A flood of new research suggests that far more people have had the coronavirus without any symptoms, fueling hope that it will turn out to be much less lethal than originally feared.

While that’s clearly good news, it also means it’s impossible to know who around you may be contagious. That complicates decisions about returning to work, school and normal life.

In the last week, reports of silent infections have come from a homeless shelter in Boston, a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, pregnant women at a New York hospital, several European countries and California.

The head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says 25% of infected people might not have symptoms. The vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. John Hyten, thinks it may be as high as 60% to 70% among military personnel.

But the risk to people, including some 8,400 Americans who live on Katterbach or nearby, suffering from the health impacts caused by PFAS, including an increased risk for cancer and birth defects, was low, base spokeswoman Dani Johnson said, citing the report.

Contaminated soil was found “only inside the airfield fence in the vicinity of the former fire training pit,” and the base’s drinking water comes from the city of Ansbach, not from wells, Johnson said. An analysis in November found Ansbach’s water to be well within Bavarian safety levels.
Google, Facebook will have to pay for news in Australia

By Edward Johnson
Bloomberg

Google and Facebook will be forced to pay media companies in Australia for publishing their news under what the government says is a world-first mandatory code of conduct.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said Monday that negotiations between the tech giants and traditional media platforms had failed to result in a voluntary arrangement and that the competition watchdog would unveil a draft code by the end of July.

Australia’s government has pledged to tackle the “power imbalance” between the digital giants and traditional media, adding to a barrage of global action against Google and Facebook. Regulators worldwide have been trying to loosen the tech giants’ grip on advertising, search engines, news, data and elections.

Frydenberg said the government was “very conscious of the challenges” of forcing the companies to pay for news content, after efforts in France and Spain had failed.

The announcement is the government’s latest response to a sweeping report by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission that raised concerns about the use and storage of personal data and the erosion of the mainstream media. In December, Australia said it would set up a special unit within the competition watchdog to monitor digital platforms.

EXCHANGE RATES

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**Russian fighter buzzes US craft for 2nd time**

**By John VANDIVER**

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — A Russian fighter plane on Sunday cut within 25 feet of a U.S. military aircraft, marking the second time in less than a week that unsafe maneuvers by Russian pilots put Navy pilots at risk, the military said.

The incident over the eastern Mediterranean Sea involved a Russian SU-35 fighter jet conducting two high-speed intercepts of a U.S. P-8A submarine reconnaissance plane, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa said late Sunday, without specifying the location.

While the first intercept was judged safe, the second was deemed “unsafe and unprofessional due to the SU-35 conducting a high-speed, high-powered maneuver that decreased aircraft separation to within 25 feet,” NAVEUR said in a statement.

The encounter exposed the U.S. aircraft to wake turbulence and jet exhaust, forcing the P-8A to “descend to create separation and ensure safety of both aircraft,” the Navy said.

Russia’s defense ministry said in a statement Monday it scrambled a fighter from Hmeimim air base in Syria to shadow the U.S. aircraft, which it said was flying toward Russian military facilities.

The defense ministry did not address the Navy’s complaint that the Russian fighter performed unsafe maneuvers. On Wednesday, an SU-35 risked a midair collision over the Mediterranean when it performed an inverted high-speed maneuver 25 feet in front of a Navy P-8A.

The incidents are part of a recent string of close military encounters with adversaries.

Earlier this month, U.S. Air Force F-22 fighter jets intercepted a pair of Russian maritime patrol planes 50 miles off the western coast of the Aleutian Islands in what military officials said at the time was a test of U.S. capabilities amid the coronavirus pandemic.

And last week, 11 Iranian military vessels moved dangerously close to several American ships conducting operations in the northern Persian Gulf, the Navy said.

On Thursday, U.S. European Command’s Gen. Tod Wolters told reporters that last week’s encounters and 15 EA-18G Growlers over the Mediterranean appeared to be more about the actions of one air crew rather than a strategy aimed at testing American combat capabilities.

“I’ve studied the intent, and my conclusion at this point is that it was probably something that was more along the lines of unprofessional as opposed to deliberate,” Wolters said.

Sunday’s incident occurred in international airspace where the P-8A was operating within international law and did nothing to provoke the Russian response, the Navy said.

“The unnecessary actions of the Russian SU-35 pilot were inconsistent with good airmanship and international flight rules, seriously jeopardizing the safety of flight of both aircraft,” NAVEUR said.

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**Afghan officials: Taliban attacks on checkpoints kill 29**

**By Rahim FAIEZ**

*Associated Press*

KABUL, Afghanistan — A wave of Taliban attacks on checkpoints across Afghanistan on Sunday killed 29 members of the security forces, officials said Monday.

In northern Takhar province, 19 security personnel were killed in a battle Sunday night in the district of Khweja Ghor, according to Jawad Hajri, spokesman for the provincial governor.

Meanwhile, in northern Balkh province, a Taliban attack on Sunday morning in the Sholgara district killed seven, according to Adil Shah Adil, spokesman for the provincial police chief.

And in western Badghis province, the Taliban struck an army checkpoint early Sunday morning, killing three soldiers and wounding 10, said Tahsul Haideri, spokesman for the provincial police chief.

The Taliban, who have not claimed responsibility for the attacks, and President Ashraf Ghani’s government in Kabul are in the process of exchanging prisoners as part of a peace deal signed by the U.S. and the Taliban at the end of February in Doha, Qatar.

The release of up to 5,000 Taliban prisoners and 1,000 government officials held captive by the insurgents ahead of intra-Afghan negotiations is a condition of the U.S.-Taliban deal.

At the heart of most of the talks, say Taliban and U.S. officials, is the demand for a reduction of violence. The Taliban have not been attacking U.S. and NATO troops since the agreement was signed but has struck Afghan forces in outlying areas. Washington wants a reduction in those attacks.

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**Report: Germany to order 45 US fighter aircraft to replace its 1970s’ Tornados**

**By Marcus KLOECKNER**

*Stars and Stripes*

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Germany will buy 45 fighter aircraft from the United States to replace its aging Tornado fighter-bombers, a German media report said.

In an email sent last week to Defense Secretary Mark Esper, Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer said Berlin has decided to buy 30 F/A-18E Super Hornets and 15 EA-18G Growlers to replace its 45 Tornados, Der Spiegel news magazine reported Sunday.

Neither the German nor U.S. government immediately confirmed Spiegel’s report Monday.

It was unclear if the German air force would procure only the U.S. aircraft or if it planned to also purchase Eurofighter Typhoons, made by a consortium led by Airbus.

During a visit to Washington in September, Kramp-Karrenbauer said the aircraft chosen to replace the Tornado, which has been in service since the 1970s, must “seamlessly” fill the aging fleet’s dual role — serving as a fighter-bomber in conventional warfare and maintaining the capability to carry the American B61 nuclear gravity bomb, the German Council for Foreign Policy said in a February brief.

Although none of the jets in the running to replace the Tornado are dual capability aircraft, the U.S. government told the Germans that the U.S. fighter jet could be certified more rapidly than the Typhoon to carry the B61, as required by NATO, several media reports said last month.

The Growlers, which have “sensors that can shut down an adversary’s ground radars during aerial operations,” would replace the Tornados’ electronic warfare capabilities, Spiegel said.

The Tornado’s replacement would be a stopgap measure before the planned introduction in the next decade of the Future Combat Air System, a sixth-generation multijet made by a consortium of French, Spanish and German companies.

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The polluted sites are around a quarter of a mile away from base housing and around 700 feet from the elementary school playground, but neither is “routinely transited” and one of the training areas was paved over in the 1980s, she said.

Fine particles of PFAS have been found in topsoil and on grass at the sites, according to the report. But grass samples “taken between the school/housing area and the airfield did not detect any PFAS,” Johnson said.

A risk assessment conducted at the sites found that “the risk of direct human exposure to the PFAS contamination via ingestion or inhalation and associated adverse health effects is very low,” Johnson said.

Particles found at the sites could, however, contaminate farm fields if they are picked up and carried by the wind or drafts created by helicopters, the report warned. But the risk of the chemicals spreading to farmland was low and the base has a plan in place, including regular lawn mowing and controlled burns, to minimize the risk of contamination, it said.

PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, make firefighting foams more effective at extinguishing fuel fires, the Defense Department said on its website.

In the decades since then, PFAS-containing foams have been found to be a major source of contamination at military bases where firefighting training occurs, the Environmental Protection Agency said.

A Pentagon task force has been working since July to find ways to eliminate use of PFAS, better understand their impact and fulfill the DOD’s cleanup responsibilities, deputy assistant secretary of defense for environment, Michelle Sullivan told a congressional hearing earlier this year.

The estimated cost of remediation at Katterbach has been blacked out in the report, but the Pentagon has said that the price tag to tackle PFAS pollution on hundreds of bases around the world will be at least $3 billion.

Unspecified sums have been made available for the Army to fix the contamination problem at Katterbach, officials said in August when a previous report was released. That study failed to meet Army standards, in part because it did not recommend remediation methods, Johnson said.

“A technically robust” report that proposed several fixes was submitted to the Army in December, Johnson said. A German version was sent to officials in Ansbach and Bavaria, and the English original was sent to the Army Environmental Command in Texas, she said.

The AEC will award a remediation contract after it finishes reviewing the report, Johnson said.

Ansbach posted the report on its website earlier this month. The city said that it was obligated by Bavaria’s Environmental Information Act to publish the report after the Army missed a March 31 publication deadline, city spokesman Chris Shafter said.

The Army let the German deadline pass, in part because it considered discussing remediation publicly to be outside its authority, Johnson said.

Ansbach politician Boris-Andre Meyer of Die Linke, a leftist party opposed to the U.S. military presence in Germany, said that because the Army has been slow to take action, “The poison has contaminated Ansbach’s waters and soil . . . [and] we are confronted with a huge remediation problem.”

But the Army, which launched investigations into PFAS at Katterbach in 2017, continues to take the problem very seriously, Johnson said.

“We live in these communities; this is our home,” she said. “The U.S. Army . . . is determined to be good neighbors and stewards of the environment while accomplishing its mission to support NATO in deterring aggression from any potential adversary here in Europe.”

Actions are being taken to address PFAS contamination on bases around the world, including in Europe, an Army statement said in November.

Sometimes called “forever” chemicals because they take so long to break down in the environment, PFAS have been confirmed or are suspected at 678 military installations in the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii, according to an analysis of the Defense Department data published this month by the nonprofit Environmental Working Group. That number does not include overseas bases, EWG spokesman Alex Formuzis said.

“Access to safe, affordable child care is an important quality of life issue for families,” Hirono wrote.

In its questions, Jones challenged the Army’s decision to cut funding to its child and youth services programs in its 2021 budget request, despite an assessment earlier this year that it would increase more child care spaces next year. McCarthy and McConville responded that they were not able to adjust their funding request in time to update their budget submission after officials determined the service would likely see an increase in need for child services in 2021. But they promised to work on it, nonetheless.

The leaders wrote that they have cut into the length of time it takes to hire child care workers, including military spouse workers, starting at child and youth centers has increased from 79% in 2018 to about 86% due to simpler hiring practices.

Among those new practices is an initiative that allows individuals transferring from one installation to another to quickly move to their next job at their new location. McCarthy and McConville noted that the initiative has cut about two weeks, typically, from the transfer process and now has been used by 140 military spouses and 107 civilian staff at day cares since October.

In their written statements, they also pledged higher pay for their child care providers “to be competitive with civilian care providers.”

Stars and Stripes
Democratic governors are egging on protesters against agitating to restart the economy, will work by the crisis. Million American thrown out of industries is the U.S. are meager has killed over 160,000 people trajectory of the disease, which Italy, Spain and Germany. Parts of Europe slowly reopen this weekend, after authorities allowed families, under strict conditions, to visit relatives in nursing homes once again.)

The work has not been formally published or reviewed, but several sources contacted back to question it. Participants were recruited through Facebook ads, which would attract many people likely to be positive who have had symptoms and want to know if the coronavirus was the reason. Some businesses also had way more participants than others, and “hot spots” within the same area. This made infections seem more common than they are elsewhere.

Next steps

Antibody testing in particular needs to be done “in an unbiased approach” on groups of people that are representative of demographic, social, racial and other conditions, Mina said. The CDC and other groups plan such studies, and they could guide public health advice on returning to normal life for people in certain areas. If infections are more widespread than previously understood, it’s possible that more people have developed some level of immunity to the virus. That could still allow the spread through what’s called herd immunity, but scientists caution that there is still much to learn about whether someone who has recovered can confer immunity and how long it might last.

It will probably be months before enough reliable testing has been done to answer those questions and others, including how widespread infections have been and the virus’s true mortality rate, which has only been estimated so far.

“We’ve seen the virus before, then maybe you can relax in that neighborhood” and ease social distancing, Mina said. “We’re not anywhere close where we need to be.”

Symptoms: Estimations of number of infections may be off by ‘huge, huge numbers’

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Boeing and a small number of other manufacturers around the U.S. geared up Monday to resume production this week amid pressure from President Donald Trump to reopen the economy and resistance from governors who warn there is not enough testing yet to keep the coronavirus in check.

Boeing, one of the Pacific Northwest’s biggest employers, said it will put about 27,000 people back to work building passenger jets at its Seattle-area plants, with virus-slowing precautions in place, including face masks and staggered shift times. Bobcat, a Forest Park manufacturer, announced it will resume production with about 600 employees in Bremerton, N.D.

Elsewhere around the world, step-by-step reopenings were underway in Europe, where the crisis has begun to ebb in places like Italy, Spain and Germany. Parts of the continent are perhaps weeks ahead of the U.S. in the trajectory of the disease, which has killed over 160,000 people worldwide.

The reopenings of certain industries is the U.S. is meager compared with the more than 22 million American thrown out of work by the crisis.

Businesses that start operating again are likely to engender good will with the Trump administration at a time when it is doling out billions to companies for economic relief. The president has been agitating to restart the economy, egging on protesters against Democratic governors.

But reopening carries major risks, especially since people can spread the virus without even knowing they are infected. Many governors say they lack the testing supplies they need and warn that if they reopen their economies too soon, they could get hit by a second wave of infections.

The death toll in the U.S., the worst-hit country by far, was more than 40,000 with over 750,000 confirmed infections, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University of government reports. The true figures are believed to be much higher, in part because of limited testing and difficulties in counting the dead.

On Monday, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government’s top infectious disease expert, warned: “When we get the virus under control, the real recovery economically is not going to happen.”

“If you jump the gun and go into a situation where you have a big spike, you’re going to set yourself back. So, as painful as it is to go by the careful guidelines of gradually phasing into a reopening, it’s going to backfire,” he said on ABC’s “Good Morning America.”

In the past few days, Florida gave the OK for beaches to reopen, and Texas on Monday began a week of slow reopenings, starting off with state parks. Later, stores will be allowed to offer curbside service.

Washington state was the first in the nation to see a spike in cases and enacted strict shutdown orders that helped control the virus. Europe was likewise ahead of the U.S. on the curve.

The global game plan is to open up but maintain enough social distancing to prevent new flare-ups of the virus.

The easing of the lockdowns “is not the end of the epidemic in any country. It’s just the beginning of the next phase,” the head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, told G-20 health ministers in an online meeting.

He warned governments not to rush to return to normal, saying, “It is critical that these measures are a phased process.”

German Health Minister Jens Spahn said the gradual easing “is a step-by-step process where, after time, we will evaluate what consequences it has had for the infection.”

Not every government was ready to take its foot off the brake just yet.

In Italy, tensions have been growing between northern regions, which are pushing to reopen industry despite being hardest hit by the coronavirus, and the south, which fears contagion if the lockdown is eased. Premier Giuseppe Conte is expected to outline what a “Phase 2” can look like this week, with the nationwide lockdown set to be lifted on May 4.

In Britain, where Prime Minister Boris Johnson is still recovering from a bout of COVID-19 that saw him hospitalized in intensive care, a lockdown imposed March 23 is due to last at least until May 7, and ministers have cautioned that measures are unlikely to be loosened in the short term.

France also is still under tight lockdown, although Monday authorities allowed families, under strict conditions, to visit relatives in nursing homes once again.

Flawed methods

These studies used tests that look for bits of the virus from antibodies or other immune system makes to fight the virus. But the accuracy of these,
Trump to speak at West Point commencement

By ROSE L. THAYER Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump said he will travel to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., on June 13 to deliver the commencement speech to cadets in the class of 2020.

Academy officials have not announced any plans for its commencement and officer commissioning ceremony originally scheduled for May 23, but an in-person ceremony would require the cadets to return to campus. All 4,000 cadets at West Point were sent home at spring break and they have continued coursework online.

“They may not have the parents, but they’re going to have the cadets,” Trump said Saturday about the graduation.

Trump first announced his plans Friday and he said the cadets will be distanced from one another. Then on Saturday during the White House’s daily coronavirus news conference, the president said the date for the event is June 13 “because that’s when they’re going on in New York.”

West Point is located about 60 miles north of New York City, which has been devastated by the coronavirus pandemic. The virus has killed more than 10,000 people in New York City and sickened nearly 130,000 people, according to the city’s Health Department. The entire state has more than 242,700 positive cases of the virus.

Trump announced his intentions to travel to West Point the day before Vice President Mike Pence traveled to Colorado to speak at the Air Force Academy’s graduation and commissioning ceremony for the class of 2020.

The Air Force chose to keep its senior class on campus and graduate students a month early. Cadets sat 8 feet apart with no family or nonessential personnel in attendance. Air Force and Space Force officials, along with Pence, sat distanced from one another behind the podium.

West Point declined to offer more information about Trump’s comments, though they said last week a final decision has not yet been made.

Army leadership offered a similar answer to Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., a 1971 West Point graduate, who asked about the plans for the rest of this academic school year during a so-called “paper hearing” in lieu of an in-person session to examine the service’s fiscal year 2021 budget request amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy and Gen. James McConville, Army chief of staff, responded in writing last week to Reed, stating West Point leadership has a deliberate planning process in place to determine the return of cadets. Aside from graduation, summer at the academy is filled with training programs and the welcome of the new freshmen class is expected June 29. As of yet, there has been no change to the report date, according to the West Point website.

The Coast Guard has announced it intends to host a virtual graduation ceremony on May 20. The Naval Academy announced it has canceled all public events for Commissioning Week, and officials are determining “how, when and where this special event will virtually occur.”

Pentagon orders masks for DOD personnel

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON— The Pentagon has ordered thousands of face coverings for Defense Department personnel to help stop the spread of the coronavirus, a top Pentagon official announced Monday.

The face coverings, made of cloth, will be provided to the entire Defense Department workforce of about 3 million people, Lord, the undersecretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment, said during a news conference at the Pentagon.

The order follows a Defense Department directive April 6 for personnel to use cloth face coverings to prevent the spread of the coronavirus if they cannot maintain six feet of social distance in public areas or in their places of work.

The deliveries for the face coverings will start this week, with 135,000 face coverings expected to be delivered by the end of the month, and another 580,000 by the end of May, Lord said. The coverings will be distributed through the military services and departments to personnel in nonmedical positions, according to Air Force Lt. Col. Mike Andrews, a Pentagon spokesman.

The Defense Logistics Agency has also provided a variety of medical and personal protective equipment to the military services, combatant commands, and federal agencies, Lord said. The list includes more than 1.8 million N95 respirator masks, 3.2 million nonmedical and surgical masks, and 8,000 ventilators.

Contracts with three companies have also been finalized to increase mask production in the United States, which are in critical need at hospitals combating the coronavirus pandemic. The first project under Title III of the Defense Production Act, which is being used to increase production of needed medical supplies, is for more than 39 million N95 masks in the next 90 days at a cost of $13.3 million, Lord said.

Outcry continues over masks for VA workers as deaths rise

By NIKKI WENTLING Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs said Monday he was “very concerned” about the Department of Veterans Affairs workforce during the coronavirus pandemic, as patient deaths rose 13% over the weekend.

“If the VA workforce gets sick, if they catch the virus in great numbers, that’s going to imperil their ability to help our veterans. That’s the bottom line,” Mark Takano said Monday morning on C-SPAN. As of Friday, 1,708 employees at VA medical centers tested positive for the virus, and 17 had died. Of the 17 who died, 5 worked directly with patients, the VA said.

On Monday morning, the VA reported 339 of its patients had died of the coronavirus, and 5,476 patients tested positive.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration initiated an investigation into the VA and employees’ exposure to the virus after receiving complaints from the American Federation of Government Employees, a federal union representing hundreds of thousands of VA workers. The union claimed the VA created unsafe working environments by not providing enough masks to front-line workers.

Nurses at the VA hospitals in Brooklyn and Atlanta have gathered between shifts to protest their lack of PPE.

Five Senate Democrats sent a letter to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie on Monday, asking for specifics about the department’s stockpile of masks and any guidance they’re sending to workers about rationing the supply.

“We have … heard from a number of our constituents who are employees at VA facilities, who think they are not being provided adequate PPE in their jobs and fear for their personal health and safety,” the senators wrote. “Employees report being asked to use one N95 mask for up to a week, which manufacturers recommend be changed each shift at a minimum.”


Their letter followed one from the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs last week. Lawmakers, including Takano, wrote to the White House Coronavirus Task Force, saying the VA had refused to provide documents with Congress that give an official count of its PPE supply.

Takano is still fighting for that information, he said Monday.
Tokyo's COVID-19 cases pass 3,000; authorities urge Golden Week caution

**By Hana Kusumoto**
Stars and Stripes

**Tuesday, April 21, 2020**

Tokyo — The total number of confirmed coronavirus infections in Tokyo passed 3,000 over the weekend as the overall number in Japan continues to rise, according to data Monday from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

Tokyo, now the epicenter of the pandemic in Japan, had 3,082 cases by Sunday, according to the Tokyo metro website. The number of deaths reached 71, it stated.

Although the number of daily cases typically falls on Mondays due to the low number of tests being conducted over the weekend, the number of new cases has reached triple digits for the past couple of weeks. The daily cases rose to 107 on Sunday, down from Saturday with 181 cases and Friday with a record-high of 201 cases.

In an interview with TokyoMetroCool.co.jp late last month described the city as being “in a critical situation on the verge of an explosive increase of infection.” She urged residents to stay home, especially over the weekends, and to work from home as much as possible.

She also called on city residents to stay home at night, citing the number of infected cases stemming from entertainment establishments such as hostess bars and nightclubs.

On April 7, Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared a state of emergency in Tokyo and six other prefectures that have a high risk of infection. On Thursday, he extended the emergency nationwide to prevent the movement of people across the prefectures to and from Tokyo and to achieve as much as 80% social distancing. This extension comes at a crucial time as next week, Japan enters Golden Week, a series of Japanese national holidays.

Nationwide, Japan has counted 10,751 cases of the coronavirus and 171 deaths as of Sunday, according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare news release.

The nationwide emergency declaration is in effect until May 6, but could be extended. It allows prefectural governors to urge people to stay home, close businesses and cancel events. Authorities, however, cannot penalize those who do not follow those guidelines.

Tokyo and the Kanagawa prefecture, the area south of Tokyo where Yokohama and Yokosuka Naval Base are located, have called on schools, movie theaters, malls and night entertainment establishments to close after the declaration. Schools in both prefectures are already closed. Authorities in both have also urged restaurants and bars to operate only between 5 a.m. and 8 p.m. and to stop serving alcohol at 7 p.m.

**Camp Zama morale builders create digital activities, real-life Story Walk**

**By Theron Godbold**
Stars and Stripes

**Tuesday, April 21, 2020**

Lucinda Ward, a school liaison officer with the program, said that the immunity team was assembled in late March to find new ideas in which to improve morale among servicemembers and their families during the pandemic.

“We are a team of nine members from MWR put together to get the morale lifted,” Ward said.

The team looks for events that can raise morale for people not only at Zama, but also at the Sagamihara Housing Area.

“We’re going to last past COVID and be a reason to get outside for a local walk and still maintain six feet from one another,” Ward said.

Weatherproofed pages of children’s books like “Corduroy” by Don Freeman and “If You Give a Pig a Pancake” by Laura Numeroff are enlarged and hung about 15 feet apart along the paths designated for the walk.

Starting at the housing area, new books are being placed weekly, Ward said, and then moved to Camp Zama to help circulate the material.

“It’s good because they put the pictures up there because the library is closed,” said Camden Carmona, 6, in a news release from the Camp Zama Public Affairs Office.

Jim Lacombe, supervisory librarian for Camp Zama and Sagamihara, said that the installation gives families and children something to do “during this difficult time when many are stuck at home,” according to the release.

With the success of the story walk and a push for more online content, Ward said, Camp Zama’s digital presence has improved greatly. The Camp Zama MWR official Facebook page has 245 new followers and on average collects 200 more "likes" than usual.

Ward said that the Facebook page has reached over 53,000 people in the past month.

“I see us coming up with more events for the community, bringing more smiles to the community’s faces and things that are going to last past COVID and becoming a legacy,” Ward said.

**COVID-19 is the pneumonia-like disease caused by the new coronavirus.**

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**Camp Zama**

**Marines on Okinawa to prep for 72-hour sheltering order**

**By Matthew M. Burke**
Stars and Stripes

**Tuesday, April 21, 2020**

The Marine Corps announced Tuesday it has ordered Marines on Okinawa to prepare to shelter in place with up to 72 hours of food, water and other necessities on hand to contain the spread of the coronavirus and to facilitate contact tracing and cleaning teams.

The order is a proactive, precautionary measure and not based on a specific threat, III MEF spokesman 1st Lt. Ryan Lacombe wrote Monday in an email to Stars and Stripes. Marine officials likened it to preparations for a typhoon, an annual occurrence in Okinawa.

“An order to shelter in place may be issued in any situation, enabling more effective contact tracing and facilitating cleaning team activities,” Lacombe said.

Essential items include food, water, medications, infant formula, diapers, personal hygiene items, pet supplies and means of cleaning team activities.”

On Friday, the Marine Forces 3rd Air Wing at Kadena Air Base on Monday imposed a “sustained counter-COVID-19 posture,” which mirrored many of the Marine restrictions. It bars airmen from off-base restaurants, schools and child care facilities as of Wednesday.

The restrictions are among the strictest in Okinawa. The order by their unit leaders or supervisors from off-base schools and child care facilities.

The restrictions are among the strictest in Okinawa. The order is a proactive, precautionary measure and not based on a specific threat, III MEF spokesman 1st Lt. Ryan Lacombe wrote Monday in an email to Stars and Stripes. Marine officials likened it to preparations for a typhoon, an annual occurrence in Okinawa.

“The restrictions are among the strictest in Okinawa. The order is a proactive, precautionary measure and not based on a specific threat, III MEF spokesman 1st Lt. Ryan Lacombe said. These include two U.S. airmen and a family cases from Kadena Air Base. The prefecture has reported three deaths.

After the number of confirmed coronavirus cases on Okinawa doubled in a week’s time, Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki is planning to declare a regional state of emergency, the Ryukyu Shimpō newspaper reported Monday.

No further details were available by press time.

As of Sunday, Okinawa had reported 119 confirmed virus cases, the prefectural government website said. These include two U.S. airmen and a family cases from Kadena Air Base. The prefecture has reported three deaths.

Lucinda Ward, a school liaison officer with the program, said that the immunity team was assembled in late March to find new ideas in which to improve morale among servicemembers and their families during the pandemic.

“We are a team of nine members from MWR put together to get the morale lifted,” Ward said.

The team looks for events that can raise morale for people not only at Zama, but also at the Sagamihara Housing Area.

The challenge is to come up with activities that adhere to social distancing and bans on large group gatherings.

Among the activities the team came up with are online fitness classes, another online program called “Zama’s Got Talent” and a walkable installation for children called a story walk.

The story walk, with segments installed at Camp Zama and at Sagamihara, a five-minute drive away, is extremely popular, Ward said. The installation gives people a reason to get outside for a local walk and still maintain six feet from one another.

Weatherproofed pages of children’s books like “Corduroy” by Don Freeman and “If You Give a Pig a Pancake” by Laura Numeroff are enlarged and hung about 15 feet apart along the paths designated for the walk.

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**Camp Zama**

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Barbers, gyms reopen on Camp Humphreys

By Matthew Keeler
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — After nearly three weeks without a regular trim or daily workout, Camp Humphreys soldiers lined up outside barber shops and with their families hit the gyms that reopened over the weekend.

Most installation services that involve close contact with other personnel were closed in March after Eighth Army reported a case of coronavirus that originated at its headquarters.

At least eight base barber shops and three fitness centers reopened Saturday after U.S. Forces Korea commander Gen. Robert Abrams allowed Camp Humphreys to revert to Health Protection Condition C from C++ on Friday.

Maj. Bernard Bunal, the Korean Service Corps Battalion executive officer, and hundreds more waited in a queue, each member spaced six feet apart, for more than two hours Saturday at barber shops in efforts to meet the military grooming standards.

“It feels great getting a brand-new cut,” Bunal told Stars and Stripes. “You can shower every day, but you can’t get rid of all the grime.”

The Guam native said he is typically ready for a new cut every seven days. “You know how

you’re so used to getting a haircut in the military,” he said, “it’s just one of those days you don’t feel completely clean.”

Off-base barbershops remain off-limits to USFK personnel, but to satisfy the demand all base

hair salons and barber shops operated on extended hours over the weekend.

Garrison commander Col. Michael Tremblay said last week that service members would have at least a week before they faced any type of haircut inspection.

The fitness centers reopened Saturday to a clientele that made do with alternatives for the first few days. Doors opened for service members and their dependents only to accommodate the distancing requirements.

“If you’re a gym junkie,” Staff Sgt. Tiffany Holley said Saturday at the Collier Community Fitness Center. “It’s my getaway, so not having access to it forced me to come up with different alternatives on trying to get in a really good workout.

“To cope with the shutdown, I implemented more resistance bands into my training, especially with my back routines,” Holley said. “I also used sandbags as weights to do my deadlifts."

Like Holley, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Josh Vernor said the fitness centers are a significant stress reliever; but being outdoors as spring rolls in has been motivating.

“I see more people outside now, out being more active than I have seen in the past 2 years of being at Humphreys,” Vernor said. “I think it has actually been good for people because it’s made people get out, sit a bit away from their families, for social distance, but they are out being more active than before.”

As gym services became available as the command monitors the declining number of reported cases throughout the peninsula.

“We’re opening it up a little bit by a little bit,” Tremblay said Thursday, but “we’re being vigilant.”

By Chad Garland
Stars and Stripes

Military officials have flown out scores of personnel from Djibouti’s Camp Lemonnier as a precaution and are urging contractors to immediately move into temporary berthing on base, due to mounting numbers of coronavirus cases in the country.

Home to some 5,500 U.S. military and other personnel, the base began barring hundreds of local workers late last month and evacuated service members and others most vulnerable to the virus.

In Djibouti, 840 people have tested positive and two have died, World Health Organization data showed Monday — an increase of more than 300 positive cases over the weekend.

As new infections increased to an average of 60 a day, military leaders in Africa called on contractors to leave their off-base housing now.

“To ensure continuation of the mission and access to emergent health care, if necessary, it is imperative that contractor employees take advantage of this opportunity immediately, before further base access restrictions are in place,” said a memo signed by Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa commander Maj. Gen. Michael D. Turello and base commander Navy Capt. Kenneth Crowe on Sunday.

But many of the roughly 180 contractors don’t want to move, partly because they’d be forced to live in closer quarters than in their housing about four miles from the facility, a contractor with knowledge of the matter said last week.

Contractors also were afraid that moving would leave many of their residences vulnerable to burglary while separating a few others from their local families.

They’d be told they would be living two or three to a room and sharing bathroom facilities, making social distancing difficult, said the contractor, who provided footage of a cramped room with two pairs of bunk beds.

Contractors may have to share a room with one or two others, “just as many of our military personnel do,” base spokeswoman Lt. Jennifer Cunningham said.

Details were being worked out, but health and safety remained “a top priority so we can continue our mission,” she said in an email Monday.

The former French Foreign Legion camp serves as a launchpad for crisis response efforts across the continent and supports counterterrorism efforts in neighboring Somalia and nearby Kenya.

Defense officials became concerned coronavirus had spread from China to Africa in January, after reports of a possible outbreak in Djibouti, where Beijing is heavily involved in infrastructure work. The Chinese military is heavily involved in infrastructure work across the continent with one of their own hospitals, the Chinese-built General Hospital, opened in January.

The precautionary evacuation freed up space for medical isolation, he said in an email. A vacant office building was also converted into an intensive care unit and 30-bed ward, he said.

The quarantine areas were clearly marked and roped off from the general population, Cunningham said.

Of base, authorities closed the international airport to passenger flights, and nearly all businesses were closed. Security forces had been posted at intersections to limit movement, the contractor said.

“This might be one of the safest places in the world to really be at this time,” he said.

The U.S. installation has also become something of a “ghost town” in recent weeks, with gym facilities and small eateries closed.

The shortage of local workers forced hours to be cut at the Navy Exchange, Crowe said in a recent video. But military volunteers have taken on extra duties such as stocking shelves, collecting trash around base and sanitizing common areas, he said.

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Pot holiday fizzes as industry braces for economic woes

BY MICHAEL R. BLOOD
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The unofficial holiday celebrating all things cannabis arrived Monday as the nation’s emerging legal marijuana market braces for an economic blow from the coronavirus crisis, with many consumers reducing spending or going underground for deals.

It was supposed to be a long weekend of festivals and music culminating April 20, or 4/20, the code for marijuana’s high holiday. Instead, it was reduced to an online replica because of stay-at-home orders to curb the pandemic.

Virtual parties and video chats replaced vast outdoor smoking sessions to mark the rise of legalization and celebrate cannabis culture. The origins of the annual celebration are believed tied to a group of Northern California high school friends, who used the code as slang for smoking pot in the early 1970s.

“Stay home,” the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, or NORML, said bluntly. San Francisco Mayor London Breed threatened arrests: “We will not tolerate anyone coming to San Francisco for 4/20 this year.”

For businesses, 4/20 is usually their once-a-year Black Friday, when sales soar. Instead, they reported up-and-down buying and pondered an uncertain future.

The pandemic means the world economy could face its worst year since the Great Depression in the 1930s. In a sign of what’s to come, U.S. retail sales overall dropped nearly 9% in March — a record. Millions are out of work.

For the holiday, “there’s a somber feeling to this one,” said Jordan Lams, CEO of Pure CA, which specializes in marijuana extracts and does business as Moxie brand products. Before the outbreak, “it was going to be the biggest 4/20 in history,” Lams said.

Steve White, CEO of Arizona-based Harvest Health & Recreation, said he’s watching to see if consumers treat marijuana more like beer or toilet paper when money runs short.

When the economy tumbles, beer sales traditionally spike. With toilet paper, panic-buying might empty shelves but people do not use more of it. They just buy less later.

It will be a telling year because no one in the relatively new industry knows if sales will plunge, stay flat or even rise.

“Do people buy less cannabis, or does it become more ingrained as part of their daily life?” White said.

Because cannabis remains illegal at the federal level, most banks don’t want to do business with pot companies and they aren’t included in the coronavirus rescue package that will help other businesses.
NYC nixes June public events, including three major parades

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York City won’t allow public events in June, including three of the city’s major annual celebrations: the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, the Celebrate Israel parade and the Pride parade on its 50th anniversary.

Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Monday that the events would be canceled or at least postponed, saying that it was a painful but necessary step as the city continues to fight the coronavirus.

“They will be back, and we will find the right way to do it,” he said.

The Pride parade began in 1970 as a way to commemorate the Stonewall rebellion the year before, when a police raid at the Stonewall Inn bar sparked a resistance by gay men, bisexuals, lesbians and transgender people and led to the development of more extensive and militant LGBTQ activist groups than the U.S. had seen before.

The Puerto Rico and Israel parades are also touchstones in a city that has the largest Jewish population outside of Israel and the biggest Puerto Rican community off the island.

Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers would need to be tested for the coronavirus daily before city officials could start to loosen restrictions that have shuttered most workplaces and forced residents to cover their faces in public, de Blasio said Monday.

“The ability to come back, you need testing to be — in our city probably hundreds of thousands of tests a day,” the Democrat said on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe.”

“You need temperature checks going into each event and all the different kinds of tests that are out there, and all sorts of things to make sure that anyone who’s sick is immediately isolated and supported in quarantine, and beyond it,” he said.

But he said that New York can’t start reopening its economy without widespread testing, “and so far the federal government still can’t get the handle on that.”

“The work-hour rule exemption is an important contingency because we understand that some healthy workers need to remain on site for more hours, reducing the need to bring in outside travel- ers and vendors,” Exelon spokes-

Women at nuclear plant get 12-hour days for 2 weeks

By Will Wade

Bloomberg

Nuclear power plants can now implement longer shifts for workers and delay some inspections, raising concerns that as the coronavirus pandemic upends basic operations, the industry may bend the rules too far.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is allowing its U.S. power plants to extend workers’ shifts to as long as 12 hours a day for two weeks, and more may be coming.

That’s up significantly from current standards that require people to get two to three days off a week when pulling shifts that long.

Employees can also work as many as 86 hours in a week now, up from 72 hours.

To curb transmission of the virus, utilities also said that they want to delay inspections which require people to work in close proximity.

Environment groups, though, have warned that the changes could have disastrous results, and are worried that they could lead to further deviations from safety rules.

“The quickest change was the federal government’s quick change,” said Daniel Arbeeny, who brought his 88-year-old father from a hospital to the home in late March. “They were doing the best they could, as far as we could tell at arm’s length, under siege.”

Tuchman told the AP on Sunday that he believes many other homes have more deaths than Cobble Hill, but has been singled out for its honesty.

He said that it responded to the state’s voluntary survey with cases in which it was “possible” COVID-19 could be a factor, since his home wasn’t able to test any due to the lack of available kits. He also said that he reported 50 deaths, not 55, though the state repeated that tally Sunday.

There’s been a lot of lip service about how vulnerable nursing homes have been, and everyone has the best intentions, but it didn’t materialize,” Tuchman said.

“PPE didn’t materialize, the staffing surges didn’t materialize, the testing didn’t materialize … How did we expect this not to spread?” said an official at a hospital in Washington, D.C.

Overwhelmed Brooklyn nursing home tolls dozens more dead

A patient is loaded into an ambulance by emergency medical workers outside Cobble Hill Health Center on Friday in the Brooklyn borough of New York.

NEW YORK — As residents at a nursing home in Kirkland, Wash., began dying in late Feb-

g

genary from a coronavirus out-

break that would eventually take 43 lives, there was little sign of trouble at the Cobble Hill Health Center, a 360-bed facility in an upscale section of Brooklyn.

Its Facebook page posted a cheerful story encouraging relatives to quiz their aging loved ones about their lives, and photos of smiling third graders at a near-

by school making flower arrange-

ments for residents.

That quickly changed. By the middle of March, the CEO began sending increasingly alarming emails about banning visitors, screening staff, confining resi-

dents, wiping down all surfaces and having all-hands-on-deck meetings to prepare everyone for the coming coronavirus “fire train.”

“I’ll be darned if I’m not going to do everything in my power to protect them,” Donny Tuchman wrote before things got worse.

More than 100 staffers, nearly a third of the workforce, went out sick.

Those left began wearing garbage bags because of a shortage of protective gear. Not a single resident has been able to get tested for the virus to this day.

Now listed with 55 deaths it can only assume were caused by COVID-19, among the most of any such facility in the country, Cobble Hill Health Center has become another glaring example of the nation’s struggle to control the rapid spread of the coronavirus in nursing homes that care for the most frail and vulnerable.

Cobble Hill’s grim toll surpasses not only Kirkland’s, but also Judah’s home in Holyoke, Mass., and five other homes in outer boroughs of New York City that have at least 40 deaths each.

Out of an Associated Press tally of 8,063 nursing home deaths na-

tional, a third of them are in New York.

AP interviews with friends and relatives who have visited the Cobble Hill Health Center in re-

cent weeks, as well as the home’s own statements, paint a picture of a facility overwhelmed and un-

equipped to deal with its coronavirus outbreak, with shortages of staff, personal protective equip-

ment and the availability of reli-

able testing.

“We were under siege,” said Daniel Arbeeny, who brought his illing 88-year-old father from a hospital to the home in late March. “They were doing the best they could, as far as we could tell at arm’s length, under siege.”

Tuchman told the AP on Sun-

day that he believes many other homes have more deaths than Cobble Hill, but has been singled out for its honesty.

He said that it responded to the state’s voluntary survey with cases in which it was “possible” COVID-19 could be a factor, since his home wasn’t able to test any due to the lack of available kits. He also said that he reported 50 deaths, not 55, though the state repeated that tally Sunday.

There’s been a lot of lip service about how vulnerable nursing homes have been, and everyone has the best intentions, but it didn’t materialize,” Tuchman said.

“PPE didn’t materialize, the staffing surges didn’t materialize, the testing didn’t materialize … How did we expect this not to spread?”
North Korean defectors doubt zero virus claim

By HYUNG-JIN KIM
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — As a doctor in North Korea during the SARS outbreak and flu pandemic, Choi Jung Hun didn’t have much more than a thermometer to decide who should be quarantined. Barely paid, with no test kits and working with antiquated equipment, if anything, he and his fellow doctors in the north-eastern city of Chonjin were often unable to determine who had the disease, even after patients died, said Choi, who fled to South Korea in 2012.

Local health officials weren’t asked to confirm cases or submit them to the central government in Pyongyang, Choi said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Experts say North Korea’s reluctance to admit major outbreaks of disease, its wrecked medical infrastructure and its extreme sensitivity to any potential threat to Kim Jong Un’s authoritarian rule means that Pyongyang is likely handling the current coronavirus pandemic in the same manner.

“This has led to widespread skepticism over the nation’s claim to have zero infections,” said Choi.

“IT’s a lie,” Choi said, “Year after year, and in every season, diverse infectious diseases repeatedly occur but North Korea says there isn’t any outbreak.”

Outsiders strongly suspect that coronavirus, which has infected more than 2.4 million people, has already spread to North Korea because it shares a long, porous border with China, its most important trading partner and biggest aid benefactor.

North Korea, which has quarantined tens of thousands and delayed the school year as precautionary steps, officially sealed its border with China in January, but smuggling across the frontier still likely happens. Activist groups in Seoul said they’ve been told by contacts in North Korea that people had died of the virus. Those claims cannot be independently verified.

While there have been no reliable outside reports of mass infections in North Korea yet, the country’s tight control on information allows few foreign experts to assert with an authority that the North’s quarantine regime has been successful. As seen in Singapore, the coronavirus can surge again, and North Korea’s powerful Politburo said last week it would further bolster anti-epidemic steps.

“I think a considerable number of people could die. But that won’t be disclosed to the outside world because the North is not even able to diagnose patients with the (coronavirus),” said Kim Sin Gon, a professor at Korea University College of Medicine in Seoul.

He said North Korea is struggling to treat seriously ill patients and noted U.N. reports that about 40% of its 24 million people are undernourished.

Russia’s foreign ministry said in February it donated 1,500 coronavirus test kits to North Korea, and observers say similar kits have also been shipped there from China. Some relief agencies, including UNICEF and Doctors Without Borders, said they sent gloves, masks, goggles and hand hygiene products to North Korea.

North Korea’s main newspaper recently called its public health system “the most superior in the world” and said that Kim Jong Un’s devotion to improving it is the reason why there are no infections.

Dozens of refugees interviewed in a recent study said they felt the North’s health care system has become poorer under Kim Jong Un, according to Min Ha-ju, a North Korean refugee-turned-researcher. She said the gap between the haves and the have-nots in terms of medical service is deepening because a crumbled state rationing system has led to a burgeoning private economy.

Choi, the doctor who worked in North Korea, said his monthly salary was the equivalent of about 4.4 pounds of rice and that he received cigarettes from patients in return for telling them what medicine they should buy at markets.

Choi Chung-hui, a former local North Korean official who is now with the Seoul-based NGO Good Farmers, said he gave cash to doctors to cure gastritis and enteritis.

Choi and Cho said measles, chickenpox, cholera, typhoid, paratyphoid, hepatitis and tuberculosis repeatedly swept through North Korea, said his monthly salary was the equivalent of about 4.4 pounds of rice and that he received cigarettes from patients in return for telling them what medicine they should buy at markets.

Choi said he wore no masks, gloves or protective gear during outbreaks and used equipment manufactured in the 1960-70s.

India sees biggest one-day spike as lockdown eased

By EMILY SCHMALL
Associated Press

NEW DELHI — India recorded its biggest single-day spike in coronavirus cases on Monday as the government eased one of the world’s strictest lockdowns to allow some manufacturing and agricultural activity to resume.

An additional 1,553 cases were reported over 24 hours, raising the national total past 17,000. At least 43 people have died from COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the virus, and epidemiologists forecast the peak may not be reached before June.

The shelter-in-place orders imposed in India on March 24 halted all but essential services, sparking an exodus of migrant workers and people who survive on daily wages out of India’s cities and toward villages in rural areas.

Authorities picked up travelers in a fleet of buses and quarantined many of them in empty schools and other public buildings for 14 days.

Starting Monday, limited industry and farming were allowed to resume where employers could meet social distancing and hygiene norms, and migrant workers were allowed to travel within states to factories, farms and other work sites.

“In the event a group of migrants wish to return to their places of work within the state where they are presently located, they would be screened and those who are asymptomatic would be transported to their respective places of work,” India’s home ministry said in a letter to state governments.

Experts say anti-Semitic spike due to pandemic

By ARON HELLER
Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israelis researchers reported Monday that the global coronavirus outbreak has sparked a rise in anti-Semitic expressions blaming Jews for the spread of the disease and the economic recession it has caused.

The findings, which came in an analysis of online and in-person attacks against Jews last year, warn that the pandemic has threatened to amp up incitement even more.

As of the end of 2020, the researchers said the hatred has come from sources as varied as right-wing European politicians, ultra-Orthodox American pastors, anti-Zionist intellectuals and Iranian officials.

“The language and imagery used clearly identifies a revival of the medieval ‘blood libels’ when Jews were accused of spreading disease, poisoning wells or controlling economies.”

The Hebrew University’s Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry releases its report every year on the eve of the annual Remembrance Day, which begins Monday at sundown.

Researchers said the 18% increase in anti-Semitic violence in 2019 continued a steady rise in recent years.

Seven Jews were killed in 2019 in more than 450 attacks across the globe against synagogues, community centers and other Jewish targets.

The researchers said the hateful response to the novel coronavirus — and the COVID-19 illness it causes — “is the continuation of an ancient form of anti-Semitism that involves blaming Jews when ‘things go wrong.’”

They recorded expressions such as pinning the source of the virus on Jews rejecting Christ, to accusing Jews of perpetrating the virus’s spread in order to profit from vaccines they would ultimately create to combat it. The FBI also warned about calls coming from neo-Nazis and white supremacists to spread contagion among Jews,” said the report.

Kantor warned that the virus had the potential to spark populist extremism, similar to what was witnessed after the Great Depression and contributed to the rise of Nazism.
Texas official: Police kill gunman who hijacked Dallas-area bus

ROWLETT, Texas — A man opened fire on a Dallas-area public bus Sunday, hijacking it with two people aboard and leading officers on a chase that ended in a shootout in which the man was wounded, according to police officials.

A man got on the Dallas Area Rapid Transit bus in Richardson, just north of Dallas, at around 11 a.m. and opened fire, shattering windows, said Gordon Shattles, a DART spokesman.

The man took the driver hostage and fired at DART officers who tried to stop the vehicle while police from other agencies joined the pursuit eastward along the President George Bush Turnpike, said Garland police officer Pedro Barineau.

“During the pursuit, shots were continually being fired from the actual gunman inside the bus toward the officers and the officers were returning fire,” Barineau said.

Police eventually used a spike strip to stop the vehicle along the freeway in the suburb of Rowlett, according to Barineau.

The man continued firing as he exited the bus after it stopped, and officers returned fire, killing him, said Barineau, who didn’t release the suspect’s name. A DART public transportation officer and a Garland police officer were shot and wounded, but their injuries weren’t considered life-threatening, he said.

Another passenger was on the bus during the chase, but was not injured, Shattles said.

No motive for the shooting has been released.

Biden wins postponed Wyoming Democratic presidential caucus

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Joe Biden won Wyoming’s Democratic presidential caucus, which had been postponed for two weeks and scaled back to just mail-in ballots because of the coronavirus pandemic, state party officials said Sunday.

The results came less than two weeks after Bernie Sanders dropped out and endorsed Biden, who is the only candidate still actively seeking the Democratic nomination. Voting began when it was still a two-candidate race.

Party rules make Sanders ineligible to win delegates based on the statewide vote. He is, however, still eligible to win delegates based on vote totals in individual congressional districts — Wyoming has one at-large district — which is why The Associated Press allocated two delegates to the Vermont senator.

The Biden and Sanders campaigns are in talks over allowing Sanders to keep some of his statewide delegates. The race for the nomination may be moot, but Sanders still wants as many delegates as possible to help shape the party’s platform.

What was originally to be a combination of in-person caucusing, drop-off and mail-in vote tabulation on April 4 was scaled back to just drop-off and mail-in — and finally just mail-in voting.

On Monday in Detroit, the Congressional Black Caucus PAC endorsed Biden’s presidential bid, further cementing his support among the nation’s influential black political leadership.

The political action committee’s unanimous endorsement came on the heels of several key nods of support among caucus leadership and members, including civil rights icon Rep. John Lewis of Georgia and caucus Chairwoman Rep. Karen Bass of California. The PAC is the caucus’s separate campaign arm.

Biden, who is on the cusp of clinching the Democratic presidential nomination, had already scored key endorsements from 38 of the 54 members of the group, which is composed of most African American members of Congress.

Certain crimes spiking in major American cities

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Gunman dressed as officer goes on rampage in Canada

By Rob Gillies
Associated Press

TORONTO — A gunman disguised as a police officer went on a 12-hour rampage in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, shooting people in their homes, setting fires and killing at least 17 people, including a woman, in the deadliest mass shooting in the country's history.

Officials said the suspect, identified as Gabriel Wortman, 51, was among the dead in the weekend attack. Police did not provide a motive for the killings.

"Today is a devastating day for Nova Scotia and will remain etched in the minds of many for years to come," a visibly shaken Lee Bergerman, an assistant commissioner for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, told a news conference Sunday.

Police began advising residents overnight Saturday in the rural town of Portapique, about 60 miles north of Halifax, to lock their doors and stay in their homes.

Several bodies were found inside and outside one home on Portapique Beach Road, the street where the suspect lived, authorities said.

Bodies were also found at several other locations within a 30-mile area from the neighborhood where the shootings began late Saturday, and authorities believe the shooter may have targeted his first victims but then began attacking randomly. Several homes were set on fire.

Authorities said the suspected gunman wore a police uniform at one point and made his car look like a Royal Canadian Mounted Police cruiser.

"That fact that this individual had a uniform and a police car at his disposal certainly speaks to it not being a random act," Mounted Police Chief Superintendent Chris Leather said. He said many of the victims did not know the shooter and authorities believe he acted alone.

Wortman, who owned a denture practice in the Dartmouth, near Halifax, lived part time in Portapique, according to residents.

Canada overhauled its gun-control laws after gunman Marc Lepine killed 14 women and himself at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique college in 1989.

It is illegal to possess an unregistered handgun or any kind of rapid-fire weapon in Canada. The country also requires training and criminal record checks to purchase a weapon.

Police cruiser.

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Police cruiser.

Israeli rally against Netanyahu's calls for 'emergency' government

Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — More than 2,000 Israelis took to the streets of Tel Aviv on Sunday, demonstrating against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attempts to form an "emergency" government with his chief rival and accusing him of using the coronavirus crisis to escape prosecution on corruption charges.

Demonstrators wore face masks and largely practiced social distancing, as speakers criticized Netanyahu's possible partnership with rival Benny Gantz.

Gantz, who during three bitter election campaigns vowed never to sit in a government with Netanyahu due to his legal problems, announced last month he had accepted Netanyahu's suggestion to form an "emergency" government to deal with the virus crisis.

Pandemic scales down Warsaw Ghetto commemoration events

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Sirens wailed and Jewish prayers were said for the heroes of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising, but the annual memorial observances were scaled down Sunday and moved to the internet because of the coronavirus pandemic and the need for social distancing.

Poland's chief rabbi, Michael Schudrich, said prayers at the monument to the ghetto fighters in downtown Warsaw.

Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and representatives of Jewish and Polish organizations laid wreaths. They were all wearing face masks and kept themselves at a distance from each other. President Andrzej Duda and Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski also sent wreaths.

History lectures and virtual visits to ghetto sites were offered on the internet, mainly by the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which faces the monument to the ghetto heroes.

Commemorative concerts were to be broadcast on Radio POLIN and on Poland's state radio.

Museum director Zygmunt Stępiński said that the coronavirus pandemic “has forced us to change the formula” of the commemorations on the 77th anniversary.
Restaurant finds man’s wedding ring years later

FORT LAUDERDALE — Three years ago, a New York couple was enjoying a meal by the water at a South Florida restaurant when the man’s wedding ring slipped off his finger, through the wooden boarboards, apparently lost forever.

Recently, Coconuts restaurant manager Ryan Krivoy decided to replace the wooden patio deck. He found a gold coin, $100 bills, piles of mud and a silver wedding ring with the inscription, “Mike & Lisa 08-21-15.”

The restaurant’s marketing manager Sasha Formica decided to post a picture of the ring on Facebook. The post was shared about 5,000 times, making its way to Mike and Lisa.

Three days later, the happy wife called to claim the ring, the Sun Sentinel reported.

State has 5 potential disasters in a week

PORTLAND — A third of the state lost power because of a freak snowstorm and a powerful windstorm as residents were locked down because of the pandemic. Rivers swelled because of heavy rain.

Then an explosion ripped through a paper mill.

It all added up to an unforgettable week at the Maine Emergency Management Agency’s 24-hour operations center.

“There were so many things coming our way. We were waiting for the locusts, and the tornadoes. I don’t think anything could shock us at this point,” said spokeswoman Susan Falo.

Brewery brews its own hand sanitizer for police

ALBANY — A brewery in one of Georgia’s communities most affected by the coronavirus is thanking police with donations of home-brewed hand sanitizer.

Coconuts Bar & Grill owner Brian Dorsey recently donated 200 bottles of the alcohol-based sanitizer to the Albany Police Department and the Dougherty County Sheriff’s Office, WALB-TV reported.

FBI seeks owner of ring

INDEPENDENCE, MO. — An unidentified participant on a Zoom video call interrupted the meeting was swiftly taken care of.

Okeson said the interruption on the Zoom video conferencing site must be accessible to the public.

The Las Vegas Justice Court in Nevada’s largest city is removing the need to curbst the spread of COVID-19.

The Las Vegas Justice Court made the announcement, saying the decision will affect about 270,000 cases that involve traffic infractions. Officials cited the need to curb the spread of COVID-19.

That means anyone who has a traffic warrant from the court isn’t at risk of being arrested for the time being. However, once the suspension period is over, officials said those with outstanding traffic warrants will again be held accountable.

From wire reports
Your friend, Bob Saget

‘Fuller House’ star invites call-ins to podcast

By CHRISTI CARAS
Los Angeles Times

A little more than a month ago, comedian Bob Saget was gearing up to debut an hour of new material on his stand-up tour “to make people feel better during all of the anger that was going on in our country.”

“And then it turned into this.”

This, of course, being the public health crisis that has since shuttered live events worldwide in an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

“I was supposed to be on the road and pulled out at the last minute, the night before I was supposed to go to Vancouver, and canceled my Canada tour,” Saget said on the phone recently from his home in Los Angeles. “They were upset at first, but then the next day they closed Calgary, so I couldn’t perform anywhere, and it would have been quiet. And it was just very, very strange.”

Now more than ever, the “Fuller House” star is on a mission to make people feel better — just through a different, CDC-approved medium. On Monday, the comedian launched the premiere of his new Studio71 podcast, “Bob Saget’s Here for You,” which invites fans to call in with any storey, comments, concerns and, yes, even “Fuller House” questions they may have.

New episodes are set to launch every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the first two weeks, followed by a regular Monday/Thursday schedule.

“I’ve always had a thing with people that I could talk to like I know them already, and I’m in a place in my life where people feel like they know me already,” Saget told The Times. “It’s amazing what my takeaway is from it. It’s so rewarding.”

This, according to his starstruck reactions — “This is crazy!” and “this is making my day,” the host was already, “It’s amazing” and “this is making my day,” they tell Saget when he calls them back. It’s safe to say the lucky callers are benefiting from the friendly chats as well.

Anyone is welcome to dial (562) 600-0343 and leave a message in Saget’s podcast mailbox for a call-back. “Hey, it’s your friend Bob Saget here,” he says in his recorded greeting. And no topic is off limits. Well, almost.

The podcast “Bob Saget’s Here for You” invites fans to call in to discuss almost anything.

The podcast "Bob Saget's Here for You" invites fans to call in to discuss almost anything.

YOUR FRIEND, BOB SAGET

FACES
What the world can do to halt future pandemics

By MICHAEL C. LU
Special to The Washington Post

I
n a mere four months, the world has been brought to its knees by a previ
ously unknown virus. But COVID-19 won’t be the last, or perhaps even the
deadliest, pandemic. An estimated 600,000 to 940,000 un
known viral species capable of infecting humans lurk in wildlife. At the same time, popu
lation growth, urbanization, globalization, ecolog
ical and climate change, and the destruction of wildlife habitats and the har
vesting of wild species have brought these viruses into closer contact with humans than ever before.

Pandemics may become the new normal.

But that doesn’t have to be. Pandem
ics are preventable, and the world can do three things to prevent them.

First, we can create a global early warn
ing system. Much like systems for tsu
nami and hurricanes, an early warning system could allow for early detection of and rapid response to an outbreak before it spreads. It would gather intelligence through a combination of zoonotic recon
naissance, artificial intelligence (AI) sur
veillance and outbreak investigation.

Pandemics emerge when a virus or other pathogen jumps from animals to people in what is called a zoonotic spill
over. The coronaviruses that caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Mid
dle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and COVID-19 pandemics all jumped from bats to humans through an intermedi
ary animal host — civets in SARS, camels in MERS. The surveillance system for predicting an outbreak investigation.

Second, we can strengthen AI-driven al
gorithms to scour news reports and airline ticketing data, issued an alert about the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China, a week before the Centers for Dis
ease Control and Prevention (CDC) did. Big data alone would cause many false alarms if not backed up by outbreak investiga
tions on the ground. A global early warning system would require a cadre of well-trained epidemiologists who could be rapidly deployed to investigate and contain outbreaks. Programs conducting zoonotic reconnaissance, AI surveillance and outbreak investigations already exist, but they need to be massively scaled up and in
tegrated into a comprehensive global early warning system.

Finally, we can prevent future pandem
ics by strengthening public health. Early warnings would be useless if local, nation
al and global public health systems fail to mount an effective response to an outbreak. Places in the world that have crushed the epidemic curve so far — such as Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea — all have robust public health systems that took early action, set up a strong coordinating body, invest ed a coordinated and science-based strat
egy, deployed massive technological and human resources, ramped up testing and contact tracing, mitigated travel via air and seaports, and made transparent information public.

In contrast, testing remains inadequate throughout the U.S. and many others, and economic underfunding has left most state and local public health departments without a suf
ficient workforce to conduct mass contact tracing. Tragically, despite plenty of early warnings, the federal government was un
prepared, misguided and disorganized in its response, leaving prevent states to fend for themselves. COVID-19 exposes the vulner
abilities of public health systems throughout the U.S. and worldwide, which need to be fixed before the next pandemic.

Third, we can prevent future pandem
ics by strengthening national digital infra
structures — and making sure they are not the source of spillovers. Protecting natural habitats from relentless human encroachment and creating buffer zones around protected areas are important long-term goals. Meanwhile, immediately we can stop wildlife trade, not only by regulating, monitoring or shutting down live animal markets, but also by enforcing international law to combat illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade. The U.S. and China are re
sponsible for 60% of global imports and ex
ports of all wildlife, respectively; it’s time for our two nations to step up.

Preventing future pandemics will re
quire an unprecedented level of global co
operation. The question is whether we can get together before the next pan
demic strikes.

Michael C. Lu is dean of the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley.
Looking at the news
A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons

LISA BENSON/Washington Post Writers Group

WALT HANDELSMAN/Tribune Content Agency

LISA BENSON/Washington Post Writers Group

LISA BENSON/Washington Post Writers Group

LISA BENSON/Washington Post Writers Group
Eugene Sheffer Crossword

ACROSS
1  Tater
5  iPhone download
8  Sudan neighbor
12  Docile
13  Madrid Mrs.
14  Old Italian money
15  “NFL Live” channel
16  God of the sea
18  Suggested
20  Garden spoilers
21  Gents
22  “Big” London attraction
23  “— were the days!”
26  Wall art
30  Little rascal
31  Glacial
32  Fawn’s mama
33  Folks who put on airs
36  Surgical dressing;
38  Away from SSW
39  Low isle
40  Texas cook-off dish
43  Impersonated
47  Stance
48  Jason’s ship
50  Shakespeare title starter
51  Wet dirt
52  Fish story
53  Plane reservation
54  Spanish gold
55  Online auction site

DOWN
1  Dance move
2  El —, Texas
3  Diamond arbiters
4  Casual pants
5  Colorado ski resort
6  God
7  — de deus
8  Attorney’s customer
9  Conceal
10  Former Yankee slugger, to fans
11  Lairs
12  Rams fans?
13  Golf peg
14  Lad
15  Gratuity
16  24 Med. plan option
17  25 Chances, for short
18  26 Mac rivals
19  27 Sch., URL ender
20  28 Cartoonist Chast
21  29 Observe
30  31 Rage
31  32 Sign up
32  33 Military group
33  34 Ozone, for one
34  35 Sailer’s assent
35  36 Homebuyer’s option
36  37 Tax prep pros
37  38 41 Pit
38  42 Madonna’s “La — Bonita”
39  43 Serve beer
40  44 Colorless
41  45 Taj Mahal city
42  46 Electronics giant
43  47 “I think,” in a text

Answer to Previous Puzzle

CULT SEE FARM
AGAR URL ACAI
ALSO BELL JARS
NIT WIT AB IDES
EARS STE
CELL MATE AMEN
AVA ACELATILE
RENO TELL TALE
CRU RIFE
SHEESH PANDAS
WELLNESS DOSE
ADOS ARI PEC
BYTE DIS NEAT

CRYPTOQUIP

X LAD N LA SVWHY WE LZ Q
Z G NW V0 Y Z VN GW Q Y Z D I, WDA
W E N LAQ XPFF WENAD O ZI
“HDNPF XA AQWNA ZS2PD.”

Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: MOVIE ABOUT WEREWOLVES WHO COME OUT AT NIGHT AND TOW AWAY EVERYBODY’S CARS: “THE HAULING.”

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

Daily Headlines | Veterans News | Military History | and more

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starsandstripes.com/newsletters
**Sports’ plans to return**

Most leagues gave aggressive and optimistic plans to start play within weeks, while fall sports said they plan to start on schedule. Key stakeholders confirmed, however, that they have less optimistic backup plans. Some of the options include, holding the basketball and hockey playoffs in September, kicking off college football in the spring of 2021 and voting to determine champions in some soccer leagues.

**Bull Riding:** Professional Bull Riders returning to action next weekend with a “closed, made-for-TV event” in Oklahoma.

**College Football:** Oklahoma athletic director Joe Castiglione says policymakers are looking at several models that include shortening the season or moving part or all of it to the spring.

**Horse Racing:** Kentucky Derby has been rescheduled to Sept. 5.

**MLB:** Plans include bringing all 30 teams to Arizona and playing through December, scheduling doubleheaders with seven-inning games and home run contests to settle games that would go into extra innings.

**NASCAR:** A tentative schedule given to teams shows the season resuming May 24 at the Coca-Cola 600, with midweek races and doubleheaders crammed in from June to August to complete the postponed events.

**NBA:** Medical experts have said there almost certainly won’t be any basketball until at least June. The league is reportedly considering a number of scenarios, including shortening some playoff series and playing them in arenas with no fans.

**NFL:** Contingency plans reportedly include playing a shortened season, or playing games in empty or half-full stadiums.

**PGA:** Plans include going directly to playoffs when play resumes, and possibly playing at neutral sites. Teams have asked about arena availability through August.

**Olympics:** Tokyo Games rescheduled to start July 23, 2021, though some organizers now saying there’s no guarantee COVID-19 will be controlled enough to hold the massive international event.

**PGA Tour:** Plans on resuming week of June 11 in Fort Worth, Texas, with tournament for no fans. Three of four majors have been rescheduled, starting with PGA in August.

**Soccer:** English Premier League has optimistic plan in place to restart June 8. German Bundesliga plans to resume in May have been threatened by government ban on public gatherings through August. Scottish teams have been asked to vote on whether to cancel seasons, which means the champions would be the teams leading when play stopped. FIFA is facing challenges to extend seasons because many player contracts expire on June 30.

**Tennis:** With circuits on hold until at least July, Serena Williams’ coach says he’s starting an inclusive league to play in front of no fans starting May 16. Wimbledon has been canceled and French Open has been moved to Sept. 20.

**By Eddie Pells**

Associated Press

With no games being played, recent sports headlines have centered around hopes and dreams — namely, the uncharted path leagues and teams must navigate to return to competition in the wake of the pandemic.

Virtually all leagues talk publicly about their desire to return before summer. But behind closed doors, they are hatching different potential plans: all 30 baseball teams playing in Arizona; home run contests to decide tie games; the Stanley Cup being hoisted in an empty arena that neither team calls home; end-of-season soccer standings decided by vote; college football games in spring.

Over the past week, The Associated Press spoke to more than two dozen policymakers, coaches and players across the globe to get their assessments of plans to return from the stoppages. The conclusion: While it’s critical to put optimistic restart scenarios in place, there is no certainty any of these plans will work without buy-in from politicians and an OK from players and medical experts. Underpinning it all would have to be a drastic ramp-up in testing, a vaccine or treatment breakthrough, or some other solution.

In short, the return of any sports, no matter how innovative the plan, will be risky and uncertain for the rest of this year and into 2021.

“It’s not about 22 players walking onto a pitch and throwing a ball out,” said FIFA Vice President Victor Montagliani.

The organizers of the Olympics were among the last to postpone their event, then among the first to set a new date — exactly 52 weeks after the original July 24 cauldron lighting had been scheduled. The decision to reschedule for a date 15 months down the road came just before an unexpected spike in virus cases hit Japan. The worry that followed underscored the many open questions about the arc of the outbreak.

“I think everyone’s probably working on multiple options. It’s ‘If this, then what?’ said Tim Hinchey, the CEO of USA Swimming, the sport’s governing body in the United States.

Virtually all the big-time team sports are coming up with scenarios to play games with no fans in the stands.

The Washington Post reported that while the NFL is publicly committed to its usual kickoff date in September, it is looking into contingencies that include shortening the season or playing in half-full or empty stadiums.

College athletic directors have come up with a half-dozen or more scenarios for football season, including, according to Oklahoma’s Joe Castiglione, a scenario in which part of the season would be played in spring. One theme gaining wide acceptance: If it’s not safe enough for students to return to school or attend games, then athletes shouldn’t be asked to return either. Without the millions of dollars from football, all college sports are in peril.

NASCAR, which has been holding virtual races, has given teams a tentative schedule under which the season would resume May 24 without fans. The NHL has drawn up plans that include resuming the season this summer, going directly to the playoffs and/or playing games in empty arenas in neutral-site cities.

The PGA Tour announced a mid-June restart and meshed its schedule with the already reworked majors calendar. In a nod to the precariousness of it all, Andy Pazder, the tour’s chief officer of tournaments and competition, said if events cannot be held in compliance with health regulations, then “we will not do anything.” That’s also where the NBA appears to be for now. The league that got in front of the coronavirus pandemic first, calling off games on March 11, is in a holding pattern. Most of the league’s conversations center on how to resume the season, not whether to cancel it.

Major League Baseball is talking about bringing all 30 teams to Maricopa County, Ariz., for a regular season at spring training sites.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the infectious disease expert who has been calling for restraint in resuming any normal activities, offered a glimmer of hope when he suggested sports could conceivably return. He suggested no fans in arenas and constant testing for the players.

“I’m going to go four or five months without seeing my kid when it’s born? I can tell you right now that’s not going to happen,” Ryan Zimmerman of the Nationals wrote. Zimmerman’s third child is due in June.

Baseball could be a vastly different game if it returns in 2020. Some other ideas floated include wrapping up the season in December, scheduling a multitude of doubleheaders with seven-inning games and quickly deciding ties with home run derbies.

Nobody’s quite sure what will happen if, despite all the precautions, an outbreak hits a team. Could one positive test evaporate an entire season?

Right now, Montagliani said, “the paramount skillset required from us is risk management and nothing else.”

Reporting by AP Sports Writers Doug Ferguson, Jenna Fryer, Rob Harris, Stephen Wade, Ronald Blum, Steve Douglas, Ben Walker, Dennis Passa, Stephen Whyno, Tim Reynolds, Brian Mahoney, Howard Fendrich, Rob Maaddi, Ralph D. Russo and Larry Lage.
College sports cuts may become catalyst for a paradigm shift

By Ralph D. Russo
Associated Press

College sports programs are already cut and more are likely on the chopping block.

The coronavirus pandemic has triggered fears of an economic meltdown on campuses around the country. The cancellation of the NCAA men’s basketball tournament cost schools $375 million and more losses are expected, especially if football season is disrupted in the fall.

In tough times, athletic administrators often drop sports programs to save money. In the past few weeks, Old Dominion said it will drop wrestling and Cincinnati will no longer have men’s soccer. Worriers of tough times ahead have come from all over college athletics, even some of the wealthiest Power Five schools.

Some say it’s not going to have any economic impact — that, I would say, would be grossly naive,” said Oklahoma athletic director Joe Castiglione, who oversees a program that had $148 million in operating revenue in 2017-18 and boasts of 20 straight years of balanced budgets.

“We’re just hoping to minimize it,” he said.

Paving the way for more cuts to come, the commissioners of five Bowl Subdivision conferences have asked the NCAA to waive over the next four years a slew of requirements for Division I membership, including the minimum number (16) of sports a school must sponsor.

Some observers see the coming crisis as a once-for-schools-to-do radical changes to how athletic departments are run or for new development paths to emerge for young athletes.

“Budgets reflect our values,” said Arne Duncan, a former U.S. education secretary and now co-chair of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics. “I think we’ll see whether now in a time of cutsbacks, what gets prioritized. Is it the interest of adults and unbelievably high salaries? Or is it the interest of student-athletes and preserving their chance to compete and to put academics first.”

A.J. Maestas, founder of the sports analytics consulting firm Navigate Research, said “a couple hundred” sports programs were cut during the last economic downturn after the 2008 financial crisis. Most programs don’t break even and he expects more cuts this time, too.

“David Zupke, former chancellor of the State University of New York and a member of the Knight Commission, said cutting sports programs is shortsighted when colleges could be facing a decrease in overall enrollment.

David Ridpath, a former NCAA compliance director and professor of sports business at Ohio University, said he fears schools will use the economic crisis as an excuse to make program cuts they had already been pondering. He also wonders if fewer opportunities for athletes in non-revenue college sports provides a catalyst to sever some of the ties between amateur athletics and higher education.

In his book, “Alternative Models of Sports Development in America,” Ridpath makes the case that the U.S. should move toward a European-style academy system.

Elite young athletes develop their games and receive an education, but the two are not tethered.

“My argument has always been schools should not be a primary source of elite development,” Ridpath said. “We need to have other models for those elite athletes to be taken care of. So for me, it’s not throwing college athletics and high school athletics out the window. It’s reframing it and also making education-based sports more participatory.”

Former Big 12 Commissioner Dan Beebe’s idea is colleges should be broken into spectator sports (ones that make money) and participation sports (ones that don’t). Schools would provide athletic scholarships in spectator sports, but not in participation sports.

Participation sports then would not be subject to NCAA scholarship limits, would not require highly paid, full-time coaches and would play regional opponents, keeping costs down. The scholarship piece of Beebe’s plan might seem extreme, but other parts are in line with what Mountain West Commissioner Craig Thompson and others are thinking.

“Maybe an institution has sports sponsored in five different conferences, if that makes sense because of geography and other things,” Thompson said. “What we’re trying to do is throw everything on the wall and it might not be a one-size fits all for even the 12 institutions in the Mountain West.”

Beebe said he hears from athletic directors running programs with successful football and basketball teams who wonder if funding so many other sports that often lose money makes sense.

“And the question they have is: There’s so much pressure for me to put so much resources into these sports to continue to sustain this level that it really makes me question why I’m spending half a million dollars or maybe a million dollars on a golf program or a tennis program,” Beebe said.

“And that was before this crisis.”

William Byron won his second consecutive NASCAR virtual race on Sunday by holding off Timmy Hill, the driver who moved him out of the way to win an earlier iRacing event.

Bryon repeats iRacing win minus controversy

By Jenna Fryer
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Nobody did anything to get fired or lose a sponsor in this weekend edition of NASCAR virtual racing.

William Byron won his second consecutive NASCAR virtual race on Sunday by holding off Timmy Hill — the driver who moved him out of the way to win an earlier iRacing event — in a race low on dramatics.

Matt DiBenedetto was parked after twice crashing at virtual Richmond Raceway with Ryan Preece, the second incident clearly intentional. It triggered a Twitter spat between the two, with DiBenedetto demanding Preece’s address to go to his house to fight and Preece replying he’d give it to him if DiBenedetto showed up in the giraffe costume he wore while competing Sunday.

Jimmie Johnson manually disconnected his simulator rather than wait out late-race repairs, and Kevin Harvick ate his lunch from the seat of his rig as he was in a 20-minute hold for repairs.

But that was about it in terms of controversy on a day NASCAR desperately needed a drama-free event.

Kyle Larson was fired this week for using a racial slur during a non-NASCAR sanctioned iRacing event last Sunday night, and drivers and fans are showing signs of losing some of the excitement that initially propelled this virtual racing league.

Byron, 22 and in his third Cup season driving for Hendrick Motorsports, is an avid iRacer who learned to drive a stock car through the platform.

“I wasn’t in a racing family growing up and obviously this was my avenue to cut my teeth,” Byron said. “I’m very thankful for what it has done for me. Driving the 24 car in real life for Hendrick Motorsports is a dream and I was really just a kid on here that was excited, a NASCAR face in a channel when I was racing against them. Now I am racing against them in real life.”

Japan scientist pessimistic Olympics will occur in 2021

By Stephen Wade
Associated Press

TOKYO — A Japanese professor of infectious disease says he is “very pessimistic” the postponed Tokyo Olympics can open in 15 months.

“To be honest with you, I don’t think the Olympics is likely to be held next year,” Kentaro Iwata, a professor of infectious disease at Kobe University, said Monday speaking in English on a teleconference.

“Holding the Olympics needs two conditions; one, controlling COVID-19 infection that is causing a pandemic. Japan might be able to control this disease by next summer. And I wish we could. But I don’t think that will happen everywhere on earth.”

Japan was spared during the initial stage of the coronavirus outbreak. But cases are now spiking, particularly in Tokyo and other large cities.

Devi Sridhar, professor of Global Health at the University of Edinburgh, told the BBC that the Olympics may hinge on finding a vaccine.

“If we do get a vaccine within the next year, then actually I think that (Olympics) is realistic,” she said.
Getting it done

From video chats to home workouts, draft prospects finding way amid outbreak

BY ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

UCLA running back Joshua Kelley was looking forward to visiting various NFL teams, checking out their facilities and meeting coaches before the COVID-19 pandemic changed the predraft process.

“I think that would’ve been really dope because I’ve been a fan of the NFL for so long and to get a chance actually be in a facility and see what goes on would’ve been really cool,” Kelley said.

Instead, because the NFL March 13 barred all in-person predraft visits, Kelley and other prospects had to do “virtual” visits with teams. Their conversations with coaching staffs took place on video conferencing technology such as Skype, Zoom and FaceTime.

On the positive side, the absence of visits gave players more time to work out.

“You take calls from coaches and then you have the rest of the day to train,” Kelley said. “You’re not flying on a plane. You’re not in hotels. It’s an extremely different process right now.”

Of course, training schedules had to be drastically altered because players can’t go to gyms or use their school’s facilities. Kelley said, Molly McManimie, said she had to scramble to find 50-pound dumbbells for her client to use at home.

“You get super creative,” McManimie said. “That’s where your grit and determination comes in. Bottom line is, this is a good example of how you’re going to face adversity. There’s going to be things in your career that aren’t perfect. But if you want it bad enough, you’ll make it work.”

“What we’ve been able to do is create a couple of different programs and send them directly,” said Brent Callaway, pro sports director at Exos in Dallas.

Going outside has been the biggest challenge for players.

“Athletes who are trying to go to local high school fields are being told that they can’t go out in that field or have someone come up and run them off that field,” Callaway said. “If there’s a place nearby, they’ve tried it, whether it’s a local park where they’ve shown up and found it locked up. We’ve heard of guys literally working out in fields. Some of them are working out in their homes or in their yards or in the street, running in the street.”

Boston College running back A.J. Dillon said he misses the weight room and working out with trainers in person. He’s doing sit-ups and push-ups at home and running.

“This is my only draft, so this is my normal,” Dillon said. “I’m making the most of it, everybody is. Obviously the biggest difference is the visits, the team meetings. I’ve done a bunch on Zoom.”

Tulane wide receiver Darnell Mooney said he runs four miles a day with his dog and works out at home. He goes outside to work out at home. He goes outside to work out at home.

“We’ve heard of guys literally working out in fields. Some of them are working out in their homes or in their yards or in the street, running in the street.”

“If a player was at the combine or pro day, he would take one, two or three of the players or short shuttle time, but to have a player come in and then all of a sudden you realize he has a medical issue that disqualifies him after you draft him, that is an issue.”

Other notable players who didn’t get combine invites or pro days: Illinois defensive end Oluwole Betiku; Louisiana offensive lineman Kevin Dotson; LSU defensive lineman Breeiden Fehoko; North Texas quarterback Mason Fine; Memphis defensive end Bryce Huff; Utah quarterback Tyler Huntley; Memphis tight end Joey Magnifico; Texas offensive lineman Zach Shackelford; and Temple receiver Isaiah Wright.

A little more than a dozen college programs held pro days before the NFL barred all in-person, predraft visits, effectively canceling pro days and prospects’ visits. Giants general manager Dave Gettleman said the ability to chat with players on video is “pretty beneficial” because “you can see the guys.”

“I’m a city kid and a big believer in body language and all this and that,” Gettleman said. “It’s not great, it’s not perfect, it’s OK. For me, what we miss is watching them interact, watching them in your facility. By not having pro days, you also lose that personal contact. Watching guys among their peers and how they operate, how they’re received. That tells a lot when you just watch a kid in those circumstances.

“Obviously, when we would go to work outs, a lot of times the night before, our coach and scout that would be at the pro day would take one, two or three of the players out to dinner and have some conversation that way. We have the visual touchpoint, but we’re really missing out on the personal touchpoint, when you can smell or feel a guy.”

Agents are helping players post videos on social media because they missed out on pro days. It’s especially important for prospects who weren’t invited to the combine.

Ishiah Perkins, a cornerback from University of New Hampshire, posted a “virtual” pro day. He ran a 4.47 and had impressive numbers overall.

“I wish I could have run those times in front of the scouts,” he said.

Kelley ran a 4.49 at the combine, but still posted a video doing drills last week.

“It shows he’s still working, he’s staying in good shape,” McManimie said.

Agent Andre Odom said “communication is paramount” during this unique predraft period.

“One of the things we’ve done is stay in direct contact with teams, making sure we help to streamline the virtual process as best as possible,” Odom said.

Risks: Medical concerns loom large for teams when spending draft capital

FROM BACK PAGE
at vitals that teams consider as important as they see on tape.

“Not having that kind of sucks,” Hammond said. “There’s really no way to get that done on FaceTime or Zoom, either.”

Hammond has four years of highlights from his days with the Gators. He caught 87 passes for 1,138 yards and six touchdowns, most of those numbers the last two seasons under coach Dan Mullen. He was a team captain in 2019 and only missed one game (in 2017) because of injury. His older brother, Frankie, also spent two years in the league.

It should be enough, but Josh Hammond knows it’s not. Teams want to poke and prod prospects before spending draft capital — and sometimes millions more — on them.

“If a player was at the combine and they were a late-round guy, it’s not an issue,” Jacksonville Jaguars general manager Dave Caldwell said. “I think we face is the medical portion of those guys that were not at the combine and hav- ing to draft a player who are not 100% sure of the medical.

“It is one thing to draft a player and not have an accurate 40 time or short shuttle time, but to have a player come in and then all of a sudden you realize he has a medical issue that disqualifies him after you draft him, that is an issue.’’

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Propects, teams left without face time

Injured players, those with checkered pasts most hurt by shutdown

BY ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

The NFL's shutdown because of the coronavirus pandemic is denying teams the opportunity to get face time with draft prospects who have been injured, have checkered pasts or are under the radar.

Those players are at risk of being selected lower in the draft than they would be in a normal year.

"That's definitely a factor for some of these guys," Baltimore Ravens general manager Eric DeCosta said. "It's really been up to the individual teams, and the agents and the players to find a way to get us all of the information that we require." Those who performed poorly at the scouting combine in February won't get another opportunity.

Those who skipped drills at the combine because of injury or other reasons won't get a pro day or private workout. And those who had off-field issues won't be able to polish their images during in-person interviews that are more in-depth than meetings at the combine.

The NFL on March 13 barred all in-person pre-draft visits, effectively canceling pro days and prospects' visits to team headquarters. Only a handful of pro days had been held.

Prospects and their agents have gotten creative, sending teams videotapes of workouts. Zoom or Skype has been the medium for interview, and teams have worked with college athletic training staffs to procure as much detailed medical information as possible.

"This is such a strange draft," said NFL personnel director Gil Brandt, former Dallas Cowboys player personnel director.

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"This is such a strange draft," said NFL personnel director Gil Brandt, former Dallas Cowboys player personnel director.

Medical reports were upbeat at the combine. Though it's been suggested he'll need to sit out the 2020 season to get back to full strength, agent Leigh Steinberg says: "His health is just fine. There's two doctors that have seen him, Dr. Lyle Cain (Alabama's orthopedic surgeon), and Dr. Chip Routt, who performed the surgery. Both have said that he is healthy and he'll be lively and ready to go for training camp and the likelihood of recurrence is very low."

But he also has had two ankle injuries and played through a broken finger and knee injury. It would have helped for him to get in front of team doctors. No one will see him work out in person, either, though his prodigious on-field production speaks for itself. Alabama's March 24 pro day was canceled, and he had to call off an April 9 workout he planned for scouts.

Some players who could have been well-served with more personal contact with teams:

QB Tua Tagovailoa, Alabama

If not for the grue-some hip injury he suffered Nov. 16, Tagovailoa would be the first or second overall pick. Now there's debate whether he or Oregon's Justin Herbert will be the second quarterback taken after LSU's Joe Burrow.

"He's a left-handed Drew Brees," Brandt said, "so I don't think you have to worry about his ability. You have to worry about him medically."

S Ashtyn Davis, California

Surgery for a groin injury kept Davis out of the Senior Bowl and from drills at the combine. He went through medical checks in Indianapolis and planned to flash his speed at Cal's pro day on March 20 and in private workouts. The cancellations cost the Pac-12 hurdle champion a chance to challenge Javelin Guidry's 4.29-second 40, the fastest by a defensive back at the combine.

TE C.J. O'Grady, Arkansas

O'Grady comes with baggage, and he didn't distinguish himself at the combine. Then he chose to not participate in a pro day March 11. He set the Arkansas career record for touchdowns by a tight end and meets the eye test. But he has a drunk-driving arrest and was suspended three times before he was dismissed in early November. He's unable to personally show teams he's cleaned up his act, though he did say at the combine his dismissal stemmed from his immaturity.

OL Kevin Dotson, Louisiana-Lafayette

The first-team All-American wasn't invited to the combine and had his April 1 pro day canceled. The 6-4, 321-pound guard has pure, raw power and a high ceiling. Even though he got a long look from scouts at the East-West Shrine Game, he surely would have benefited from a pro day and team visits.

WR Laviska Shenault, Colorado

Shenault had surgery to repair a core muscle injury a few days after he ran a 4.58 40 at the combine, and he wasn't able to do drills at Colorado's pro day March 11. He's also had shoulder and toe injuries, so there are durability questions. The versatile playmaker looked like a first-round pick after his breakout season in 2018. His health, coupled with his production falling off last year, might keep him on the board longer than he expected.
Healthy risks?

NFL prospects without formal medical exams in difficult situation

BY MARK LONG
Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. Florida receiver Josh Hammond was "a little shocked" he didn't get an invite to the NFL combine.

He was just as surprised not to be asked to the Senior Bowl.

Hammond settled for a spot in the East-West Shrine Game, figuring any NFL team that missed him at the second-tier all-star game would get another shot at Florida's pro day in late March. He also was banking on one-on-one visits with teams, a chance to really put his character and football IQ on display for general managers, coaches and scouts.

But once the coronavirus pandemic wiped out most pro days and all predraft visits, Hammond found himself in a tough spot — with plenty of company. He is one of hundreds of pro prospects who haven't had formal medical checks before the NFL Draft, a vital look

SEE RISKS ON PAGE 22

‘Not having (formal medical checks) kind of sucks. There’s really no way to get that done on FaceTime or Zoom, either.’

Josh Hammond
Florida wide receiver, pictured