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STARS AND STRIPES

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PHOTOS BY RUSSIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY PRESS SERVICE/AP

A Russian military technician checks a MiG-31K fighter carrying a Kinzhal hypersonic cruise missile, which can carry a nuclear warhead. The repeated use of the nuclear threat is starting to lose its potency for Russia.

US sending more troops to Mideast as violence rises

By TARA COPP AND LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. is sending additional troops to the Middle East in response to a sharp spike in violence between Israel and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon that has raised the risk of a greater regional war, the Pentagon said Monday.

Pentagon press secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder would provide no details on how many additional forces or what they would be tasked to do. The U.S. currently has about 40,000 troops in the region.

“In light of increased tension in the Middle East and out of an abundance of caution, we are sending a small number of additional U.S. military personnel forward to augment our forces that are already in the region. But for operational security reasons, I’m not going to comment on or provide specifics.”

The new deployments come after significant strikes by Israeli forces against targets inside Lebanon that have killed hundreds and as Israel is preparing to conduct further operations. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday warned Lebanese civilians to evacuate their homes ahead of further airstrikes. He spoke as Israeli warplanes continued to strike alleged Hezbollah targets in southern and eastern Lebanon.

The State Department is warning Americans to leave Lebanon as the risk of a regional war rises.

“Due to the unpredictable nature of ongoing conflict between Hezbollah and Israel and recent explosions throughout Lebanon, including Beirut, the U.S. Embassy urges U.S. citizens to depart Lebanon while commercial options still remain available,” the State Department cautioned Saturday.

Trying to defend red lines

With nuclear option unlikely, Putin struggles to keep fear alive

By CATHERINE BELTON AND ROBYN DIXON
The Washington Post

When Russian President Vladimir Putin warned last week that Western approval for Ukraine to strike deep inside Russia would mean Moscow was at war with NATO, Russian propagandists rushed to rattle the nuclear saber.

Alexander Mikhailov, director of the Bureau of Military Political Analysis, called for bombing plywood mock-ups of London and Washington — complete with replicas of Buckingham Palace, Big Ben and the White House — to simulate nuclear strikes, so that they would “burn so beautifully that it will horrify the world.”

The speaker of the lower house, Vyacheslav Volodin, warned that strikes on Russia would lead to war with nuclear weapons and reminded the European Parliament that its headquarters in Strasbourg was only a three-minute flight for a Russian ICBM.

But inside the Kremlin, there is a growing recognition that the repeated use of the nuclear threat is starting to lose its potency and Moscow’s red lines are constantly being crossed. Analysts and officials close to senior Russian diplomats said instead that Putin is casting around for a more nuanced and limited response to the West allowing Ukraine to use longer range missiles to strike Russia.

SEE DEFEND ON PAGE 6



A Russian submariner presses the button to conduct a practice launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile as part of the drills of Russian forces.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Cost of Germany's transport ticket to increase

Associated Press

The cost of a popular ticket introduced last year that allows people to use all local and regional trains, buses and subway systems across Germany is set to increase by about 18% next year, a senior official said Monday.

Transport ministers from Germany's 16 states agreed that the price of the Germany Ticket, which has cost 49 euros (\$54.70) per month since it became available in May 2023, should rise to 58 euros at the beginning of 2025.

"With this price, we will manage to keep the ticket attractive and put the financing on a more solid footing," Oliver Krischer, the transport minister of North Rhine-Westphalia state, told German news agency dpa. He said the decision shows that German regional authorities "want to stick to the successful model of the Germany Ticket and further develop it."

The Germany Ticket was intended to encourage people to ditch their cars in favor of more environmentally friendly forms of transportation.

It followed a successful experimental ticket offering unlimited travel for 9 euros per month that was offered for three months in the summer of 2022, as part of a government program to help combat high inflation and fuel prices.

Officials said that ultra-low price wasn't financially viable. But it and the Germany Ticket had the added merit of simplifying for ticket holders a fractured public transit system in which individual regions offered myriad different fare options that baffled many travelers.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (Sept. 24)	\$1.08	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8502
British pound (Sept. 24)	\$1.30	Thailand (Baht)	32.93
Japanese yen (Sept. 24)	138.00	Turkey (NewLira)	34.1501
South Korean won (Sept. 24)	1302.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3768		
Britain (Pound)	1.3334		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3519		
China (Yuan)	7.0553		
Denmark (Krone)	6.7019		
Egypt (Pound)	48.7009		
Euro	0.8985		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7859		
Hungary (Forint)	354.80		
Israel (Shekel)	3.7825		
Japan (Yen)	144.05		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3051		
Norway (Krone)	10.4944		
Philippines (Peso)	56.12		
Poland (Zloty)	3.84		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7519		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2912		
South Korea (Won)	1337.79		

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

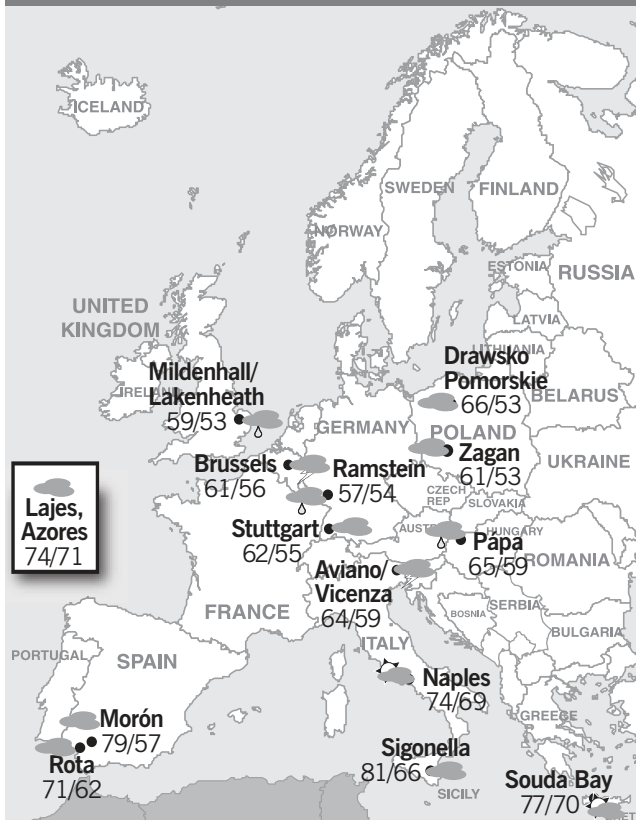
INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	8.00
Interest Rates Discount rate	5.00
Federal funds market rate	5.33
3-month bill	4.67
30-year bond	4.09

WEATHER OUTLOOK

TUESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



TUESDAY IN EUROPE



WEDNESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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MILITARY

Airman's recognition delayed, but not denied

Paperwork lost after he helped save 3 Abbey Gate victims

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Master Sgt. Matthew Parker has finally received recognition for helping to save the lives of three children after one of the deadliest days for U.S. forces in Afghanistan more than three years ago.

The official record of his actions to aid the critically injured Afghan children on a C-17 military flight from Kabul to Qatar on Aug. 27, 2021, was lost.

A respiratory therapist on a critical care air transport team, Parker received no award for the mission or for his deployment to the Middle East during the drawdown of U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, others with whom he had deployed received awards within months of returning home.

When he reached out to the unit he was assigned to in Kuwait, they told him, “We have a folder that says Parker, but there’s nothing in it,” he recalled.

“All my paperwork was apparently routing. It was signed, but it got lost,” Parker said.

The snub left Parker salty as he dealt with traumatic memories from a deployment that had him wondering whether his Air Force career might be over.

“I had a lot of things that I saw, a



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Master Sgt. Matthew Parker received the Distinguished Flying Cross with a “C” device for combat in recognition of the care he provided in flight on Aug. 27, 2021, to three Afghan children who had been badly wounded in the Abbey Gate bombing in Kabul.

lot of attacks,” he said. “I was having trouble sleeping, focusing. With no medals from my deployment, I thought, ‘I’m never going to promote.’”

Parker credits Air Force leaders for stepping in to change that. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross with “C” device, the nation’s highest award for extraordinary aerial achievement, earlier this month at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany, where he is assigned to the 86th Medical Squadron.

Parker was based in Ohio when he deployed to the Middle East. His team went to Bagram Airfield and closed the aeromedical evacuation squadron at what had been

the U.S. military’s largest base in Afghanistan.

They had moved to Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait to set up operations for critical care air transport missions when they got the call that there had been a bombing in Kabul.

“They said, ‘We still don’t know what you’re getting but we might fill up this entire plane with bodies or patients,’” he said.

The Abbey Gate suicide bombing at Kabul’s airport on Aug. 26, 2021, took the lives of 170 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members.

When Parker’s team arrived at a Kabul hospital, it “looked like a movie where you see people covered in blood (and) in shock,” he



Parker is a critical care air transport respiratory therapist with the 86th Medical Squadron at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany.

said. The crew airlifted 11 Afghan children and their families. Three of the kids were missing limbs and had to be sedated.

Parker oversaw the placement of endotracheal tubes to support breathing in each of the three. At one point, one of the tubes had to be attached to the inside of the aircraft with a parachute cord to keep it from kinking and blocking the patient’s airway. One of the children kept waking up because of the rough flight, Parker said.

The plane landed in Qatar, where Parker escorted the children on a bus headed to the military hospital. He had to hook up two of the patients to one oxygen tank because of a shortage.

Awards were far from his mind in the days and weeks that followed. But as the years passed, the career-damaging realities of being a senior NCO without so much as a medal to show for a combat zone tour sank in.

Unbeknownst to Parker, a new paper trail had started with his name on it.

Gen. Mike Minihan, the former head of Air Mobility Command, wanted to recognize more airmen

who had helped with the Afghanistan withdrawal.

“(Minihan) said, ‘If you did anything of note, get your paperwork in. I want to sign off on it before I retire,’” Parker said.

Parker found out about Minihan’s efforts days before the general retired and figured that, once again, it was too late for him. But the aircrew on Parker’s flight submitted a packet in time for everyone on the plane that day, he said.

“Soon after, I looked on my personnel record and (the award) was scanned in there. ... Now I just really feel like I can close that box and put that away,” he said.

Parker also received a commendation medal for sustained acts of heroism or meritorious service during the deployment.

Most importantly, Parker later heard that the children he treated on the evacuation flight in 2021 were recovering in the United States.

The Distinguished Flying Cross is a reminder of “that success story,” he said. “This is something that I know one day my kids will have on their mantel and will be proud of.”

Army banking on medical aid to strengthen ties with African nations

By REBECCA HOLLAND
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — The U.S. aims to show that its prescription for good relations in Africa includes medical partnerships with militaries across the continent, some of which are engaged in heated campaigns against militant terrorist groups.

More than 100 people from 17 African countries visited Vicenza for a four-day annual planning event last week that included experts from U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Medical Command and U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa.

As American adversaries Russia and China vie for influence in Africa, the U.S. is betting on partnerships, including in areas like medicine, to secure its position.

“We have never lived in a more violent time,” Lt. Gen. Mary Izaquirre, surgeon general of the Army, told the audience. “Our place in

bringing stability to that is critical, and the best way to do that is partnerships.”

Plans include various types of cooperation in the health care sphere, such as direct treatment. Another topic was medical readiness exercises, or MEDREX, which have cared for more than 47,000 patients in Africa since 2017.

“Medical readiness is a vital component of the U.S. strategy in Africa because it ensures both U.S. forces and our African partners are prepared to effectively respond to health emergencies, whether in combat or humanitarian situations,” said Col. Kelley Togiola, global health engagements chief for SETAF-AF.

Recent developments in Africa have complicated the situation there for the United States. Extremist violence is increasing in West Africa and American forces had to withdraw from former counterter-



KATHERINE SIBILLA/U.S. Army

Kenyan army Lt. Col. Moses Mdzomba speaks with a U.S. Navy sailor last week, during a U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa medical training planning session in Vicenza, Italy.

rorism partner Niger after a coup last year.

Meanwhile, Russia and China are expanding their presence on the continent. Russian forces have now taken over the base formerly occu-

pied by U.S. soldiers, and are working with Niger’s military junta.

Partnering with African countries on medical readiness is one way for the U.S. to create goodwill, military officials say.

At the same time, the U.S. learns about local customs and traditions and gets the chance to work on cases they wouldn’t otherwise see, like infectious diseases that have been eradicated in the U.S., said Chief Warrant Officer 3 David Kloberdanz, a food safety officer with the 30th Medical Brigade.

Partners said they appreciated that the trainings allow them to continue programs even after the U.S. leaves, and that the planning is African-led. But stability across Africa can’t be left solely to U.S. partnership, said Cmdr. James Aggrey-Orleans, a medical planner for Ghana’s armed forces.

“For the past three years we’ve been able to make it a point for the U.S. military to know that we believe in strengthening our ties with them but also with our partner nations,” he said. “We need stronger integration within Africa as we fuel stronger cooperation with the U.S.”

MILITARY

Hawaii-based soldier completes tab trifecta

Corcoran in rarefied air after completing Army's Jungle, Sapper and Ranger courses

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — In 1st Lt. Mackenzie Corcoran's successful quest to become triple-tabbled by completing the Army's challenging Jungle, Sapper and Ranger courses, she banished one thought from her mind.

"Once you start, you can never let quitting enter your brain," the Hawaii-based combat engineer told Stars and Stripes in a Sept. 4 phone interview.

"You can never think about 'quit' because then it's gonna always be there and it's always gonna be on your mind, the thought of quitting," she said.

Corcoran graduated from the formidable 62-day Ranger School in March. That followed the earlier completion of the daunting 28-day Sapper Leader Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and the two-week Jungle Operations Training Course run by the 25th Infantry Division's Lightning Academy at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

The tab trifecta places the 25-year-old soldier in rarefied air.

Corcoran is the 135th woman to earn a Ranger tab and only the 8th woman to be double tabbed with Ranger and Sapper, according to an Aug. 23 Army news release. The Army did not clarify the number of soldiers who have earned all three tabs, but the total is doubtlessly minute.

The Army allows only four elite service tabs to be worn on uniforms: Sapper, Ranger, Special Forces and President's Hundred tabs.

Soldiers who have earned the Jungle tab can wear it only while assigned to Army units in the Pacific.

'Classic Army brat'

Earning the tri-tabs was a curious accomplishment for someone who grew up wanting anything else but a life in the military — de-

"Whatever you want, put your mind to it, but know that you're going to have to work yourself towards it. No one's going to give it to you."

1st Lt. Mackenzie Corcoran
U.S. Army

spite having an Army father and Air Force grandfather.

"I did not want to join the military at all, because, you know, the classic Army brat, I hated moving, hated leaving friends and stuff," Corcoran said.

Then, the summer before her senior year of high school, she had an epiphany of sorts, realizing she needed the kind of structure and motivation found in the military.

"I think I could probably be the laziest person in the world if I wanted to, but I love that the Army makes me get up every morning and work out and do pushups and run," she said.

Corcoran's mother encouraged her to apply for an ROTC scholarship for college, and she ended up attending William & Mary in Virginia where she majored in chemistry.

For the first few years of college, she was "fully set" on going into the Army's Medical Service Corps but changed her mind after a trip to Argentina during the summer of her junior year through the Army's Cultural Understanding and Leadership Program for ROTC cadets, she said.

There, Corcoran rubbed shoul-



JOHANNA PULLUM/U.S. Army

1st Lt. Mackenzie Corcoran, assigned to the 29th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, poses with her Jungle, Sapper and Ranger certificates at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, June 6.

ders with Army engineers, who clued her in that the field was not just for construction engineers but also "combat engineers who actually are blowing things up and working with the infantry side by side and stuff like that," she said.

She was sold on the field and pursued it after being commissioned in May 2021.

'I would never quit'

Corcoran was assigned to the 29th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks in January 2022. Within a week of arriving, she was given the opportunity to attend the Jungle school.

She jumped at the chance, saying "I've always been a big proponent of doing hard things."

The training instilled in her the confidence that she could complete the much lengthier and more arduous Sapper school, Corcoran said.

"You can definitely do more than you think you can," she said

of the training she experienced. "And so that's what I love about those schools. It tests you as a person and who you are deep down to your core if you're going to be that leader that people need."

Corcoran regards the Sapper school as more difficult than the Ranger course.

Sapper training included seven days in the field patrolling during which soldiers were given only 60 minutes every 24 hours for sleeping or eating.

"You get two MREs, but you have maybe seven minutes to eat both of them," she said.

"You know how long it takes — when your hands are cold, especially — to just open an MRE and eat it?" she said. "And then you're trying to also maybe squeeze some sleep in there, maybe 20 minutes at most."

Corcoran's low point came during one of those rest periods as she sat beside a fellow soldier under a poncho as rain poured down.

"I want to quit," the poncho mate confessed to Corcoran.

"And I was like, 'No, we're not

quitting. You know, we're three days away [from finishing]."

"I knew I would never quit," she said. "I would be there as long as I needed to in order to get the tab. I wanted to show myself that I could do this."

Biggest advocate

Rain also featured in her low point at Ranger school, where the cadre of soldiers huddled for three hours in pouring rain in utter darkness as they awaited the lightning to pass.

"It's always the weather; the weather's gonna dictate everyone's mood," she said.

Corcoran would like to serve in the airborne community in the near future, perhaps at Fort Liberty in North Carolina.

She maintains a philosophy that any young soldier can achieve what she wants by being her own biggest advocate.

"Whatever you want, put your mind to it, but know that you're going to have to work yourself towards it, essentially," she said. "No one's going to give it to you."

US service member fined \$2,250 for assaulting taxi driver

By DAVID CHOI
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — A U.S. service member stationed in South Korea pleaded guilty to assaulting a taxi driver in Seoul and was fined roughly \$2,250 last month.

The unidentified service member admitted to entering the taxi in the Gangnam district of the capital city at 4:11 a.m. Feb. 17, according to an Aug. 14 verdict

sheet from the Seoul Central District Court.

South Korean law enforcement agencies and courts typically do not identify defendants except in extreme cases, such as homicide.

After getting into the back seat of the taxi, the 52-year-old driver told the service member that another passenger had already reserved the taxi, according to the court document.

The service member then exited the taxi and walked toward the

driver, at which point the driver also left the taxi. The service member then pushed the driver's chest, choked him and punched him in the face several times, according to the court record.

The assault committed by the service member "is not light" and his conduct during the incident was "very bad," Judge Goo Changgyu said in the verdict, the document states.

In addition to the \$2,250 fine, the service member paid the

same amount to the driver as a settlement, according to the document.

Eighth Army and the 2nd Infantry Division did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday.

At least one other U.S. service member has been accused of assaulting a South Korean taxi driver this year.

Earlier this month, police from Dongducheon city alleged a U.S. soldier assaulted a taxi driver

near Camp Casey, about 25 miles north of Seoul.

The 21-year-old enlisted soldier allegedly threw the 73-year-old driver to the ground by the neck, according to the Dongducheon Police Station. Police may refer charges to prosecutors this week.

Roughly 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea, the majority of them in Camp Humphreys, about 40 miles south of the capital city.

MILITARY

Army's newest museum to open at Fort Cavazos

Exhibits to showcase the many modes of transportation soldiers used in war

By **ROSE L. THAYER**
Stars and Stripes

FORT CAVAZOS, Texas — After 14 years and \$14.5 million, the National Mounted Warrior Museum opened Thursday to the public to share the story of how America's soldiers have used horses, bicycles, helicopters and tanks to fight in every conflict from the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror.

The museum is intended to honor all who have served in the mounted units, particularly those at Fort Cavazos, which is home to the 1st Cavalry Division and III Armored Corps. While much of the museum is about the wars in which they fought, there's a particular focus on the troops, their families and even the communities that were displaced to establish the base during World War II.

"This museum gives an opportunity for Fort Cavazos soldiers and family members to understand and to appreciate the heritage that they bear as members of the profession of arms," Brig. Gen. Geoffrey Van Epps, deputy commander for maneuver of III Armored Corps at Fort Cavazos, said Wednesday during a ceremony to open the museum.

He spoke alongside representatives from the Army and the National Mounted Warfare Foundation, which raised money, designed and constructed the facility that will now be transferred to the service.

The foundation will continue to raise funds to support the facility

and build a \$15 million expansion that includes classrooms.

The foundation projects 377,000 visitors in the museum's first year with about 70% traveling from outside the community.

The concept of a museum to honor cavalry units at Fort Cavazos began in the 1980s with retired Gen. Robert Shoemaker and began to take form in 2010 with the creation of the foundation to raise money for the facility, said retired Lt. Col. Bob Crouch, vice president of the foundation.

The more than 12,000 square-foot facility features a main gallery and a rotating gallery that now displays combat camera work from World War II. It also includes nods to two famous soldiers who were once assigned to the base — Jackie Robinson and Elvis Presley.

Two former museums at the base that focused on the 1st Cavalry Division and the 3rd Cavalry Regiment were folded into the new space.

Visitors enter through a 4,900 square-foot rotunda with glass panels forming a triangle encased in steel panels. Windows look out onto 1st Cavalry Division horse stables and pasture nearby. Once inside, visitors are greeted by a display of a soldier flying a drone, a tank and a helicopter, as well as a trooper on horseback.

In the main gallery, a path winds through the history of combat as seen through the lens of mounted troops — horses, trucks, track vehicles and helicopters.



PHOTOS BY ROSE L. THAYER/Stars and Stripes

Visitors enter a gallery of the National Mounted Warrior Museum at Fort Cavazos, Texas, on Sept. 18.



Sherry McDowney and Rudy Rocha try to decode encrypted messages in an interactive exhibit.



A display to commemorate singer Elvis Presley's time in the Army, which included a stint at Fort Hood, Texas, now known as Fort Cavazos.

One display highlights a test of using bicycles with a Buffalo Soldier unit in the 1890s.

The 25th Infantry conducted bicycle rides through the West, including a 41-day, 1,900-mile journey between Missoula, Mont., and St. Louis.

Another display included a dirt bike, which the Army briefly used for reconnaissance missions alongside the M-551 Sheridan light tank.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Robb Ochsner worked on Sheridan tanks during his 32-year Army career and now volunteers for the museum.

For the one on display, he helped move the turret so it sat facing forward.

He also rounded up accessories to put on vehicles to help build realism in displays, such as canvas rucksacks, ammo cans and rolls of coiled barbed wire.

"I'm a little amazed," he said of seeing the museum finished and people walking through during a preview event Wednesday. "When we first moved the vehicles inside, for the longest time, it was just these vehicles in a big

empty room."

Once the walls were built to form the paths, he could finally see how the empty warehouse would transform into a museum.

Other stops along the gallery path highlight the changes that have come over the years, such as the acceptance of women in combat units. A stop at the end explains the change of the name Fort Hood, which recognized an officer of the Confederate army, to Fort Cavazos, which honors former III Corps commander Gen. Richard Cavazos.

Along the way are interactive exhibits to experience what a tank gunner would see using night vision or what it takes to decode encrypted messages.

Crouch began working at the museum foundation after his 2011 retirement and has a particular fondness for the section on the Vietnam War. His father, Lt. Col. Harry Crouch, served in the 1st Cavalry Division during the Ia Drang campaign in 1965.

flash across the ground.

It gives Crouch a feeling of what his father would have seen.

"We didn't want visitors to just see something and move on. We wanted them to step into the story and feel what it was like to serve in the Vietnam era," he said.

The museum joins more than 25 others under the Army's care, said Charles Bowery, executive director of the U.S. Army Center of Military History. Spread across the U.S. and in Germany and South Korea, most of the museums focus on specific units or specialties, while the National Museum of the U.S. Army at Fort Belvoir, Va., looks at the entire history of the service.

"They tell different types of stories, but all of them circle back to the soldier ... and they tell these stories through the experiences of those soldiers," Bowery said.

The National Mounted Warrior Museum will be open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays.



Retired Lt. Col. Bob Crouch, vice president of the National Mounted Warfare Foundation, discusses a UH-1 "Huey" helicopter on display at the National Mounted Warrior Museum.

EUROPE

Study touts permanent over rotations

Europe-based units could prod allies on Ukraine

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — Turning U.S. Army rotational brigades into units permanently based in Europe could give the security assurances needed to nudge allies into playing a larger role in supporting Ukraine, a new U.S. Army War College study asserts.

The report, released Thursday, said U.S. policymakers should consider making permanent the deployments of armored combat brigades that for the past decade have been the centerpiece of Army efforts to bolster defenses along NATO's eastern flank.

European reluctance to dig deeper into domestic military stocks is related to allies' security concerns, according to the report, which also noted that many countries on the Continent are struggling



TREVARES JOHNSON/U.S. Army

Paladins belonging to the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment conduct their final fire missions during training at Forward Operating Station Torun, Poland, in February.

to balance equipping their own military with ramping up weapons production for Ukraine.

"American forward-stationed military forces can play a critical role in reassuring allies they can take on greater risk and dig deeper for Ukraine," wrote Army War College researchers John Deni and Lisa Aronsson.

The change would have the add-

ed benefit of saving the U.S. money, the report said. Past U.S. Army War College research has shown that the long-standing practice of rotating armored brigades back and forth between the United States and Poland costs about \$135 million more per brigade compared with the permanent basing of such units in Europe.

The latest study delves into the

array of problems allies face when it comes to boosting weapons production on the Continent and solidifying that support for the long term.

The difficulties range from outdated laws that hinder defense industrial production to command-and-control flaws that leave other militaries unable to fill the role the United States plays in facilitating the flow of arms into Ukraine.

Since Russia's full-scale 2022 invasion of Ukraine, allies have stepped up their support for Kyiv. While the United States remains the single largest donor, Europe is now collectively surpassing the U.S. in supplying Ukraine's war effort.

Even so, "a Europe-only effort to assist Ukraine would clearly fail," the report said.

Now three years into the war, the Pentagon also has grappled with its own defense industrial limitations and depleted stockpiles.

In the United States, support for Ukraine also has become a partisan issue, with former President Donald Trump opposing the extensive delivery of American weapons for

Ukrainian defense.

But the U.S. Army War College authors concluded that success hinges on sustained U.S. involvement in Europe, noting that allies will not be able to increase their military support for Ukraine dramatically in the short term.

The situation has created a set of tradeoffs for various countries depending on their respective threat perceptions. And in many of them, bureaucratic red tape stands in the way of getting industrial production onto a wartime footing, according to the analysts.

"European allies — even those closest to the Russian threat — appear unwilling or unable to implement a wartime approach to industrial production," the report said.

Allies need legislation akin to the Defense Production Act in the U.S. that would allow governments to better direct the prioritization of specific defense contracts and procurement.

"European allies cannot continue supporting Ukraine or expand their assistance without significant adjustments," the report said.

Defend: Pressure on Putin to respond

FROM PAGE 1

"There has been an overflow of nuclear threats," said a Russian official speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject. "There is already immunity to such statements, and they don't frighten anyone."

A Russian academic with close ties to senior Russian diplomats agreed, calling the nuclear option "the least possible" of scenarios, "because it really would lead to dissatisfaction among Russia's partners in the Global South and also because clearly, from a military point of view, it is not very effective."

"All this discussion of the nuclear threshold overexaggerates the threat of such a type of escalation and underestimates the possibility of alternative options," the academic added. "Since the West has a global military infrastructure ... a lot of vulnerable points can be found."

Putin is searching through a range of options to deter Western support for Ukraine and try to enforce his red lines, said Tatiana Stanovaya, the founder of France-based political consultancy R-Politik. "There are options he doesn't want to deploy, and there are options he is ready to review today," she said, and he sees nuclear weapons as the "worst option for everyone including for himself."

Nuclear measures or a direct attack on NATO territory would on-

ly be considered if "Putin feels there is a threat to the existence of Russia in its current form, when he considers there is no other way out," she said. "For such a situation, the West should go a lot further than what it is discussing now."

Russian officials already appeared to be placated to some degree by the United States' apparent hesitation so far to lifting restrictions on Ukraine striking military targets deep inside Russia using Western missiles. The expectation was growing that if permission was granted it would be "very limited," analysts and officials said.

Putin, however, is still under pressure to respond in some way and stop his red lines from being constantly crossed.

"There is an understanding that the red lines drawn by Moscow are being ignored by the West, and there should be weightier and more significant steps from Moscow to demonstrate the seriousness of its intentions," said the academic.

Since the 2022 invasion, Russia has warned against the West supplying modern fighter jets like F-16s, main battle tanks and missiles to Ukraine, and each has eventually come to pass.

Putin is seeing a trend where Ukraine's western allies keep allowing Kyiv to expand its activities, said Stanovaya, and the trend is scaring him, especially if

it leads to increased missile strikes inside Russia. "For Putin this is a qualitative shift which takes the situation to a new level and which could be followed by a further expansion."

Moscow could opt to respond with sabotage operations against military targets or other infrastructure in the West where Russia's participation could be difficult to prove. It could also turn to proxy groups that are already battling Western interests, like the Houthi militia in Yemen that has been attacking Red Sea shipping, said Lawrence Freedman, emeritus professor of War Studies at Kings College, London — highlighting a possibility also raised by the Russian academic.

"He doesn't want to turn into anything dramatic or drastic, in the sense of nuclear, or direct fighting between our troops and his troops, but [that] doesn't mean to say that there's not something serious going on," Freedman said.

Sergei Markov, the hawkish Kremlin-connected political analyst, said there was a growing realization in the top ranks of the Russian military that "Russia has spoiled the West, and that we have spoken a lot about red lines but we haven't done anything. At some point we will have to escalate."

Markov suggested possible responses could include the closure of the British Embassy in Moscow and strikes on air bases in Poland and Romania where F-16s being



RUSSIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY PRESS SERVICE/AP

A Yars missile launcher belonging to the Russian armed forces is driven from a shelter in an undisclosed location in Russia.

deployed by Ukraine are based. "Since Russia is sure that at some point strikes on Moscow will definitely happen, then we need to hit first," he said.

While Stanovaya dismissed any such strikes on a NATO air bases as unlikely and only in case of desperation, the nuclear rhetoric does have its uses. Both she and Markov point out how members of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's campaign have amplified Moscow's threats as a campaign issue.

This week, Trump and former independent candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wrote in an op-ed for the Hill that a decision to grant Ukraine permission to use Western long range missiles "would put the world at greater risk of nuclear conflagration than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis" and called for direct negotiations with Moscow instead.

Putin could seek to increase the threat and play a "golden card" by escalating before the elections, Markov claimed. "If Putin escalates, then the U.S. will fear nuclear war and Trump will win."

Freedman also noted that Putin's nuclear threats were deliberately ambiguous to increase their sense of danger. "It sounds menacing, but he never actually is very specific about what he's going to do. He allows us to make our own interpretations, and people interpret the worst."

Ultimately, however, as the effectiveness of this approach wanes, Putin has not yet figured out what to replace it with, said Stanovaya, and uncertainty was growing since "no one understands" which responses Putin would eventually choose for every concrete action.

"I think Putin doesn't understand either," she said.

WAR IN UKRAINE

Zelenskyy visits Pa. ammo plant to give thanks

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM AND TARA COPP
Associated Press

SCRANTON, Pa. — Under tight security, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday visited a Pennsylvania ammunition factory to thank the workers who are producing one of the most critically needed munitions for his country's fight to fend off Russian ground forces.

Rep. Matt Cartwright, a Democrat who was among those who met with Zelenskyy at the Scranton Army Ammunition Plant, said the president had a simple message: "Thank you. And we need more."

The Scranton plant is one of the few facilities in the country to manufacture 155 mm artillery shells and has increased production over the past year. Ukraine has already received more than 3 million of them from the U.S.

Zelenskyy said he expressed his gratitude to all the employees at the plant.

"It is in places like this where you can truly feel that the democratic world can prevail," he wrote on X. "Thanks to people like these — in Ukraine, in America, and in all partner countries — who

work tirelessly to ensure that life is protected."

Zelenskyy's visit kicked off a busy week in the United States. He will speak at the U.N. General Assembly annual gathering in New York on Tuesday and Wednesday and then travel to Washington for talks on Thursday with President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, as he seeks to shore up support for Ukraine.

The area around the ammunition plant had been sealed off since Sunday morning, with municipal garbage trucks positioned across several roadblocks and a very heavy presence of city, regional and state police, including troopers on horseback.

As Zelenskyy's large motorcade made its way to the ammunition plant in the afternoon, a small contingent of supporters waving Ukrainian flags assembled nearby to show their appreciation for his visit.

"It's unfortunate that we need a plant like this, but it's here, and it's here to protect the world," said Vera Kowal Krewson, a first-generation Ukrainian American who was among those who greeted Zelenskyy's motorcade. "And I



CURT LOTER, U.S. ARMY/AP

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, listens to Rich Hansen, the commander's representative for the Scranton Army Ammunition Plant, while observing metal being cut down to billets as part of the projectile cartridge case production process at the ammunition plant in Scranton, Pa., on Sunday.

strongly feel that way."

She said many of her friends' parents have worked in the ammunition plant, and she called Zelenskyy's visit "a wonderful thing."

Laryssa Salak, 60, whose parents also immigrated from Ukraine, said she was pleased Zelenskyy came to thank the workers. She said it upsets her that funding for Ukraine's defense has divided Americans and that even some of her friends oppose the support, saying the money should go to help Americans instead.

"But they don't understand that that money does not directly go to Ukraine," Salak said. "It goes to American factories that manufacture, like here, like the ammuni-

tion. So that money goes to American workers as well. And a lot of people don't understand that."

The 155 mm shells made in the Scranton plant are used in howitzer systems, which are towed large guns with long barrels that can fire at various angles. Howitzers can strike targets up to 15 miles to 20 miles away and are highly valued by ground forces to take out enemy targets from a protected distance.

At one point in the war, Ukraine was firing between 6,000 and 8,000 of the 155 mm shells per day. That rate started to deplete U.S. stockpiles and drew concern that the level on hand was not enough to sustain U.S. military needs if

another major conventional war broke out, such as in a potential conflict over Taiwan.

In response the U.S. has invested in restarting production lines and is now manufacturing more than 40,000 155 mm rounds a month, with plans to hit 100,000 rounds a month.

Two of the Pentagon leaders who have pushed that increased production through — Doug Bush, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology and Bill LaPlante, the Pentagon's top weapons buyer — were to join Zelenskyy at the plant. Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, also joined the Ukrainian president.

21 wounded in Russian strikes that hit apartment buildings in Kharkiv

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia launched strikes in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv that hit high-rise apartment buildings over the weekend, leaving at least 21 wounded in two consecutive nighttime attacks, authorities said.

The bombs fell Saturday night on the district of Shevchenkivsky, north of the center of Kharkiv, which is the second-largest Ukrainian city, local Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said. Residential buildings sustained varying degrees of damage, including 16- and nine-story buildings, he added. Kharkiv's city council said that 18 buildings were damaged.

The wounded included an 8-year-old child, according to Syniehubov and Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov. Terekhov said that 60 residents were evacuated from one of the buildings, a high-rise that was hit directly.

Kharkiv has been a frequent target of Russian attacks since Moscow launched its all-out invasion of neighboring Ukraine in February 2022. Late Friday, 15 people, including children ages 10 and 12, were wounded when Russian airstrikes hit three Kharkiv neighborhoods, Terekhov said.

Ukrainian officials said that KAB-type aerial glide bombs — a retrofitted Soviet weapon that has for months laid waste to eastern Ukraine — were used in both attacks.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned the strike and urged Kyiv's Western allies to send more weapons to help it "protect lives and ensure safety."

"Ukraine needs full long-range capabilities, and we are working to convince our partners of this," Zelenskyy said on X, as he prepared to kick off a busy week in the United States shoring up support

for Kyiv in the war.

And Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov said Sunday that Kyiv was in talks with partners in Europe to secure Swedish-made Gripen and European Eurofighter Typhoon jets. Umerov said that commitments were already in place for deliveries of U.S.-made F-16s and French Mirages.

Russia also launched 80 Shahed drones and two missiles at Ukraine overnight into Sunday, the Ukrainian air force said. Ukrainian defenses shot down 71 drones, and another six were lost on location because of electronic warfare countermeasures, the statement said.

Farther south, a 12-year-old girl and a woman died after a Russian drone struck a passenger car in the city of Nikopol, local Gov. Serhii Lysak reported. Two others, including a 4-year-old child, suffered wounds.

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NATION

'This was an assassination attempt,' note says

Prosecutors: Suspect's car had a list of dates, venues that matched Trump's schedule

BY ERIC TUCKER AND
ALANNA DURKIN RICHER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The man accused in the apparent assassination attempt of Donald Trump at a golf course in Florida left behind a note saying that he intended to kill the former president and maintained in his car a handwritten list of dates and venues where Trump was to appear, the Justice Department said Monday.

The new allegations were included in a detention memo filed ahead of a hearing Monday at which the Justice Department was expected

argue that 58-year-old Ryan Wesley Routh should remain locked up as the case moves forward. The details are meant to buttress prosecutors' assertions that Routh had set out to kill Trump before the plot was thwarted by a Secret Service agent who spotted a rifle poking out of shrubbery on the West Palm Beach golf course where Trump was playing.

The note, addressed "Dear World," was placed in a box that was dropped at the home of an unidentified person who contacted law enforcement officials after last Sunday's arrest. It appears to have been

based on the premise that the assassination attempt would be ultimately unsuccessful.

The box, which also contained ammunition, a metal pipe and other items, was not opened by the person until after Routh was taken into custody. The person who received the box and contacted law enforcement was not identified in the Justice Department's detention memo.

"This was an assassination attempt on Donald Trump but I failed you. I tried my best and gave it all the gumption I could muster. It is up to you now to finish the job; and I will offer \$150,000 to whomever can



Routh

complete the job," the note said, according to prosecutors.

An attorney for Routh didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment

and venues where Trump had appeared or was scheduled to, according to prosecutors.

A notebook found in his car was filled with criticism of the Russian and Chinese governments and notes about how to join the war on behalf of Ukraine.

Cellphone records indicate he traveled to West Palm Beach from Greensboro, N.C., in mid-August, and that he was near Trump's golf club and the former president's Mar-a-Lago residence "on multiple days and times" between Aug. 18 and the day of the apparent attempted assassination.

Monday morning.

Authorities who searched his car found six cellphones, including one that showed a Google search of how to travel from Palm Beach County to Mexico.

They also found a list with dates in August, September and October



TOM BRENNER/For the Washington Post

North Carolina Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson walks onstage during a campaign event for Donald Trump in Asheville, N.C., on Aug. 14. Several top staffers in Robinson's campaign for governor have quit their posts.

Robinson staffers flee as fallout over past online posts continues

BY GARY D. ROBERTSON
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Several top staffers in North Carolina Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson's campaign for governor have quit their posts, marking more fallout from a CNN report outlining evidence that he made disturbing posts on a pornography website's message board more than a decade ago.

The campaign said in a news release Sunday that senior adviser Conrad Pogorzelski III, campaign manager Chris Rodriguez, the campaign's finance director and the deputy campaign manager "have stepped down from their roles with the campaign." Information on new campaign staffers would be forthcoming soon, the release said.

"I appreciate the efforts of these team members who have made the

difficult choice to step away from the campaign, and I wish them well in their future endeavors," Robinson said in the release.

Pogorzelski, who helped Robinson get elected lieutenant governor in 2020 in his first bid for public office and later became his chief of staff, said separately on Sunday that additional staffers also left the campaign—the deputy finance director, two political directors and the director of operations.

Pogorzelski, in a text, said that he "along with others from the campaign have left of our own accord."

The CNN report on Thursday unearthed past posts it said Robinson left on a porn site's message boards in which he referred to himself as a "black NAZI," said he enjoyed transgender pornography; said in 2012 he preferred Hitler to then-

President Barack Obama; and slammed the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. as "worse than a maggot."

Robinson denied writing the posts and said Thursday that he wouldn't be forced out of the race by "salacious tabloid lies." He avoided directly discussing the controversy during a gubernatorial campaign event on Saturday evening at a race track in Fayetteville. The event happened after earlier in the day former President Donald Trump didn't mention Robinson at a rally about 90 miles away in Wilmington.

Before Saturday, Robinson had been a frequent presence at Trump's North Carolina campaign stops. The Republican presidential nominee has long praised Robinson — who would be North Carolina's first Black governor if elected.

Harris raises \$27M in fundraiser, promises economic speech soon

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Vice President Kamala Harris raised \$27 million at a packed New York City fundraiser on Sunday, her largest fundraising haul since she took over at the top of the ticket from President Joe Biden, according to a Harris campaign aide.

Though Harris has far more money than former President Donald Trump, the money will be needed to compete with pricey advertising by deep-pocketed outside groups that support Trump, said the aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private fundraising details.

The blockbuster fundraiser was held at Cipriani Wall Street in a massive Greek Revival ballroom with over a dozen columns. Much of the crowd stood shoulder to shoulder as Harris needled Trump for refusing to debate her again.

"My opponent seems to be looking for an excuse," Harris told the crowd. "I feel very strongly that we owe it to the American people, to the voters, to meet once more before Election Day."

She reiterated that later, telling reporters after landing outside Washington, "We have more to discuss."

Trump has rejected more debates, saying Saturday that "it's just too late."

"Voting is already started," he said at a rally in Wilmington, N.C. Voters cast the first in-person ballots last week in Minnesota, South Dakota and Virginia, the states with the first early in-person voting opportunities. About a dozen more states will follow by mid-October.

Harris also said she would deliver a speech Wednesday outlining her economic vision, saying there is "more we can do to invest in the aspirations and ambitions of the

American people while addressing the challenges they face."

She cited the high cost of home ownership and stubbornly high grocery bills as examples.

By fleshing out her economic agenda in more detail, Harris can address an issue that's front of mind for voters after prices soared during Biden's presidency and distance herself from the president's economic track record. Trump has criticized her for being slow to release detailed policy proposals of her own since she rose to the top of the ticket.

Harris has said she'd push for middle-class tax cuts and tax hikes on the wealthy and corporations, and she adopted Trump's proposal to end taxes on tipped wages, though she'd limit her plan to low- and middle-income taxpayers. She's also criticized Trump's plan to impose large tariffs on most imported goods, which she says would severely raise the cost of goods.

Neither Harris nor Trump has a decisive edge with the public on the economy, according to the latest poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The survey suggests Harris is gaining ground on an issue that was once a clear strength for Trump.

About 4 in 10 registered voters say Republican Trump would do a better job handling the economy, while a similar number say that about the Democratic vice president, according to the poll. About 1 in 10 voters don't trust either candidate, and a similar share has equal faith in them.

The new poll found that the economy is one of the most important issues for about 8 in 10 voters as they consider which candidate to support, dwarfing other top issues like health care and crime.

NATION

Spending deal averts shutdown for three months

By KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congressional leaders announced an agreement Sunday on a short-term spending bill that will fund federal agencies for about three months, averting a possible partial government shutdown when the new budget year begins Oct. 1 and pushing final decisions until after the November election.

Temporary spending bills generally fund agencies at current levels, but an additional \$231 million was included to bolster the Secret Service after the two assassination attempts against Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, and additional money was added to aid with the presidential transition, among other things.

Lawmakers have struggled to get to this point as the current budget year winds to a close at month's end.

At the urging of the most conservative members of his conference, House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., had linked temporary funding with a mandate that would have compelled states to require proof of citizenship when people register to vote.

But Johnson abandoned that approach to reach an agreement, even as Trump insisted there should not be a stop-gap measure

without the voting requirement.

Bipartisan negotiations began in earnest shortly after that, with leadership agreeing to extend funding into mid-December. That gives the current Congress the ability to fashion a full-year spending bill after the Nov. 5 election, rather than push that responsibility to the next Congress and president.

In a letter to Republican colleagues, Johnson said the budget measure would be "very narrow, bare-bones" and include "only the extensions that are absolutely necessary."

"While this is not the solution any of us prefer, it is the most prudent path forward under the present circumstances," Johnson wrote. "As history has taught and current polling affirms, shutting the government down less than 40 days from a fateful election would be an act of political malpractice."

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said Democrats would evaluate the bill in its entirety before this week's vote, but with the agreement, "Congress is now on a bipartisan path to avoid a government shutdown that would hurt everyday Americans."

Johnson's earlier effort had no chance in the Democratic-controlled Senate and was opposed by the White House.

California governor signs law banning all plastic shopping bags at stores

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — "Paper or plastic" will no longer be a choice at grocery store checkout lines in California under a new law signed Sunday by Gov. Gavin Newsom that bans all plastic shopping bags.

California had already banned thin plastic shopping bags at supermarkets and other stores, but shoppers could purchase bags made with a thicker plastic that purportedly made them reusable and recyclable.

The new measure, approved by state legislators last month, bans all plastic shopping bags starting in 2026. Consumers who don't bring their own bags will now simply be asked if they want a paper bag.

State Sen. Catherine Blakes-

pear, one of the bill's supporters, said people were not reusing or recycling any plastic bags. She pointed to a state study that found that the amount of plastic shopping bags trashed per person grew from 8 pounds per year in 2004 to 11 pounds per year in 2021.

Blakespear, a Democrat from Encinitas, said the previous bag ban passed a decade ago didn't reduce the overall use of plastic.

"We are literally choking our planet with plastic waste," she said in February.

The environmental nonprofit Oceana applauded Newsom for signing the bill and "safeguarding California's coastline, marine life, and communities from single-use plastic grocery bags."



KIM CHANDLER/AP

A firefighter cleans blood stains off the sidewalk outside a nightclub in Birmingham, Ala., on Sunday after a mass shooting took place.

Alabama officials plead for info on mass shooting, offer reward money

By KIM CHANDLER
Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Officials in Birmingham, Ala., pleaded Monday with members of the public for information leading to arrests in a weekend mass shooting that killed four people and injured more than a dozen others, announcing rewards of up to \$100,000.

Police Chief Scott Thurmond said at a news conference that police are still sifting through tips. Five of the injured victims remain in the hospital, he said.

The FBI is offering a \$50,000 reward, and Crime Stoppers is offering \$50,000, officials said. Tipsters can remain anonymous, they said.

Authorities have still made no arrests after Saturday's shooting killed four people and left 17 oth-

ers injured in what police described as a targeted "hit" by multiple shooters who opened fire outside a popular nightspot in Birmingham's Five Points South district.

The shooting rocked an area of restaurants and bars that is often bustling on weekend nights. The mass shooting, one of several this year in the city, unnerved residents and left officials at home and beyond pleading for help to both solve the crime and address the broader problem of gun violence.

"The priority is to find these shooters and get them off our streets," Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin said a day after the shooting.

The shooting occurred on the sidewalk and street outside Hush, a lounge in the entertainment dis-

trict, where blood stains were still visible on the sidewalk outside the venue on Sunday morning.

Thurmond has said authorities believe the shooting targeted one of the people who was killed, possibly in a murder-for-hire. A vehicle pulled up and "multiple shooters" got out and began firing, then fled, he said.

"We believe that there was a 'hit,' if you will, on that particular person," Thurmond said.

Police said about 100 shell casings were recovered. Thurmond said that law enforcement was working to determine what weapons were used, but that they believe some of the gunfire was "fully automatic." Investigators also were trying to determine whether anyone fired back, creating cross-fire.

Ban sought for Chinese, Russian software and hardware used in autonomous vehicles

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Commerce Department said Monday it's seeking a ban on the sale of connected and autonomous vehicles in the U.S. that are equipped with Chinese and Russian software and hardware with the stated goal of protecting national security and U.S. drivers.

While there is minimal Chinese and Russian software deployed in the U.S., the issue is more complicated for hardware. That's why Commerce officials said the prohibitions on the software would take effect for the 2027 model year and the prohibitions on hardware would take effect for the model year of 2030, or Jan. 1, 2029, for units without a model year.

The measure announced Monday is proactive but critical, the

agency said, given that all the bells and whistles in cars like microphones, cameras, GPS tracking and Bluetooth technology could make Americans more vulnerable to bad actors and potentially expose personal information, from the home address of drivers, to where their children go to school.

In extreme situations, a foreign adversary could shut down or take simultaneous control of multiple vehicles operating in the United States, causing crashes and blocking roads, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo told reporters on a call Sunday.

"This is not about trade or economic advantage," Raimondo said. "This is a strictly national security action. The good news is right now, we don't have many Chinese or Russian cars on our

road."

But Raimondo said Europe and other regions in the world where Chinese vehicles have become commonplace very quickly should serve as "a cautionary tale" for the U.S.

Security concerns around the extensive software-driven functions in Chinese vehicles have arisen in Europe, where Chinese electric cars have rapidly gained market share.

"Who controls these data flows and software updates is a far from trivial question, the answers to which encroach on matters of national security, cybersecurity, and individual privacy," Janka Oertel, director of the Asia program at the European Council on Foreign Relations, wrote on the council's website.

NATION

‘Dustoff’ helicopter crews to receive honor

Congressional Gold Medal will be given to Vietnam vets

BY GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

Vietnam War medevac helicopter crews will be the latest military group to receive the highest award Congress can bestow.

The Dustoff Crews of the Vietnam War Congressional Gold Medal Act won final approval last week. It honors the estimated 3,000 pilots, medics, and crew who flew between combat zones and field hospitals during the war.

The flights were nicknamed “Dustoff” because of the dirt and debris churned up by their helicopter rotors as they landed to pick up wounded. The crew of a helicopter early in the war took the name as their call-sign, according to the Army.

The Dustoffs extracted 900,000 wounded U.S., Vietnamese, and allied soldiers from May 1962 to March 1973. The Army said the medevac crews had a one-in-three chance of becoming casualties themselves.

“They were some of the very best, and their heroism deserves to be recognized, which we finally

did [Thursday] by sending this legislation to President [Joe] Biden’s desk to become law,” said Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., a co-sponsor of the legislation.

Congressional testimony included the record of the 54th Medical Detachment, a Dustoff unit of about 30 soldiers with three UH-1 Huey helicopters. During one 10-month stretch of heavy fighting, they extracted 21,435 casualties to safety. The 8,644 evacuation and rescue missions required 4,832 hours in the air. Unit members received 78 valor awards.

Patrick Henry Brady of Seattle was an Army major flying missions with the 54th Medical Detachment from Chu Lai, about 340 miles northeast of Saigon on the coast of the South China Sea.

In January 1968, calls came in from groups of wounded soldiers who were trapped behind enemy lines, including one group in a mine field.

Despite heavy fog and smoke, Brady extracted soldiers from a site where two early rescue heli-

copters had been shot down. Returning several times to pull more soldiers out of the jungle, Brady had one helicopter shredded by machine gun fire and a second damaged at the mine field by an explosion. At the end of the day, Brady and his crew had lost three helicopters and saved 51 wounded American and South Vietnamese soldiers.

Brady received the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest award for valor in combat.

“A Dustoff was usually vulnerable,” he said. “Of course, the most dangerous time was landing on the battlefield during the battle. The chopper was big and visible — no armor protection.”

Brady said despite the red cross painted on the Dustoffs to show they weren’t combat helicopters, they nonetheless always drew enemy fire.

“We knew it and we were never surprised,” he said. “We did all we could to avoid it. That meant finding the safest way in, taking the shortest time on the ground possible and getting the patient to the



LAWRENCE J. SULLIVAN/National Museum of the U.S. Army

Soldiers in September 1966 carry the wounded to “Dustoff” medevac helicopters at a 1st Air Cavalry base near Qui Nhon in Vietnam, about 375 miles northeast of Saigon.

hospital as soon as we could.”

Vietnam Dustoff Association President Steve Vermillion said the Congressional Gold Medal recognized the history of what were often teenagers involved in a life and death mission all day,

nearly every day.

“[It’s] the story of 18- and 19-year-old men flying unarmed helicopters into battle, at night, in the rain, and multiple times a day, to rescue our wounded and fly them back to medical facilities,” he said.

Island uses peanut butter, black lights to find rat that might not exist

BY BECKY BOHRER
Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska — On an island of windswept tundra in the Bering Sea, hundreds of miles from mainland Alaska, a resident sitting outside their home saw — well, did they see it? They were pretty sure they saw it.

A rat.

The purported sighting would not have gotten attention in many places around the world, but it caused a stir on St. Paul Island, which is part of the Pribilof Islands, a birding haven sometimes called the “Galapagos of the north” for its diversity of life.

That’s because rats that stow away on vessels can quickly populate and overrun remote islands, devastating bird populations by eating eggs, chicks or even adults and upending once-vibrant ecosystems.

Shortly after receiving the resident’s report in June, wildlife officials arrived at the apartment complex and crawled through nearby grasses, around the building and under the porch, looking for tracks, chew marks or droppings. They baited traps with peanut butter and set up trail cameras to capture any confirmation of the rat’s existence — but so far have found no evidence.

“We know — because we’ve seen this on other islands and in other locations in Alaska and



AP

Lauren Divine holds the last rat known to have been on St. Paul Island, after it was found dead on June 30, 2019.

across the world — that rats absolutely decimate seabird colonies, so the threat is never one that the community would take lightly,” said Lauren Divine, director of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island’s ecosystem conservation office.

The anxiety on St. Paul Island is the latest development amid long-standing efforts to get or keep non-native rats off some of the most remote, but ecologically diverse, islands in Alaska and around the world.

Rodents have been removed successfully from hundreds of islands worldwide — including one in Alaska’s Aleutian chain formerly known as “Rat Island,” according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. But such efforts can take years and cost millions of

dollars, so prevention is considered the best defense.

Around the developed areas of St. Paul, officials have set out blocks of wax — “chew blocks” — designed to record any telltale incisor bites. Some of the blocks are made with ultraviolet material, which allow inspectors armed with black lights to search for glowing droppings.

They also have asked residents to be on the lookout for any rodents and are seeking permission to have the U.S. Department of Agriculture bring a dog to the island to sniff out any rats. Canines are otherwise banned from the Pribilofs to protect fur seals.

There have been no traces of any rats since the reported sighting this summer, but the hunt and heightened state of vigilance is likely to persist for months.

Divine likened the search to trying to find a needle in a haystack “and not knowing if a needle even exists.”

The community of about 350 people — clustered on the southern tip of a treeless island marked by rolling hills, rimmed by cliffs and battered by storms — has long had a rodent surveillance program that includes rat traps near the airport and at developed waterfront areas where vessels arrive, designed to detect or kill any rats that might show up.

Still, it took nearly a year to

catch the last known rat on St. Paul, which was believed to have hopped off a barge. It was found dead in 2019 after it evaded the community’s initial defenses. That underscores why even an unsubstantiated sighting is taken so seriously, Divine said.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is planning an environmental review to analyze eradicating the potentially tens of thousands of rats on four uninhabited islands in the far-flung, volcanopocked Aleutian chain, hundreds of miles southwest of St. Paul. More than 10 million seabirds of varying species nest in the Aleutians.

The diversity and number of breeding birds on islands with established, non-native rat populations are noticeably low, the agency has said. Carcasses of least auklets and crested auklets, which are known for their noisy nesting colonies in rocky areas, have been found in rat-food caches on Kiska Island, one of the four islands, where rat footprints have been spotted on the wet, sandy shoreline.

If the agency moves ahead, it might take five years for the first of the projects to be launched, and given the intensive planning, testing and research required for each island, it could take decades to complete all of them, said Stacey Buckelew, an island invasive species biologist with Alaska

Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.

But such efforts are important steps to help seabirds already challenged by stresses including climate change, Buckelew said.

The success of what was long called Rat Island, a tract in the Aleutians roughly half the size of Manhattan, shows how effective eradication programs can be. Rats are believed to have first arrived with a Japanese shipwreck in the late 18th century. Fur traders introduced arctic foxes there the following century.

The foxes were eradicated in 1984, but it was nearly a quarter century later when wildlife agents and conservation groups killed off the rats by dropping poison pellets from a helicopter. Those involved said that without nesting seabirds, the island was eerily silent compared to the cacophony of other, rat-free islands, and it even smelled different.

Since the eradication of rats, researchers have found native birds benefiting, even documenting species thought to have been wiped out by rats. The island is once again known by the name originally bestowed by the Unangan people native to the Aleutians: Hawadax. Researchers have found tufted puffins, which dig burrows into cliff edges and are defenseless against rats or foxes, as well as eagle and falcon nests.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Card game maker sues SpaceX in alleged breach

TX BROWNSVILLE — The maker of the popular party game Cards Against Humanity is accusing Elon Musk's SpaceX of trespassing on and damaging a plot of vacant land the company owns in Texas.

In a lawsuit filed at a Texas court, Cards Against Humanity alleges SpaceX has essentially treated the game company's property — located in Cameron County — as its own for at least the past six months.

The lawsuit said SpaceX, which had previously acquired other plots of land near the property, has placed construction materials, such as gravel, and other debris on the land without asking for permission to do so.

SpaceX did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Cards Against Humanity, which is headquartered in Chicago, had purchased the plot of land in 2017 as part of what it said was a stunt to oppose former president Donald Trump's efforts to build a border wall.

The company is asking for \$15 million in damages, which it said includes a loss of vegetation on the land.



CHARLES SYKES/AP

Highway vehicle crash injures 8 firefighters

CA SANTA ANA — Eight firefighters were injured in a severe highway crash involving a fire truck in Southern California, authorities said.

Chief Brian Fennessy of the Orange County Fire Authority said the truck overturned on the California State Route 241 just north of Portola Hills.

The vehicle was transporting a ground crew after a 12-hour shift fighting a massive wildfire in Orange County called the Airport Fire. A ladder in the road caused the truck to swerve, strike a guard rail and overturn, Fennessy said.

At least one firefighter was flown by helicopter with others transported by ambulance to hospitals.

National park trail closed after bear attacks hiker

MT WEST GLACIER — A section of a popular Glacier National Park trail was closed after a man was attacked by a bear and injured, park officials said.

Rangers are still trying to determine if the attack involved a grizzly bear or a black bear.

The 35-year-old man sustained non-life-threatening injuries when his hiking party encountered the bear near the Grinnell Glacier Overlook trailhead on the Highline Trail.

The man hiked over a mile to Granite Park Chalet with assistance and was flown to a spot where he could be taken by ambulance to a hospital in Whitefish.

A global signature

A peace advocate signs the Declaration of World Day of the Power of Hope at the invitation of members of the Federation of World Peace and Love during an International Day of Peace celebration in Times Square on Saturday, in New York.

The trail from Haystack Butte to the Granite Park Chalet will remain closed until further notice, officials said.

Interim commissioner says feds searched homes

NY NEW YORK — New York City's interim police commissioner revealed that federal authorities had executed search warrants at his homes.

Thomas Donlon, who became the interim commissioner after the resignation of his predecessor, issued a statement on the search through the police department.

"On Friday, September 20, federal authorities executed search warrants at my residences. They took materials that came into my possession approximately 20 years ago and are unrelated to my work with the New York City Police Department," the statement said.

"This is not a department matter, and the department will not be commenting," he added.

The statement did not address what the investigation was about, which federal authorities were involved or what "materials" had been seized.

City settles suit accusing officer of excessive force

VT BURLINGTON — Vermont's largest city of Burlington has paid \$215,000 to settle a lawsuit accusing a police

officer of using excessive force by grabbing a man and slamming him to the ground, knocking him unconscious in September of 2018.

According to the lawsuit filed in 2019, Mabior Jok was standing outside with a group when a conversation became heated. Officer Joseph Corrow, without announcing himself or issuing any instructions, then slammed Jok to the ground, the lawsuit said.

The police chief at the time said an internal investigation found Corrow did not call for backup or use verbal commands, but he did not use excessive force, according to a court filing. He also had said that Jok was known to officers "as a person who has a violent history who has attacked the community and police officers."

The settlement was reached about a week before the planned start of a trial, said Jok's lawyer Robb Spensley, who called it a reasonable settlement. It was first reported by Seven Days.

India-based hotel firm buys Motel 6 for \$525M

NY NEW YORK — The budget motel chain Motel 6 is being acquired by the parent company of OYO, a hotel operator based in India.

The New York-based investment firm Blackstone, which owns Motel 6's parent company G6 Hospitality, announced the deal would be an all-cash transaction worth \$525 million.

The transaction will also include the sale of the Studio 6 motel brand, which caters to customers seeking extended stays. The deal is expected to close by the end of the year.

OYO, which launched in India just over a decade ago, has been expanding its footprint in the U.S. over the past few years. The company said it currently operates 320 hotels across 35 states and is aiming to add 250 more this year.

"This acquisition is a significant milestone for a startup company like us to strengthen our international presence," Gautam Swaroop, OYO's international division chief, said in a statement.

More dengue fever seen from local mosquitoes

CA LOS ANGELES — Health officials warned that the Los Angeles area is seeing more dengue fever cases in people who have not traveled outside the U.S. mainland, a year after the first such case was reported in California.

Public health officials said at least three people apparently became ill with dengue this month after being bitten by mosquitoes in the Baldwin Park neighborhood east of downtown Los Angeles.

"This is an unprecedented cluster of locally acquired dengue for a region where dengue has not previously been transmitted by mosquitoes," said Barbara Ferrer, director of the Los Angeles County

Department of Public Health.

Other cases that stemmed from mosquito bites originating in the U.S. have been reported this year in Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, where officials have declared a dengue epidemic. There have been 3,085 such cases in the U.S. this year, of which 96% were in Puerto Rico, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Lawmaker whose mower fell into pool improving

KY FRANKFORT — A Kentucky lawmaker who was critically injured when the lawn mower he was riding plunged into an empty swimming pool has made progress in his recovery, a legislative spokesman said.

State Sen. Johnnie Turner was able to sit upright and communicate and continued to improve, said Dustin Isaacs, a spokesman for the Republican supermajority in the Kentucky Senate.

"While he remains in ICU and in some pain, we are grateful for this positive progression," Isaacs said in a statement.

Turner, a Republican from Harlan, was injured when he drove his mower into the deep end of the pool at his home, Kentucky State Police said. No details were provided as to what caused the accident.

WORLD

Israel strikes Lebanon, warns residents to leave

Associated Press

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon — Israeli strikes on Monday killed more than 270 Lebanese in the deadliest barrage since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war as the Israeli military warned residents in southern and eastern Lebanon to evacuate their homes ahead of a widening air campaign against Hezbollah.

Thousands of Lebanese fled the south, and the main highway out of the southern port city of Sidon was jammed with cars heading toward Beirut in the biggest exodus since the 2006 fighting. More than 1,000 other people were wounded in the strikes — a staggering one-day toll for a country still reeling from a deadly attack on communication devices last week.

The death toll surpassed that of Beirut's devastating port explosion in 2020, when hundreds of tons of ammonium nitrate stored in a warehouse detonated, killing at least 218 people and wounding more than 6,000.

In a recorded message to Lebanese civilians, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged



HUSSEIN MALLA/AP

Smoke rises from an Israeli airstrike on Kfar Rouman village, as seen from Marjayoun town, south Lebanon, on Monday.

them to heed Israeli calls to evacuate, saying "take this warning seriously."

"Please get out of harm's way now," Netanyahu said. "Once our operation is finished, you can come back safely to your homes."

The Israeli military said Monday evening that it had carried out a tar-

geted strike in Beirut. It did not give details.

Lebanese Health Minister Firass Abiad told a news conference in Beirut that the strikes hit hospitals, medical centers and ambulances. The government ordered schools and universities to close across most of the country and began preparing

shelters for people displaced from the south.

The Israeli military announced that it hit some 800 targets, saying it was going after Hezbollah weapons sites. Some strikes hit in residential areas of towns in the south and the eastern Bekaa Valley. One strike hit a wooded area as far away as Byblos in central Lebanon, more than 80 miles from the border north of Beirut.

The military said it was expanding the airstrikes to include areas of the valley along Lebanon's eastern border with Syria. Hezbollah has long had an established presence in the valley, and it is where the group was founded in 1982 with the help of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari repeated warnings urging residents to immediately evacuate areas where Hezbollah is storing weapons, including in the valley. The warnings left open the possibility that some residents could live in or near targeted structures without knowing that they are risk.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah said in a statement that it fired dozens of

rockets toward Israel, including at military bases. It also targeted for a second day the facilities of the Rafael defense firm, headquartered in Haifa.

As Israel carried out the attacks, Israeli authorities reported a series of air-raid sirens in northern Israel warning of incoming rocket fire from Lebanon.

The evacuation warnings were the first of their kind in nearly a year of steadily escalating conflict and came after a particularly heavy exchange of fire on Sunday. Hezbollah launched around 150 rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel in retaliation for strikes that killed a top commander and dozens of fighters.

The increasing strikes and counterstrikes have raised fears of an all-out war, even as Israel is still battling Hamas in Gaza and trying to return scores of hostages taken in Hamas' Oct. 7 attack. Hezbollah has vowed to continue its strikes in solidarity with the Palestinians and Hamas, a fellow Iran-backed militant group. Israel says it is committed to returning calm to its northern border.

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The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market

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WORLD

Japanese warplanes use flares to warn a Russian plane to leave airspace

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan said its warplanes used flares to warn a Russian reconnaissance aircraft to leave northern Japanese airspace on Monday.

Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Kihara told reporters that the Russian Il-38 plane breached Japan's airspace above Rebus Island, just off the coast of the country's northernmost main island of Hokkaido, for up to a minute in three instances, during its five-hour flight in the area.

It came a day after a joint fleet of Chinese and Russian warships sailed around Japanese northern coasts. Kihara said the airspace violation could be related to a joint military exercise that Russia and China announced earlier this month.

Japan scrambled an undisclosed number of F-15 and F-35 fighter jets, which used flares for the first time after the Russian aircraft apparently ignored their warnings, Kihara said.

"The airspace violation was extremely regrettable," Kihara said. He said Japan "strongly protested" to Russia through diplomatic channels and demanded preventive measures.

Kihara said the use of flares was a legitimate response to airspace violation and "we plan to use it without hesitation."

Japanese defense officials are highly concerned about growing military cooperation between the China and Russia, and China's increasingly assertive activity around Japanese waters and airspace.

It led Tokyo to significantly reinforce defenses of southwestern Japan, including remote islands that are considered key to Japan's defense strategy in the region.

Earlier in September, Russian military aircraft flew around southern Japanese airspace.

A Chinese Y-9 reconnaissance aircraft briefly violated Japan's southern airspace in late August.

UN expert: Russian prisoners fighting in Ukraine commit crimes when they return

Associated Press

GENEVA — A U.N.-backed human rights expert monitoring President Vladimir Putin's Russia decried on Monday increased violence in the country caused by former prisoners who have their sentences shortened or pardoned to fight in Ukraine and then return home to commit crimes including rape and murder.

Mariana Katzarova, who is observing rights in Russia under a mandate from the U.N.-backed Human Rights Council, said the return home to Russia of former

criminals who have had their legal slates wiped clean is adding to more domestic violence.

The phenomenon first emerged last year among returning fighters, but Katzarova noted that pardons and shortened sentences in Russia for prisoners who agree to fight in Ukraine became law in March.

Speaking to reporters, Katzarova said an estimated 170,000 convicted violent criminals have been recruited to fight in Ukraine.

"Many of them who return — and this is an emerging trend —

have been perpetrating new violent crimes to begin with against women, against girls, against children, including sexual violence and killings," she said in Geneva, where the council is holding its autumn session.

"This has increased, the violence against women in Russia, which already is on a very high level with thousands of women dying each year as a result of domestic violence," she said. "There is no law in Russia distinctly criminalizing domestic violence or gender-based violence."

Capsule with 2 Russians, 1 American from the International Space Station returns to Earth

Associated Press

MOSCOW — A Soyuz capsule carrying two Russians and one American from the International Space Station landed Monday in Kazakhstan, ending a record-breaking stay for the Russian pair.

The capsule landed on the Kazakh steppe about 3 1/2 hours after undocking from the space station in an apparently trouble-free descent. In the last stage of the land-

ing, it descended under a red-and-white parachute at about 16 mph, with small rockets fired in the final seconds to cushion the touchdown. The astronauts were to be extracted from the capsule and placed in nearby chairs to help them adjust to gravity, then given medical examinations in a nearby tent.

Oleg Kononenko and Nikolai Chub returned after 374 days

aboard the space station; on Friday they broke the record for the longest continuous stay there. Also in the capsule was American Tracy Dyson, who was in the space station for six months.

Eight astronauts remain in the space station, including Americans Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams, who have remained long past their scheduled return to Earth.

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OPINION

The losing strategy of underestimating Russia

By LEE HOCKSTADER

Special to The Washington Post

Aboard a NATO surveillance flight above the Norwegian Sea this month, just two of the 19 military personnel were as old as the plane, a 45-year-old modified Boeing 707 jammed with electronics and monitoring devices, its fuselage crowned with an enormous radar dome.

But the young crew on the lumbering AWACS — the acronym stands for Airborne Warning and Control System — was on the lookout for an enduring threat: Russia's Northern Fleet, on maneuvers near Iceland as part of a massive worldwide naval exercise.

That exercise, dubbed Ocean 2024, involved some 400 Russian warships, submarines and support vessels in the North Atlantic and Pacific, as well as the Mediterranean, Caspian and Baltic seas, along with some 90,000 military personnel, according to the Russian Defense Ministry. Chinese vessels also participated.

Even if Russia's figures are inflated, the operation was a muscle-flexing reminder that Moscow remains plenty equipped to project power across the globe.

That sobering fact often gets lost amid China's rising threat and Washington's pivot to the Indo-Pacific. It shouldn't, because it would be a mistake once again to underestimate the Kremlin's resolve to challenge the U.S.-led global order, or Moscow's staying power in Ukraine.

The outset of Vladimir Putin's full-scale war in Ukraine exposed Russia's ground forces as incompetently led and beholden to a tyrant in thrall to his own arrogance and neoimperial ambitions. The ensuing stalemate, now well into its third year, has been a strategic calamity for Moscow.

Yet if Russia is a corrupt, retrograde, nihi-

stic power, it remains a power. Given the West's pattern of misreading Moscow's resilience, it's worth taking stock of the menace it still poses far beyond Ukrainian borders.

Reminders of that threat have been plentiful in recent months. On the AWACS flights that patrolled the Norwegian Sea east of Iceland this month, Russian ships, presumed to be part of the Ocean 2024 exercise, were detected on nearly every mission, a NATO spokesman said.

On the flight I was on, the tactical director, a French air force major, told me: "We didn't used to encounter the Russian navy very often. Now we know they are out there."

That observation was reinforced in a recent paper for Chatham House, a British think tank, by a half-dozen military specialists who surveyed Moscow's plans for regenerating its military, now the recipient of an eye-watering one-third of all Russian government spending.

Much has been made of Ukraine's impressive success in sinking or crippling a chunk of Putin's Black Sea Fleet. But with a couple of exceptions, the Chatham House study said, the ships destroyed or disabled were "very old or limited" vessels. The Russian navy "has lost none of its blue-water combat capability," the paper concluded, and Moscow's "global power projection capabilities are undiminished."

To underline that capability, three Russian warships and a submarine cruised into Cuban waters in June and remained just off Havana for several days. They posed no specific threat to the United States; unlike other ships and submarines in Moscow's arsenal, they were not equipped with nuclear weapons. But they did carry hypersonic precision missiles with a range of several hundred miles.

It's also worth remembering that Putin's nuclear saber-rattling, which has successful-

ly intimidated Western leaders into slowing weapons deliveries to Ukraine, has involved more than rhetoric. On his orders, Russian forces in May rehearsed preparations for launching tactical nuclear weapons.

That is not to say Putin intends to launch a nuclear war, or that he believes Russia's fleet could go toe-to-toe with the U.S. Navy. But the longer the war in Ukraine grinds on, the more credence the West should give his bedrock assumption — that Moscow can outlast Washington and its allies through the sheer mass of Russian forces and resources, and by keeping the West off balance with threats of escalation.

Putin's strategy seems increasingly sound as public support for Ukraine has softened in the United States and parts of Europe. There, hopes have receded that Russia can be defeated on the battlefield, or that its economy will crumble under the weight of U.S.-led sanctions.

The wishful view of Russia as a paper tiger has been discredited by the failure of Ukraine's counteroffensive last year, and by Putin's ability to shrug off an attempted mutiny last year and repeated military setbacks.

Granted, Ukraine's invasion of the Russian region of Kursk this summer was a propaganda triumph. But it has given Kyiv control of just 0.006% of Russia's landmass. By contrast, Moscow's forces occupy nearly 20% of Ukrainian territory — despite the infusion of \$200 billion of Western military and other aid.

The West has been right to help Kyiv retain its independence. It needs now to formulate a muscular long-term strategy that deters future Russian aggression in Ukraine and elsewhere — without starry-eyed assumptions that Moscow is a depleted force.

Lee Hockstader has been The Washington Post's European Affairs columnist, based in Paris, since 2023. Previously he was a member of the Post editorial board; a national correspondent, a foreign correspondent, and a local reporter.

SAVE Act didn't advance, so we must protect our vote

By KERRI TOLOCZKO

InsideSources.com

The House of Representatives recently failed to pass a continuing resolution that included the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act. Blocked by Republicans and Democrats, the bill would have stopped non-citizens' illegal voting from canceling citizens' ballots.

Now, it's up to the people to protect their vote, following in the traditions of our predecessors who fought to ensure all citizens' votes are counted. One of those predecessors was Clara Vajda, a Hungarian immigrant living in Milwaukee. Intensely proud of her status as a naturalized citizen, she brought the idea of Citizenship Day to her congressman, Rep. Thaddeus Wasielewski, who created a bill designating the third Sunday of every May as Citizenship Day. This was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

According to congressional records, in his 1941 remarks when the bill passed, Wasielewski noted, "I wonder how many know that a simple act of charity of a foreign-born citizen was the motivating spark that set in motion this movement to teach all citizens to appreciate the great honor and privilege which has been bestowed upon them when they assume their sovereign rights of citizenship."

Vajda was following in the footsteps of America's Founding Fathers, the men who debated passionately about how much power the

new Constitution should allocate to our three branches of government.

Our earliest founding document, the Declaration of Independence, states our government derives its "just powers from the consent of the governed." The way we provide or withdraw that consent is by voting.

During the summer of 1787, Federalists who believed in a stronger centralized power like Alexander Hamilton and James Madison argued with the anti-Federalist wing of the founding brotherhood: Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry. The final product was a magnificent document, the first in history crafted under the principle that all our rights come from God, not man, and, therefore, cannot be taken from us by any level of government.

Almost a century later, in 1870, the 15th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, providing voting rights to African Americans, but it was not enough. Black Americans throughout the 20th century encountered racism, assault and murder while trying to exercise their right to vote. It wasn't until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 became federal law that they could exercise these rights fully.

American women were not allowed to vote until 1920 when the 19th Amendment was ratified, and they, too, won a hard-fought battle to get there.

Our laws are not perfect and do not fully protect our citizen voters. The National Voter Rights Act of 1993 clearly states that only citizens can vote but there are no compliance re-

quirements, such as an obligation to produce documentary proof of citizenship during the registration process.

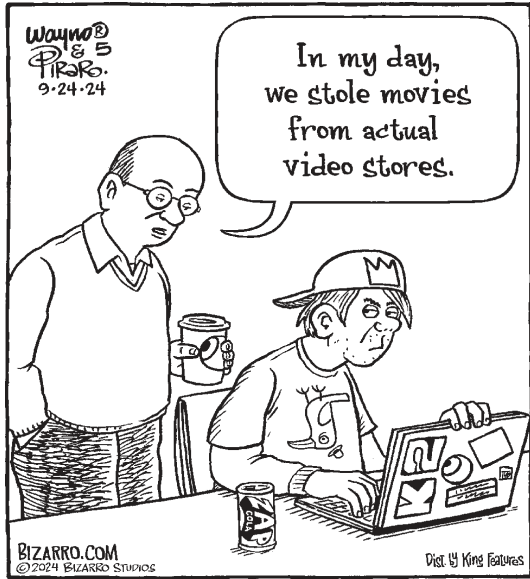
The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 notes, "It shall be unlawful for any alien to vote in any election ... for the purpose of electing a candidate for the office of President, Vice President, Presidential elector, Member of the Senate, Member of the House of Representatives." It also has no provisions demanding proof of citizenship to be entered on our voter rolls.

The SAVE Act of 2024 was designed to correct these deficiencies by adding a federal provision to the NVRA requiring proof of citizenship with voter registration. All it does is follow existing federal law and all 50 states' constitutions to ensure that only citizens vote. Eight states have language specific to "only" citizens voting. Iowa, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Idaho, South Carolina, Missouri, Oklahoma and North Carolina have clarifying wording on their ballots this November.

The words and the spirit of our founding documents, and our current voting laws, reflect the rights — and the restrictions — of voting in U.S. elections. Unfortunately, Congress is unwilling to stand with the Founding Fathers and Clara Vajda. It is up to each citizen to stand and be counted in protecting the value of citizenship against non-citizen voting.

Kerri Toloczko is the executive director of the Election Integrity Network and senior adviser to the Only Citizens Vote Coalition.

Bizarro

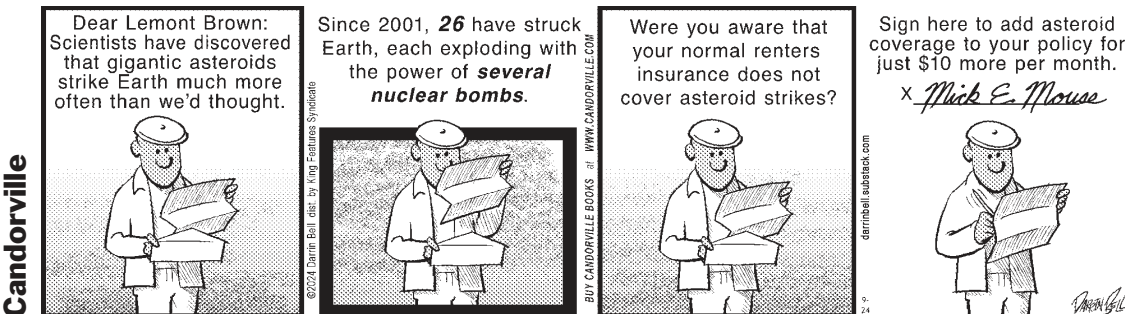
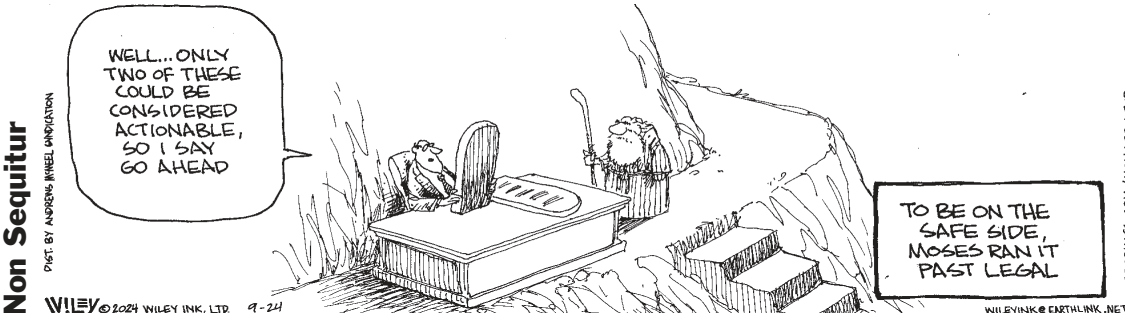
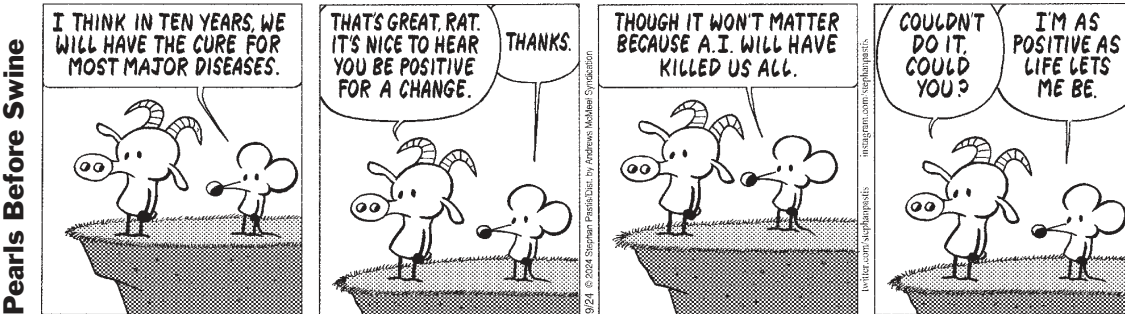
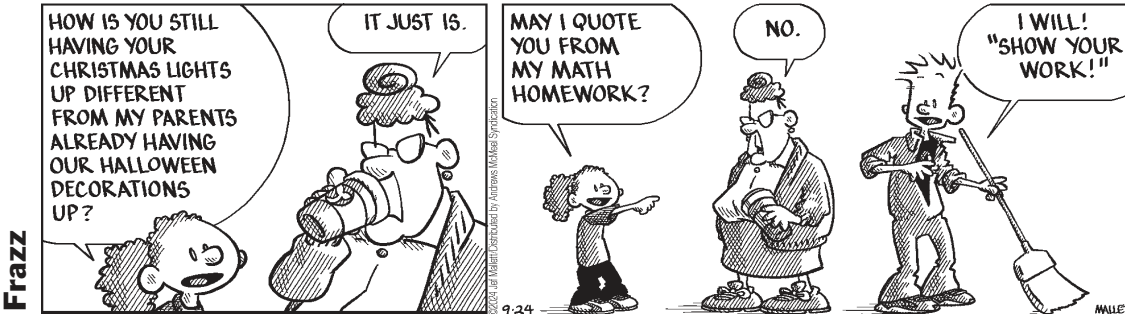


Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

Grid for Eugene Sheffer Crossword with numbered squares from 1 to 53.



ACROSS

- 1 Innocent one
5 Pvt.'s superior
8 Throat clearer
12 Corp. bigwig
13 Knee protector
14 Modern money
15 Some hair sprays
17 Baseball stats
18 Last (Abbr.)
19 ISP giant
20 Schnozzes
21 "Bow-wow!"
22 Owns
23 Greek sorceress
26 "Holy cow!"
30 Always
31 Pallid
32 Oaxaca water
33 Time between flights
35 "Ivanhoe" novelist
36 Bro or sis
37 Picnic dessert
38 Olympic symbol
41 Bank account amt.
42 Diner order
45 California city
46 Balloon pilot
48 Oodles
49 Desk wood
50 Without purpose
51 Cleanse
52 Metric distances (Abbr.)
53 Snitch

DOWN

- 1 Boyfriend
2 Skater's leap
3 Ernie's pal
4 Green prefix
5 Parody
6 Chutzpah
7 QB stats
8 High-flying industry
9 Centers
10 Toledo's lake
11 Rolling stone's lack
16 Singer Evans
20 Dundee denial
21 "Sweet Emotion" rock band
22 Chick's mom Brooks
23 Director Mendes
24 Actress

- 25 Susan of "L.A. Law"
26 Honey holder
27 Swelled head
28 Boring routine
29 Perched
31 Entanglement
34 Compete
35 Missile shelter
37 Urban oases
38 Imperfection
39 Classic Kinks song
40 Big fusses
41 Ray of light
42 Commanded
43 Temporary calm
44 Texter's sign-off
46 Fine, at NASA
47 Petty peeve

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Answer grid for the previous crossword puzzle with words like IRA, MUSK, PITA, SNITS, BOCA, IAN, EUROPA, CAKEMIX, EIDER, OREL, TET, NINE, AIRES, SAVANNA, LAIDUP, JAW, EPIC, NICHE, GUAC, XOO, TOOT, AMOK, ASK, TIES, DALY, RTS, FRY.

9-24

CRYPTOQUIP

LO FWWQF DF ONUTPN ZDFNLUJ
VWFLPJWCF NDHW D HWCA
JDCCUR ZUITF. ONWA'CW
D BRDAF IBUONWF-QLJVWV.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN FOLKS IMMIGRATE TO STOCKHOLM'S LAND, PEOPLE MIGHT CALL THEM ARTIFICIAL SWEDENERS.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals D

MLB

Scoreboard

Scoreboard table showing American League and National League standings by division (East, Central, West) with columns for Wins (W), Losses (L), Percentage (.Pct), and Games Behind (GB).

Monday's games: Boston at Toronto, Seattle at Houston... Tuesday's games: Cincinnati (Junis 4-0) at Cleveland (Bieber 11-8)...

ROUNDUP

Twins fall behind in wild-card race

Associated Press

BOSTON — The struggling Minnesota Twins were swept in a split doubleheader against Boston on Sunday...

Losing for the 13th time in 19 games, the Twins fell a game behind both Detroit and Kansas City for the AL's final two wild-card spots...

"We do feel like we're in a funk and we're not scoring the runs we need to. We know what it feels like, we know what it looks like. We've done it many times before..."

Minnesota (81-75) is just 11-22 since going 17 games over .500 on Aug. 17.

"It was an especially tough day today, we lost both games," Twins first baseman Carlos Santana said in a quiet clubhouse...

The Red Sox won for just the ninth time in 23 games to get back to .500 (78-78) after fading in the playoff chase...

In the opener, Triston Casas homered in his first three at-bats and drove in seven runs, carrying the Red Sox to an 8-1 victory.

With the Twins leading the second game 2-0 in the fifth, Gonzalez sent his three-run drive into the Green Monster seats...

Jarren Duran had a two-run double off the Monster in Boston's six-run sixth that increased it to 9-2. Gonzalez added a sacrifice fly...

Tigers 4, Orioles 3: Kerry Carpenter homered twice, Parker Meadows made a home run-saving grab and surging Detroit moved into a tie for the second American League wild card...

Carpenter's third multi-home run game of the season ensured the Tigers their first winning season since 2016 as Detroit (82-74) moved into a tie with Kansas City (82-74) and one game in front of Minnesota (81-75) for the final AL wild-card spot.

The Tigers have won 11 of their last 14. Baltimore (86-70) lost its fifth consecutive series and fell 5 1/2 games behind New York (91-64) in the AL East race.

Rays 4, Blue Jays 3: Jonathan Aranda homered in a third straight game and host Tampa Bay beat Toronto to complete a three-game sweep.

Aranda gave the Rays a 2-1 lead on his two-run drive against Zach Pop in the sixth inning. Aranda has connected for six of his 10 career homers against the Blue Jays.

Braves 5, Marlins 4: Michael Harris II tripled, singled and scored the go-ahead run in the seventh inning and visiting Atlanta beat Miami.

Gio Urshela and Ozzie Albies homered while Matt Olson had two hits and an RBI for the Braves (85-71), who remain two games behind the New York Mets for the third NL wild card.



MICHAEL DWYER/AP

Twins pitcher Brent Headrick, right, stands on the mound after giving up a solo home run to the Red Sox's Triston Casas, back left, during the first game of a doubleheader on Sunday.

loaded against Declan Cronin (3-4) in the seventh scored Harris from third and put the Braves ahead.

Rangers 6, Mariners 5: Marcus Semien's line single into the left-field corner scored Leody Taveras as Texas rallied from a five-run deficit in a walk-off win over visiting Seattle.

Taveras had tied the score at 5-all with a solo homer in the seventh inning and finished with three hits — all from the sixth inning onward.

The Mariners are two games out of the last AL wild-card spot with six games remaining. Seattle closes out the season with three games at Houston and hosting the Oakland Athletics.

Brewers 10, Diamondbacks 9: Jake Bauers drove in the go-ahead run with a pinch-hit infield single that capped a four-run eighth inning as host Milwaukee overcame an eight-run deficit and avoided a series sweep, rallying for a win over Arizona.

The Brewers trailed 8-0 in the third before chipping away and tying that game at 9 by scoring three runs with two outs in the eighth inning.

Cardinals 2, Guardians 1: Lars Nootbaar scored the go-ahead run from second base on a wild pitch and Andre Pallante allowed one hit in seven innings as host St. Louis beat Cleveland.

Pallante (8-8) walked two and struck out three.

Angels 9, Astros 8: Zach Neto hit two home runs and drove in six, and visiting Los Angeles came from behind twice to beat Houston.

The Angels trailed 4-0 in the sixth before scoring two runs in back-to-back innings, and then took the lead in the eighth on a solo shot from Neto. The Astros responded with two runs in the bottom of the inning before the Angels had a four-run ninth.

Dodgers 6, Rockies 5: Shohei Ohtani hit a game-tying home run in the ninth inning and Mookie Betts followed with a game-ending blast as host Los Angeles rallied past Colorado to maintain its three-game lead in the National League West.

Ohtani had four hits and added two stolen bases, giving him 53 home runs and 55 steals

on the season.

Yankees 7, Athletics 4: Aaron Judge hit his major league-leading 55th homer of the season, Gleyber Torres and Jasson Domínguez also went deep and visiting New York beat Oakland for a three-game sweep and moved to the verge of the AL East title.

Already assured of a playoff berth, the Yankees (92-64) can clinch the division with one victory over second-place Baltimore (86-70) during a three-game series in the Bronx that starts Tuesday night.

Mets 2, Phillies 1: Brandon Nimmo hit a tie-breaking, sixth-inning home run off Zack Wheeler that sailed just over the glove of leaping right fielder Nick Castellanos, and host New York prevented Philadelphia from clinching the NL East at Citi Field.

The Mets (87-69) took three of four from the Phillies and have won 18 of their last 23 to move a season-high 18 games over .500. They passed Arizona into the second of three NL wild-card slots and stayed two games ahead of the Braves (85-71). New York finishes the regular season with three games each at Atlanta and Milwaukee.

Pirates 2, Reds 0: Paul Skenes struck out nine and pitched two-hit ball through five innings, leading visiting Pittsburgh to a win over Cincinnati.

Skenes (11-3) recorded his 16th game with seven or more strikeouts. In three starts against the Reds, the 22-year-old right-hander has allowed one earned run with 25 strikeouts in 17 innings.

Giants 2, Royals 0: Blake Snell struck out nine in six strong innings and visiting San Francisco completed a three-game series sweep of Kansas City.

The Royals lost their seventh straight and dropped into a tie with Detroit (82-74) in the race for an AL wild card.

Cubs 5, Nationals 0: Shota Imanaga pitched seven crisp innings in his sixth consecutive win, and host Chicago beat Washington.

Imanaga (15-3) was backed by home runs from Mike Tauchman, Michael Busch and Miguel Amaya.



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MLB

Reds fire manager Bell after 6 seasons

By MITCH STACY
Associated Press

CINCINNATI — The Cincinnati Reds fired manager David Bell on Sunday night after six seasons.

The team announced the move hours after a 2-0 loss to the Pittsburgh Pirates, and named bench coach Freddie Benavides as interim manager for the final five games of the season.

“David provided the kind of steadiness that we needed in our clubhouse over the last few seasons. We felt a change was needed to move the Major League team forward. We have not achieved the success we expected, and we need to begin focusing on 2025,” President of Baseball Operations Nick Krall said on a statement posted on the Reds’ website.

With a week left in the season, the Reds are 76-81 and in fourth place in the NL Central, 13½ games behind division champion Milwaukee. Cincinnati closes out the season with five road games. The Reds have a two-game series in Cleveland on Tuesday and Wednesday before closing out the campaign with three games in Chicago against the Cubs.

The 52-year-old Bell — whose grandfather Gus and father Buddy both spent part of their careers playing in Cincinnati — was hired by the Reds in October 2018. He had a 409-456 record in six seasons.

Under Bell in 2020, the Reds earned a postseason berth in his second season, which was shortened by COVID-19 to 60 games.

The Reds finished the 2021 season with a respectable 83-79 record, good enough for third place in the National League Central. That season also produced a National League Rookie of the Year in second baseman Jonathan India.

In 2022, Cincinnati lost 100 games for the first time in four

decades. The Reds improved to 82-80 in 2023, despite leading the major leagues with 650 games missed by players because of injuries.

This season began with high expectations that Bell and the Reds couldn’t meet. An eight-game losing streak in May put them five games under .500. They strung together seven wins in a row in June to get them back to one game under .500 but couldn’t sustain the success.

That lack of consistency was a trend for the rest of the season.

The Reds swept the Yankees in a three-game series in New York July 2-4 but again faded. They looked as if they could make a postseason run when an Aug. 12-14 sweep of the Cardinals improved their record to 60-61 as they moved into a tie for second place in the NL Central with St. Louis and within a half dozen games of a wild-card spot.

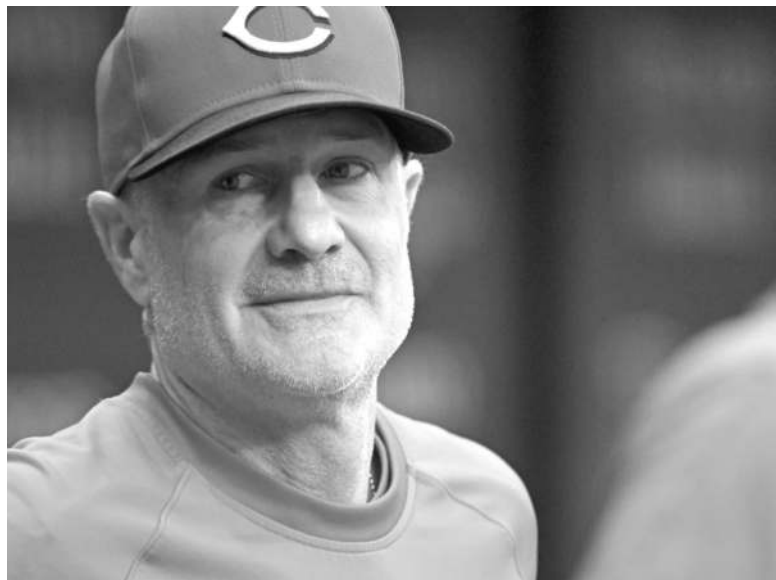
But consistency was a problem again, and Bell lost three of his top starting pitchers, Hunter Greene, Nick Lodolo and Andrew Abbott, to injuries. Cincinnati is 12-8 in September.

During Bell’s tenure, the Reds brought along a talented core expected to put the organization back on top, including India, Greene, Elly De La Cruz and Matt McLain. But Cincinnati hasn’t been able to get over the hump.

Bell becomes the third manager fired this season. The Chicago White Sox fired Pedro Grifol and three coaches on Aug. 8, just days after the team ended a 21-game losing streak that tied the American League record.

The Seattle Mariners fired Scott Servais on Aug. 22, in the middle of his ninth season with the team.

Krall planned to speak to the media on Monday at Great American Ball Park.



STEVE NESIUS/AP

Reds manager David Bell was fired Sunday with five games left in the season. Bell had a 409-456 record in six seasons in Cincinnati.



DERRICK TUSKAN/AP

The Padres’ Fernando Tatis Jr. celebrates in the dugout after hitting a solo home run against the Chicago White Sox during the eighth inning on Sunday in San Diego. The Padres won 4-2.

White Sox lose 120th, tie record of expansion Mets

By BERNIE WILSON
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The Chicago White Sox tied the post-1900 MLB record of 120 losses by the 1962 expansion New York Mets on Sunday when the San Diego Padres won 4-2 by rallying for three runs in the eighth inning, capped by Fernando Tatis Jr.’s towering home run.

The White Sox (36-120) had taken a 2-1 lead on home runs by Korey Lee and Miguel Vargas off Yu Darvish, but that lead quickly disappeared in the eighth.

This defeat came a day after the White Sox tied the American League record of 119 losses set by the 2003 Detroit Tigers. The 1899 Cleveland Spiders hold the major league record for losses at 20-134.

Interim manager Grady Sizemore didn’t address the team afterward.

“No loss is good,” he said. “It’s not something that we’re focused on. I think everyone outside this clubhouse is more obsessed with it than us. The way we spin is to put this one behind us and get ready for the series back home.”

With one more loss in their final six games, the White Sox will hold the modern-day record outright. They finish with three at home against the Los Angeles Angels beginning Tuesday night and finish with three at Detroit, which is in the AL wild-card hunt.

“I guess when you lose 120 it’s easier to brush it off, but it (stinks) to go through it, but that’s where we’re at,” veteran Andrew Benintendi said.

The Padres (90-66) clinched their first 90-win season since 2010, when they finished 90-72 but missed the postseason thanks to a brutal September collapse.

Wild card

AMERICAN LEAGUE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	86	70	.551	+4
Detroit	82	74	.526	—
Kansas City	82	74	.526	—
Minnesota	81	75	.519	1
Seattle	80	76	.513	2
Boston	78	78	.500	4
Tampa Bay	78	78	.500	4

NATIONAL LEAGUE

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Diego	90	66	.577	+3
Arizona	87	69	.558	—
New York	87	69	.558	—
Atlanta	85	71	.545	2



DERRICK TUSKAN/AP

The White Sox’s Miguel Vargas reacts after striking out against San Diego in the eighth inning on Sunday. Chicago lost its 120th game of the season.

The Padres reduced their magic number to one for clinching their third postseason berth since 2020.

The Padres control their own destiny going into a three-game series at the NL West-leading Los Angeles Dodgers starting Tuesday night, but would have to win out to clinch the division title. While the Dodgers have a three-game lead over the Padres, San Diego owns the tiebreaker. San Diego has a three-game lead over Arizona for the NL’s top wild card. The Padres finish with three games at Arizona next weekend.

Some in the sellout crowd of 45,197 began chanting “Beat L.A.!” as the Padres players and staff saluted the fans after the final home regular-season game. San Diego set the franchise attendance record of 3,314,593 in 80 games.

“We’re never out and that’s probably since the first week that we played baseball this year,” Tatis said. “What we have been doing over here is really special. We have the talent to go all the way. But it’s time to take care of business one day at a time.”

The Padres tied it at 2 when Donovan Solano and pinch-hitter Luis Arraez hit consecutive doubles opening the eighth against Fraser Ellard (2-3). Arraez advanced on a wild pitch and scored the go-ahead run on Jurickson Profar’s sacrifice fly.

Tatis then drove a towering shot into the left-field stands, his 20th homer of the season.

“It felt amazing. It felt like I showed it that way after I hit it,” said Tatis, who had an exuberant trot after the 389-foot blast, including stutter-stepping into third base.

WNBA/NFL

Wilson, Clark selected top player, rookie

By DOUG FEINBERG
Associated Press

A'ja Wilson and Caitlin Clark had record-breaking seasons, putting up stats the WNBA had never seen before.

Wilson became the first player in league history to score more than 1,000 points in a season, and she averaged a record 26.9 points. Clark broke the league's single-season assist mark and scored the most points ever for a rookie.

So it's no surprise the two were honored Sunday as the unanimous choices for the AP Player and Rookie of the Year awards, respectively, by a 15-member media panel.

"It means a lot," Wilson said in a phone interview with The Associated Press. "The preparation you put in, the approach I set myself up for this season."

The Las Vegas Aces star was named the league's MVP earlier Sunday, also unanimously. The WNBA will announce the rest of its awards over the course of the postseason, which began Sunday.

Wilson finished the regular season with 1,021 points and 451 rebounds and led the league with 98 blocks.

Clark came into the league with quite possibly more hype than any rookie ever and she delivered, leading the Indiana Fever to the

playoffs for the first time since 2016. She broke the WNBA single-season record with 337 assists, including a league-record 19 in one game. She also broke the single-season rookie scoring mark as she averaged 19.2 points.

"This is a tremendous honor to be named The Associated Press Rookie of the Year," she said. "This recognition wouldn't be possible without an incredible group of teammates and coaches, and we are looking forward to continuing an exciting regular season in the postseason."

Clark headlined the all-rookie team along with Angel Reese of the Chicago Sky, who broke the rebounds-per-game record by averaging 13.1. She would have had the overall rebounding record as well had she not gotten hurt at the end of the season. Other rookies on the team were New York's Leonie Fiebich, Los Angeles' Rickea Jackson and Chicago's Kamilla Cardoso.

Wilson's teammate Tiffany Hayes earned AP Sixth Woman of the Year honors.

Wilson and Clark headlined the AP All-WNBA first team. They were joined by Napheesa Collier, Breanna Stewart and Alyssa Thomas. Sabrina Ionescu, Kahleah Copper, Nneka Ogwumike, Kayla McBride and Arike Ogunbowale were on the second team.



Clark



STEVE MARCUS, LAS VEGAS SUN/AP

Las Vegas Aces center A'ja Wilson poses with a sign on Sept. 15 after becoming the first player in WNBA history to score 1,000 points in a season. Wilson was a unanimous pick as league MVP.

Other AP winners included:

■ **Coach of the Year:** Cheryl Reeve. She helped Minnesota finish second in the regular season with a team that was picked ninth before the season began. The Lynx won the Commissioner's Cup and finished the regular season with 13 wins in their final 15 games.

■ **Comeback Player of the Year:** Skylar Diggins-Smith. The

Seattle Storm guard missed last season after giving birth to her second child. Diggins-Smith averaged 15.1 points and 6.4 assists this season.

■ **Most Improved Player:** Dearica Hamby. The Los Angeles Sparks forward made a huge jump this season by averaging 17.3 points — 8.4 more than last season. She also improved her rebounding by more than three a

game. Hamby edged Connecticut's DiJonai Carrington by one vote.

■ **Defensive Player:** Collier. The Lynx star had an incredible season on both ends of the court, but she was an anchor especially for Minnesota's stellar defense. The team had the best defense in the league this season and Collier's play was the main reason why.

Winless: Nix gives Broncos plenty of reason for optimism

FROM PAGE 24

the (National) Football League; everyone is good. We can't look at (any) opponent and think (that) we can just go in there and roll them over like this is high school or something or college, and we're playing walk-on guys. ... They're going to play their heart out against us, like it's the Super Bowl, so we've just got to go out there and do what we're supposed to do."

The injury-depleted Rams, a playoff team last year, seemed headed for a third straight loss when they trailed the reigning NFC champion 49ers 24-14 midway through the fourth quarter. But Matthew Stafford led an improbable comeback, Kyren Williams ran 4 yards to score his third touchdown of the day with 1:51 remaining, and Joshua Karty hit a 37-yard field goal with 2 seconds left to give Los Angeles a 27-24 win.

"I saw a team respond after a really humbling week last week," Rams coach Sean McVay said. "And three hours will never define you, good or bad, unless you



SUE OGRICK/AP

New York Giants wide receiver Malik Nabers had eight catches for 78 yards and two touchdowns Sunday against Cleveland.

allow it to, and we've got to do a good job of being able to build on this."

The Broncos have plenty of reason for optimism after rookie Bo Nix led them to a stunning 26-7 rout in Tampa Bay against the previously unbeaten Buccaneers.

Nix completed 25 of 36 passes for 216 yards and ran for 47 yards

and a score as Denver dominated from start to finish. The Broncos aren't a playoff contender in the AFC West but Nix and a strong defense will keep them competitive while Sean Payton builds around them.

"I haven't seen him flinch," Payton said of his quarterback. "We all get a little bit more confi-

dent with the win but I say that respectfully. He hasn't flinched. I think that we had a good plan. The players did a good job and certainly (Nix) had more fun than he did in prior weeks."

The Giants also got a standout performance from a rookie first-round pick to secure their first victory. Malik Nabers had eight catches for 78 yards and two TDs in a 21-15 victory at Cleveland. Daniel Jones was terrific for New York, throwing for 236 yards and the two scores to Nabers.

"I think it always feels good to get a win, however it comes," Jones said. "First one is important, so we have to look at what we did well and build on it, and clean up the things we didn't do well."

A quarterback change helped the Panthers get coach Dave Canales his first win. Andy Dalton replaced Bryce Young and threw for 319 yards and three TDs to lead Carolina to a 36-22 win in Las Vegas.

Maybe the supporting cast isn't that terrible. Dalton was sharp, Chuba Hubbard ran for 114 yards and Diontae Johnson had eight

catches for 122 yards and one TD.

Canales helped Geno Smith and Baker Mayfield resurrect their careers in previous stops. He was hired to get the best out of Young, the No. 1 overall pick in 2023. But perhaps the 36-year-old Dalton will regain his Pro Bowl form under Canales.

"That's Panthers football, team football right there. I get to show them that. I get to show them how it all complements and plays off of each other," Canales said.

The Colts, who barely missed the playoffs last season, beat the Bears 21-16 for their first win. Jonathan Taylor led the way with 110 yards rushing and two TDs on a day Anthony Richardson struggled again. Richardson, who was 10-for-20 for 167 yards and two interceptions, needs to improve for Indianapolis to have a shot at making the playoffs this season.

Getting to 1-2 was a big step for all six teams. Of course, they still have an uphill climb. Only two of the 32 teams that started 0-2 have made the playoffs since the NFL expanded the postseason field to 14 teams in 2020.

NFL

Scoreboard

Scoreboard table with columns for American Conference (East, South, North, West) and National Conference (East, South, North, West), listing teams, wins/losses/ties, percentage, points for, and points against. Includes a schedule section with dates and game locations.

ROUNDUP

Darnold's 4 TDs lift Vikings to 3-0

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Sam Darnold matched his career high with four touchdown passes, and the undefeated Minnesota Vikings used another dominant performance on defense to trounce C.J. Stroud and the Houston Texans 34-7 on Sunday.

Jonathan Greenard had three of the four sacks of Stroud, his former teammate, as the Vikings (3-0) intercepted the 2023 AP NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year twice while rattling the Texans (2-1) with their aggressive and unpredictable scheme — and the crowd noise that cranked up with each stop.

Darnold connected with Justin Jefferson and Aaron Jones for scores in the first quarter on third-down plays inside the 10. In the second half, he delivered a touchdown to Jalen Nailor for the third straight game and got tight end Johnny Mundt one, too.

Jefferson had six catches for 81 yards and Jones rushed 19 times for 102 yards and caught five passes for 46 yards for the Vikings, who were a trendy pick for last place in the NFC North but have beaten back-to-back contenders to start their home slate against San Francisco and Houston.

Giants 21, Browns 15: Daniel Jones threw two touchdown passes to rookie Malik Nabers and the Giants' defensive players took turns sacking Deshaun Watson as visiting New York held off Cleveland.

Jones completed 24 of 34 passes for 236 yards as the Giants (1-2) shook off a loss at Washington that prompted a week of criticism toward coach Brian Daboll.

The Browns (1-2) rallied in the fourth after being dominated for three quarters and losing three offensive linemen to injuries.

Watson threw his second TD pass to Amari Cooper, and Cleveland had the ball three times with a chance to take the lead. But running back Jerome Ford fumbled and the Giants twice stopped the Browns on fourth down in the final four minutes.

Steelers 20, Chargers 10: Justin Fields threw for a touchdown and ran for another and host Pittsburgh topped Los Angeles.

Pittsburgh improved to 3-0 for the first time since 2020 behind another efficient performance from Fields, who completed 25 of 32 passes for 245 yards, including a 55-yard touchdown pass to Calvin Austin III midway through the fourth quarter that broke it open.

Fields also added a 5-yard touchdown run and is quietly making a compelling case that he should be the starter even after Russell Wilson's injured calf



BRUCE KLUCKHOHN/AP

Vikings quarterback Sam Darnold throws a pass under pressure from Texans linebacker Azeem Al-Shaair during the first half on Sunday in Minneapolis. Darnold threw four touchdown passes in Minnesota's win.

heals. Fields has played largely mistake-free through three games, though he did throw his first interception of the season on a tipped pass in the third quarter.

Najee Harris ran for 70 yards, Chris Boswell kicked a pair of field goals and Pittsburgh's defense racked up five sacks while handing the Chargers (2-1) their first loss.

Packers 30, Titans 14: Malik Willis ran for a touchdown and threw for a score in his best performance in the NFL, leading visiting Green Bay to a rout of Tennessee.

Willis not only won his second straight start subbing for Jordan Love, he got a sweet measure of revenge against the team that traded him to Green Bay (2-1) in August. Willis accounted for 134 of the Packers' 137 yards in the first quarter. He finished with 202 yards passing and 73 rushing.

Cornerback Jaire Alexander had his first career pick-6 late in the first quarter, helping Green Bay jump out to a 17-7 lead after 15 minutes.

The Packers had eight sacks and forced three turnovers.

Broncos 26, Buccaneers 7: Rookie Bo Nix ran for an early touchdown and Wil Lutz kicked four field goals to help visiting Denver avoid starting 0-3 for the second straight season with a victory over Tampa Bay.

Nix completed 25 of 36 passes for 216 yards without an interception. The 12th overall pick in this year's NFL Draft, however, still

hasn't thrown for a TD through three games.

Denver's defense did its part in helping Nix rebound from struggling the previous two weeks, too, sacking Baker Mayfield seven times and intercepting the Bucs quarterback once to set up a second-quarter touchdown. The Broncos (1-2) also turned away two Tampa Bay possessions in Denver territory in the fourth quarter, stopping one drive on downs and forcing a fumble on the other.

Colts 21, Bears 16: Jonathan Taylor had two touchdown runs and Trey Sermon added another as host Indianapolis held on for a victory over Chicago.

Taylor ran 23 times for 110 yards as the Colts (1-2) avoided their first 0-3 start since 2021. Anthony Richardson completed 10 of 20 passes for 167 yards, but had two more interceptions.

Chicago (1-2) lost its second straight despite getting two offensive TDs — one more than its total in the first two weeks. Caleb Williams, this year's No. 1 overall draft pick, went 33-for-52 with 363 yards through the air — all season bests — and threw the first two TD passes of his NFL career.

Panthers 36, Raiders 22: Andy Dalton gave Carolina the quarterback play it's been sorely lacking, throwing for 319 yards and three touchdowns in a victory over host Las Vegas.

Promoted to the starting job in place of the ineffective Bryce Young, Dalton guided the Pan-

thers (1-2) to their first win and moved to 4-0 lifetime against the Raiders.

Carolina, now 3-17 going back to last season, was outscored a combined 73-13 by the Saints and Chargers in the first two weeks before Coach Dave Canales benched Young, the No. 1 overall draft pick just a year ago, on Monday.

Seahawks 24, Dolphins 3: Geno Smith threw for 289 yards and a 71-yard touchdown to DK Metcalf, Zach Charbonnet rushed for two TDs, and host Seattle won while the attention turned to another injury suffered by a Miami quarterback.

A week after losing Tua Tagovailoa to a third concussion in the past two years, the Dolphins watched Skylar Thompson suffer a chest injury in the second half, leaving Tim Boyle to try to lead the charge back from a 17-3 deficit.

Lions 20, Cardinals 13: Jared Goff threw two touchdown passes, David Montgomery ran for 106 yards and a score and visiting Detroit held on late to beat Arizona.

The Lions continued their recent dominance in the series, improving to 5-0-1 against the Cardinals since 2017. Detroit's defense kept Kyler Murray and Arizona out of the end zone in the second half, giving up just one field goal.

Goff completed his first 14 passes before an incompleting in the third quarter. It was his longest streak without an incompleting to start a game in his nine-year career and he finished 18-for-23 for 196 yards.

NFL

Barkley's 2 late TDs lift Eagles over Saints

By **BRETT MARTEL**
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Saquon Barkley and the Eagles emerged from a flood of Philadelphia-style scrutiny and delivered a master-class on grinding out — and closing out — a physical, defensive struggle in which a lot went wrong before it ended just right.

Barkley rushed for fourth-quarter touchdowns of 65 and 4 yards, and the Eagles rebounded from a maddening late-game collapse six days earlier to beat the previously surging New Orleans Saints, 15-12 on Sunday.

“Last week was rough. Our guys had to pick ourselves off the mat, and every one of them did,” Eagles coach Nick Sirianni said, alluding to a 22-21 home loss to Atlanta on Monday night. “You have to overcome those things. I’m so proud of those guys that they did.”

Barkley’s shorter scoring run came with 1:01 left, one play after Dallas Goedert got free across the middle on third-and-16 for a 61-yard catch and run that gave him a career-high 170 yards on 10 receptions.

Barkley’s 147 yards rushing and clutch scoring runs brought him no small measure of redemption after his failure to make what could have been a game-sealing catch against the Falcons.

“When things like that happen, everyone thinks the world’s ending, but it really doesn’t matter what the outside world thinks,” Barkley said. “Today, we kept trusting each other and kept having each other’s back.”

Eagles safety Reed Blanken-



BUTCH DILL/AP

Philadelphia Eagles running back Saquon Barkley breaks loose on a 65-yard touchdown run as Saints cornerback Marshon Lattimore gives chase during the second half Sunday in New Orleans.

ship sealed the victory by intercepting Derek Carr’s pass over the middle with 48 seconds left, capping a banner performance by Philadelphia’s defense against an offense that had scored an NFL-high 91 points during the regular season’s first two weeks under new coordinator Klint Kubiak.

“You knew adversity would happen at some point. It’s not going to be that easy all the time,” Carr said, adding that he regretted not throwing away the second-

down pass that Blankenship intercepted. “At the very end, they made one more play than we did and that’s how this game goes sometimes.”

The Eagles (2-1) did not allow a touchdown until Carr found Chris Olave for a 12-yard, go-ahead score with just more than two minutes left. That gave the Saints a 12-7 lead after a failed 2-point try.

The Eagles looked the better team on both sides of the ball, outgaining New Orleans (2-1) in total

net yards, 460 to 219. But a number of curious decisions by Sirianni, along with some clutch plays by the Saints’ defense, kept the Eagles off the board for three quarters.

Hurts finished 29-for-38 for 311 yards passing and scrambled for 25 yards. But he also turned the ball over twice in the first half, intercepted by Tyrann Mathieu in the end zone and losing a fumble on a sack by Carl Granderson.

The Eagles again threatened to

score late in the second quarter, only to come away empty when they eschewed a field goal on fourth-and-1 from the New Orleans 15 with just 14 seconds left.

Defensive end Chase Young and linebacker Pete Werner stuffed Barkley’s run, preserving the Saints’ 3-0 lead at halftime.

The Eagles twice drove into Saints territory in the third quarter, only to fail on fourth-and-short and then have an illegal substitution penalty contribute to a stall near midfield.

But after J.T. Gray’s block of Braden Mann’s punt gave New Orleans the ball inside the Philadelphia 30, New Orleans stalled out on its own fourth-and-1 failure when it otherwise could have tried a field goal late in the third quarter.

Barkley’s long run came four plays later to make it 7-3.

Already missing receiver A.J. Brown, the Eagles lost Devonta Smith early in the fourth quarter on a hit by defensive tackle Christian Boyd that knocked the receiver’s helmet off as he tried to prevent two other Saints defenders from bringing him to the turf.

What appeared to be a concussion-causing, helmet-to-helmet hit came after Smith’s seventh catch, giving him 79 yards receiving for the game.

That drive wound up stalling when the Eagles elected to try a 60-yard field goal by Jake Elliott, who missed.

Carr finished 14-for-25 for 142 yards. Saints running back Alvin Kamara rushed for 87 yards on 26 carries.

Ravens race to big lead, hang on to beat Cowboys

By **SCHUYLER DIXON**
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Lamar Jackson and the Baltimore Ravens had an early, emphatic answer for the first 0-2 start since before he was their franchise quarterback.

The two-time MVP added a couple of clutch plays late when the Ravens were at risk of letting a big fourth-quarter lead get away.

Derrick Henry ran for 151 yards and two touchdowns, Jackson accounted for two scores and the Ravens held on for a 28-25 victory over the Dallas Cowboys on Sunday.

The Ravens (1-2) scored touchdowns on their first two drives and led 28-6 before Dak Prescott and the Cowboys rallied late with some help from a rare onside kick recovery.

Baltimore was a play away from having to give the ball back to the Cowboys (1-2) leading by just three when Jackson had a clutch completion to Zay Flowers.

Jackson put the game away with a nifty fake to start a 10-yard run as the Ravens finished with 274 yards rushing. It’s the most Dallas has allowed since twice giving up at least 294 with one of the worst defenses in franchise history in 2020.



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson scores on a 9-yard run Sunday against the Cowboys in Dallas.

The Ravens, coming off a trip to the AFC championship game in which they lost to Super Bowl champion Kansas City, were 0-2 for the first time since 2015, three years before they drafted Jackson. Only one team since 2000 has made the playoffs after starting 0-3.

“Every game is a big game for us because we’re trying to get somewhere,” Jackson said. “We’ve got to win these games to get to the playoffs, and we need to get to the Super

Bowl. But it starts with the game that’s in front of us.”

The Cowboys have allowed 120 points in their past three home games, including a 48-32 wild-card loss to Green Bay in January that ended Dallas’ 16-game winning streak at AT&T Stadium.

Brandon Aubrey kicked a 65-yard field goal for the Cowboys, 1 yard shy of the NFL record from 2021 held by the kicker on the other sideline, Baltimore’s Justin Tucker.

Just as in last week’s 44-19 loss to New Orleans, the Cowboys needed more than field goals because of their porous defense.

The touchdowns eventually came for Dallas. They were just a little late.

Prescott scored on a 1-yard quarterback sneak midway through the fourth, C.J. Griffin recovered the onside kick and Jalen Tolbert had a 15-yard TD catch to make it 28-18 before the Cowboys missed on a second consecutive 2-point conversion try.

Flowers recovered Dallas’ second onside kick after whiffing on the first, but the Ravens went three-and-out.

The Cowboys kicked deep after KaVontae Turpin’s 16-yard scoring catch cut the deficit to three before Jackson’s 9-yard completion to Flowers on third-and-6, then

the keeper that finished off the final 2:53.

“Lamar was just phenomenal,” Ravens coach John Harbaugh said. “Didn’t really want to get to that situation, but we did, and we came through.”

Dallas lost consecutive home games in the same regular season for the first time since 2020, after Prescott’s gruesome, season-ending ankle injury in Week 5 of a 6-10 season.

“Make sure guys don’t dwell,” Prescott said after emerging from quiet, frustrated locker room. “They can feel bad tonight, but come the morning, it’s over with. If you’re dwelling on that, you’re not going to prepare the right way. You’re still going to be looking back at things you could have done, should have done.”

Nelson Agholor had a 56-yard catch-and-run to set up Henry’s first touchdown, a 1-yard plunge for a 14-3 lead.

The Ravens opened with a five-play, 71-yard drive capped by Jackson’s 9-yard run, untouched, to the pylon. His first throw of the game was a 30-yarder to uncovered tight end Charlie Kolar.

Henry became the first Baltimore back to score at least one touchdown in each of his first three games for the franchise.

NFL



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Los Angeles Rams running back Kyren Williams, right, runs for a touchdown during the second half of Sunday's game against the San Francisco 49ers in Inglewood, Calif. Williams scored three touchdowns.

Rams rally from 14 down to stun 49ers on late FG

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — The winless Los Angeles Rams were fresh off a 31-point loss and missing their top two receivers when they took the field Sunday against a rival that has dominated them for a half-decade.

The Rams then fell behind San Francisco by 14 points in the second half, and they still trailed by double digits midway through the fourth quarter.

Although Matthew Stafford has seen plenty of crazy stuff in his 16 years in pro football, the Rams' thrilling 27-24 comeback victory ranks way up there — both for the way it happened, and for the heart his team showed in grim circumstances.

"I'm not into improbable, probable," Stafford said. "NFL is an improbable business, I'll tell you that much. You never know what's gonna happen week in and week out. You've got to go out there and earn it and prove it, and we did that."

Kyren Williams rushed 4 yards to score his third touchdown of the day with 1:51 remaining, and Joshua Karty hit a 37-yard field goal with 2 seconds left to complete the dramatic rally by Los Angeles, which outscored San Francisco 20-3 in the final 19 minutes.

The Rams (1-2) matched their franchise's biggest second-half comeback victory since 2006 while earning their second straight win over the 49ers (1-2) after losing nine of the NFC West



Rams quarterback Matthew Stafford completed 16 of 25 passes for 221 yards and a TD.

archrivals' previous 10 meetings.

Williams caught a TD pass and rushed for two scores for the Rams, who avoided their first 0-3 start under Sean McVay in remarkable fashion. Stafford passed for 221 yards, and Tutu Atwell had four catches for 93 yards.

"I think there are the games where you bring just a little bit more juice," Williams said. "Just the games where you can't wait to play, when everybody's doubting you and everybody's (saying), 'There's no way the Rams are gonna win. The Rams are gonna start 0-3.' We feel it for sure, but it's something that fuels us."

Jauan Jennings set career highs with 11 catches for 175 yards and three touchdowns for the 49ers, who blew a lead of at least 14 points for the first time since 2018. While the Rams have salvaged

hope for their season, the defending NFC champions were left flustered, frustrated — and under .500 for the first time since Brock Purdy became their starting quarterback in 2022.

The Niners led 24-14 midway through the fourth quarter, but Jake Moody missed a 55-yard field-goal attempt for San Francisco with 2:43 to play.

Stafford hit Atwell for a 50-yard completion to the San Francisco 5, and Williams took it in two plays later.

Ronnie Bell then dropped a long pass with 1:02 left that would have put San Francisco in field-goal range, and Xavier Smith — elevated from the Rams' practice squad for this game — took his first career punt return 38 yards to mid-field.

A 25-yard pass interference penalty against linebacker DeVondre Campbell put the Rams in range, and their rookie kicker buried the kick.

San Francisco threw several laterals after time expired, but the final play died on the Rams' sideline.

Purdy passed for 292 yards in the Super Bowl favorites' second straight road loss after falling at Minnesota last week.

Both teams were missing most of their top offensive playmakers due to injury. The 49ers played without Christian McCaffrey, Deebo Samuel and George Kittle, while the Rams were without Cooper Kupp, Puka Nacua and Tyler Higbee.

KC defense helps turn back Atlanta

By PAUL NEWBERRY
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Patrick Mahomes knows he must get better.

Not to worry.

Thanks to a couple of stifling stands from Kansas City's defense, the two-time reigning Super Bowl champs are still unbeaten.

Mahomes shook off another interception to throw a pair of touchdown passes and the Chiefs defense stopped Atlanta twice on fourth down in the closing minutes, preserving a 22-17 victory over the Falcons on Sunday night.

"It helps when you have a defense that's been in those moments before and is able to make those big plays," Mahomes said. "It's a team game and we're winning games and I feel like we're gonna start getting better and better each and every week."

The Chiefs (3-0) have been far from perfect, that's for sure — Mahomes points to himself more than anyone — but their record has remained unblemished by a combined 13 points.

Coming off an upset victory at Philadelphia, the Falcons (1-2) had a couple of shots at the go-ahead touchdown in the closing minutes.

Kirk Cousins threw a pair of incompletions in the end zone from the Chiefs 6 after the Falcons passed up a shot at a field goal with just over 4 minutes remaining.

Atlanta got the ball back, drove down the field with help from a couple of penalties, and had third-and-1 at the Kansas City 13. Tyler Allgeier was stuffed for no gain and Bijan Robinson was thrown for a 3-yard loss by Nick Bolton on fourth down with less than a minute remaining.

Bolton said he recognized what play the Falcons were running before they snapped the ball.

"Trust my keys, trust my eyes, trust the play call we had," he said. "I already knew where I was going."

Mahomes threw for 217 yards, including scoring throws to Rashee Rice and JuJu Smith-Schuster, and Harrison Butker booted three field goals for the Chiefs.

Cousins was 20-for-29 for 230 yards with a 13-yard touchdown pass to Drake London and a 50-yard completion to Kyle Pitts that set up Robinson's 1-yard scoring run.

"I feel like we've left a lot of opportunities out there on the field," Cousins said. "I look forward to getting better."

Riding the momentum from their last-minute stunner at Philadelphia, the Falcons took the opening kickoff and quickly drove 70 yards for a touchdown.

Cousins completed all five of his passes for 66 yards, including a 14-yard scoring toss to London — who also caught the winning score against the Eagles. London wound up all alone in the end zone on a busted coverage by the Chiefs.

Mahomes bounced back from his fourth interception of the season to take Kansas City on a 13-play, 79-yard drive that ended with a 13-yard touchdown pass to Rice.

The Falcons reclaimed the lead on Robinson's 1-yard touchdown run, which was set up by Cousins' 50-yard pass to Kyle Pitts.

But Atlanta's offensive line took a pair of hits when right tackle Kaleb McGary and center Drew Dalman both went out with injuries. With a pair of backups joining their ranks, the guys up front struggled to keep the pressure off Cousins, who was sacked twice and hit 10 more times as he threw, spending much of the night picking himself up off the turf at Mercedes-Benz Stadium.



DANNY KARNIK/AP

Kansas City Chiefs wide receiver Rashee Rice scores after a 13-yard reception during the first half Sunday against the Falcons in Atlanta.

SPORTS



Dubious distinction

White Sox tie 1962 expansion Mets for most losses in a season » **MLB, Page 19**

ANALYSIS



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Baltimore Ravens running back Derrick Henry picks up yards as the Cowboys' Jourdan Lewis, left, and Donovan Wilson try to bring him down Sunday in Arlington, Texas.

Winless no more

6 teams avoid 0-3 start, unlikely playoff odds

BY ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

Six NFL teams saved their season on Sunday by earning their first win.

That's no overstatement considering only six teams since 1979 have made the playoffs after starting 0-3, including just one since 2000, and none have won a Super Bowl.

After the Ravens, Rams, Broncos, Colts, Giants and Panthers avoided that dreaded start, only the Titans are 0-3. The Jaguars and Bengals were winless going into Monday night. Jacksonville played at Buffalo (2-0). Cincinnati hosted Washington (1-1).

Four of the six first-time winners on Sunday played on the road, including Lamar Jackson and the Ravens. They beat Dallas 28-25, holding on after Dak Prescott rallied the Cowboys back from a 22-point deficit in the fourth quarter.

The Ravens had the best record in the NFL last year but that didn't matter when they blew a double-digit lead in their home opener against the Raiders last week.

Facing a defense that was dominated by New Orleans in Week 2, Jackson, Derrick Henry and the rest of Baltimore's offense clicked. They scored four touchdowns on the first six possessions and built a comfortable lead.

"To be honest, every game is a big game for us, because we're trying to get somewhere," said Jackson, who played like the reigning NFL MVP. "We've got to win these games to get to the playoffs, man, and win these playoff games to get to the Super Bowl. But it starts with the game that's in front of us. So, the 0-2 start, we didn't want that to happen. Obviously, it's

SEE WINLESS ON PAGE 20



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

Broncos quarterback Bo Nix scrambles as he looks for a receiver during the first half Sunday against the Buccaneers in Tampa, Fla.

Norris wins Formula 1 race in Singapore » Auto racing, Page 16

