLIGHTS FROM RIO: Led by Maggie Steffens and Ashleigh Johnson, the U.S. women rolled to their second straight gold medal. Steffens was named MVP for the second straight Olympics, and Johnson provided a steady presence in goal. Filip Filipovic and Dusan Mandic helped Serbia win the men's tournament for the first time after finishing third in each of the previous two games. Mandic scored four times and Filipovic had two goals during an 11-7 victory over Croatia in the final.

WHAT'S NEW: The women's tournament includes 10 countries, up from eight in Rio.

Tokyo EXPECTATIONS: Anyone other than the U.S. taking the women's gold would be a major surprise. Steffens and Johnson are back, surrounded by a talented roster that rivals the United States' loaded 2016 team. When it comes to potential challengers, check out Rita Keszthelyi and Hungary and Australia, led by captain Rowie Webster and Bronwen Knox. The men's tournament is wide open, made even more uncertain by the pandemic wreaking havoc on the traditional international schedule. Italy won the world title for the fourth time in 2019, beating Spain 10-5 in the final. But Italy lost to the United States in the semifinals of this year's FINA World League Super Final. Traditional powers Serbia, Croatia and Hungary all should be in the mix in Tokyo.

ATHLETES TO WATCH: U.S. attacker Maddie Musselman, the daughter of former major league pitcher Jeff Musselman, is going for her second straight gold medal after she scored 12 goals and made the all-tournament team at the 2016 Olympics. Musselman, 23, was named MVP after the U.S. won this year's World League Super Final for the seventh straight time. Stephania Haralabidis gives the already powerful U.S. team a rare commodity on the international water polo scene: a left-hander. She scored 13 times as the U.S. swept its six matches to improve to 14-0 this year. On the men's side, Pietro Figlioli is hoping to lead Italy to its first Olympic gold medal since 1992. Figlioli scored 14 times in Rio. Jesse Smith is in his record-tying fifth Olympics. Smith matches Tony Azevedo for most Olympic teams for a U.S. water polo athlete.

GOLD MEDAL MOMENTS: The women's final is Aug. 7. The men's final is Aug. 8.



JAE C. HONG/AP

Maggie Steffens is going for a third consecutive gold medal with the U.S. women's water polo team at the Tokyo Olympics. Steffens, who became team captain in 2014, scored 38 goals in the past two Olympics and was named the tournament MVP both times.

TRIATHLON

Highlights from Rio: Gwen Jorgensen gave the United States its first Olympic gold medal in the sport. It was an incredible performance from Jorgensen, who finished 38th at the 2012 London Olympics. Jorgensen stayed near the front in the swim and tied for first as part of the lead group, held her position throughout the bike leg and battled out the 10-kilometer run alongside 2012 gold medalist Nicola Spirig of Switzerland before sprinting away for gold. The British brothers Brownlee — Alistair and Jonathan — took gold and silver in the men's race. Alistair defended the title he won at the London Games in 2012, when Jonathan took the bronze.

What's new: The course at Odaiba Marine Park in Tokyo Bay will host the first Olympic mixed triathlon. Like the men's and women's individual events, it will be an early-morning start to take into account expected high temperatures and oppressive humidity in Tokyo. The mixed race starts at 7:30 a.m. local time, an hour later than the two individual races. Two women and two men compete in the mixed. The men and women alternate during the race. Each swims 300 meters, cycles for eight kilometers and runs for two kilometers before tapping the hand of their teammate to extend the relay.

Tokyo expectations: Neither of the champions from Rio will be back to defend their titles, and the competition is wide-open. As of the men's rankings issued June 28, Spain's Mario Mola, Luis Vincent of France and Kristian Blummenfelt of Norway are the leading trio. Blummenfelt won the first two World Triathlon Series events two months ago. Alex Yee of Britain and American Morgan Pearson had a one-two finish in a World Triathlon Series event in early June in Leeds, England. The Leeds race ended Alistair Brownlee's chance of winning a third gold when he was disqualified from the race for unsportsmanlike behavior in the swim leg. American women lead the ITU rankings heading into Tokyo and 23-year-old Taylor Knibb is among the top-ranked trio.

Athletes to watch: With Jorgensen not returning to defend her title, Americans will still be well-positioned to again win gold. Three American women have qualified for Tokyo — Knibb, Katie Zaferes and Summer Rappaport. Pearson and Kevin McDowell on the men's side give the U.S. five triathletes in Tokyo.

The American team has a combined 32 World Triathlon Championship Series medals, 30 from the World Triathlon Cup and 12 from World Triathlon mixed relays. Australia is the only country with the full complement of six triathletes, which could give it the edge in the



JAE C. HONG/AP

American Katie Zaferes competes during a triathlon test event in 2019 at Odaiba Marine Park, a venue for marathon swimming and triathlon at the Tokyo Olympics.

mixed event. Yee, Jonathan Brownlee, Vicky Holland, Georgia Taylor-Brown and Jess Learmonth are in a strong British squad.

Gold medal moments: July 26: men's race; July 27: women's; July 31: mixed.

MARATHON SWIM

Highlights from Rio: Sharon van Rouwendaal and Ferry Weertman made it a Dutch sweep of the gold medals competing off hot and sunny Copacabana Beach.

What's new: Start times for the two 10-kilometer events were moved up to 6:30 a.m. local time to avoid expected heat later in the day. Water quality at Odaiba Marine Park has been an issue, with renewed screening being done. The course features a backdrop of the Tokyo skyline and the Rainbow Bridge.

Tokyo expectations: Two hours of racing typically comes down to seconds at the finish. Strategy plays a part, with some swimmers choosing to sprint right from the start, while others conserve their energy in hopes of closing with a rush. Twenty-five swimmers compete in both races. Watch for kicking, athletes swimming on top of each other or knocking into each other. Those kinds of actions can cause disqualifications and affect who wins the medals.

Athletes to watch: Germany's Florian Wellbrock is the current world champion in the 10K. He'll be challenged by 2016 bronze medalist Marc-Antoine Olivier, who finished 0.2 seconds behind Wellbrock at worlds. Also in the men's mix are defending Olympic champion Weertman, former world champion Jordan Wilimovsky of the U.S. and Gregorio Paltrinieri of Italy. In the women's race, China's Xin Xin comes in as the current world champion. Van Rouwendaal will be back to defend her gold, while 2016 silver medalist Rachele Bruni of Italy and 2012 silver medalist Haley Anderson of the U.S. are contenders.

Gold medal moments: Aug. 4, women's 10K; Aug. 5, men's 10K

ARTISTIC SWIMMING

Highlights From Rio: One of the biggest issues in 2016 entailed getting rid of green-tinted water in one of the pools at the Maria Lenk Aquatics Center. Local officials eventually drained the pool and transferred nearly 1 million gallons of clear water from a nearby practice pool in time for the start of what was then known as synchronized swimming. Once the competition started, it was the usual golden procession for Russia, with Natalia Ishchenko and Svetlana Romashina winning the duet and also taking part in the team title. It marked the fifth consecutive Olympics that Russia swept gold in the sport.

What's new: Aquatics' governing body FINA changed the name of the sport from synchronized swimming to artistic swimming in 2017. The move was met with criticism from athletes who decried the new name as demeaning and, while many national federations quickly assumed the new name, USA Synchro didn't rebrand to USA Artistic Swimming until March of last year.

"The rebrand globally and now in the United States is rooted in a long-held misunderstanding of the sport," the American federation said. "The term 'synchronized swimming' has always had a disconnect with casual fans in that 'synchronized' as used here refers to the swimmers' ability to time their moves to the music, not to each other. Without that understanding, 'synchronized' also causes confusion for those watching solo competitors, which is a discipline at the world championship level.

Tokyo expectations: Russia and Russia. Or, actually, ROC and ROC (for Russian Olympic Committee), as Russia will be called at these games amid a doping suspension. Expect ROC to take a sixth consecutive sweep of the medals, with Romashina back from maternity leave to aim for a third straight gold in the duet. With Ishchenko having retired, Romashina should partner with Svetlana Kolesnichenko, having won the 2019 world title together. Romashina needs only one more Olympic title to become the most successful athlete in the sport's history — but (including the team event) she'll likely get two more golds to boost her Olympic haul to seven medals — all gold.

Athletes to watch: Romashina and Kolesnichenko.

Gold medal moment(s): Aug. 4: Duet free routine final; Aug. 7: Team free routine.

DIVING

Highlights from Rio: China remains the dominant force in the sport, having won seven of eight gold medals in 2016. The Chinese followed up by taking 12 of 13 events at worlds in 2019.

What's new: Competition is at the new Tokyo Aquatics Centre located in a seaside park.

Tokyo expectations: There's little reason to believe the Chinese won't dominate the eight events — two 3-meter springboard and two 10-meter platform as well as synchronized events in both disciplines. Men's 3-meter springboard could be the most competitive with Britain's Jack Laugher trying to get on the podium against four-time world champion Xie Siyi and Cao Yuan of China.

Athletes to watch: China's Yang Jian, the current world champion, and four-time Olympian Tom Daley of Britain figure to duel on platform. On the women's side, two-time Olympic champion Shi Tingmao of China is favored in 3-meter. Chen Yuxi, a 15-year-old from China, is the favorite on 10-meter. She won the world title two years ago. Just three of the 11 American divers competed five years ago in Rio. Two-time platform medalist David Boudia failed to make the U.S. team.

Gold medal moments: July 25, women's 3-meter synchro final; July 26, men's 10-meter synchro final; July 27, women's 10-meter synchro final; July 28, men's 3-meter synchro final; Aug. 1, women's 3-meter final; Aug. 3, men's 3-meter final; Aug. 5, women's 10-meter final; Aug. 7, men's 10-meter final.

OLYMPICS/NBA FINALS



CHASE STEVENS/AP

United States forward Bam Adebayo had 12 points, five rebounds and five steals in a 108-80 exhibition defeat of Argentina on Tuesday in Las Vegas.

US men bounce back with big victory over Argentina

BY TIM REYNOLDS

Associated Press

USA Basketball finally made it look easy again.

Kevin Durant and Bradley Beal each scored 17 points and the Americans took control from the outset, beating Argentina 108-80 in Las Vegas on Tuesday to avoid what would have been the first three-game losing streak in this era of NBA players being able to represent USA Basketball on the international stage.

Zach LaVine scored 15 points for the U.S., which lost its first two games in Las Vegas to Nigeria and Australia. The Americans shot 51%, scored 33 first-quarter points to get off and running and beat Argentina for the 10th consecutive time since a loss at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

"It was better," U.S. coach Gregg Popovich said. "Bit by bit, every day, I hope."

Damian Lillard scored 13 points and Bam Adebayo finished with 12 points, five assists and five rebounds for the U.S.

"Just really locked in," Adebayo said.

Luis Scola, set to play in the Olympics for a fifth time, scored 16 points in 19 minutes for Argentina. Nicolas Laprovittola scored 13, Facundo Campazzo had 12 and Gabriel Deck added 10.

"It's not a big deal," Argentina's Luca Vildoza said. "It's only a loss."

The U.S. played with only eight members of the Olympic team. Jayson Tatum was held out with right knee soreness and will be day-to-day going forward, USA Basketball

said. The Americans also will be without Khris Middleton, Jrue Holiday and Devin Booker until at least this weekend because of the NBA Finals.

The back-to-back losses to start the U.S. team's stay in Las Vegas raised the possibility that the Americans might lose three in a row with NBA players for the first time.

If those thoughts truly existed, they didn't last for long.

"Our biggest thing is we have to realize it's not the NBA and Coach Pop keeps reemphasizing that every single day," Beal said. "It's way more physical. Guys are smarter. These guys have been playing together for five-, 10-plus years. So they have the experience and the chemistry and we're trying to develop that in a short period of time."

US women's fencers arrive for training at Marine base in Japan

BY JONATHAN SNYDER

Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — The U.S. women's Olympic fencing team arrived Tuesday evening at this Marine base in Yamaguchi prefecture for training ahead of the Tokyo Games this month.

The fencing squad joins the U.S. Olympic softball team for workouts in Iwakuni.

Japan has carved out exceptions for Olympic athletes that preclude them from the usual 14-day quarantine expected of most arriving foreigners, but also prevent them from mingling with most residents of Japan.

Iwakuni Deputy Mayor Tadashi Sugioka welcomed the fencing team in front of reporters at the airport, giving his first opening remarks in English.

"While the USA women's softball team is already in training camp, now it's your turn to get more than ready for the Tokyo Games and I know you're going to give it your best performance to achieve the best results," he said. "While you are here in Iwakuni we must follow COVID safe distanc-

ing guidelines, but we are always close to you in our hearts."

The fencing team will be training every day from 10 a.m. to noon until Sunday at the Lotus Culture Center Arena inside the Atago Sports Complex, a facility shared by the city and the air station, according to the Iwakuni city Sports Promotion Division.

Tickets to team practice sessions have already sold out.

"For me, personally, this is my third visit here to Iwakuni, and the reason we keep coming back here is because of the city's special atmosphere and the hospitality we receive here," US coach Andrey Geva said. "On behalf of our team I would like to thank the people of Iwakuni and thank you for your hospitality. It makes our preparation much more enjoyable, and we are happy to be here."

Mariel Zagunis, of Portland, Ore., who competes in the saber events, won gold in individual competition in 2004 and 2008 and bronze in the team competition in 2008 and 2016.

snyder.jonathan@stripes.com
Twitter: @Jon_E_Snyder



JONATHAN SNYDER/Stars and Stripes

Members of the U.S. women's Olympic fencing team arrive at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, on Tuesday.

Suns can hack Giannis, but know he'll keep coming

BY BRIAN MAHONEY

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo pointed to a pair of scratches, one on his forehead and the other on his cheek.

Those NBA Finals battle scars are proof, he figures, that the frustrated Phoenix Suns are indeed fouling him.

"So they're making my pretty face ugly," Antetokounmpo said.

The Suns may be hacking and whacking him, but they sure aren't stopping the Milwaukee Bucks star.

NBA scoreboard

NBA Finals

(Best-of-seven)

x-if necessary

Phoenix 2, Milwaukee 1

Phoenix 118, Milwaukee 105
Phoenix 118, Milwaukee 108
Milwaukee 120, Phoenix 100
Wednesday: at Milwaukee
Saturday: at Phoenix, AFN-Sports, 3 a.m.
Sunday CET; 10 a.m. Sunday JKT
x-Tuesday, July 20: at Milwaukee
x-Thursday, July 22: at Phoenix

Coming off two straight 40-point performances, Antetokounmpo will try to help the Bucks even the series in Game 4 on Wednesday.

And whether playing with pain in his knee or shaking off hits to his face, Phoenix knows Antetokounmpo is going to keep attacking them.

"He's coming full speed every play, like a running back coming downhill," point guard Chris Paul said.

Antetokounmpo had 41 points and 13 rebounds in Milwaukee's 120-100 victory in Game 3. That followed his 42 points and 12 rebounds in Game 2, making him just the sixth player with consecutive 40-point games in the NBA Finals.

The Suns have already faced

LeBron James and Nikola Jokic during this first run to their first NBA Finals since 1993, so they've had to figure out ways to overcome MVP players.

But Antetokounmpo, with his end-to-end bursts that seem to take just two or three dribbles, is a different type of challenge. Paul said Phoenix coach Monty Williams' instructions are just to try to get in the 6-foot-11 forward's way, but it's difficult because the Bucks have shooters such as Khris Middleton, Jrue Holiday and Brook Lopez set up around the perimeter.

Paul said the Suns will just stick with their game plan.

"We're going to keep trying to build a wall," he said.

Antetokounmpo is used to that.

He recalls it being about two years ago when teams started to employ that defensive strategy of packing multiple players in his path to the basket.

Antetokounmpo still doesn't enjoy playing against it — "I'm not going to lie; I hate it," he said — but he's come to look at it as a compliment, adding that it's "funny that there's a defense out there called the Giannis Wall."

MLB

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	55	36	.604	—
Tampa Bay	53	37	.589	1½
New York	46	43	.517	8
Toronto	45	42	.517	8
Baltimore	28	61	.315	26
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	54	35	.607	—
Cleveland	45	42	.517	8
Detroit	40	51	.440	15
Minnesota	39	50	.438	15
Kansas City	36	53	.404	18
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	55	36	.604	—
Oakland	52	40	.565	3½
Seattle	48	43	.527	7
Los Angeles	45	44	.506	9
Texas	35	55	.389	19½
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	47	40	.540	—
Philadelphia	44	44	.500	3½
Atlanta	44	45	.494	4
Washington	42	47	.472	6
Miami	39	50	.438	9
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	53	39	.576	—
Cincinnati	48	42	.533	4
Chicago	44	46	.489	8
St. Louis	44	46	.489	8
Pittsburgh	34	56	.378	18
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	57	32	.640	—
Los Angeles	56	35	.615	2
San Diego	53	40	.570	6
Colorado	40	51	.440	18
Arizona	26	66	.283	32½

Tuesday's game
All-Star Game: AL 5, NL 2

Thursday's game
Boston at N.Y. Yankees

All-Star Game MVPs
2021 — Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Toronto, AL
2019 — Shane Bieber, Cleveland, AL
2018 — Alex Bregman, Houston, AL
2017 — Robinson Cano, Seattle, AL
2016 — Eric Hosmer, Kansas City, AL
2015 — Mike Trout, Los Angeles, AL
2014 — Mike Trout, Los Angeles, AL
2013 — Mariano Rivera, New York, AL
2012 — Melky Cabrera, San Francisco, NL
2011 — Prince Fielder, Milwaukee, NL
2010 — Brian McCann, Atlanta, NL
2009 — Carl Crawford, Tampa Bay, AL
2008 — J.D. Drew, Boston, AL
2007 — Ichiro Suzuki, Seattle, AL
2006 — Michael Young, Texas, AL
2005 — Miguel Tejada, Baltimore, AL
2004 — Alfonso Soriano, Texas, AL
2003 — Garret Anderson, Anaheim, AL
2002 — None
2001 — Cal Ripken Jr., Baltimore, AL
2000 — Derek Jeter, New York, AL
1999 — Pedro Martinez, Boston, AL
1998 — Roberto Alomar, Baltimore, AL
1997 — Sandy Alomar Jr., Cleveland, AL
1996 — Mike Piazza, Los Angeles, NL
1995 — Jeff Conine, Florida, NL
1994 — Fred McGriff, Atlanta, NL
1993 — Kirby Puckett, Minnesota, AL
1992 — Ken Griffey Jr., Seattle, AL
1991 — Cal Ripken Jr., Baltimore, AL
1990 — Julio Franco, Texas, AL
1989 — Bo Jackson, Kansas City, AL
1988 — Terry Steinbach, Oakland, AL
1987 — Tim Lincecum, Montreal, NL
1986 — Roger Clemens, Boston, AL
1985 — LaMarr Hoyt, San Diego, NL
1984 — Gary Carter, Montreal, NL
1983 — Fred Lynn, California, AL
1982 — Dave Concepcion, Cincinnati, NL
1981 — Gary Carter, Montreal, NL
1980 — Ken Griffey Sr., Cincinnati, NL
1979 — Dave Parker, Pittsburgh, NL
1978 — Steve Garvey, Los Angeles, NL
1977 — Don Sutton, Los Angeles, NL
1976 — George Foster, Cincinnati, NL
1975 — Bill Madlock, Chicago, NL and Jon Matlack, New York, NL
1974 — Steve Garvey, Los Angeles, NL
1973 — Bobby Bonds, San Francisco, NL
1972 — Joe Morgan, Cincinnati, NL
1971 — Frank Robinson, Baltimore, AL
1970 — Carl Yastrzemski, Boston, AL
1969 — Willie McCovey, San Francisco, NL
1968 — Willie Mays, San Francisco, NL
1967 — Tony Perez, Cincinnati, NL
1966 — Brooks Robinson, Baltimore, AL
1965 — Juan Marichal, San Francisco, NL
1964 — John Callison, Philadelphia, NL
1963 — Willie Mays, San Francisco, NL
1962 — x-Maury Wills, Los Angeles, NL
1962 — x-Leon Wagner, Los Angeles, AL
x-two games

Sho-case: Ohtani gets win for AL

Two-way star sets NL down in order in the first inning of 5-2 All-Star win

RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

DENVER — A Sho-case for Shohei Ohtani became a grand stage for Vladimir Guerrero Jr., too.

Ohtani unleashed his 100 mph heat while pitching a perfect inning for the win in becoming baseball's first two-way All-Star, Guerrero rocked Coors Field with a 468-foot home run and the American League breezed 5-2 Tuesday night for its eighth straight victory.

Near and far, the sport's entire focus was on Ohtani from the very start in this All-Star Game.

Players on both sides climbed to the dugout rails to watch him, and the Japanese sensation went 0-for-2, grounding out twice as the AL's leadoff man and designated hitter.

Jared Walsh, Ohtani's teammate on the Los Angeles Angels, got a save — with his glove. He made a sliding catch in left field on Kris Bryant's tricky liner with the bases loaded to end the eighth inning.

So even with the teams decked out in new uniforms that social media deemed a strikeout instead of a home run, it was a familiar result. Mike Zunino also connected for the AL as it improved to 46-43-2 overall in the series.

Guerrero, at 22, became the youngest MVP in All-Star Game history.

J.T. Realmuto homered for the National League on a mile-high



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

American League starting pitcher Shohei Ohtani threw 10 of 14 pitches for strikes while retiring Fernando Tatis Jr., Max Muncy and Nolan Arenado in order in the bottom of the first inning Tuesday in Denver.

night at Coors, a hitter's park.

A 27-year-old right-hander in his fourth big league season, Ohtani has dazzled. He leads the major leagues with 33 homers and is 4-1 in 13 starts as a pitcher, a two-way performance not seen since Babe Ruth in 1919 and '20, before the Bambino largely gave up the mound for slugging.

"This has been the best experience, most memorable," Ohtani said through translator Ippei Mizuhara. "Obviously, I've never played in the playoffs or World Series, so once I do that, that's probably going to surpass it. But this has

been the most memorable."

Ohtani was a double triple-digit threat in Denver, hitting a 513-foot drive during Monday night's Home Run Derby and throwing a 100.2 mph pitch to Nolan Arenado.

"He was as good as advertised," Arenado said. "His fastball had a little cut and he's a really good player. Just incredible."

Ohtani retired Fernando Tatis Jr., Max Muncy and Arenado, a Colorado fan favorite, in order in the bottom half of the first, throwing 10 of 14 pitches for strikes.

Major League Baseball even

made a special rules tweak for Ohtani, allowing him to be replaced as a pitcher and to remain in the game as the DH after he was done pitching. He grounded out twice — Pittsburgh second baseman Adam Frazier ranged to make a nice backhanded pickup that prevented a hit against Max Scherzer starting the night.

Ohtani was pulled for a pinch-hitter in the fifth. His shoes, meanwhile, were headed to the Hall of Fame, which collected his cleats, hand guard and foot guard for display in Cooperstown.

Just like dad, Guerrero has blast as an All-Star

BY ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

DENVER — Vladimir Guerrero Jr. admired his 468-foot screamer for a moment before bouncing into his triumphant home run trot.

Quick out of the park, slow out of the box, Guerrero became the youngest All-Star Game MVP after driving in a pair of runs in the American League's 5-2 win Tuesday night.

"Dad, this is for you," Guerrero said in Spanish when he was presented with the Ted Williams All-Star Game MVP award.

He kissed the trophy — a clear baseball bat — held it up high and posed with it at home plate, soaking in the accomplishment, much as he did admiring his monster home run from the batter's box two hours earlier.

At 22 years, 119 days old, the Toronto Blue Jays slugger is 117 days younger than Ken Griffey Jr. was when he won the award in 1992.

Vladimir Guerrero Sr. homered off Brad Penny in the 2006 All-Star Game. The younger Guerrero's homer marked the third father-son duo to go deep in All-Star Game history, joining Griffey and his father and Bobby and Barry Bonds.

Guerrero crushed a slider from Milwaukee's Corbin Burnes in the third inning that almost cleared the left field bleachers at cavernous Coors Field and gave the AL a 2-0 lead.

NL shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr. immediately



JACK DEMPSEY/AP

Vladimir Guerrero Jr., of the Toronto Blue Jays kisses the All-Star Game's MVP trophy. He homered for the AL, and at 22 years and 119 days, is the game's youngest MVP.

put his glove on his head and slowly turned around to watch the ball leave the yard.

"Wow," Tatis said. "It was a moonshot. It was something impressive. He's been doing it all year. Why not show it off here?"

The 6-foot-2, 250-pound Guerrero has 28 homers in 2021.

Tatis was mic'd up for the third inning and he marveled at the drive, saying, "That was a bomb. ... He should have admired it a little bit more. It's

the All-Star Game, boy. Have fun."

That, he did.

Guerrero rocketed a comebacker near NL starter Max Scherzer in the first inning, just missing the three-time Cy Young Award winner. After he was thrown out at first, Guerrero jogged through the infield and offered Scherzer a bear hug.

"Basically at the Home Run Derby yesterday we had a conversation and he said 'Hey take it easy on me tomorrow.' That's what he told me and after the line drive I just wanted to give him a hug," Guerrero said.

He wasn't as generous with Burnes. His homer was the longest at the All-Star Game since Statcast began tracking in 2015.

And it's the longest by an astounding 58 feet. The previous best was Kris Bryant's 410-foot shot in 2016. It was also the 200th homer in All-Star history.

"Ever since I was a kid, I've been thinking about this moment," said Guerrero, who also had a run-scoring groundout in the fifth that made it 3-0. "All my life I've worked hard and thank God it's happening right now."

Asked about 45 minutes after the game if he'd heard from his father, Guerrero said, "I haven't checked my phone yet."

It was surely blowing up, just like his big homer on baseball's ultimate launching pad.

SPORTS



All-Star Game
AL wins behind Guerrero's MVP performance » **MLB, Page 23**



Spain's Jon Rahm, the U.S. Open champion, tees off on the first tee Wednesday during a practice round for the British Open at Royal St George's golf course in Sandwich, England.

PHOTOS BY IAN WALTON/AP

Back, but in a bubble

After skipping last year, British Open returns with player restrictions

BY DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

As tradition goes at the British Open, it might feel as though nothing has changed.

Shane Lowry, a popular champion on Irish soil at Royal Portrush, returned the silver claret upon his arrival Monday at Royal St. George's in England for a ceremonial start to the 149th edition of golf's oldest championship. It's like clockwork, with one exception:

The British Open is one year behind.

Strange as it was for the Masters to be played amid autumn hues of November, and for the U.S. Open to be played in September for the first time in nearly a century, the biggest fallout in golf last year from the COVID-19

pandemic was the British Open not being played at all.

Now it's back, though not quite to normal.

It might look that way with the British Open allowing 32,000 spectators a day to roam the expansive links off Sandwich Bay, just up the coast from the English Channel. Major championship golf hasn't seen a crowd that large since Portrush two summers ago.

"I'm keen to get as many spectators in as possible because I do think that's what creates the atmosphere," said Martin Slumbers, chief executive of the R&A. "And I think actually it's what makes the players play just a little bit better."

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Ireland's Shane Lowry, the defending champion, got to hold onto the claret jug for two years after the British Open was canceled last year due to the pandemic. He returned it Monday.

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