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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

US bases attacked 13 times in Iraq, Syria

By DOUG G. WARE
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Two dozen American troops were injured in 13 separate attacks at bases in Iraq and Syria during the past week, the Pentagon said, as Iranian-backed militants respond to U.S. support for Israel in its war with Hamas.

U.S. forces have seen attacks in recent days at the al-Tanf garrison in southeastern Syria and the al Asad and al-Harir air bases in Iraq. While the attacks have resulted in only minor injuries, the Defense Department said troops at the bases are repeatedly being targeted.

"Between Oct. 17 and [today] U.S. and coalition forces have been attacked at least 10 separate times in Iraq and three separate times in Syria via a mix of one-way attack drones and rockets," said Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon's top spokesman. "Those are the initial numbers. We are continuing to work to ensure we get you the facts."

U.S. Central Command, which is responsible for American military operations in the Middle East, said 24 military personnel sustained minor injuries Oct. 18 in drone attacks at al-Tanf and al Asad. CENTCOM officials said they all quickly returned to duty. That same day at the Syria garrison, an American contractor died of a heart attack and an attack destroyed an aircraft hangar and small airplane.

The Defense Department declined to specifically identify what groups are launching the attacks but said they are supported by Iran.

SEE ATTACKED ON PAGE 8



HATEM MOUSSA/AP

A Palestinian looks at destruction by the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip in the Maghazi refugee camp, in Deir Al-Balah, on Wednesday.

UN urges fuel delivery in Gaza

Agency warns blockade could force it to sharply cut relief effort as bombings rise

By NAJIB JOBAIN,
SAMY MAGDY
AND RAVI NESSMAN
Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees warned Wednesday that without immediate deliveries of fuel it will soon have to sharply cut back relief operations across the Gaza Strip, which has been blockaded and hit by devastating Israeli airstrikes since Hamas militants

launched an attack on Israel more than two weeks ago.

The warning came as hospitals in Gaza struggled to treat masses of wounded with dwindling resources, and health officials in the Hamas-ruled territory said the death toll was soaring as Israeli jets continued striking the territory overnight into Wednesday.

The airstrikes killed more than 750 people in Gaza between Tuesday and Wednesday, according to

the Health Ministry in Gaza, where Hamas controls the government. The figures did not give a breakdown of how many of those killed were militants. The Associated Press could not independently verify the death tolls cited by Hamas, which says it tallies figures from hospital directors.

The Israeli military said its strikes had killed militants and destroyed tunnels, command centers, weapons storehouses and

other military targets, which it has accused Hamas of hiding among Gaza's civilian population. Gaza-based militants have been launching unrelenting rocket barrages into Israel since the conflict started.

The death toll, following a reported 704 killed the day before, was unprecedented in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian con-

SEE FUEL ON PAGE 8

BUSINESS/WEATHER

New Amazon cloud addresses Europe's strict standards

Associated Press

Amazon is rolling out an independent cloud for Europe as it looks to address strict regulations that companies and those in the public sector face in the European Union.

Amazon Web Services said Wednesday that its AWS European Sovereign Cloud, which will be located in and operate out of Europe, will have the same security, availability, and performance as existing AWS regions but will be separate from them.

The cloud will let customers keep all metadata they create in the European Union and will have its own billing and usage metering systems.

"The AWS European Sovereign Cloud reinforces our commitment to offering AWS customers the most advanced set of sovereignty controls, privacy safeguards, and security features available in the cloud," Max Peterson, vice president of Sovereign Cloud at AWS, said in a written statement.

Amazon's AWS supports 143 security standards and compliance certifications, to help customers meet regulatory requirements. The company said that AWS is collaborating with European regulators and national cybersecurity agencies to build the AWS European Sovereign Cloud so that it is able to meet additional data residency, operational autonomy, and resiliency needs in Europe.

Germany will be the first AWS Region within the AWS European Sovereign Cloud and will be available to all European customers

Germany will be the first AWS Region within the AWS European Sovereign Cloud and will be available to all European customers

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (Oct. 26)	\$1.03	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8955
British pound (Oct. 26)	\$1.18	Thailand (Baht)	36.14
Japanese yen (Oct. 26)	146.00	Turkey (NewLira)	28.1199
South Korean won (Oct. 26)	1311.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770		
Britain (Pound)	1.2130		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3778		
China (Yuan)	7.3167		
Denmark (Krone)	7.0565		
Egypt (Pound)	30.9000		
Euro	0.9455		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8217		
Hungary (Forint)	363.97		
Israel (Shekel)	4.0659		
Japan (Yen)	149.93		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3092		
Norway (Krone)	11.1681		
Philippines (Peso)	56.83		
Poland (Zloty)	4.23		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7511		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3702		
South Korea (Won)	1352.27		

(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	8.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
Federal funds market rate	5.33
3-month bill	5.47
30-year bond	4.93

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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MILITARY

Lawyers argue over assault charge evidence

By ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — Lawyers argued during a hearing Tuesday whether the evidence used to charge Maj. Gen. Phillip Stewart with sexual assault points to a commander abusing his power over a junior officer or a woman regretting an alcohol-fueled night of infidelity with her boss.

With 24 items of evidence to review, Col. Brian Thompson, a military judge serving as the hearing's presiding officer, will have until mid-November to recommend whether there is probable cause to court-martial Stewart. The charges against Stewart are dereliction of duty, sexual assault, behavior unbecoming of an officer and adultery.

Lt. Gen. Brian S. Robinson, the commander of the Air Education and Training Command, will use Thompson's report to determine whether Stewart will go to trial. Robinson in May fired Stewart from his post as commander of the 19th Air Force because of the allegations.

Witnesses were not questioned during the roughly one-hour hearing at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, where Stewart led the Air Force's major pilot training unit. Stewart's face showed little emotion as he sat among his two military and three civilian attorneys in Building 100, a historic multi-use office building at Randolph that is known commonly as "The Taj Mahal."



JONATHAN MALLARD/U.S. Air Force

Air Force Maj. Gen. Phillip Stewart.

Most of Tuesday's hearing focused on the two-count sexual assault charge against Stewart, which alleges he had sex with an officer under his command twice without her consent April 14 at Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma.

On that night, Stewart, the victim and two additional military personnel were drinking alcoholic beverages together, according to evidence discussed during the hearing. Sometime after leaving the gathering, a technical sergeant sent a text message to the victim asking if everything was OK. The victim responded yes.

Once alone, the victim sat closely on a couch next to Stewart and began to show him non-sex-related photos. She told criminal investigators that he kissed her, and she kissed him back. Then the two

moved into a bedroom, where he undressed her and then himself, according to evidence discussed at the hearing.

Later April 14, Stewart participated in a training flight and sent a photo of himself in the aircraft to the victim. The flight occurred within 12 hours of drinking alcoholic beverages, which is not permitted.

Keith Scherer, a civilian defense attorney for Stewart, argued the victim's interview with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations proves "it is guilt and shame" that led to the charges rather than nonconsensual sex. He accused investigators of an "unwillingness" to consider anything other than sexual assault during the victim's interview with them.

"I told him I've never been unfaithful to [my husband]," Scherer quoted from the woman's interview.

A video of the interview was included as evidence and discussed but not played during the hearing. She never explicitly told Stewart to stop or tried to get out of the situation, the lawyer said.

"Anybody who's watched that video, it's hard to believe they would want to go forward with a [sexual assault charge]," Scherer said.

Thompson told prosecutors he too was having trouble finding probable cause in the woman's interview and asked them to explain at what point it became clear to them the sex was not consensual.

"It's important for whoever makes this decision ... to seriously consider the responsibilities and

duties of an Air Force major general behaving in this manner with [a subordinate]," said Lt. Col. Pete Havern, one of three prosecutors at the hearing.

Instead of explicitly saying no, Havern said the victim described to investigators "social cues" to try to "politely discourage" the senior officer from initiating sex. The victim told investigators that alcohol consumption delayed her responses, the lawyer said.

Havern also quoted to Thompson that the military's definition of sexual assault states a lack of physical and verbal resistance doesn't constitute consent.

Looking at text messages between the two dating to Sept. 6, 2022, Havern said it's clear that Stewart had an interest in the victim that went beyond a professional relationship, and it was one-sided.

"She calls him boss in that interview. Abuse of authority and rank differential permeates the entire case," Havern said.

Stewart is also accused of flying a training aircraft at Altus during that same visit within 12 hours of drinking alcoholic beverages, according to his charge sheet. The judge asked prosecutors to submit further evidence to prove Stewart was in control of the aircraft during the more than four-hour flight.

Thompson also questioned whether there was precedent to take this type of flight violation to court-martial rather than handling it through administrative action. The prosecution did not offer any but said the flight happened at the

same time as the other charges and fits into the context of the other events.

"The government strongly believes it's necessary to tell the full story of the events of that night," Havern said.

Once Robinson receives Thompson's recommendation, there is no timeline for him to decide whether to move forward with a court-martial, according to the Air Education Training Command.

If Stewart were to face a court-martial, he would be only the second general officer in the service's history to do so, according to the Air Force. Maj. Gen. William Cooley was convicted of abusive sexual contact in a court-martial last year at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. He was sentenced to a reprimand and a forfeiture of nearly \$55,000.

Stewart, who began his career as a fighter pilot, took command of the 19th Air Force in August 2022, according to his online biography. Prior to the assignment, he served as deputy chief of staff for strategic employment at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Belgium. He deployed to Afghanistan in 2017.

The 19th Air Force includes 32,000 personnel and 1,530 aircraft assigned to 17 wings located across the United States. It oversees more than 45% of the Air Force's annual flying hour program, according to Stewart's biography.

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Space Force wants ability to refuel satellites in orbit

By JONATHAN SNYDER

Stars and Stripes

Space tankers being developed by a Denver-based tech company could soon keep U.S. military satellites in orbit longer.

The Space Force awarded a \$25.5 million contract last month to Astroscale U.S. Inc. to develop and deliver an in-orbit refueler by 2026, the service announced in a Sept. 19 news release. The firm is a subsidiary of the Tokyo-based Astroscale Holdings Inc., a private orbital debris removal company.

"Our primary goal with establishing a refueling capability is to enable Dynamic Space Operations to support our Combatant Commanders," Col. Joyce Bulson, the Space Force's lead for space mobility and logistics, told Stars and Stripes in a recent email.

Satellite operations have been limited for the past 60 years due to the requirement that they launch with a "lifetime" fuel supply, according to the Space Force release.

This impacts the size, weight and cost of satellites and launch vehicles, the service said. It also reduces payloads and forces tradeoffs between in-orbit operations and

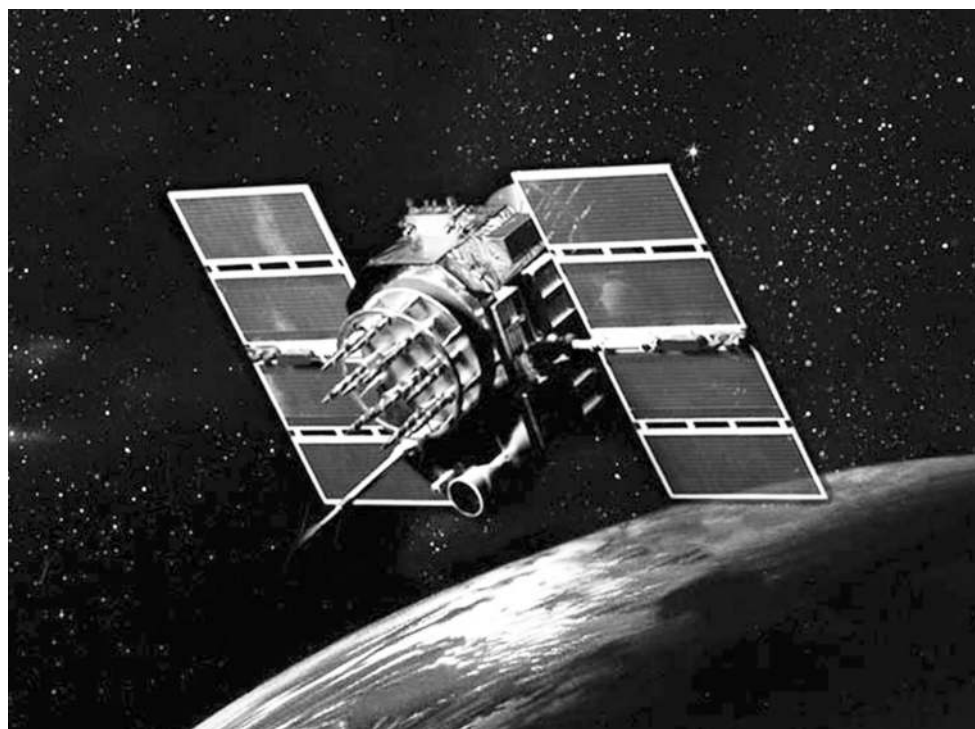
mission life.

"A satellite has a useful lifetime of between five and 15 years depending on the satellite," Allan McInnes, a lecturer at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, told Science Learning Hub in 2013. "It's hard to design them to last much longer than that, either because the solar arrays stop working or because they run out of fuel to allow them to maintain the orbit that they're supposed to be in."

Air Force tankers, flying since the 1950s, carry enlisted crew who operate a boom that extends to refuel aircraft in flight. However, there won't be any Guardians flying the space tankers, Bulson wrote.

"In the near term, the U.S. Space Force intends to buy commercial services for refueling, so no refueling-specific career fields are anticipated at this time," Bulson said. "The three Space Force field commands are exploring what type of roles, responsibilities, authorities, and training are necessary for spacecraft operators when refueling or other servicing functions are being performed, in both peacetime and conflict."

Astroscale is contracted to build a proto-



U.S. Air Force

A GPS satellite orbits Earth in this image released by the 50th Space Wing.

type space tanker within 26 months, according to the Space Force release.

The company has yet to release information about what the space tanker will look like.

"We will be sharing details on the refuel-

ing servicer in the near future," Astroscale spokesman Dave Herbert told Stars and Stripes by email Thursday.

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MILITARY

Hawaii group calls for new water testing

Some households on Navy line report symptoms similar to 2021 jet fuel spill

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — A community group in Hawaii is asking the Navy to investigate an uptick in reports of water contamination in households near Pearl Harbor that were affected by a jet fuel spill in late 2021.

The Community Representative Initiative — a 10-member group established last month to liaison directly with the Navy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Defense Logistics Agency — also called on the Navy to begin testing “hot water tanks in housing on the water distribution line,” according to a Monday news release.

The group was established to oversee community concerns related to defueling and closing the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, as well as water safety issues arising from the site.

In 2021, jet fuel leakage from the World War II-era facility seeped into the Navy’s water distribution on and near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, contaminating tap water for thousands of residents in military communities.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in March 2022 ordered the facility permanently closed. Final defueling of 104 million gallons of fuel began earlier this month and is ex-

pected to be completed by early next year.

Some residents were sickened by the tainted water, and some remain leery of the tap water despite assurances from the Navy that the system is clean.

“Over a dozen families on the Navy water line have reported to the CRI in the last week that they have experienced a rise in symptoms that are consistent with increased water contamination and shared with the CRI documented and photographed evidence of recent ailments that included rashes, burns and illnesses,” the news release said.

Just ‘common sense’

Army Maj. Mandy Feindt, who lived in a home on Ford Island at the time of the water contamination and is now a member of CRI, said Tuesday that testing hot water is just a matter of “common sense.”

“Most people do not bathe in cold water, yet the Navy has only conducted cold water testing as part of their long term monitoring process,” she said via text. “The Navy refuses to test residential hot water, just as they’ve refused to replace hot water heaters. I want the Navy to stop turning a blind eye and ignoring the possibility of contamination being stored in



JORDAN KIRKJOHNSON/U.S. Navy

A fuel line is connected to a merchant tanker Monday to transfer fuel from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility in Hawaii as part of the defueling and closing of the facility.

those water heaters.”

The Navy said in an emailed statement Tuesday that the tests it conducts are done in accordance with procedures instituted and approved by the Interagency Drinking Water System Team, which includes the EPA and Hawaii Department of Health.

CRI is also asking the Navy to create “a new, written policy statement that will ban retribution or retaliation for military personnel and their spouses who report issues with their water and request water testing,” the news release states.

“In Feb 2022, I filed a DOD whistleblower violation complaint after experiencing retaliation from my own command team,” Feindt wrote. “The investigation into my complaint is still ongoing (20 months later), and there are currently no regulations in place to protect me in the process.”

Meanwhile, she said she has watched “my retaliators and the leaders responsible for the crisis be nominated for the most senior

positions in the military ... promoted, awarded, or have been able to retire with their careers intact.”

The Navy said in its statement that both the service and the Department of Defense have existing policies prohibiting reprisal or retaliations against whistleblowers.

“Residents who have concerns may contact their local or command-level Inspector General’s office,” the statement said.

No traces of petroleum

The Hawaii Department of Health said in a news release Monday that it learned last week that 12 users of Navy water had reported symptoms attributed to exposure to tap water.

The Health Department conducted on-site inspections Thursday in five of those households but “did not observe a sheen or odor in the drinking water” in samples taken.

“A Photoionization Detector did not detect volatile organic compounds, which are indicators of petroleum byproducts,” the re-

lease said. “With the homeowners’ permission, the Navy collected water samples for further testing with DOH oversight.”

At the direction of the Department of Health, the Navy tested the well shaft for fuel contamination on Thursday, but the presence of petroleum was not detected using rapid-screening tests, according to the release.

The Navy said in its statement that it had resampled drinking water from residents who expressed concerns last week.

“Samples were collected as part of the Rapid Response Team program and the Drinking Water Long-Term Monitoring program,” the statement said. “The rapid response tests all resulted in non-detects of Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons.”

Samples from the long-term monitoring were sent to an out-of-state EPA-certified laboratory and the Navy expects to receive those results in about a week.

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Senators seek over-the-counter birth control for troops

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — More than 30 senators are urging the Defense Department to offer an over-the-counter birth control pill for service members and their families to improve troop access to reproductive health care.

The senators said they want to see health coverage for the military community expanded to include over-the-counter contraceptives such as Opill, the first non-prescription daily pill approved by the Food and Drug Administration in July.

“Access to contraception, as well as education about it, increases readiness and improves quality

of life for our service members and their families,” the senators wrote in a letter to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and other Pentagon officials.

The letter is led by Sens. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, and Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H. Only two Republicans signed it in support: Sen. Susan Collins of Maine and Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska.

The push to broaden contraceptive options for women in the military is part of the aftermath of the Supreme Court decision last year to end the federal right to an abortion. The landmark ruling severely limited or ended access to abortion

for the 40% of active-duty service women stationed in politically conservative states.

In response, the Defense Department this year offered service members paid leave and transportation reimbursement to travel out of state for reproductive care. The policy is opposed by many Republicans and prompted Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., to put a hold on hundreds of senior military promotions in protest.

About 1.6 million women of reproductive age, including service members, retirees and their families, are dependent on the Military Health System, according to the Congressional Research Service. Unintended pregnancies are 50%

higher for active-duty women than other women.

Senators said service members also use contraception at a lower rate than the national population, partly because of the military-related challenges of obtaining prescriptions.

“Studies show that requiring prescriptions for contraception can be a barrier to access due to prolonged appointment wait times, difficulty scheduling time off from work and challenges finding child care during medical appointment times — hurdles that are exacerbated by the nature of military service,” the senators wrote.

They are asking the Defense De-

partment to stock over-the-counter contraceptives in medical facilities, retail stores and pharmacies on military bases at no cost to service members and their dependents and without a prescription.

The senators also said they will continue to seek free prescription birth control pills for service members to give troops the same benefits available to civilians under the Affordable Care Act.

“As part of the full spectrum of reproductive health care, contraception provides individuals control over their reproductive health and family planning,” they wrote.

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MILITARY

Coast Guardsman dinged for dong drawing

Military appeals court ruling applies standards of discipline to age of social media

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

A Coast Guardsman's court-martial conviction connected to him drawing a penis on the forehead of a colleague in a photo, which was shared in a professional group chat, was upheld by the military's highest court this week.

Chief Petty Officer Fernando Brown, a machinery technician, was convicted in 2019 of disrespecting senior enlisted personnel after he sent a batch of off-color digital messages involving three chief petty officers in a text group called "Chief's Mess."

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces' ruling, released Monday, brings new clarity to how a statute intended to uphold order and discipline applies in the era of digital and social media.

"Sometimes a seemingly simple statute can be devilishly difficult to interpret," Chief Judge Kevin Ohlson wrote in the majority's decision.

The statutory language led the five judges to differ on several legal points, even when they arrived at the same conclusion.

Brown was assigned to the Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star at the time and was part of a text group that involved the ship's 11 chief petty officers.

The aim of the Chief's Mess group was to pass along work-related information, because the crew was geographically separated while the cutter was in dry dock. While the group primarily dealt with work, it also encompassed "some levity" and banter, court documents said.

However, military prosecutors said Brown repeatedly crossed the line. That led to his conviction under Article 91 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which prohibits disrespect toward a warrant, noncommissioned or petty officer.

The court's ruling resolves two key points. First, a 3-2 decision stated that a service member can be convicted of disrespect even if the conduct occurs outside the physical presence of the victim, such as on a digital device or on social media.

A majority also ruled that service members can be held criminally



MATTHEW MASASCHI/U.S. Coast Guard

Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star sits on blocks in a Vallejo, Calif., dry dock in 2018.

liable only if the disrespectful conduct happens at the same moment the victim is on the job.

At issue in Brown's case were three instances that involved modified pictures or references to three different chief petty officers.

In one instance, Brown altered a picture of a colleague in the group by adding a "crude drawing of male genitalia" to the person's forehead and posting it to Chief's Mess.

The second instance involved a picture of a "scantily clad" man along with a text stating: "Found out why (the chief petty officer) missed chiefs call," in reference to

a skipped meeting.

Brown sent that text at 7:39 p.m., outside of regular duty hours. The chief testified that he found the photo funny when he first saw it, according to case documents.

The third instance occurred when Brown sent a picture of a chief petty officer's high school yearbook photo with the added caption "Voted most likely to steal your (b---)."

The chief, who identifies as lesbian, was on convalescent leave when she received the message, records stated.

The chief petty officer testified that she felt embarrassed when Brown posted the photo to the group, records stated.

The high court ruled that convictions under Article 91 can stand only if evidence shows that the victims were executing their duties at the time the disrespectful pictures and texts were sent.

Since prosecutors provided no evidence that the woman or the male chief petty officer who received the "scantily clad" photo were on the job, those convictions

were dismissed.

In dissent, one judge said the latter conviction should be upheld because participation in the group chat constituted work.

The conviction related to the penis drawing was upheld because evidence showed that the victim was "down in dry dock" and on the job at the time of the text.

The court sent the case back to the lower Coast Guard Court of Criminal Appeals to either reassess Brown's punishment or order a sentence rehearing.

At his court-martial, Brown was convicted on three counts of disrespect toward a noncommissioned officer and one count of sexual harassment. He was reprimanded and reduced from E-7 to E-4, or petty officer third class.

Later, the Court of Criminal Appeals dismissed the sexual harassment conviction charge but upheld the other convictions. The court reassessed the punishment, reducing Brown to the E-6 pay grade.

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PACIFIC

S. Korea wants more US Marines in training

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The South Korean military wants more U.S. Marines to participate in annual large-scale amphibious training on and around the Korean Peninsula.

Plans to expand Ssangyong — Korean for “double dragons” — were submitted in a report to lawmakers during a National Defense Committee hearing on Tuesday, a South Korean marine headquarters spokesman told

Stars and Stripes by phone the next day.

The hearing took place at the naval headquarters in South Chungcheong Province.

Though the South Korean marines seek to increase the number of U.S. Marines who train during Ssangyong 2024, its own troop levels will remain the same, the spokesman said.

He declined to provide the specific number of troops used by either country in this year's exercise, which took place in March,

citing security concerns.

It's customary in South Korea for some government officials to speak to reporters on condition of anonymity.

Discussions with the Marine Corps are ongoing and a final decision has not been made, the spokesman added.

U.S. Marine Forces Korea did not immediately respond to a request for comment by phone Wednesday.

This year's Ssangyong was the largest joint maritime drill in

South Korea since 2018 and included the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz, along with its strike group, air wing and about 7,000 sailors and Marines.

Around 30 British marines, taking part in the exercise for the first time, conducted reconnaissance operations.

Military cooperation between the U.S. and South Korea have taken unprecedented steps this year after President Joe Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol agreed to deploy strateg-

ic assets to the peninsula in response to North Korea's ballistic missile testing.

The USS Kentucky sailed to Busan in July, becoming the first nuclear-capable U.S. submarine to visit South Korea in 42 years. Last week, a nuclear-capable B-52H Stratofortress bomber landed on the peninsula for the first time in at least 30 years.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.
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Military leaders from US and Japan pledge stronger relationship

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND MARI HIGA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Military leaders from the U.S. and Japan pledged to forge stronger ties during island-defense training geared toward blunting China's maritime expansion.

The III Marine Expeditionary Force's commander, Lt. Gen. James Bierman Jr., visited Ishigaki, an island 160 miles east of Taiwan, on Tuesday with the head of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's Western Army, Lt. Gen. Toshikazu Yamane.

They watched training that involved Marine anti-aircraft radar and Japanese surface-to-ship missile batteries. The drills, part of the Resolute Dragon exercise, marked the first time U.S. forces have operated from Japan's Camp Ishigaki, which opened March 16.

The island is one of three where Japan plans to deploy upgraded Type 12 surface-to-ship missiles by 2026 to counter potential threats from China and North Korea.

“Countries with strong military power are concentrated around Japan, and these coun-

tries are further enhancing their military strength and increasing their military activities,” Yamane said Tuesday, according to a transcript provided by the JGSDF. “Japan must drastically strengthen our defense ability and further strengthening of the U.S.-Japan partnership is essential.”

Bierman said he was proud of progress in performance and integration III MEF and the Western Army have made in recent years, 1st Lt. Alejandro Arteaga, a III MEF spokesman, wrote in an emailed statement Wednesday.

Resolute Dragon, which kicked off Oct. 15 and runs through Oct. 31, involves thousands of U.S. Marines and Japanese troops in stand-in force exercises across Japan, including command and control, precision fires and maneuvering.

A stand-in force is a smaller, mobile unit inserted within range of enemy missiles to seize and hold key islands and deny enemy vessels access to sur-



Yamane



JENNIFER ANDRADE/U.S. Marine Corps

A Japanese soldier briefs U.S. troops last week on the Type 12 surface-to-ship missiles at Camp Ishigaki, an island in Okinawa prefecture.

rounding seas.

About 80 U.S. soldiers and Marines are on Ishigaki for the exercise. A portion of them have been working with their Western Army counterparts out of a bilateral coordination center at the camp, Arteaga said.

About 20 locals with signs and banners opposing the drills have been protesting outside the camp, Japanese public

broadcaster NHK reported Tuesday.

A Japanese V-22 Osprey touched down in Okinawa prefecture for the first time during the training, despite a request from the prefectural government to exclude the tiltrotor aircraft.

After the Osprey landed at Ishigaki on Oct. 19, Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki took to X,

formerly known as Twitter, to express disappointment that his request had not been granted.

The use of Ospreys “causes anxiety for Okinawa's population,” Tamaki wrote. He vowed to continue to advocate against the tiltrotors.

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China says US is a disrupter of peace in response to Pentagon report

Associated Press

BANGKOK — China said the United States is the “biggest disrupter of regional peace and stability” in the world in a scathing response Wednesday to a Pentagon report on China's growing military buildup.

The annual report that is required by Congress is one way the Pentagon measures the military capabilities of China, which the U.S. government sees as its key

threat in the Asia-Pacific region and America's primary long-term security challenge.

The statement China's Ministry of Defense issued in response called the Pentagon report's findings false and used it in turn to hit back at the U.S.' recent actions in helping Israel and Ukraine, as well as its buildup of military installations worldwide.

“The U.S. has sent depleted uranium munitions and cluster

bombs to Ukraine, sent its carrier battle groups to the Mediterranean and weapons and munitions to Israel, is this the so-called ‘gospel’ the human rights defender is bringing to the area?” said Wu Qian, the spokesperson for China's defense ministry.

The Pentagon report builds on a warning last year that China was expanding its nuclear force rapidly, in line with a general buildup of its military. The earlier warning

said Beijing was on track to nearly quadruple the number of warheads it has to 1,500 by 2035.

China's top diplomat Wang Yi will visit the United States on Thursday ahead of a possible meeting between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping in November. U.S.-China relations have deteriorated since 2018, initially over a trade dispute but expanding to the pandemic, China's actions in Xinjiang and over Taiwan.

China also made sure to address Taiwan in its response. The Pentagon report said China is intensifying military, diplomatic and economic pressure toward the self-ruled island.

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has become more overt with this claim in recent years. This claim has become one of the main points of tension between China and the U.S. as U.S. support for Taiwan has grown.

MILITARY

NATO prodded to increase its arms stockpiles

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Depleted weapons stockpiles and a dangerous security outlook mean NATO countries need to ramp up arms production for the long haul, the alliance's top official said Wednesday.

Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg's remarks at a gathering of defense industry leaders in Sweden came as Western militaries come under pressure to supply arms to Israel and Ukraine.

Stoltenberg said in Stockholm that even when the war in Ukraine ends, allies will need to be on a war footing when it comes to rearming.

"There is no turning back to where we were before," Stoltenberg said. "We face a more aggressive Russia, a more coercive China and a more unstable world. So we must adapt for the long term."

NATO countries and their defense contractors have struggled to keep pace with the demand from the Russia-Ukraine war. Now, there is competing demand

amid support for Israel as it prepares for a ground offensive into Gaza.

The Pentagon said Tuesday that the U.S. is pressing industry to bolster its capacity, especially production of high-demand 155 mm artillery rounds, which can be used on a wide array of systems.

"We have been working closely with industry, not only in the United States, but working with our allies and partners and their defense industrial base to look at ramping up production," Pentagon spokesman Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said.

Ryder said the U.S. is confident that the needs of both Israel and Ukraine will be met. Still, others in the alliance have sounded the alarm.

Dutch Adm. Rob Bauer, head of NATO's Military Committee, warned earlier this month that when it comes to stockpiles, "the bottom of the barrel is now visible." He didn't specify which forms of weaponry were running out fastest.

A dilemma for Western militar-



NATO

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg participates in a forum in Stockholm, Sweden, Wednesday.

ies is how to strike a balance between having large stockpiles on hand and enough spare capacity to quickly ramp up when demand increases.

Critics argue that the current setup, designed around a "just in time" supply chain business model, falls short on both counts.

On the question of how to pay for it all and put in place the industry regulations to make larger stockpiles a reality, Stoltenberg said there isn't a clear path.

"I don't know the answer, but I know that we have not enough spare capacity today," he said.

Stoltenberg said allies need to invest to ensure that Ukraine gets what it needs because "courage

alone does not stop drones and heroism cannot intercept missiles."

There is no end in sight to the demand, as the war appears likely to stretch into a third year in February. Allies have pumped tens of billions of dollars in arms into Ukraine ranging from Abrams and Leopard tanks to air defense and munitions.

"We have mainly done this by depleting our own stocks," Stoltenberg said. "And that is not sustainable. So now we need to ramp up production to meet Ukraine's needs but also to strengthen our own deterrence and defense."

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Stripes cited for coverage of hurdles for spouses

Stars and Stripes

A Stars and Stripes report on the barriers to employment for U.S. military spouses in Italy earned an award from Military Reporters and Editors, the professional group announced Wednesday.

The February 2022 story headlined "Sexism and the SOFA: How a 71-year-old US military treaty and Italy's rules derail women's careers," by Naples, Italy-based reporter Alison Bath took top honors in the organization's small newspaper category for overseas coverage.

Bath, who reports on the U.S. Navy in Europe and Africa, wrote that military spouses in Italy are forced to choose between working off base and retaining

their rights under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement.

In most other countries where



Bath

U.S. forces are typically based, spouses are allowed to work off base and retain their SOFA privileges. About 92% of military spouses are women, according to data compiled in recent years.

Spouses also were legally barred from teleworking for a U.S. employer while residing in Italy under the SOFA. That changed in September, when an exchange of letters between the American and Italian governments granted spouses the right to telecommute.

A follow-up investigation published in August 2023 examined how the lack of overseas spousal employment pushes thousands of families under the poverty line and creates a system in which spouses sometimes work full time without pay for military organizations, which tout the benefits of keeping their skills current.

Meanwhile, spouses who hold green cards may be excluded from base jobs because they are citizens of countries like Japan while living in Europe, even in areas of critical need, such as day care.

Before joining Stars and Stripes, Bath reported for publications in Montana, Nevada and Louisiana and served as editor of newspapers in Louisiana, Oregon and Washington state.

Vaccines delayed at bases in Europe

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Shipments of COVID-19 vaccines to Europe are delayed, while a new appointment system requires added steps to obtain flu shots at the largest American military community overseas.

Both Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and Ramstein Air Base are still awaiting delivery of the latest coronavirus shots, which became available stateside in September.

Last month, base officials said vaccine shipments were supposed to begin Sept. 25, subject to product availability.

Vaccines go to installations based on when orders were received, Peter Graves, a spokesman for the Defense Health Agency, told Stars and Stripes last month.

No timeline has been announced for the vaccine's arrival. The Army hospital will post information on its website and social media accounts telling people how to make appointments when the doses do come, spokesman Marcy

Sanchez said.

Bases in Europe are ordering the vaccine based on their beneficiary population and expected demand, said Kirk Frady, a spokesman for Medical Readiness Command, Europe.

Some clinics are expected to offer "vaccine rodeo" drives, Frady said, adding that demand isn't expected to be as high as for influenza immunizations.

The Pentagon rescinded its COVID-19 vaccination mandate for active-duty troops in January. The seasonal flu shot, however, is still required for service members as well as for employees and students at Defense Department schools on U.S. bases.

Flu immunizations are available now at most bases. But some locations, particularly in the Kaiserslautern Military Community, are no longer offering mass vaccination drives.

The changes make it unclear whether the same numbers of civilians and family members will decide to get the shot as in previous years.

The vaccine's effectiveness va-

ries annually, largely based on whether the flu strains in the inoculation match the most prevalent types in circulation.

When it is effective, service members are less likely to get the flu if the civilians and family members they interact with regularly are also inoculated.

To get the shot in the KMC and elsewhere, beneficiaries may go to the military's health portal at <https://informatics-stage.health.mil/DAP/>. They can select an appointment time and register, if necessary, at a clinic.

The Landstuhl hospital previously held drives at outlying Army bases, schools and gyms.

But because of the transition to MHS Genesis, the Pentagon's electronic health care record-keeping system, shot appointments are being offered in the community only at the hospital and the Kleber Kaserne clinic.

"We are ensuring we have all the required information to properly document the vaccination of individuals for safety/public health reasons, while also ensuring the correct information is in-

putted into our records," Sanchez said in a statement Wednesday.

Most bases in Europe are still offering flu vaccination drives or walk-in immunization clinics.

The Navy installation in Naples, Italy, for example, announced it will open flu shot clinics starting this week at the hospital and at the Capodichino health clinic.

Ramstein Air Base is administering the flu shot to DOD teachers at Building 2116 near Pizza Hut on Thursday from 6 to 9 a.m.; meanwhile, family members 6 and older who are covered by Tricare can get the shot there Friday from 6 to 9 a.m., and again from 2 to 5 p.m.

Wiesbaden is accepting flu shot appointments for nearly a dozen days next month through the military's health portal.

An appointment slot must be selected for each family member, the site says, but families will be able to get the shot at the same time regardless of their appointment time.

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MIDEAST

Fuel: Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad officials meet

FROM PAGE 1

flict. Even greater loss of life could come when Israel launches an expected ground offensive aimed at crushing Hamas militants.

The U.N. says about 1.4 million of Gaza's 2.3 million residents are now internally displaced, with almost 600,000 crowded into U.N. shelters.

Gaza's residents have been running out of food, water and medicine since Israel sealed off the territory following the attack on southern Israel by Hamas, which is sworn to Israel's destruction.

In recent days, Israel allowed a small number of trucks filled with aid to come over the border with Egypt but barred deliveries of fuel — needed to power hospital generators — to keep it out of Hamas' hands.

The U.N. said it had managed to deliver some of the aid in recent days to hospitals treating the wounded. But the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, the largest provider of humanitarian services in Gaza, said it was running out of fuel.

Officials said they were forced to reduce their operations as they rationed what little fuel they had.

"Without fuel our trucks cannot go around to further places in the strip for distribution," said Lily Esposito, a spokesperson for the agency. "We will have to make decisions on what activities we keep or not with little fuel."

Meanwhile, more than half of Gaza's primary health care facilities, and roughly a third of its hospitals, have stopped functioning, the World Health Organization said.

Overwhelmed hospital staff struggled to triage cases as constant waves of wounded were brought in. The Health Ministry said many wounded are laid on the ground without even simple medical aid and others wait for days for surgeries because there are so many critical cases.

The conflict threatened to



PETROS GIANNAKOURIS/AP

Avida Bachar comes to the funeral of his wife, Dana, and his son Carmel in a wheelchair after he lost a leg in the Oct. 7 attacks on Israel by Hamas, at Gan Shlomo cemetery, central Israel, on Tuesday. Carmel Bachar, 15, and his mother lived in a small community that was among more than 20 ambushed on Oct. 7.

spread across the region, as Israeli airstrikes hit Syrian military sites in the south Wednesday, killing eight soldiers and wounding seven, according to Syria's state-run SANA news agency.

The Israeli military said in a post on X, formerly Twitter, its jets had struck Syrian military infrastructure and mortar systems in response to rocket launches from Syria.

Israel has launched several strikes on Syria in recent days, including strikes that put the Damascus and Aleppo airports out of service, in an apparent attempt to prevent arms shipments from Iran to militant groups, including Lebanon's Hezbollah. Israel has been fighting the Iranian-backed group Hezbollah across the Lebanese border in recent weeks.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nas-

rallah met Wednesday with top Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad officials in their first reported meeting since the war started. Such a meeting could signal coordination between the groups, as Hezbollah officials warned Israel against launching a ground offensive in Gaza.

Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said Iran was helping Hamas, with intelligence and by "whipping up incitement against Israel across the world." He said Iranian proxies were also operating against Israel from Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon.

The Gaza Health Ministry says more than 6,500 Palestinians have been killed in the war. The figure includes the disputed toll from an explosion at a hospital last week.

The fighting has killed more than 1,400 people in Israel —

mostly civilians slain during the initial Hamas attack, according to the Israeli government. Hamas is also holding some 222 people that it captured and took to Gaza.

The prime minister of Qatar, which has mediated the release of four of the hostages, said he was hopeful for more breakthroughs.

"The negotiations are still ongoing and at any moment of time, I think that if we will be able to get along between the two parties, I think we will see some breakthroughs hopefully soon," Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said.

Tzahi Hanegbi, the head of Israel's National Security Council, welcomed Qatar's help in a post on X. Israeli praise for the Gulf emirate, a financial backer of the Gaza Strip, is rare.

Fighting also erupted in the

West Bank, which has seen a major spike in violence.

Islamic Jihad militants said they fought with Israeli forces in Jenin overnight. The Palestinian Health Ministry in the West Bank said Israel killed four Palestinians in Jenin, including a 15-year-old, and two others in other towns. That brought the total number of those killed in the occupied West Bank since Oct. 7 to 102.

Across central and south Gaza, where Israel told civilians to take shelter, there were multiple scenes of rescuers pulling the dead and wounded out of large piles of rubble from collapsed buildings.

A father knelt on the floor of the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah next to the bodies of three dead children cocooned in bloodied sheets. Later at the nearby morgue, workers prayed over 24 dead wrapped in body bags, several of them the size of small children.

Buildings that collapsed on residents killed dozens at a time in several cases, witnesses said. Two families lost 47 members in a leveled home in Rafah, the Health Ministry said.

In Gaza City, at least 19 people were killed when an airstrike hit the house of the Bahloul family, according to survivors, who said dozens more remained buried.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen told the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday that the proportionate response to the Oct. 7 attack is "a total destruction" of the militants. "It is not only Israel's right to destroy Hamas. It's our duty," he said.

On Wednesday, Israel's U.N. ambassador, Gilad Erdan, said his country will stop issuing visas to U.N. personnel after U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that Hamas' attack "did not happen in a vacuum." It was unclear what the action, if followed through with, would mean for U.N. aid personnel working in Gaza and the West Bank.

Attacked: Pentagon hesitant to connect attacks on US bases to Hamas actions

FROM PAGE 1

"We know that the groups conducting these attacks are supported by [Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] and the Iranian regime. What we are seeing is the prospect for more significant escalation against U.S. forces and personnel across the region in the very near term," Ryder said. "We know these groups are Iranian proxy groups."

While all 13 attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria came within a couple of weeks of a surprise attack by Hamas militants against Israel on Oct. 7, the Pentagon has been hesitant to establish a clear connection. Military offi-

cial have said they are looking at the drone and rocket attacks as separate incidents, along with the firing of several rockets and drones by Houthi rebels in Yemen toward Israel that were shot down by the USS Carney operating in the Red Sea. It's still not confirmed the Houthis were shooting at Israel, though Ryder said the missiles could travel roughly 1,200 miles, which would have put them well within the range of Israel.

U.S. officials also said Tuesday that additional air power has arrived in the region — F-16s from the New Jersey Air National Guard's 119th Expeditionary

Fighter Squadron, known as the "Jersey Devils."

"The arrival of these airmen strengthens our ability to support our allied, coalition and regional partners as we work together to enhance regional stability and security," said Air Force Lt. Gen. Alexis Grynkeiwich, commander of the 9th Air Force and Combined Forces Air Component Command.

The arrival of the fighter jets comes as other U.S. forces were ordered during the weekend to the Middle East, including the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier strike group, a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense battery and more Patriot battery bat-

talions. The Army air defense units were sent from Fort Bliss in Texas, Fort Liberty in North Carolina and Fort Sill in Oklahoma.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin also gave pre-deployment orders to more service members, in addition to 2,000 troops who received the same orders several days earlier. None of the troops have been activated for deployment, Ryder said Tuesday.

The White House said Monday that President Joe Biden continues to work toward the release of all American hostages taken by Hamas and keeping up a steady flow of aid into the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military has delivered air-

strikes into the Palestinian-held territory and is believed to be planning a ground incursion.

"We have made very clear that Palestinians are not Hamas and Hamas are not Palestinians. And it is very, very unfortunate that we see a terrorist group who embeds themselves within a civilian population," Ryder said. "At the end of the day, what everyone is trying to do here is protect innocent, civilian lives ... [and] ensuring that groups like Hamas cannot continue to do what they have done."

NATION



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, second from right, and Maj. Gen. Trevor Bredenkamp, right, walk past flagbearers holding U.S. state flags during a ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery on Monday, in Arlington, Va.

Australian PM arrives for meetings and celebrations at White House

BY CHRIS MEGERIAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden said he was “doubling down” on the alliance with Australia as he welcomed Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to the Oval Office on Wednesday, part of a state visit intended to bolster American ties in the Pacific against the backdrop of fighting between Israel and Hamas.

Biden said the leaders would discuss supporting Ukraine, where the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues after almost two years, and how to “stand with Israel in the wake of Hamas’ appalling terrorist attack.”

The state visit, only the fourth since Biden took office, is a reminder of how he’s pursuing long-term plans to counter China’s influence even as bloody conflicts in the Middle East and Europe remain the most immediate concerns.

Albanese arrived at the White House on Wednesday morning as a military band played and 4,000 guests watched from the South

Lawn.

Biden said their alliance is characterized by “imagination, ingenuity and innovation,” and they will “race undaunted to a future we know is possible if we work together.”

Albanese said the “soul of our partnership” is “not a pact against a common enemy,” but “a pledge to a common cause.”

The two leaders were scheduled to hold a press conference in the Rose Garden after their meeting.

Senior administration officials said Biden and Albanese would be focused on supporting economic development among Pacific island nations, a key arena as the U.S. seeks the upper hand in the region.

The U.S. and Australia plan to work together on building maritime infrastructure and laying undersea cables to strengthen internet connectivity, according to the officials, who insisted on anonymity to discuss details before they’re announced.

There are also plans to have U.S. companies launch space mis-

sions from Australia, and Microsoft announced it would spend \$3 billion on cybersecurity, cloud computing and artificial intelligence there.

“State visits are a big deal,” said Charles Edel, a senior adviser and Australia chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. “They’re filled with plenty of pomp and circumstance, but they also serve as an opportunity to take stock of critical relationships and push them further forward.”

Wednesday’s events end with a state dinner in a pavilion erected on the South Lawn of the White House. On the menu will be farro and roasted beet salad, butternut squash soup and sarsaparilla-braised short ribs.

The B-52s, a rock group, were originally scheduled to perform, but they’ve been replaced by military bands.

“We are now in a time when so many are facing sorrow and pain, so we made a few adjustments to the entertainment portion of the evening,” first lady Jill Biden said.

GOP elects Mike Johnson House speaker

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans eagerly elected Rep. Mike Johnson as House speaker Wednesday, elevating a deeply conservative but lesser-known leader to the seat of U.S. power and ending for now the political chaos in their majority.

Johnson, of Louisiana, swept on the first ballot with support from all Republicans anxious to put the past weeks of tumult behind them and get on with the business of governing.

A lower-ranked member of the House GOP leadership team, Johnson emerged as the fourth Republican nominee in what has become an almost absurd cycle of political infighting since Kevin McCarthy’s ouster as GOP factions jockey for power. While not the party’s top choice for the gavel, the deeply religious and even-keeled Johnson has few foes and an important GOP backer: Donald Trump.

“I think he’s gonna be a fantastic speaker,” Trump said Wednesday at the New York courthouse where the former president is on trial over a lawsuit alleging business fraud.

Trump said he hadn’t heard “one negative comment about him. Everybody likes him.”

Three weeks on without a House speaker, the Republicans have been wasting their majority status — a maddening embarrassment to some, democracy in action to others, but not at all how the House is expected to function.

Far-right members have refused to accept a more traditional speaker, and moderate conservatives don’t want a hard-liner. While Johnson had no opponents during the private roll call late Tuesday, some two dozen Repu-

blicans did not vote, more than enough to sink his nomination.

But when GOP Conference Chair Rep. Elise Stefanik rose to introduce Johnson’s name Wednesday as their nominee, Republicans jumped to their feet for an extended standing ovation.

“House Republicans and Speaker Mike Johnson will never give up,”

she said.

Democrats again nominated their leader Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, criticizing Johnson as an architect of Trump’s legal effort to overturn the 2020 presidential election he lost.

With Republicans controlling the House only 221-212 over Democrats, Johnson could afford just a few detractors to win the gavel.

Overnight the endorsements for Johnson started pouring in, including from failed speaker hopefuls — Rep. Jim Jordan, the hard-charging Judiciary Committee chairman, gave his support, as did Majority Leader Steve Scalise, the fellow Louisiana congressman, who stood behind Johnson after he won the nomination.

“Mike! Mike! Mike!” lawmakers chanted at a press conference after the late-night internal vote, surrounding Johnson and posing for selfies in a show of support.

Anxious and exhausted, Republican lawmakers are desperately trying to move on.

“Democracy is messy sometimes, but it is our system,” Johnson said after winning the nomination.

“We’re going to restore your trust in what we do here.”



Johnson

Trump’s lawyers question Cohen in civil business fraud trial

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Michael Cohen returned to the witness stand Wednesday in his ex-boss Donald Trump’s civil business fraud trial as the former president’s defense team tried to undermine the credibility of his onetime personal attorney turned adversary.

During his first day of testimony Tuesday, Cohen said he and key executives at Trump’s company

worked to inflate the estimated values of their employer’s holdings so documents given to banks and others would match a net worth that Trump had set “arbitrarily.”

Trump watched as his lawyer Alina Habba then cross-examined Cohen, emphasizing Cohen’s federal criminal convictions and working to portray him as a liar, especially after he said Tuesday

he had lied when he pleaded guilty in 2018 to tax evasion and lying on a bank loan application. Cohen now maintains he did not really commit those crimes and on Tuesday he sought to portray his conduct as a matter of omissions and failure to correct paperwork.

Habba returned to those themes Wednesday, underscoring that Cohen had admitted in open court to lying under oath in a courthouse

next door.

Cohen is a key witness in New York Attorney General Letitia James’ civil case against Trump. James alleges Trump habitually exaggerated the value of his real estate holdings on financial documents that helped him get loans and insurance and make deals.

Trump denies any wrongdoing and says James, a Democrat, is targeting the leading Republican

presidential candidate in 2024 for partisan reasons. Trump said the trial was “very unfair” and a “pure political witch hunt.” Nonetheless, he said, “We’re happy with the way it’s going.”

“We have the facts on our side,” said Trump, who is expected to testify later in the trial. In the meantime, he has voluntarily attended several days of the proceedings.

NATION

States sue Meta, claim harm to kids' health

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY**
Associated Press

Dozens of U.S. states, including California and New York, are suing Meta Platforms Inc. for harming young people and contributing to the youth mental health crisis by knowingly and deliberately designing features on Instagram and Facebook that addict children to its platforms.

A lawsuit filed by 33 states in federal court in California claims that Meta routinely collects data on children under 13 without their parents' consent, in violation of federal law. In addition, nine attorneys general are filing lawsuits in their respective states, bringing the total number of states taking action to 41 and Washington, D.C.

"Meta has harnessed powerful and unprecedented technologies to entice, engage, and ultimately ensnare youth and teens. Its motive is profit, and in seeking to maximize its financial gains, Meta has repeatedly misled the public about the substantial dangers of its social media platforms," the complaint

says. "It has concealed the ways in which these platforms exploit and manipulate its most vulnerable consumers: teenagers and children."

The suits seek financial damages and restitution and an end to Meta's practices that are in violation of the law.

"Kids and teenagers are suffering from record levels of poor mental health and social media companies like Meta are to blame," said New York Attorney General Letitia James in a statement. "Meta has profited from children's pain by intentionally designing its platforms with manipulative features that make children addicted to their platforms while lowering their self-esteem."

In a statement, Meta said it shares "the attorneys general's commitment to providing teens with safe, positive experiences online, and have already introduced over 30 tools to support teens and their families."

"We're disappointed that instead of working productively with com-

panies across the industry to create clear, age-appropriate standards for the many apps teens use, the attorneys general have chosen this path," the company added.

The broad-ranging federal suit is the result of an investigation led by a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general from California, Florida, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, Tennessee and Vermont. It follows damning newspaper reports, first by The Wall Street Journal in the fall of 2021, based on Meta's own research that found that the company knew about the harms Instagram can cause teenagers—especially teen girls—when it comes to mental health and body image issues. One internal study cited 13.5% of teen girls saying Instagram makes thoughts of suicide worse and 17% of teen girls saying it makes eating disorders worse.

Following the first reports, a consortium of news organizations, including The Associated Press, published their own findings based on leaked documents from whistle-

blower Frances Haugen, who has testified before Congress and a British parliamentary committee about what she found.

"Meta has been harming our children and teens, cultivating addiction to boost corporate profits," said California Attorney General Rob Bonta. "With today's lawsuit, we are drawing the line."

The use of social media among teens is nearly universal in the U.S. and many other parts of the world. Almost all teens ages 13 to 17 in the U.S. report using a social media platform, with about a third saying they use social media "almost constantly," according to the Pew Research Center.

To comply with federal regulation, social media companies ban kids under 13 from signing up to their platforms—but children have been shown to easily get around the bans, both with and without their parents' consent, and many younger kids have social media accounts. The states' complaint says Meta knowingly violated this law, the Children's Online Privacy Pro-

tection Act, by collecting data on children without informing and getting permission from their parents.

Other measures social platforms have taken to address concerns about children's mental health are also easily circumvented. For instance, TikTok recently introduced a default 60-minute time limit for users under 18. But once the limit is reached, minors can simply enter a passcode to keep watching. TikTok, Snapchat and other social platforms that have also been blamed for contributing to the youth mental health crisis are not part of Tuesday's lawsuit.

Washington D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb wouldn't comment on whether they're also looking at TikTok or Snapchat. For now they're focusing on the Meta empire of Facebook and Instagram, he said.

"They're the worst of the worst when it comes to using technology to addict teenagers to social media, all in the furtherance of putting profits over people."

GM-owned robotaxi service suspended

By **MICHAEL LIEDTKE**
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — California regulators have revoked the license of a robotaxi service owned by General Motors after determining its driverless cars that recently began transporting passengers throughout San Francisco are a dangerous menace.

The California Department of Motor Vehicles' indefinite suspension of the Cruise robotaxi service comes just two months after another state regulator, the Public Utilities Commission, approved an expansion that authorized around-the-clock rides throughout San Francisco—the second most dense city in the U.S.

That approval came over a chorus of protests, including some lodged by police and fire officials who asserted the driverless vehicles had been impeding traffic in emergencies during a testing phase.

Now Cruise is being forced to slam on the brakes on its operations after the DMV concluded its robotaxis posed "an unreasonable risk to public safety," according to a statement issued by the agency.

The DMV didn't elaborate on the specific reasons for the suspension, but the move comes after a series of incidents that heightened concerns



TERRY CHEA/AP

Associated Press reporter Michael Liedtke gets out of a Cruise driverless taxi after a test ride in San Francisco, in February.

about the hazards and inconveniences caused by Cruise's robotaxis. The worries reached a new level earlier this month after a Cruise robotaxi ran over a pedestrian who had been hit by another vehicle driven by a human, and then pinned the pedestrian under one of its tires after coming to a stop.

In a statement, Cruise confirmed it has ceased its robotaxi operations in San Francisco. It said it is continuing to cooperate with state and federal regulators in their inquiry into the Oct. 2 accident involving a robotaxi named "Panini" and the critically injured pedestrian. Cruise said its engineers are examining that accident and working on ways for its robotaxis to improve their response "to this kind of extremely rare event."

During the suspension, Cruise will be able to still operate its vehicles in autonomous mode, but with a human sitting in the driver's seat to

take control whenever something goes awry.

While Cruise has been sidelined in San Francisco, another robotaxi operated by Waymo is continuing to give rides throughout the city. Waymo, which began as a secret project within Google more than a decade ago, has been running another robotaxi service in Phoenix for the past three years. Although its robotaxis haven't been involved in a major accident in San Francisco, Waymo's vehicles also have come to sudden stops that have backed up traffic in the city.

The California suspension is a significant blow to GM and its ambitious goals for Cruise, which the Detroit automaker has predicted will generate \$1 billion in revenue by 2025. Cruise also is testing a robotaxi service in Los Angeles, where protests against it already have been percolating, as well as Phoenix and Austin, Texas.

1st major storm of season drops up to foot of snow

Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — The first major snowstorm of the season dropped up to a foot of snow in the Helena area by Wednesday morning, canceling some school bus routes on the western side of the city.

The storm, which began Tuesday in the northern Cascades and Rockies, prompted people to search out their winter coats, gloves, boots and snow shovels after a warm fall in many places.

The National Weather Service warned of hazardous travel on snowy mountain passes and ice on some highways when snow initially melts and then freezes as road temperatures drop.

The storm was forecast to come in waves, beginning with precipitation that fell Tuesday as rain at lower elevations in Washington state and as snow in the mountains. The snow was then forecast to spread across northern Idaho, Montana, northwestern Wyoming and North Dakota into Friday.

Cold air moving down from northwestern Canada has combined with a moist Pacific weather system, leading to freezing temperatures and expected snowfall amounts up to 14 inches in Washington's northern Cascade Mountains and 18 inches in the mountains of Montana, the National Weather Service forecasts. Some higher elevations in the northern Rockies could see snow totals of 2 feet or more.

Central Montana will see the

worst of the snow, said Matt Ludwig, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Great Falls.

"We kind of are the bull's-eye," he said Tuesday.

The first snowfall of the season "is always the most dangerous because people just aren't used to it yet" after driving for months on mostly dry pavement, Ludwig said. Drivers aren't used to dealing with less traction, slower speeds and longer stopping distances, he said.

After the first 12 hours of the storm, it was Helena that saw the most accumulation. Stanford, in central Montana, saw 8 inches, while 6 to 7 inches were reported at spots along the Rocky Mountain Front in Montana by Wednesday morning.

The first wave of snow was forecast to continue falling through midday Wednesday, with a second round starting Wednesday night into Thursday morning, the National Weather Service said.

Helena Public Schools canceled six school bus routes Wednesday morning and said it would update its website and Facebook page about whether the routes would run Wednesday afternoon.

No schools were closed.

The storm brings a sharp change in weather. Helena tied record temperatures in the lower 80s late last week, which is about 25 degrees above average for this time of year, Ludwig said.

NATION

‘Grounded’ look at drone pilots, PTSD

One-woman play turned opera will premiere at The Kennedy Center

By **BRIAN McELHINEY**
Stars and Stripes

Articles in Stars and Stripes helped George Brant get “Grounded” off the ground a decade ago.

The original one-woman play, first produced in 2013, is a monologue from an unnamed female Air Force F-16 pilot who becomes a drone pilot after being grounded due to pregnancy. As the play progresses, the pilot struggles to balance her mission targeting enemies overseas via a trailer in Las Vegas with her life at home with her husband and young daughter.

When Brant wrote the play — which is now an opera by the same name co-written by composer Jeanine Tesori and Brant and premiering with Washington National Opera at The Kennedy Center on Saturday — he wanted to explore why drone pilots were suffering from post-traumatic stress at the same rate as fighter pilots. In 2013, a study released by the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center concluded just that, and the topic has been revisited in numerous articles written before and since.

“This idea that the pilots were suffering from PTSD despite being drone pilots, and at the same rate as fighter pilots, was one that I really wanted to further explore and try to suss out why that might be,” Brant said. “And then also the idea that they did go home at night — that there weren’t barracks and that they had to reconcile their time at war during the day, and then potentially going home at night to your family and trying to reconcile those two worlds — was something that really intrigued me as well. And I did indeed read about that first in the Stars and Stripes.”

That article, published in 2009, describes how “the strain of the daily whiplash transition between bombs and bedtime stories, coupled with the fast-increasing workload to meet relentlessly expanding demand, is leading to fatigue and burnout for the ground-based controllers who drive the drones.”

“At the time that I wrote the play, a part of it was my moral concerns — about the moral implications of this technology that we had and how we were using it, and wanting to make sure we explored this morally before proceeding too far,” Brant said. “And it’s interest-



Emily D'Angelo, who plays fictional Air Force drone pilot Jess Kelsen, and Joseph Dennis, who plays her husband, Eric, rehearse for Washington National Opera's world premiere of “Grounded.”

JATI LINDSAY



MARK PILLAI

A promotional image for “Grounded” featuring Emily D'Angelo, who stars as Air Force pilot Jess Kelsen.

ing that now it has become used globally. Certainly in the Ukraine conflict we’re seeing drones used left and right. I didn’t even know there was a naval drone now until a recent article about that — about Ukraine sinking one of the Russians’ ships. The field keeps expanding, so it definitely seems like the story has not become a museum piece by any stretch of the imagination.”

The military and veterans communities have embraced the play as well, with productions often featuring discussions and workshops. Brant recalled one of the first productions of the play, in San Francisco: “I mean, I was definitely holding my breath because I wasn’t sure what their reaction would be, and yeah, it was really gratifying to find that the service people who attended seemed to really respond to it. They just swarmed our actress afterward,

“This idea that the pilots were suffering from PTSD despite being drone pilots, and at the same rate as fighter pilots, was one that I really wanted to further explore.”

George Brant
writer of “Grounded” play

and asking her all these questions.”

This will continue with the opera, which will be presented Oct. 28, Nov. 1, 3, 5, 11 and 13. Each performance will be accompanied by a pre-show lecture featuring Brant and Washington National Opera Artistic Director Francesca Zambello.

The WNO also partnered with The Elizabeth Dole Foundation for the Nov. 1 performance for “Courage in Service,” in which 100 members of the military community will be invited to a pre-show reception and a Q&A following the performance open to the entire audience.

“When this [play] was originally staged there was a lot in the news about [drone pilots], and for some reason we haven’t continued to talk about this new generation of soldier who comes out of their service experience having PTSD or other conditions associated with that service that are different than conventional warfare, where they’re on the ground,” Elizabeth Dole Foundation CEO Steve Schwab said. “My thinking is — and why we’re so interested in being involved in this — is because we want to have a sustained con-

versation over what the needs of our service members and veterans are when they do go through those experiences.”

Directed by Michael Mayer, the “Grounded” opera, which Brant said is “99% sung-through,” made a number of changes to the original play in order to better tackle these themes. The pilot, portrayed by mezzo-soprano Emily D’Angelo, now has a name — Jess Kelsen, who takes her last name from Stephanie Kelsen, an Air Force fighter pilot who was photographed while pregnant by portrait photographer Shlomit Levy Bard. That photo, featured in The New York Times, was another inspiration for Brant’s original play.

The cast has expanded to include people who were mentioned in the one-woman play, including Jess’ husband, Eric (portrayed by Joseph Dennis); Jess’ daughter, Sam; Jess’ commander (Morris Robinson); and her trainer (Frederick Ballantine). A male chorus, the “Drone Squadron,” made up of Jess’ fellow flight squadron pilots, will reflect “the history of combat,” according to WNO. The set design, featuring two large screens that allow for real-time video projection, helps add to the

immersive experience.

“The story gets increasingly trippy and surreal as it goes along, so we wanted to start it out as close to accurate as we could, before things take a turn for the strange,” Brant said. “... Certainly our movements — our choreographer has spent a lot of hours watching military marches and such, trying to get that flavor. Again, it’s not going to mimic exactly military marching, but trying to honor that and incorporate it into an artistic expression.”

The surreal element ties into the dissociative disorders or “split” that can sometimes be experienced with PTSD. In the opera, an alter-ego for Jess appears in the second act.

“There was one line in the original play where she says, ‘I am above me,’” Brant said. “And Jeanine, the composer, really ran with that idea and was like, ‘What if we have a whole character who embodies that idea?’ ... It’s an opportunity as well to allow (D’Angelo) to sing with herself in a strange way and express things. And this other self sometimes can speak for her innermost thoughts maybe a little better than she can.”

Brant did not serve in the military, but has a long history of service in his family, he said. His father, George Brant Sr., served in the Judge Advocate General’s Corps in the Army during the Vietnam War, and his grandfather on his mother’s side, Robert Alexander, was in the Navy during World War II and was part of the group that captured the German submarine U-505 about 150 miles west of Rio De Oro, Africa, in June 1944. The capture marked the first time a Navy vessel captured an enemy vessel since the War of 1812, according to the National Museum of the U.S. Navy. The submarine is now on display at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

Still, Brant had help with keeping the opera, well, grounded in realism. Some people who have served in the military who were on the board of the Washington National Opera “chimed in with kind of keeping the story as honest as possible,” he said.

“We did have a line in the opera about — I can’t remember if it was ‘Air Force wings are good as gold,’ or something along those lines,” Brant said. “And an Air Force person pointed out that the wings are in fact silver, not gold, and that if I were to keep that in there I was going to tick off both Air Force and Navy people at the same time. So we did find a way to correct that line. ... And it’s not — I don’t want people to enter this thinking it’s a documentary. There’s definitely imagination involved. ... This is a fictional story, but we’re trying to get right as much as we can.”

NATION

USPS touts crackdown on postal crime, carrier robberies

By DAVID SHARP
Associated Press

With mail theft and postal carrier robberies up, law enforcement officials have made more than 600 arrests since May in a crackdown launched to address crime that includes carriers being accosted at gunpoint for their antiquated universal keys, the Postal Service announced Wednesday.

Criminals are both stealing mail and targeting carriers' so-called "arrow keys" to get access to mailboxes.

"We will continue to turn up the pressure and put potential perpetrators on notice: If you're attacking postal employees, if you steal the mail or commit other postal

crimes, postal inspectors will bring you to justice," Chief Postal Inspector Gary Barksdale told reporters on Wednesday.

The Postal Service announcement on Wednesday came against a backdrop of rallies by the National Association of Letter Carriers calling for better protection of carriers and harsh punishment for criminals who rob them. They've been held across the country in recent months, including one Tuesday in Denver and another Wednesday in Houston.

Letter carriers are on edge after nearly 500 of them were robbed last year. Criminals increasingly targeted the mail to commit financial crimes like altering checks to

obtain money.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said in a statement that it's important to protect the "sanctity of the nation's mail" but that his top priority is the safety of those delivering it.

To reduce robberies, the Postal Service is replacing tens of thousands of postal carriers' universal keys that are sought by criminals seeking to steal mail to commit check fraud, officials said.

So far, 6,500 of the keys have been replaced with electronic locks in select cities, and another 42,500 are set to be deployed, officials said.

The Postal Service has declined to say how many of the arrow keys

are in service.

To prevent mail theft, the Postal Service also has deployed more than 10,000 high-security blue boxes in high-risk locations to prevent criminals from fishing out the mail.

The Postal Service also implemented changes that reduced fraudulent change-of-a-address transactions by 99.3% over the past fiscal year, and they've reduced counterfeit postage by 50%, as well, officials said.

The Postal Service is touting its successes after a critical report by its own watchdog, the Office of Inspector General. Issued late last month, it faulted management for a lack of "actionable milestones,"

accountability for staffing and training, and upgrading carriers' universal keys.

The Postal Service has its own police force, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, which is leading the effort with other internal units and outside law enforcement agencies.

The penalty is steep for interfering with the mail.

Theft alone can be punished by up to five years in prison; possession or disposal of postal property carries a sentence of up to 10 years in prison. Assaulting a mail carrier can also lead to a 10-year sentence for a first-time offense. Repeat offenders can get 25 years for an assault.

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WAR IN UKRAINE

Power lines near Ukraine nuke plant downed as winter nears

By HANNA ARHIROVA
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia fired 11 Shahed drones against Ukrainian targets, reaching deep into Ukraine while falling debris damaged power lines near a nuclear power plant in the country's west, officials said Wednesday. Ukraine's air force said it intercepted all the overnight drones.

For the fourth day in a row, the Kremlin's forces took aim at the Ukrainian region of Khmelnytskyi, injuring 16 people, according to local authorities.

Ukraine's Ministry of Energy Infrastructure said falling drone wreckage in Khmelnytskyi broke windows in the administrative building and the laboratory of the local nuclear plant and knocked out electricity to more than 1,800 customers. The plant is about 120 miles east of the border with Poland.

Ukraine President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy said his country's air defenses are preparing for another winter of Russian attacks on energy infrastructure as the war enters its 21st month.

But Kyiv also plans to take the fight to Russia through its ongoing counteroffensive, he said.

"This year we will not only defend ourselves, but also respond," Zelenskyy said. "The enemy knows this well."

Last winter, Moscow's drones and missiles zeroed in on Ukraine's power grid, hoping to erode the country's will to resist Russia's invasion by denying civilians heating. Ukraine said it was an effort to weaponize winter.

Ukrainians are bracing for another onslaught.

The looming wintry weather could further hamper battlefield movements in a conflict that is largely deadlocked and compel the warring sides to focus more on long-range strikes, including

drones that have played a key role in the war.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said Russia "is likely trying to expand and diversify its arsenal of drones, missiles and guided bombs for strikes against Ukrainian critical infrastructure" ahead of the change in weather.

"Russia appears to be increasingly supplementing the use of Shahed ... drones with cheaper and lighter domestically produced drone variants during strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure," it said in an assessment late Tuesday.

Russian news reports have mentioned one such drone, Italmas, which reportedly has a range of about 120 miles, allowing Moscow's forces to strike targets far beyond the front line.

Another is an upgraded version of the Lancet drone. It has an extended range compared to its pre-



BRAM JANSSEN/AP

The sun sets over a destroyed building in Izyum, Ukraine, on Tuesday.

vious version, which has been used extensively on the battlefield.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu visited his country's forces deployed in eastern Ukraine, his ministry said Wednesday, meeting with senior officers in the southern part of the Donetsk region to discuss preparations for the winter, according to the defense ministry.

The chief of the eastern group of forces, Lt. Gen. Andrei Kuzmenko, reported on forming dedicated drone units in the area and on

storm units' tactics in capturing Ukrainian strongholds, the ministry said.

It also said that four Ukrainian drones were shot down over Russia's western Bryansk region early Wednesday. Another was jammed and forced down near Sevastopol in Russia-occupied Crimea.

In Ukraine, at least three civilians were killed in the east and south over the previous 24 hours, and 22 people were injured in the west and southeast, the presidential office reported Wednesday.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Whitmer criticizes MSU for scandals, woes

MI EAST LANSING — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer ripped into Michigan State University on Monday, accusing the school of “no clear unified leadership” amid rancor on the governing board and other unflattering incidents.

Whitmer’s statement came after two trustees over the weekend said they would support the ouster of board chair Rema Vassar.

Separately, MSU apologized after an image of Adolf Hitler was displayed on the scoreboard before the Michigan-MSU football game Saturday night. Officials said it was part of a quiz by an outside contractor that provides pre-game content.

MSU also is dealing with fallout from the firing of football coach Mel Tucker who was accused of sexually harassing a woman over the phone. Some critics say the school should have acted months ago.

Theft of 2M dimes leaves 4 facing federal charges

PA PHILADELPHIA — Federal authorities have released more details and unsealed charges in the theft of more than 2 million dimes earlier this year from a tractor-trailer that had picked up the coins from the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia.

The truck driver was bound for Miami when he pulled into a parking lot to sleep on April 13. During the night, thieves made off with a portion of its cargo of \$750,000 in dimes, a shipment weighing about six tons, authorities said.

Thousands of coins were left scattered all over the lot in northeast Philadelphia.

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported that prosecutors contend the theft — which they now say totaled \$234,500 in stolen dimes — was part of a spree of robberies from tractor-trailers passing through the region that also netted the thieves frozen crab legs, shrimp, meat, beer and liquor.

Four Philadelphia men — 25-year-old Rakiem Savage, 31-year-old Ronald Byrd, 30-year-old Haneef Palmer and 32-year-old Malik Palmer — face conspiracy, robbery, theft of government money and other charges.

Man gets 18 months for racist phone calls

MT BILLINGS — A Montana man has been sentenced to 18 months in federal prison for making repeated threatening and racist phone calls to a Billings church for two years after he went there seeking help and received a gift card from a Black employee, prosecutors said.

Joshua Leon Hiestand, 41, was sentenced Friday, according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Montana. Hiestand pleaded guilty in June to making harassing telephone calls.



BEBETO MATTHEWS/AP

Tusks are finishing touch

A team of exhibition specialists at the American Museum of Natural History install the head on a woolly mammoth model Monday for the museum's Nov. 13 opening exhibition, "The Secret World of Elephants," in New York.

A stalking charge was dismissed as part of the plea agreement.

Prosecutors alleged Hiestand went to the Presbyterian church in November 2020 seeking help. Five days later, the church received a voicemail in which someone, using a racially derogatory term, said he would give more money to the church if the church did not employ an African American. After three similar calls, the woman called Billings police.

A detective called the number used to leave the messages and spoke to Hiestand, who admitted making the calls and apologized for his behavior, prosecutors said.

Judge releases man accused of plotting attacks

MD GREENBELT — A federal judge on Monday ordered the release of a Maryland man who has been imprisoned for more than four years on charges that he plotted Islamic State group-inspired attacks at an airport and at a shopping and entertainment complex in the Washington, D.C., area.

Rondell Henry, 32, of Germantown, Md., pleaded guilty in August to attempting to perform an act of violence at Dulles International Airport in Virginia. U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis agreed to sentence Henry to the jail time that he already has served since his March 2019 arrest.

Accepting terms recommended by both prosecutors and defense attorneys, the judge also sentenced Henry to lifetime supervised release with mandatory par-

ticipation in a mental health treatment program.

Henry, then 28, abandoned his plan to plow a stolen U-Haul van into pedestrians at the airport because he didn’t think the early-morning crowd was large enough, prosecutors said. Police arrested Henry after he parked the truck at National Harbor, a popular waterfront destination in Maryland just outside the nation’s capital.

Former NSA worker pleads guilty in secrets case

CO DENVER — A former National Security Agency employee from Colorado pleaded guilty Monday to trying to sell classified national security information to Russia.

Federal prosecutors agreed to not ask for more than about 22 years in prison for Jareh Sebastian Dalke when he is sentenced in April if he adheres to the terms of a plea deal, but the judge will ultimately decide his punishment.

Dalke, a 31-year-old Army veteran from Colorado Springs, technically faces up to a possible life sentence for giving the information to an undercover FBI agent who prosecutors say Dalke believed was a Russian agent. However, accepting responsibility for a crime usually leads to a lighter sentence.

New bird flu cases reported in Iowa

IA DES MOINES — Two commercial turkey farms in Iowa have been hit by the re-

emerging highly pathogenic bird flu, causing about 100,000 birds to be killed to prevent the disease from spreading.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture reported the infected commercial poultry flocks within weeks of a turkey farm in South Dakota and one in Utah reporting the first outbreaks in the U.S. since April, raising concerns that more would follow.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture shows 12 commercial flocks in South Dakota, Utah and Minnesota have been affected in October, totaling more than 500,000 birds.

Bird flu last year cost U.S. poultry producers nearly 59 million birds across 47 states, including egg-laying chickens and turkeys and chickens raised for meat, making it the country’s deadliest outbreak ever, according to USDA figures.

Man charged with murder after body found in suitcase

GA THOMASTON — A Georgia man has been charged with murder after police said he killed his girlfriend, stuffed her body in a suitcase and stashed it in the closet of the apartment they shared.

Freddrick Durham of Thomaston was being held without bail in the Upson County jail. Durham appeared before a judge on Monday, a Thomaston police investigator said by phone.

Officers and relatives had gone to Margret Dubignon’s apartment Friday in the town about 60

miles south of Atlanta, but didn’t find her, after last speaking to her on Thursday.

She was officially reported missing Saturday morning, with relatives saying Durham and Dubignon’s vehicle were also missing. Officers were called back to the apartment 90 minutes later after relatives found Dubignon’s body in the suitcase.

Officer fired after shooting accusation

MO ST. LOUIS — An off-duty St. Louis County officer accused of displaying his badge and firing into the air at a trick-or-treating event no longer is employed at the agency, a police spokesperson confirmed Monday.

Matthew McCulloch was no longer working at the department as of Thursday, St. Louis County Police officer Adrian Washington said in an email. He had been on unpaid administrative leave. Washington declined to comment on whether McCulloch was fired or quit.

McCulloch is charged with child endangerment, unlawful use of a weapon, armed criminal action and making a terrorist threat during a school-sponsored trunk-or-treating event attended by hundreds of parents and children Oct. 15 in the St. Louis suburb of Kirkwood.

Police said McCulloch told multiple attendees that “you are all going to die,” according to the probable cause statement.

FACES

‘RAW’ rappers

City Girls growing, having fun on 3rd album

By MARIA SHERMAN
Associated Press

You’d be hard-pressed to find a rap duo doing it like City Girls. They’ve been bringing life-affirming, pretty-girl scam rap to the masses since they were featured on Drake’s “In My Feelings” and launched into superstardom with their 2018 debut “Girl Code” and its hit single “Act Up.”

A lot has changed since then. Three years ago, the Miami-based duo of JT and Yung Miami released their sophomore album, “City on Lock,” shortly after it was leaked. They’ve worked to make sure things move as smoothly as possible with their third full-length album, “RAW.” It’s City Girls, as fun as ever — with marked growth.

“RAW” is just being authentic and being ourselves,” says JT, who did most of the speaking in their interview with The Associated Press.

Of course, that doesn’t mean the album — true to their spirited party records and moments of real vulnerability — came easy. Across the past three years, the

duo hasn’t felt immune to the pressures that accompany fame and influence creativity.

“I feel like, when creating music, it relates so much to your life, and as your life change, your music change. So, it’s a lot of pressure from different sides, like people saying, ‘Oh, you don’t sound like your old self.’ Or people just basically saying, ‘I want to hear growth in the music,’” she continues. “It’s a line of division as an artist, when you’re creating.”

“RAW” is just being authentic and being ourselves.”

JT
half of the rap duo City Girls

Of course, there’s a lot to celebrate here, from the NSFW club banger “Piñata” and “Tonight,” which samples Lil Kim, to the JT freestyle “No Bars,” her first solo single since 2019’s “JT First Day Out,” which led to the launch of a No Bars Reform initiative,

created to provide resources to other formerly incarcerated women and help them rehabilitate into society.

There’s also an all-star list of collaborations on “RAW,” from the dizzying trap of “Static” featuring Lil Durk to the Dr. Luke pop record “Flashy,” with Kim Petras. “Kim Petras is beautiful. I love her songs. I love her music,”



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

Yung Miami, left, and JT of City Girls pose Sept. 27 in Los Angeles to promote their third album, “RAW.”

says JT. “(When) she sent the demo back in, she sounded amazing.”

Then there’s their track with future Super Bowl halftime performer Usher.

“Originally Chris Brown was supposed to get on ‘Good Love,’ but I don’t know what happened with that,” says Yung Miami. “So, I personally reached out to Usher, I sent the record, he sent it back, and that’s how ‘Good Love’ came about.”

And a collaboration with fellow Floridian Muni Long on the sexy R&B tune “Emotions.” “I just hear

her voice on it,” JT says. “She writes great music so we felt like she would be perfect for that song.”

That track follows the sing-along rap record, “Show Me the Money,” emphasizing the no-skip, smooth transitions of “RAW,” what JT refers to as “turn down, turn up, turn down, turn up” sequencing.

The math is working. When asked about their place in hip-hop — on its 50th anniversary, no less — JT is acutely aware of City Girls’ position. “Every time I think about, like, us being rappers, I al-

ways feel blessed. Like, damn, we are really rappers. We are really a part of hip-hop,” she says, expressing particular gratitude for being “the only female rap group right now. “And I think we were the first female rappers to go platinum since Salt-N-Pepa, and to chart over than Salt-N-Pepa ... It’s a great feeling. I feel like we doing our thing and we will continue.”

As for their listeners: “I want them to feel good, you know, liberated,” she says. “I want our album to kind of be an escape from this world because it is always so serious and it’s always so stressful.”

‘Shaft’ star Roundtree, considered the first Black action hero, dies

From wire reports

Richard Roundtree, the trailblazing actor who starred as the ultra-smooth private detective in several “Shaft” films beginning in the early 1970s, has died. He was 81.

Roundtree’s longtime manager, Patrick McMinn, said the actor had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and died at his home in Los Angeles on Tuesday. He was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1993 and underwent a double mastectomy.

“Richard’s work and career served as a turning point for African American leading men,” McMinn said. “The impact he had on the industry cannot be overstated.”

Roundtree, who was born in New Rochelle, N.Y., was considered the first Black action hero and became one of the leading actors in the blaxploitation genre through his New York street smart John Shaft character in the Gordon Parks-directed film in 1971. At age 28, it was Roundtree’s first feature film appearance after starting his career as a model.

Roundtree’s “Shaft” was part of a change in how Black movies were viewed in Hollywood, which failed to consider Black actors — especially for leading roles — in projects at the time. The blaxploitation films were primarily aimed at the African American audiences.

In the film, his character navigated the world of thugs. He regularly whipped out popular one-liners like “It’s my duty to please that booty.”



Roundtree in 1972

“What we were doing was a good, old Saturday afternoon shoot ‘em up,” Roundtree said in a 2000 interview with The Associated Press.

Isaac Hayes’ “Shaft” theme song — which included the line “You a bad mother— (Shut your mouth)” — helped insinuate the original movie into the pop-cult consciousness. The singer, who died in 2008, said the song was “like the shot heard ‘round the world.” His single won an Academy Award for best song in 1971 and two Grammys the following year.

After the film’s success, Roundtree returned in sequels “Shaft’s Big Score” in 1972 and “Shaft in Africa” in 1973. That same year, he played the savvy detective once again on the CBS television series “Shaft,” which lasted only seven episodes.

Roundtree reprised his role in the 2000 “Shaft” film, a revival that starred Samuel L. Jackson. He appeared as Jackson’s uncle in the big-budget film that was aimed at the

general audience. Both appeared again in the same roles in the 2019 film starring Jessie T. Usher.

Jackson called Roundtree the “prototype” and the “best to ever do it” in a social media post.

“SHAFT, as we know it is & will always be his Creation,” he said of Roundtree. “His passing leaves a deep hole not only in my heart, but I’m sure a lotta y’all’s, too.”

Through his 50-plus year career, Roundtree appeared in a number of other notable films including “Earthquake,” “Man Friday” with Peter O’Toole, “Roots,” “Maniac Cop” “Se7en” and “What Men Want” starring Taraji P. Henson. He also made his mark with television roles on “Magnum P.I.,” “The Love Boat” and “Being Mary Jane.”

In 1995, Roundtree received a lifetime achievement award at the MTV Movie & TV awards.

Frances Bean Cobain marries skateboarder Tony Hawk’s son

Rock royalty and a skateboarding dynasty have tied the knot. Frances Bean Cobain, the only child of Courtney Love and the late Kurt Cobain, has reportedly married Riley Hawk, son of professional skateboarding legend Tony Hawk.

Cobain, 31, and Hawk, 30, had obtained a marriage license in September and were wed in Los Angeles on Oct. 7, according to TMZ, which obtained marriage documents. R.E.M. co-founder and Cobain’s godfather Michael Stipe officiated the ceremony, according to the outlet.

In January 2022, Cobain revealed her relationship with Hawk in a series of photos posted to her Instagram account. The post included a waterside image of Cobain snuggling with Riley Hawk, next to his father and stepmother Catherine Goodman.

“I took a year long break from posting on Instagram which was exceptionally good for my mental, emotional & spiritual health,” Cobain wrote. “2021 brought me more into the present moment than I’ve ever been, which I’m deeply grateful for.”

Her father, the iconic frontman of Nirvana, died in April 1994 at 27, when Frances Cobain was only 1. Her mother and fellow rock artist Courtney Love intermittently lost custody of Cobain throughout her childhood due to substance use treatment and she was regularly cared for by her aunts and Kurt’s mother.

Cobain’s marriage to Hawk is her second. Cobain married Isaiah Silva in 2014 and they were divorced in 2017.

Hawk is also a professional skateboarder.

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OPINION

The US military has a readiness problem

By MICHAEL P. DiMINO
 AND MATTHEW C. MAI
Special to Stars and Stripes

In an interview with “60 Minutes” this month, President Joe Biden was asked about how many crises the United States can “take on” at once. Biden replied, essentially, that America can handle anything. But as the United States courts strategic overstretch with possible involvement in multiple foreign conflicts, concerns about its own military readiness are becoming harder to ignore.

Training exercises are not preparing units for the realities of the modern battlefield, sustainment issues are keeping complex platforms out of action, and a high operational tempo driven by “forward presence” missions is pushing the joint force to a breaking point. Pentagon leadership might be loath to acknowledge it, but the military has a growing readiness problem on its hands.

Take ground forces. The war in Ukraine illustrates how the lethality of the modern battlefield punishes militaries unable to integrate cover, concealment, dispersion, suppression, small unit independent maneuver, and combined arms into their tactics. The Army, however, is still advocating doctrinal concepts favoring centralized theater-level decision-making and large unit maneuver, as opposed to enabling warfighters at the brigade level to act independently to rapidly seize the initiative. Some analysts are already highlighting the risks of this approach. A paper published by the U.S. Army War College in August observed that maturing technologies like unmanned systems will “dramatically accelerate the pace of modern war” and Army leaders “cannot expect a brigade that micromanages garrison tasks to execute combat operations successfully.”

The Army’s Combat Training Center exercises that brigades participate in every 18 months also fall short of replicating the battlefield conditions the United States would confront against near-peer adversaries. As Army Maj. Robert G. Rose recently explained, opposing forces in CTC exercises do not con-

struct a defense in depth, utilize reserves for counterattacks, employ mass artillery, or build dense minefields to thwart Army units trying to improve their maneuver warfare techniques. Yet in Ukraine, Russian forces have successfully employed all of these elements to frustrate Kyiv’s counteroffensive.

While U.S. ground forces aren’t training for the right fight, critical air power assets might not be ready to fight at all. Since its inception two decades ago, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program has become known more for its performance mishaps than as the world’s premier fifth-generation fighter. Just last month, a Marine Corps pilot was likely automatically ejected by his F-35 over a populated area in South Carolina before the \$100 million aircraft crashed. The Marine Corps hasn’t commented on why the ejection occurred, though faulty sensors and perhaps even mild turbulence may be to blame.

But a broader issue is keeping hundreds of F-35s grounded: sustainment. According to a report from the Government Accountability Office last month, military maintainers are facing several challenges keeping the F-35 fleet in the air, including insufficient and unavailable technical data, spare parts, and support equipment. Since Lockheed Martin has proprietary ownership of F-35 technical data, uniformed maintainers must wait for the company to send a representative to assess and remedy problems with the aircraft — a process that can take more than four months to complete.

The consequences for readiness are predictable: Less than 60% of the F-35 fleet is mission capable. Operational Marine Corps F-35Bs and Navy F-35Cs have abysmal mission-capable rates of 25% and 30%, respectively. This is to say nothing of the aerial tankers responsible for refueling F-35s midflight — a critical logistical requirement in the Pacific. According to the latest GAO figures, the Marine Corps and Navy’s aerial refueling tankers didn’t meet their annual mission capable goals once from 2011-21. The Air Force’s KC-10 and KC-135 tankers only met their goals for one and three years, respectively,

during that same period.

For all of the F-35’s woes, nothing compares to the readiness crisis facing the Navy. The main source of the Navy’s problems is that its operational tempo is too high, running aging ships and their undermanned crews ragged. The consequences can be disastrous. In 2020, a devastating fire on the USS Bonhomme Richard forced the Navy to scrap the \$1.2 billion warship. An investigation found that training, maintenance and command failures allowed the fire to burn unnoticed for hours before it engulfed the ship. Just this year, six Navy commanders have been relieved of duty due to “loss of confidence.” In September, the USS Ronald Reagan was forced to delay its departure from Japan seven times, with one report claiming the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier’s repeated delay was due to a pipe rupture that left the ship without any fresh water supply.

The Navy’s shipyards aren’t in good shape either. Aging equipment and facilities, increasing material costs, schedule overruns, and high workforce turnover are handicapping the Navy’s ability to maintain its ships and submarines, leading to thousands of “delay days.” Along with maintenance backlogs, the Navy also isn’t building enough new ships to deter America’s adversaries. A recent Office of Naval Intelligence report noted that China’s shipbuilding capacity is now more than 200 times more capable than that of the U.S. These issues aren’t just confined to the surface fleet. The Pentagon is demanding delivery of at least two Virginia-class attack submarines a year, but capacity problems mean only 1.2 are built annually.

There are no easy solutions for the military’s mounting readiness issues, but the first step is to acknowledge that they exist. The core of America’s military remains strong. But if Pentagon leaders don’t address the military’s readiness problems soon, they might be in for a rude awakening about how much the joint force can handle.

Michael P. DiMino is a fellow at Defense Priorities, and a former career intelligence officer. His views are his own and do not represent those of the United States government. Matthew C. Mai is a research associate at Defense Priorities.

Are Americans getting richer? No, we owe it back.

By BRUCE YANDLE
Tribune News Service

A much-welcomed ray of sunshine descended on the news recently by way of a new report from the Federal Reserve Board. It seems that important measures of the net worth of U.S. households — our total assets minus total liabilities — rose markedly following the COVID pandemic. But before popping corks and celebrating, we should look a bit closer and recognize that the source of some of those gains may come back to haunt us.

First, let’s look at the good news. According to the Fed’s report, the median American household’s net worth, which is the level that evenly splits the income distribution of the nation, rose a whopping 37% from 2019 to 2022. This was more than double the largest increase recorded since the report was first published in 1989. Not only that, but there was hardly any increase in debt, whether for mortgages, credit cards or student loans.

The increase in net worth was not only large, but widely spread among the relatively rich and poor. In fact, the percentage growth was highest for poorer families and increases were tallied across races and ethnicities.

Make no mistake, there is a lot of genuinely good news in there — but the extent of it is almost too good to be true. Now, let’s take a second look. If you’ve paid close attention, you might not be completely surprised by this surge of well-being. After all, across 2020 and 2021, some 476 million payments totaling \$814 billion in federal financial relief went to households impacted by the pandemic. When that much money is spread around, some of it has to show up somewhere.

Happily, especially for future generations, not all the money got spent. Indeed, our savings increased. Some of it is currently propelling strong retail sales and some is still resting in our bank accounts.

Though the Fed report mentioned pandemic stimulus payments in passing, it gave no accounting for the increases in federal debt that funded them. Nor did it mention how this \$814 billion must eventually be paid off by the same American households who received it.

Let’s avoid that oversight. Consider that between 2019 and 2022, when household wealth was rising by 37%, the federal debt rose from \$22.7 trillion to \$30.8 trillion — a 35.6% increase. Some might say not to worry. After all, isn’t this debt we owe to ourselves? Well, most

of it. Of that amount, \$7.2 trillion was owed to foreign sources.

All of this suggests we might want to turn down the volume a bit when celebrating a suspiciously rapid rise in family net worth. After all, our government can print money by issuing new debt and shipping the resulting dollars to our bank accounts, creating what some call “helicopter money,” without accounting for the fact that somebody will have to pay it off. This can’t go on forever.

Eventually, maybe very soon, we must confront the debt we owe and begin to pay it off with some combination of higher taxes, fewer government services, or more inflation. The annual interest cost of the national debt alone is now \$659 billion, following Social Security, Medicare and the military as the fourth-largest item in the federal budget.

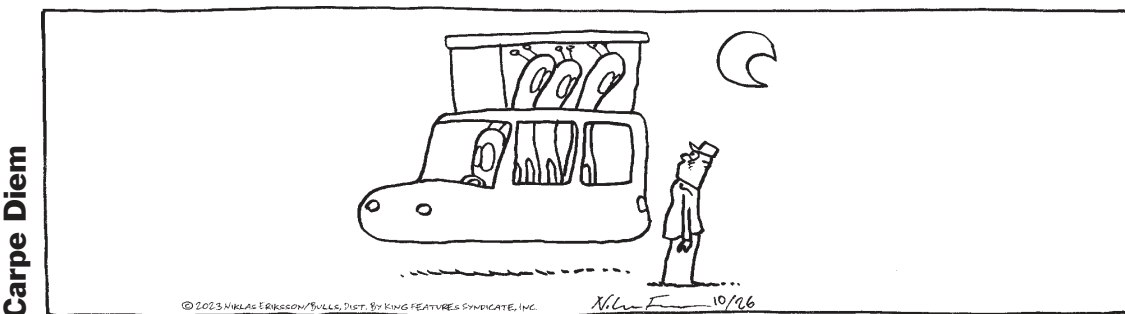
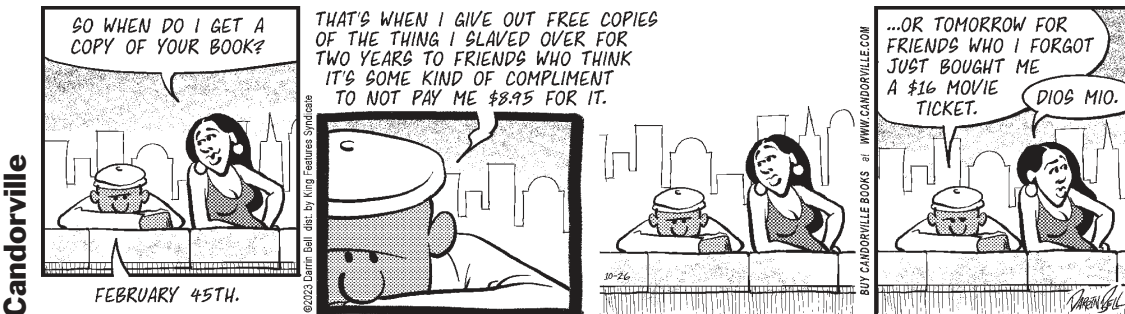
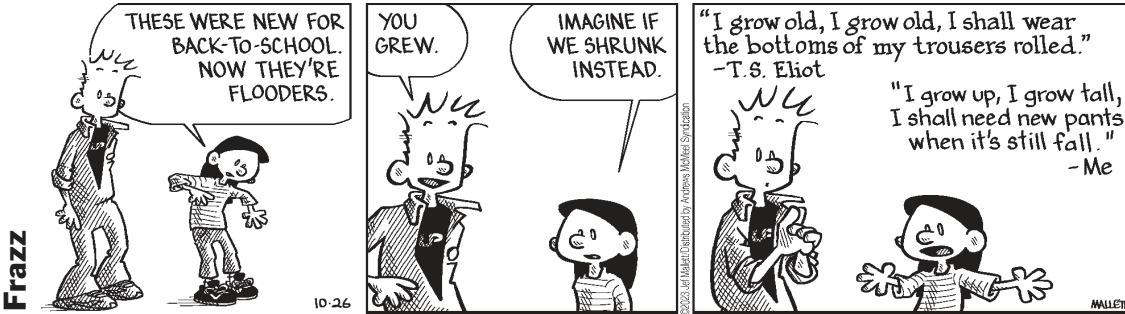
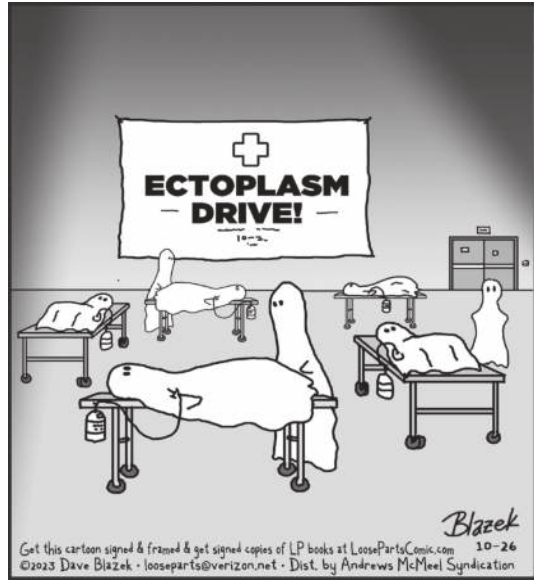
Like recent college graduates told by their parents that they now will be responsible for paying off their own credit card purchases, we high-net-worth people may eventually find out what happens when the buck stops with us.

Bruce Yandle is a distinguished adjunct fellow with the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, dean emeritus of the Clemson University College of Business & Behavioral Science, and a former Federal Trade Commission executive director.

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

Grid for Eugene Sheffer Crossword with numbers 1-56.

ACROSS

- 1 Male offspring
5 Obama predecessor
9 Prof's degree
12 "— a Kick Out of You"
13 Golden Rule word
14 Listener of preschool children
17 Historic period
18 eBay user
19 Everglades wader
21 Hesitant sound
22 "Catch my drift?"
24 Conks on the head
27 Muppet eagle
28 Russian refusal
31 Tavern
32 "— -ching!"
33 Refusals
34 Gator's kin
36 "You've got mail" ISP
37 Dance move
38 PC shortcut
40 "Little Women" woman
41 Firm belief
43 Go sour
47 Prefix with meter
48 Forest-inspired color
51 Despondent
52 Satan's forte
53 Hotel chain

- 54 Directional ending
55 Bicycle part
56 Fireplace fuel

DOWN

- 1 Tries the wine
2 Leer at
3 "Hud" actress Patricia
4 Phonograph needle
5 Duelist Aaron
6 Popular card game
7 Poker champ Ungar
8 Had aspirations
9 Henrik Ibsen play
10 Tortoise's opponent
11 "Phooey!" predecessor
16 Jewel
20 Martini liquor
22 Google rival
23 Lawyer Clooney
24 Telly network
25 Rowing need
26 Teen's formal attire
27 Cicatrix
29 Fair hirer, in ads
30 Recipe abbr.
35 Rotating part
37 Sad state
39 Cod and May vessel
41 Hand (out)
42 Scent
43 Ancient Brit
44 Showroom sample
45 Fallon
46 Author Bagnold
49 "— had it!"
50 Long of "Empire"

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Answer grid for previous puzzle with words like BOK, ESSO, MAID, etc.

10-26

CRYPTOQUIP

HZVY NQ Z IBKY AMNUYMNO
TNNLEHK TNHMYAM MZLEHK
OJZTY YUYWP QNBW PYZWA:
MIY AEVYW NJPVOETA.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF PEOPLE CAN CHOOSE ANY SHIPPING CASES THAT THEY PREFER, HAVE THEY BEEN GIVEN CRATE BLANCHE?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals G

SCOREBOARD/SPORTS BRIEFS

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL AMERICAN CONFERENCE East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Miami	5	2	0	.714	240	187
Buffalo	4	3	0	.571	198	118
N.Y. Jets	3	3	0	.500	113	119
New England	2	5	0	.286	101	177

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Jacksonville	5	2	0	.714	173	146
Houston	3	3	0	.500	135	113
Indianapolis	3	4	0	.429	178	191
Tennessee	2	4	0	.333	104	117

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	5	2	0	.714	171	97
Cleveland	4	2	0	.667	134	115
Pittsburgh	4	2	0	.667	103	127
Cincinnati	3	3	0	.500	100	127

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	6	1	0	.857	178	105
Las Vegas	3	4	0	.429	112	161
L.A. Chargers	2	4	0	.333	144	155
Denver	2	5	0	.286	148	217

NATIONAL CONFERENCE East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	6	1	0	.857	186	141
Dallas	4	2	0	.667	154	100
Washington	3	4	0	.429	140	190
N.Y. Giants	2	5	0	.286	85	174

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	4	3	0	.571	115	133
Tampa Bay	3	3	0	.500	103	104
New Orleans	3	4	0	.429	133	127
Carolina	0	6	0	.000	112	186

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Detroit	5	2	0	.714	174	151
Minnesota	3	4	0	.429	151	152
Green Bay	2	4	0	.333	130	132
Chicago	2	5	0	.286	158	188

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
San Francisco	5	2	0	.714	201	109
Seattle	4	2	0	.667	144	118
L.A. Rams	3	4	0	.429	155	141
Arizona	1	6	0	.143	127	182

Thursday, Oct. 19

Jacksonville 31, New Orleans 24

Sunday, Oct. 22

Atlanta 16, Tampa Bay 13
Baltimore 38, Detroit 6
Chicago 30, Las Vegas 12
Cleveland 39, Indianapolis 38
N.Y. Giants 14, Washington 7
New England 29, Buffalo 25
Pittsburgh 24, L.A. Rams 17
Seattle 20, Arizona 10
Denver 19, Green Bay 17
Kansas City 31, L.A. Chargers 17
Philadelphia 31, Miami 17

Open: Cincinnati, Houston, N.Y. Jets, Tennessee, Carolina, Dallas

Monday, Oct. 23

Minnesota 22, San Francisco 17

Thursday's game

Tampa Bay at Buffalo

Sunday's games

Atlanta at Tennessee
Houston at Carolina
Jacksonville at Pittsburgh
L.A. Rams at Dallas
Minnesota at Green Bay
N.Y. Jets at N.Y. Giants
New England at Miami
New Orleans at Indianapolis
Philadelphia at Washington
Cleveland at Seattle
Baltimore at Arizona
Cincinnati at San Francisco
Kansas City at Denver
Chicago at L.A. Chargers

Monday's game

Las Vegas at Detroit

NFL injury report

NEW YORK — The National Football League injury report, as provided by the league (OUT: Player will not play; DOUBTFUL: Player is unlikely to play; QUESTIONABLE: Player is not certain to play; DNP: did not practice; LIMITED: limited participation; FULL: Full participation):

Thursday

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS at **BUFFALO BULLS** — TAMPA BAY: DNP: G Matt Feiler (knee), S Kaevon Merriweather (ankle), DT Vita Vea (groin). LIMITED: WR Chris Godwin (neck), QB Baker Mayfield (knee). FULL: RB Chase Edmonds (knee). **BUFFALO:** DNP: TE Dawson Knox (wrist), TE Quintin Morris (ankle), LB Baylon Spector (hamstring). LIMITED: LB Von Miller (NIR-resting player/knee), DT Ed Oliver (toe), DT Jordan Phillips (back). FULL: QB Josh Allen (right shoulder), LB Terrel Bernard (knee), T Spencer Brown (knee), CB Kaiir Elam (ankle).

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Scores

Tuesday's games
SOUTH
New Mexico St. 27, Louisiana Tech 24
Liberty 42, W. Kentucky 29

Schedule

Wednesday's games
SOUTH
Jacksonville St. (6-2) at FIU (4-4)

SOUTHWEST
UTEP (2-6) at Sam Houston St. (0-7)

Thursday's games
EAST
LIU Brooklyn (1-6) at CCSU (3-4)

SOUTH
Georgia St. (6-1) at Georgia Southern (5-2)

Syracuse (4-3) at Virginia Tech (3-4)
SC State (3-4) at NC Central (6-1)

Friday's games
EAST
Brown (3-3) at Penn (5-1)

SOUTH
FAU (3-4) at Charlotte (2-5)

PRO SOCCER

MLS playoffs

Wild Card
Wednesday, Oct. 25
Charlotte at New York Red Bulls
San Jose at Sporting KC

First Round
Best-of-three
Western Conference

St. Louis vs. Sporting KC-San Jose winner
Game 1: Sunday at St. Louis
LAFc vs. Vancouver

Game 1: Saturday at LAFc
Houston vs. Real Salt Lake

Game 1: Sunday at Houston
Seattle vs. Dallas

Game 1: Monday at Seattle
Eastern Conference

Cincinnati vs. Red Bulls-Charlotte winner
Game 1: Sunday at Cincinnati
Columbus vs. Atlanta

Game 1: Nov. 1 at Columbus
Philadelphia vs. New England

Game 1: Saturday at Philadelphia
Orlando City vs. Nashville

Game 1: Monday at Orlando

NWSL

Playoffs
Quarterfinals
Friday, Oct. 20
OL Reign 1, Angel City FC 0

Sunday, Oct. 22
Gotham FC 2, North Carolina 0

Semifinals
Sunday, Nov. 5
Gotham FC at Portland
OL Reign at San Diego

Championship
Saturday, Nov. 11
At Snap Dragon Stadium
San Diego

Semifinal winners

TENNIS

Swiss Indoors Basel

Tuesday
At St. Jakobshalle
Basel, Switzerland
Purse: Euro 2,169,000
Surface: Hardcourt indoor

Men's Singles
Round of 32
Dominic Stricker, Switzerland, def. Benjamin Hassan, Lebanon, 7-6 (2), 6-2.

Tallon Griekspoor, Netherlands, def. Thiago Seyboth Wild, Brazil, 7-6 (4), 2-6, 6-3.

Hubert Hurkacz (4), Poland, def. Dusan Lajovic, Serbia, 7-6 (2), 6-3.

Alex de Minaur (5), Australia, def. Diego Schwartzman, Argentina, 6-4, 6-4.

Holger Rune (1), Denmark, def. Miomir Kecmanovic, Serbia, 1-6, 7-5, 6-3.

Alexander Shevchenko, Russia, def. Stan Wawrinka, Switzerland, 6-3, 7-6 (8).

Nicolas Jarry (7), Chile, def. Adrian Panarino, France, 7-6 (6), 6-7 (2), 6-4.

Erste Bank Open

Tuesday
At Wiener Stadthalle
Vienna
Purse: Euro 2,409,835
Surface: Hardcourt indoor

Men's Singles
Round of 32
Tommy Paul (6), United States, def. Alexandre Muller, France, 6-3, 6-1.

Tomas Machac, Czech Republic, def. Aleksandar Vukic, Australia, 6-3, 6-1.

Andrey Rublev (3), Russia, def. Alexei Popyrin, Australia, 7-6 (5), 6-4.

Frances Tiafoe (7), United States, def. Daniel Evans, Britain, 1-4, ret.

Stefanos Tsitsipas (4), Greece, def. Dominic Thiem, Austria, 7-6 (5), 6-4.

Lorenzo Sonego, Italy, def. Francisco Cerundolo, Argentina, 6-4, 5-7, 6-2.

AP SPOTLIGHT

Oct. 26
1951 — Joe Louis loses his last fight, an eighth-round TKO to Rocky Marciano at New York's Madison Square Garden. Marciano knocks Louis down with a left hook in the eighth round. Louis gets to one knee at the count of three and takes an eight-count before getting up. Marciano ends the fight with a right that sends Louis

DEALS

Tuesday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Sent C Tyler Cropley outright to Omaha (IL).

OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Claimed LHP Anthony Kay off waivers from the New York Mets.

National League
NEW YORK METS — Sent C Michael Perez, SS Jonathan Arauz and Danny Mendick, OF Rafael Ortega and RHP Vinny Nitoli outright to Syracuse (IL).

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association

CHARLOTTE HORNETS — Signed G Ish Smith. Waived G Edmond Sumner.

HOUSTON ROCKETS — Waived G Trevor Huddings.

PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS — Waived C Ibou Badji.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

ARIZONA CARDINALS — Promoted TE Blake Whiteheart from the practice squad to the active roster. Placed TE Zach Ertz on injured reserve. Released S K'Von Wallace and CB Quavian White from the practice squad.

ATLANTA FALCONS — Promoted DT La-Cale London from the practice squad to the active roster. Released DT Ali Ankou from the practice squad.

CAROLINA PANTHERS — Signed OLB Luiji Vilain from the Minnesota practice squad and OL Brett Toth from the Philadelphia practice squad. Reinstated G Austin Corbett from injured reserve. Placed S Jeremy Chinn, OLB Yetur Gross-Matos and TE Giovanni Ricci on injured reserve. Released G Justin McCray from the practice squad.

CLEVELAND BROWNS — Signed RB Jordan Wilkins to the practice squad.

DALLAS COWBOYS — Signed TE Eric Saubert, LB Buddy Johnson and Gs Chris Glaser and Adam Pankey to the practice squad.

DETROIT LIONS — Released WR Marvin Jones. Placed RB Mohamed Ibrahim on injured reserve. Signed RB Jermar Jefferson to the practice squad.

HOUSTON TEXANS — Re-signed LB Cory Littleton. Signed CB D'Angelo Ross to the practice squad.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Signed DT Ross Blacklock to the practice squad. Released S Henry Black from the practice squad.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Re-signed QB Nathan Rourke to the practice squad.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Signed DT Mike Pennel to the practice squad. Released WR Daniel Arias from the practice squad.

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Signed LB Darius Harris and K James McCourt to the practice squad. Released TE John Samuel Shenker and LB Mykal Walker from the practice squad. Released TE Noah Togiai from the practice squad injured reserve.

LOS ANGELES RAMS — Released K Brett Maher.

MIAMI DOLPHINS — Reinstated CB Nik Needham off the physically unable to perform (PUP) list. Placed OL Isaiah Wynn on injured reserve.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Waived QB/WR Malik Cunningham. Released DE Trey Flowers.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Signed G Tommy Kraemer to the practice squad. Released TE J.P. Holtz from the practice squad. Reinstated LB Ryan Connelly from the practice squad injured reserve.

NEW YORK GIANTS — Signed RB Jashaun Corbin. Signed OLB Justin Hollins to the practice squad. Placed RB Eric Gray and T Matt Peart on injured reserve. Claimed RB Deon Jackson off waivers from Cleveland.

NEW YORK JETS — Reinstated DB Jarrick Bernard-Converse from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list. Signed WR Lance McCutcheon to the practice squad. Released S Tyreque Jones from the practice squad. Waived LB Hamsah Nasirilddeen.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Signed DT Noah Ellis and LB Brandon Smith to the practice squad.

PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Signed LB Caleb Johnson and TE Scotty Washington to the practice squad. Released OL Obinna Eze and TE Noah Gindorff from the practice squad.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Signed S Tayler Hawkins to the practice squad. Released S Tre Norwood from the practice squad.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Signed LB Joe Jones and RB Jonathan Ward to the practice squad. Released RB Jacques Patrick from the practice squad.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League

CAROLINA HURRICANES — Recalled D Dylan Coughlin from Springfield (AHL).

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS — Activated C Philipp Kurashev from injured reserve.

FLORIDA PANTHERS — Recalled F Mackie Samoskevich from Charlotte (AHL).

MONTREAL CANADIENS — Recalled D Gustav Lindstrom from Laval (AHL) as an emergency backup goaltender (EBUG).

NASHVILLE PREDATORS — Reassigned F Nolan Burke from Milwaukee (AHL) to Atlanta (ECHL).

WASHINGTON CAPITALS — Returned G Clay Stevenson to Hershey (AHL). Recalled G Hunter Shepard from Hershey.



GERALD HERBERT/AP

Army quarterback Champ Harris pitches the ball during Saturday's game against LSU. The Black Knights are moving to the American Athletic Conference as a football-only member starting in 2024.

BRIEFLY

Sources: AAC adds Army for football

Associated Press

The American Athletic Conference voted unanimously to add Army as a football-only member starting in 2024, two people with direct knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

The people spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because a formal announcement was still in the works. AAC Commissioner Mike Aresco was planning to attend a news conference at West Point, N.Y., with school officials later Wednesday.

Army will replace SMU, which is moving to the Atlantic Coast Conference, to keep the American a 14-team football league. The move puts Army and Navy football in the same conference, but their traditional, end-of-the-season, standalone matchup will remain a nonconference game so it can be played after conference championships.

Army mostly competes in the Patriot League, but it has been an independent in football for most of the program's existence. The Black Knights competed in Conference USA from 1998-2004 and never won more than three football games in a season.

Michigan sign-stealing investigation intensifies

Tickets for the last two Southeastern Conference championship games were purchased in the name of a suspended Michigan football staffer who is the focus of an NCAA investigation into an alleged sign-stealing scheme, a person with direct knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The person, speaking on condition of anonymity because no one was authorized to speak publicly

about an open NCAA investigation, said electronic records revealed Connor Stallions bought tickets to the games at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

ESPN was first to report that in addition to tickets being purchased in Stallions' name to multiple games involving most of Michigan's Big Ten rivals over the past three years, he also bought tickets to the games of several potential College Football Playoff opponents for the Wolverines.

Melvin leaving Padres for Giants, sources say

SAN FRANCISCO — The San Francisco Giants have hired manager Bob Melvin away from the division rival San Diego Padres, three people with direct knowledge of the agreement said Tuesday.

The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither team had made a formal announcement about the move. The Athletic first reported Melvin was the Giants' choice.

The 61-year-old Melvin will be returning to the Bay Area where he grew up cheering the Giants. He later played for them and then managed the Oakland Athletics from 2011-21. An introductory news conference was planned for Wednesday.

Melvin had one year left on his contract with San Diego but leaves amid reports of friction with general manager A.J. Preller. Melvin managed the Padres for two seasons, reaching the 2022 NL Championship Series but then missing the playoffs this season with a \$258 million payroll, the third-highest in the majors. It's unclear if the Padres will receive compensation.

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	6	6	0	0	12	19	7
Detroit	7	5	1	1	11	34	20
Toronto	6	4	2	0	8	23	20
Tampa Bay	7	3	2	2	8	23	24
Montreal	6	3	2	1	7	18	21
Ottawa	6	3	3	0	6	25	21
Florida	6	3	3	0	6	17	18
Buffalo	7	3	4	0	6	19	22

Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Rangers	6	4	2	0	8	18	13
New Jersey	5	3	1	1	7	20	17
Philadelphia	6	3	2	1	7	18	16
Columbus	6	3	2	1	7	17	19
Carolina	7	3	4	0	6	28	33
N.Y. Islanders	5	2	2	1	5	13	17
Pittsburgh	6	2	4	0	4	17	20
Washington	5	1	3	1	3	7	19

Western Conference							
Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	6	6	0	0	12	28	12
Dallas	5	4	0	1	9	16	11
Minnesota	6	3	2	1	7	25	25
Winnipeg	6	3	3	0	6	20	23
Arizona	6	3	3	0	6	16	15
Nashville	7	3	4	0	6	20	19
St. Louis	5	2	2	1	5	11	15
Chicago	7	2	5	0	4	14	21

Pacific Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	7	7	0	0	14	28	13
Vancouver	6	4	2	0	8	23	15
Los Angeles	6	3	2	1	7	27	22
Calgary	7	2	4	1	5	17	26
Seattle	7	2	4	1	5	16	25
Anaheim	6	2	4	0	4	14	17
Edmonton	6	1	4	1	3	17	27
San Jose	6	0	5	1	1	8	23

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Tuesday's games

Toronto 4, Washington 1
Buffalo 6, Ottawa 4
Tampa Bay 3, Carolina 0
New Jersey 5, Montreal 2
Dallas 4, Pittsburgh 1
Florida 3, San Jose 1
Colorado 7, N.Y. Islanders 4
Seattle 5, Detroit 4, OT
Anaheim 3, Columbus 2, OT
Winnipeg 4, St. Louis 2
Boston 3, Chicago 0
Minnesota 7, Edmonton 4
Vancouver 3, Nashville 2
N.Y. Rangers 3, Calgary 1
Los Angeles 6, Arizona 3
Vegas 3, Philadelphia 2

Wednesday's games

Washington at New Jersey

Thursday's games

Anaheim at Boston
Colorado at Pittsburgh
Columbus at Montreal
San Jose at Tampa Bay
Seattle at Carolina
Winnipeg at Detroit
Minnesota at Philadelphia
Ottawa at N.Y. Islanders
Toronto at Dallas
N.Y. Rangers at Edmonton
St. Louis at Calgary

Friday's games

Chicago at Vegas
Buffalo at New Jersey
Minnesota at Washington
San Jose at Carolina
Los Angeles at Arizona
St. Louis at Vancouver

Saturday's games

Anaheim at Philadelphia
Seattle at Florida
Detroit at Boston
N.Y. Islanders at Columbus
Ottawa at Pittsburgh
Toronto at Nashville
Winnipeg at Montreal
N.Y. Rangers at Vancouver
Vegas at Los Angeles

Scoring leaders

Through Tuesday				
	GP	G	A	PTS
Dylan Larkin, DET	7	4	10	14
Jack Hughes, NJ	5	4	10	14
Alex DeBrincat, DET	7	9	4	13
Mikko Rantanen, COL	6	5	7	12
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	6	4	7	11
Elias Pettersson, VAN	6	2	8	10
John Tavares, TOR	6	3	7	10

ROUNDUP

Avs top Isles, win sixth straight

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mikko Rantanen scored the tiebreaking goal in the third period and had three assists as the Colorado Avalanche beat the New York Islanders 7-4 on Tuesday night for their NHL-record 15th straight road win.

Ryan Johansen scored twice, Cale Makar had a goal and an assist, and Bowen Byram, Nathan MacKinnon and Ross Colton also scored for Colorado, which won its sixth straight to open the season. Valeri Nichushkin had two assists, and Alexandar Georgiev stopped 27 shots to also improve to 6-0-0 this season.

“It was a shooter’s night on both sides, a little bit of a strange game,” Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said. “But I did like the way we capitalized late. ... We are fortunate to be 6-0. The guys realize that. We are still trying to improve.”

The Avalanche’s winning streak, which includes the last 11 road games of last season, topped the previous mark of 14 set by Buffalo bridging the 2005-06 and 2006-07 seasons. They also matched the 2013-14 team for the best start (6-0-0) since moving to Colorado before the 1995-96 season — one win behind the 1985-86 Quebec Nordiques for tops in franchise history.

“We had a lot of chances and we were rewarded with a team win,” Colton said. “This was another step in the right direction. For us, it’s all about focus.”

Cal Clutterbuck had a goal and an assist, Kyle Palmieri and Simon Holmstrom also scored, and Noah Dobson and Jean-Gabriel Pageau each had two assists as the Islanders lost their third straight (0-2-1). Ilya Sorokin finished with 34 saves.

Maple Leafs 4, Capitals 1: Auston Matthews scored his seventh goal of the season, Joseph Woll made 36 saves and visiting Toronto handed Washington its fourth loss in five games.

Alex Ovechkin scored his first goal this season and 823rd of his NHL career, moving 71 back of Wayne Gretzky’s record. Ovechkin had a game-high 14 shots, including a failed penalty shot. Darcy Kuemper allowed four goals on the first 12 shots he faced and 17 overall.

Stars 4, Penguins 1: Thomas Harley and Wyatt Johnston scored in the third period and visiting Dallas beat Pittsburgh.

Trailing by a goal, Dallas countered with four straight scores. Jason Robertson scored for the first time this season and Evgenii Dadonov added a goal before third-period goals from Harley and Johnston.



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

The Colorado Avalanche’s Andrew Cogliano shoots past the New York Islanders’ Noah Dobson during the third period Tuesday in Elmont, N.Y. Colorado won 7-4, stretching its road winning streak to 15 games.

Lightning 3, Hurricanes 0: Jonas Johansson made 32 saves, Brayden Point had a goal and an assist, and host Tampa Bay sent Carolina to its third straight loss.

Alex Barré-Boulet and Nicholas Paul also scored for Tampa Bay. Johansson is filling in for Andrei Vasilevskiy, who had back surgery last month and is expected back in late November or early December.

Devils 5, Canadiens 2: Tyler Toffoli had a hat trick against his former team, leading visiting New Jersey past Montreal.

Alexander Holtz and Nico Hischier also scored for New Jersey, and Jack Hughes continued his hot start to the season with four assists. Vitek Vanecek stopped 27 shots.

Sabres 6, Senators 4: Jeff Skinner and Tage Thompson each scored twice and visiting Buffalo won on a night Ottawa honored former star goaltender Craig Anderson, who serves as a hockey liaison for its opponent.

Zemgus Girgensons and Alex Tuch also added goals for the Sabres. Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 34 saves.

Panthers 3, Sharks 1: Sam Reinhart extended his goal streak to five games, helping host Florida keep San Jose winless.

At 0-5-1, San Jose has matched the worst six-game start in franchise history. The Sharks also went 0-5-1 for one point through six games in 1993-94 — part of what became an 0-8-1 start.

Kraken 5, Red Wings 4 (OT): Jordan Eberle scored with 5 seconds remaining in overtime and visiting Seattle ended Detroit’s

Red five-game winning streak.

Eberle’s game-winner was set up by Jared McCann, who tied the game with a power-play goal with 1:22 left. Jaden Schwartz scored twice and Tye Kartye added a goal for the Kraken. Joey Daccord made 23 saves.

Bruins 3, Blackhawks 0: Matthew Poitras and Trent Frederic scored 56 seconds apart in the third period as visiting Boston beat Chicago to match the best start in franchise history.

The Bruins moved to 6-0 by closing out a perfect four-game trip in the franchise’s centennial season. Boston also won its first six games of the 1937-38 season.

Ducks 3, Blue Jackets 2 (OT): Frank Vatrano scored on a breakaway 2:40 into overtime and Lukas Dostal stopped 34 shots as Anaheim snapped a three-game skid with its first road win of the season, rallying to beat Columbus.

The Ducks twice erased one-goal deficits and pulled even with goals by Ryan Strome and Brett Leason on the way to their fifth straight win over Columbus.

Jets 4, Blues 2: Connor Hellebuyck stopped 18 of 20 shots to lead host Winnipeg past St. Louis.

Kyle Connor, Mason Appleton and David Gustafsson scored for the Jets, and Morgan Barrons added an empty-netter.

Wild 7, Oilers 4: Ryan Hartman scored three goals as part of a career-high-tying five-point game, and host Minnesota scored five times in the final period to beat Edmonton.

Joel Eriksson Ek and Mats Zuccarello also scored in the third for the Wild before Marcus Foligno

added an empty-netter. Marco Rossi and Hartman scored in the first period for Minnesota, and Filip Gustavsson finished with 25 saves.

Canucks 3, Predators 2: Phillip Di Giuseppe and Nils Hoglander scored early in the second period to lead visiting Vancouver past Nashville.

Ilya Mikheyev also scored, and Thatcher Demko made 15 saves as Vancouver won its second straight game.

Rangers 3, Flames 1: Defenseman Erik Gustafsson had a goal and an assist and visiting New York scored three times in the second period to beat Calgary.

Chris Kreider added his team-leading fifth goal and Alexis Lafreniere also scored for New York. Filip Chytil had two assists. Igor Shesterkin made 24 saves and improved to 3-2.

Kings 6, Coyotes 3: Kevin Fiala had a goal and an assist, Anze Kopitar scored on the power play and had an assist, and host Los Angeles defeated Arizona.

Trevor Lewis, Trevor Moore, Blake Lizotte and Adrian Kempe also scored for the Kings, who had been winless in their first three games on home ice. Pheonix Copley made 24 saves.

Golden Knights 3, Flyers 2: Shea Theodore blasted a shot from above the left circle with 32.5 seconds left to beat visiting Philadelphia and extend Vegas’ winning streak to seven games to open the season.

Ivan Barbashev and Paul Cotter also scored for the Knights and Jack Eichel had two assists. Logan Thompson made 26 saves.

NFL



GREG M. COOPER/AP

Bills quarterback Josh Allen and his slow-starting offense has scored just 10 points combined in the first half of their past three games. The Bills are 1-2 in those games, including Sunday's loss to New England.

Allen says he's to blame for Bills' offensive woes

BY JOHN WAWROW
Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — With so many chiming in on why the Buffalo Bills offense has been so sluggish of late, and blame being placed on everything and everyone from jet lag to coordinator Ken Dorsey, quarterback Josh Allen came up with a reason of his own on Tuesday.

It just might be him. Revealing he made the conscious decision last month to keep his emotions in check — “low positive,” the quarterback called it — following a season-opening dud and Week 2 domination, Allen wondered whether he’s reined himself in too much.

“I’ve been trying to find a zone where I get myself into throughout the game to try to stay as low as possible, because I feel like I perform better that way,” Allen said.

“If I could limit myself and my energy and my heart rate, I felt like I could maybe think a little bit more,” he added. “But, who knows? Maybe I need to think a little bit less and play football.”

While Allen has no intention of returning to his reckless, defender-hurdling, squeezing passes into double coverage old ways, the quarterback thinks a reset might be in order.

“Maybe I’ve got to be more upbeat and be a voice a little bit more loud — let my emotions show a little more,” he said as Buffalo (4-3) faces a short week in preparing to host the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (3-3) on Thursday night.



**Tampa Bay Buccaneers (3-3)
at Buffalo Bills (4-3)**
AFN-Sports
2:15 a.m. Friday CET
9:15 a.m. Friday JKT

Buffalo is in a desperate need of a spark, particularly involving a slow-starting offense that’s combined to score 10 points in the first half in its past three outings, capped by a 29-25 loss at New England.

The Bills are 1-2 over that span — rounded out by a 25-20 loss to Jacksonville at London’s Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and a 14-9 win against the New York Giants — and facing midseason questions as to whether the window of opportunity is closing on the three-time defending AFC East champions.

What’s befuddling is how the offensive slump immediately followed a three-game winning streak in which the Bills outscored their opponents by a combined margin of a 123-33 and capped by a 48-20 rout of division rival Miami.

Coach Sean McDermott placed the blame on everyone, including himself, by saying the team as a whole needs to return to dictating rather than reacting to what happens during a game.

Dorsey, facing intensifying

scrutiny, dismissed a question as to whether his offense was facing a crisis. And he declined offering insight on what’s gone wrong and what steps he might take to improve its production, whether it’s switching tempos to keep defenses off balance or having Allen attack the middle of the field more often.

In the first half of Buffalo’s past two games, Allen has attempted just six passes over the middle, four of them completions, including a touchdown negated by a penalty, with one incompletion and an interception.

Receiver Stefon Diggs said one way to build momentum is enjoying some success on opening drives.

“Us in a rhythm is scary, you know what I’m saying? Once we get going, we get going,” Diggs said. “We just got to get going.”

The Bills’ starts have been going nowhere. Over its past three games, Buffalo’s first drives have combined for 11 yards on seven plays, and ended with two punts and a first-snap interception last weekend.

Buffalo’s been much better in rallying to score a combined 42 points in its past three fourth quarters. But it’s only resulted in one win, which came down to Buffalo’s defense stopping the Giants at the 1 on an untimed down.

“It’s frustrating when you can’t score. So the fun’s not there when you’re not doing what you work all week to do,” receiver Gabe Davis said.

Weekly statistics

AFC individual leaders					
Quarterbacks					
	Att	Com	Yds	TD	Int
Tagovailoa, Mia	229	163	2092	15	6
Mahomes, KC	266	185	2017	15	6
J.Allen, Buf	246	174	1841	15	7
Stroud, Hou	213	127	1660	9	1
Lawrence, Jac	239	161	1643	8	3
Jackson, Bal	200	142	1610	8	3
Herbert, LAC	212	142	1592	10	4
Wilson, Den	214	142	1499	13	4
Mac.Jones, NE	231	154	1480	7	7
Pickett, Pit	184	112	1257	5	4

Rushers					
	Att	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Moss, Ind	114	523	4.6	56t	4
Etienne, Jac	127	504	4.0	35t	7
Mostert, Mia	84	474	5.6	49	9
Bre.Hall, NYJ	66	426	6.5	83	2
Henry, Ten	98	425	4.3	63	3
Cook, Buf	88	419	4.8	36	1
Pacheco, KC	100	419	4.2	48t	3
Mixon, Cin	96	366	3.8	22	1
Jackson, Bal	69	363	5.3	26	5
Jacobs, Las	118	347	2.9	24	2

Receivers					
	No	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
T.Hill, Mia	53	902	17.0	69t	7
Diggs, Buf	55	678	12.3	55t	6
K.Allen, LAC	46	574	12.5	42	4
Chase, Cin	50	556	11.1	63t	3
N.Collins, Hou	29	547	18.9	52t	3
Adams, Las	46	528	11.5	32t	3
Kelce, KC	48	525	10.9	53	4
Pickens, Pit	27	500	18.5	71t	2
Pittman, Ind	42	489	11.6	75t	2
Kirk, Jac	39	474	12.2	45	3

Punters					
	No	Yds	Lg	Avg	
Stonehouse, Ten	23	1186	74	51.6	
Cole, Las	22	1103	70	50.1	

Scoring					
Touchdowns					
	TDRush	Rec	Ret	Pts	
Mostert, Mia	11	9	2	0	66
Achane, Mia	7	5	2	0	42

Kicking					
	PAT	FG	LG	Pts	
Butker, KC	19-19	15-15	60	64	
Fairbairn, Hou	12-12	17-18	43	63	

AFC team statistics					
AVERAGE PER GAME					
OFFENSE					
	Yards	Rush	Pass		
Miami	462.3	162.3	300.0		
Kansas City	396.7	111.3	285.4		
Buffalo	369.7	112.9	256.9		
L.A. Chargers	364.2	111.8	252.3		
Baltimore	362.6	145.0	217.6		
Indianapolis	361.1	124.0	237.1		
Houston	347.3	88.8	258.5		
Jacksonville	336.3	113.4	222.9		
Cleveland	319.2	147.5	171.7		
Denver	311.0	111.6	199.4		
New England	294.3	85.4	208.9		
Las Vegas	284.1	68.6	215.6		
Tennessee	283.5	110.3	173.2		
N.Y. Jets	277.0	117.5	159.5		
Pittsburgh	273.5	81.3	192.2		
Cincinnati	256.3	69.8	186.5		

DEFENSE					
	Yards	Rush	Pass		
Cleveland	243.0	93.8	149.2		
Baltimore	271.1	95.7	175.4		
Kansas City	294.6	105.7	188.9		
New England	311.3	100.7	210.6		
Las Vegas	316.4	129.0	187.4		
Buffalo	329.6	128.3	201.3		
Tennessee	339.0	102.0	237.0		
Miami	345.3	112.3	233.0		
Indianapolis	351.3	118.7	232.6		
N.Y. Jets	351.8	135.2	216.7		
Houston	354.0	108.5	245.5		
Jacksonville	354.4	80.6	273.9		
Cincinnati	355.8	142.8	213.0		
Pittsburgh	383.5	142.3	241.2		
L.A. Chargers	406.8	96.8	310.0		
Denver	424.7	167.3	257.4		

NFC individual leaders					
Quarterbacks					
	Att	Com	Yds	TD	Int
Cousins, Min	280	193	2057	16	5
Stafford, LAR	256	153	1908	7	6
Goff, Det	256	174	1898	11	4
Hurts, Phi	244	164	1821	9	8
Howell, Was	256	167	1749	9	7
Purdy, SF	193	131	1668	11	3
Ridder, Atl	228	149	1630	6	6
Carr, NO	255	163	1600	6	4
G.Smith, Sea	188	129	1391	7	4
Mayfield, TB	204	133	1363	8	4

Rushers					
	Att	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
McCaffrey, SF	125	598	4.8	65t	8
Swift, Phi	101	514	5.1	43	2
K.Williams, LAR	97	456	4.7	31	6
Walker, Sea	109	450	4.1	36	6
Robinson, Atl	81	404	5.0	38	0
Montgomery, Det	94	385	4.1	42t	6
Pollard, Dal	96	370	3.9	31	2
Conner, Ari	68	364	5.4	35	2
Mattison, Min	90	359	4.0	19	0
Robinson, Was	85	325	3.8	27	4

Receivers					
	No	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
A.Brown, Phi	52	809	15.6	59t	3
Nacua, LAR	58	752	13.0	37	2
Moore, Chi	40	636	15.9	58	5
Jefferson, Min	36	571	15.9	52t	3
St. Brown, Det	51	557	10.9	39	3
Aiyuk, SF	30	511	17.0	42	2
Thielen, Car	49	509	10.4	30	4
Lamb, Dal	34	475	14.0	49	1
Olave, NO	39	471	12.1	45	1
Evans, TB	30	468	15.6	70	4

Punters					
	No	Yds	Lg	Avg	
Camarda, TB	27	1427	74	52.9	
Anger, Dal	19	978	57	51.5	

Scoring					
Touchdowns					
	TDRush	Rec	Ret	Pts	
McCaffrey, SF	11	8	3	0	66
K.Williams, LAR	7	6	1	0	42

Kicking					
	PAT	FG	LG	Pts	
Elliott, Phi	17-18	17-19	61	68	
Maher, LAR	12-13	17-23	54	63	

NFC team statistics					
AVERAGE PER GAME					
OFFENSE					
	Yards	Rush	Pass		
Philadelphia	389.3	142.7	246.6		
Detroit	377.0	118.4	258.6		
L.A. Rams	365.1	112.0	253.1		
San Francisco	364.7	136.4	228.3		
Minnesota	354.9	74.9	280.0		
Atlanta	341.0	124.3	216.7		
Seattle	330.2	106.0	224.2		
Dallas	329.8	119.7	210.2		
New Orleans	326.0	98.1	227.9		
Chicago	324.3	141.3	183.0		
Arizona	319.9	139.0	180.9		
Washington	297.9	86.1	211.7		
Tampa Bay	297.7	77.8	219.8		
Carolina	294.7	98.0	196.7		
Green Bay	289.8	90.8	199.0		
N.Y. Giants	278.4	99.9	178.6		

DEFENSE					
	Yards	Rush	Pass		
Atlanta	285.4	95.3	190.1		
New Orleans	285.7	98.7	187.0		
Dallas	288.7	111.7	177.0		
Philadelphia	290.3	62.9	227.4		
San Francisco	302.9	79.3	223.6		
Detroit	316.9	76.3	240.6		
Seattle	322.2	87.2	235.0		
L.A. Rams	326.0	117.0	209.0		
Minnesota	330.3	105.6	224.7		
Green Bay	338.0	143.7	194.3		
Chicago	339.4	82.3	257.1		
Carolina	342.2	144.3	197.8		
Tampa Bay	342.5	95.8	246.7		
N.Y. Giants	351.4	137.3	214.1		
Arizona	368.3	130.7	237.6		
Washington	374.1	125.7	248.4		

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Ohio State's defense demands attention

By MITCH STACY
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Jim Knowles heard all the pre-game chatter about Penn State's nation-leading defense.

Ohio State's second-year defensive coordinator challenged his players to be meaner and more violent than the visitors from Happy Valley.

"I don't look at stats, but I guess Penn State had a pretty good defense," said Knowles, who was hired away from Oklahoma State before last season. "So we talked to (players) before the game about, 'Hey, you're not just playing Penn State's offense, you're playing Penn State's defense. If they make one play, we got to make two. If they make two, we got to make three.'"

He continued: "So it's a sense of maturity, leadership, yeah, maybe a little chip on your shoulder. We've done a lot of work to have everyone have faith in us for sure."

The Buckeyes defense responded, making big stops the whole game, including eight tackles for a loss and four sacks of Drew Allar, who was held to under 200 yards passing in Ohio State's 20-12 win Saturday.

No. 3 Ohio State (7-0, 4-0 Big Ten) recorded six pass breakups and four quarterback hurries. Penn State finished with just 49 yards rushing in losing to the Buckeyes for the seventh consecutive time.

Penn State (6-1, 3-1) was a stunning 1-for-16 on third down. That's



JAY LAPRETE/AP

Ohio State defenders force Penn State quarterback Drew Allar out of the pocket during the second half Saturday in Columbus, Ohio. Ohio State held Allar to less than 200 yards passing in their 20-12 win.

the worst third-down conversion rate by any AP-ranked team with a minimum of 15 third-down attempts in a game over the past 10 seasons, according to ESPN Stats and Info.

"Our defense won the game," Ohio State coach Ryan Day said. "They kept playing and they kept grinding. They did an unbelievable job."

The Buckeyes are surrendering an average of just over 260 yards

per game, which puts them fourth in the national rankings, behind Penn State, Air Force and Michigan, and 3.93 yards per play, second only to Penn State — still.

"I think it's a statement, but I think our biggest thing was being consistent and staying consistent," said defensive end JT Tuimolou, who had a sack and was frequently disruptive. "Not just showing up against big matchups. Showing up in every game."

Day's offense needed the assist.

The Buckeyes are still struggling to establish a running game, managing just 79 yards on the ground against Penn State and fewer than 2 per carry. No. 1 back TreVeyon Henderson was held out of the game with an unspecified injury. Miyan Williams got his first significant playing time this season and had 70 yards on 24 carries with a touchdown.

The difference was the passing



No. 3 Ohio State (7-0)
at Wisconsin (5-2)
AFN-Sports2
1:30 a.m. Sunday CET
8:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

of quarterback Kyle McCord (22-for-35, 286 yards and a touchdown) to All-America receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. (11 catches, 162 yards and a TD).

After 100-yard receiving games in five of Ohio State's seven games, Harrison is working his way into Heisman Trophy consideration.

"There's going to be ups and downs throughout the whole year," Harrison said. "You really can't get too low, and even with a game like this, you can't get too high afterwards."

Ohio State's win over Penn State and Michigan's blowout of Michigan State on Saturday leaves the Big Ten East rivals unbeaten and on a collision course for the Nov. 25 showdown at the Big House.

The Buckeyes play at Wisconsin (5-2, 3-1) on Saturday.

Injury news

Ohio State quarterback Devin Brown, who was injured on a red-zone run late in the third quarter, was seen after the game on crutches and wearing a protective boot on his right ankle.

James Madison looks to avoid another quick Top 25 exit

By HANK KURZ JR.
Associated Press

James Madison is back in the Top 25 after a 7-0 start to the season, and coach Curt Cignetti is confident the Dukes are better prepared for continued success this time.

A year ago, after starting 5-0 and being ranked No. 25 for the first time as a Bowl Subdivision program, they promptly lost three straight.

"I think last season we were ranked and then went down to Georgia Southern, there was a lot of hoopla around here," Cignetti said Monday, the day after the Dukes appeared in both the AP Top 25 and the coach's poll for the first time.

"We crossed that bridge a little bit when we played them last time because we were 5-0 again, the same matchup, and I thought we handled it much better."



Cignetti

On Oct. 14, this time at JMU's Bridgeforth Stadium, the Dukes rolled, 41-13.

"This team has learned the lessons from the past," Cignetti said. "It's very mature. One thing I'll say about this team is they have been extremely focused day in, day out and played with great effort and energy every Saturday."

After that skid last season, the Dukes won their last three, including a 47-7 blowout of then-No. 23 Coastal Carolina in what would have been a battle for the Sun Belt Conference's East Division title if the Dukes had been eligible during their FCS transition.

After that game, Queen's "We Are The Champions" blared over the PA system and Cignetti admitted he was "disappointed we didn't score 65."

This year, when they were picked to win the division but are again ineligible to play for the conference championship, he's not sure that bitterness is still evident.

"I don't know. I can't say that for sure," he said. "I think this



RYAN FISCHER, THE HERALD-DISPATCH/AP

James Madison's Jordan McCloud picks up yardage against Marshall on Oct. 19. The Dukes are ranked No. 25 in the latest AP poll.

team's really focused on taking care of business and doing something special."

The Dukes are 4-0 in conference play and coming off a 20-9 victory at Marshall, their first-ev-

er win against the Thundering Herd. Marshall finished with minus-4 rushing yards, the second Dukes opponent to finish with a negative rushing total. That was thanks in great measure to eight

sacks for minus-60 yards, including five by Jalen Green. Earlier, they held Troy to minus-12 yards.

The Marshall victory also made James Madison 4-0 on the road, including consecutive wins at Virginia, 36-35, on a touchdown pass with 55 seconds to play, at Troy, 16-14, and at Utah State, 45-38 after squandering a 24-point lead.

The Dukes play three of their next four games at home, beginning Saturday night against Old Dominion (4-3, 3-1), a team they beat for the first time just last year.

The ranking also marks the sixth consecutive season that a team from the Sun Belt has been ranked in the Top 25 during the season, and Appalachian State, Coastal Carolina, Troy and Louisiana have each finished ranked at least once.

"It gives us national exposure," Appalachian State coach Shawn Clark said. "It shows our strength as a conference to go play and be successful. It's not surprising that we have those teams in the top 25, and we'll continue to get more."

MLB PLAYOFFS

Stun: Marte wins MVP, sets NL hit streak record

FROM PAGE 24

The young Diamondbacks, who at 84-78 squeezed into the playoffs as the final NL wild card, completed their comeback from an 0-2 hole in the NLCS. They won Games 6 and 7 in Philadelphia, where the defending National League champions had been 12-2 over the past two postseasons — including 11-0 in NL playoff games.

“I’ve said it a million times, and I’ll say it again: A connected team is a very dangerous team,” Arizona manager Torey Lovullo said. “No matter what happened in those times of crisis, these guys stuck together.”

Diamondbacks second baseman Ketel Marte hit .387 with 12 hits, four doubles, a triple and a stolen base in the series to earn NLCS MVP honors. His 19 hits in a single postseason are a club record.

“There was times this year where it was, like, how do you even pitch this guy? He is kind of back in that mode right now. It’s special to watch,” Carroll said.

Marte has hit safely in all 16 career postseason games, the longest streak in NL history and second in major league annals to Derek Jeter’s 17-game postseason hitting streak for the Yankees.

Rookie starter Brandon Pfaadt struck out seven, and five relievers combined on five scoreless innings of one-hit ball for the surprising NL pennant winners.

“They played great baseball,” Phillies slugger Kyle Schwarber said. “There’s no way around it. Everyone’s got a sick feeling in their stomach. It’s not the way we pictured this thing ending.”

Bryce Harper and the rest of the Phillies are forced to ponder this offseason how they let a second

straight World Series trip slip away. Philadelphia returned home one win from another pennant but couldn’t close it out, falling behind early in Game 6 and then losing the first Game 7 in the 141-year history of the franchise.

Kevin Ginkel, the fourth reliever for Arizona, showed his mettle with an absolutely gutsy performance in the seventh. After left-hander Andrew Saalfrank walked consecutive batters with one out, Ginkel entered and retired Trea Turner and Harper on flyouts to center field.

Ginkel then struck out all three hitters in the eighth, and Paul Sewald pitched a perfect ninth for his sixth save this postseason.

With that, Arizona’s bullpen slammed the door on Philadelphia’s powerful lineup — and shushed Phillies fans who had made Citizens Bank Park one of the loudest stadiums in baseball.

“That’s a good club, and they really played well. You come into this building and beat us twice in this type of atmosphere, you’re doing some things right,” Thomson said. “They pitched well. They really did.”

Again, the Diamondbacks struck first when Christian Walker grounded into a fielder’s choice against Phillies starter Ranger Suárez in the first inning for a 1-0 lead. It may have seemed like a rather innocuous run. But Arizona was already 5-0 this postseason when it scored first and the run — much as the Diamondbacks did with a three-run second in Game 6 — deflated a boisterous crowd that came prepped for a clinch.

Well, Phillies fans did see one.

Just not the pennant winner they paid to watch at Citizens Bank Park.



MATT SLOCUM/AP

The Phillies’ Bryce Harper reacts after flying out to end the seventh inning Tuesday against the Arizona Diamondbacks in Game 7 of the NL Championship Series in Philadelphia. Harper went 0-for-4.

Phillies’ big bats go cold amid disappointing exit

BY DAN GELSTON
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Trea Turner had the moment that could have pushed the Phillies toward the World Series waiting for him. Philadelphia — with an electric offense grounded by strikeouts and unproductive at-bats — put the potential tying runs on base against Arizona’s bullpen in the seventh inning.

Here it was, the first Game 7 in the Phillies’ 141-year history, and Turner simply needed to keep the rally going as his team tried to erase a 4-2 deficit.

The \$300 million shortstop, whose middling season was rejuvenated by a manufactured standing ovation in August, flied out to center field against Kevin Ginkel.

No worries. Bryce Harper was up.

You know Bryce Harper, the master of the postseason stage?

The two-time NL MVP who sent the Phillies to the World Series a year ago with a go-ahead home run was in position to try to repeat the feat against Ginkel. The righty-against-lefty matchup seemed to favor Harper, who had two homers already in the NLCS among the scores of his previous clutch postseason hits. But this time he lofted a 2-1 fastball to center, ending the scoring threat and Philadelphia’s last, best chance to return to the World Series.

Turner and Harper never got going once the NLCS returned to Philadelphia, where raucous

Scoreboard

Playoffs

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES (Best-of-seven) American League Texas 4, Houston 3

Texas 2, Houston 0
Texas 5, Houston 4
Houston 8, Texas 5
Houston 10, Texas 3
Houston 5, Texas 4
Texas 9, Houston 2
Texas 11, Houston 4

National League Arizona 4, Philadelphia 3

Philadelphia 5, Arizona 3
Philadelphia 10, Arizona 0
Arizona 2, Philadelphia 1
Arizona 6, Philadelphia 5
Philadelphia 6, Arizona 1
Arizona 5, Philadelphia 1
Tuesday: Arizona 4, Philadelphia 2

x-if necessary WORLD SERIES (Best-of-seven) Arizona vs. Texas

Friday: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Saturday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT

Saturday: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT

Monday: at Arizona, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Tuesday CET; 9 a.m. Tuesday JKT

Tuesday, Oct. 31: at Arizona, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Wednesday CET; 9 a.m. Wednesday JKT

x-Wednesday, Nov. 1: at Arizona, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Thursday CET; 9 a.m. Thursday JKT

x-Friday, Nov. 3: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Saturday CET; 9 a.m. Saturday JKT

x-Saturday, Nov. 4: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT

x-Sunday, Nov. 5: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Monday CET; 9 a.m. Monday JKT

x-Monday, Nov. 6: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Tuesday CET; 9 a.m. Tuesday JKT

x-Tuesday, Nov. 7: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Wednesday CET; 9 a.m. Wednesday JKT

x-Wednesday, Nov. 8: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Thursday CET; 9 a.m. Thursday JKT

x-Thursday, Nov. 9: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Friday CET; 9 a.m. Friday JKT

x-Friday, Nov. 10: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Saturday CET; 9 a.m. Saturday JKT

x-Saturday, Nov. 11: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT

x-Sunday, Nov. 12: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Monday CET; 9 a.m. Monday JKT

x-Monday, Nov. 13: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Tuesday CET; 9 a.m. Tuesday JKT

x-Tuesday, Nov. 14: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Wednesday CET; 9 a.m. Wednesday JKT

x-Wednesday, Nov. 15: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Thursday CET; 9 a.m. Thursday JKT

x-Thursday, Nov. 16: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Friday CET; 9 a.m. Friday JKT

x-Friday, Nov. 17: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Saturday CET; 9 a.m. Saturday JKT

x-Saturday, Nov. 18: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT

x-Sunday, Nov. 19: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Monday CET; 9 a.m. Monday JKT

x-Monday, Nov. 20: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Tuesday CET; 9 a.m. Tuesday JKT

x-Tuesday, Nov. 21: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Wednesday CET; 9 a.m. Wednesday JKT

x-Wednesday, Nov. 22: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Thursday CET; 9 a.m. Thursday JKT

x-Thursday, Nov. 23: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Friday CET; 9 a.m. Friday JKT

x-Friday, Nov. 24: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Saturday CET; 9 a.m. Saturday JKT

x-Saturday, Nov. 25: at Texas, AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT

ways want to have the moment, you always want to have the opportunity,” Harper said. “I think a lot of the guys on this team have had those moments, have had those opportunities. Reaching a little bit? Of course. But at the same time, we’ve been in those moments. Just didn’t get it done.”

This one will sting in Philly.

Blame the offense? Sure. Johan Rojas was perhaps the biggest of all the Game 7 rally-killers. Kyle Schwarber, Turner and Harper combined to go 1-for-11, and the trio was 1-for-20 in the final two games.

“I tried doing too much and put myself in bad counts,” Turner said.

Pin the collapse on the bullpen? Absolutely. The Diamondbacks used a walk-off single in Game 3 and a tying two-run homer late in a Game 4 win that wiped out an 0-2 NLCS hole.

The Phillies eventually turned to ace Zack Wheeler for the first relief appearance of his big league career. It might have meant more had Thomson turned to Wheeler in the fifth rather than let starter Ranger Suárez try to push through one more inning. Suárez instead gave up two runs that put the Diamondbacks ahead 3-2, and they never looked back.

“I told the club if you asked me two days ago, two weeks ago, two months ago if we would be going home tonight, I would have said no. So that’s how much belief I have in this club,” Thomson said.



MATT SLOCUM/AP

Arizona Diamondbacks second baseman Ketel Marte took home NLCS MVP honors with a .387 average in the series, recording 12 hits in seven games. His 19 hits in a single postseason are a club record.

NBA

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	0	0	.000	—
Brooklyn	0	0	.000	—
New York	0	0	.000	—
Philadelphia	0	0	.000	—
Toronto	0	0	.000	—
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	0	0	.000	—
Charlotte	0	0	.000	—
Miami	0	0	.000	—
Orlando	0	0	.000	—
Washington	0	0	.000	—
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	0	0	.000	—
Cleveland	0	0	.000	—
Detroit	0	0	.000	—
Indiana	0	0	.000	—
Milwaukee	0	0	.000	—
Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	0	0	.000	—
Houston	0	0	.000	—
Memphis	0	0	.000	—
New Orleans	0	0	.000	—
San Antonio	0	0	.000	—
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	1	0	1.000	—
Minnesota	0	0	.000	½
Oklahoma City	0	0	.000	½
Portland	0	0	.000	½
Utah	0	0	.000	½
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	1	0	1.000	—
L.A. Clippers	0	0	.000	½
Sacramento	0	0	.000	½
Golden State	0	1	.000	1
L.A. Lakers	0	1	.000	1
Tuesday's games				
Denver 119, L.A. Lakers 107				
Phoenix 108, Golden State 104				
Wednesday's games				
Atlanta at Charlotte				
Boston at New York				
Houston at Orlando				
Washington at Indiana				
Cleveland at Brooklyn				
Detroit at Miami				
Minnesota at Toronto				
New Orleans at Memphis				
Oklahoma City at Chicago				
Sacramento at Utah				
Dallas at San Antonio				
Portland at L.A. Clippers				
Thursday's games				
Philadelphia at Milwaukee				
Phoenix at L.A. Lakers				

Banner, rings, win for Nuggets

BY ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

DENVER — The bling and the banner were nice. What the Denver Nuggets really relished, though, was their opening defense of the franchise's first NBA title with a 119-107 win over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night.

"We can't think about last year too much," Jamal Murray said after the Nuggets followed the raising of their championship banner by dropping the hammer on the Lakers in the NBA's season opener, which featured Nikola Jokic's triple-double and LeBron James taking a few more breathers than normal.

Jokic said the Nuggets fed off the emotion from the pregame ceremony to jump out to an early 18-point lead, which held up even after the Lakers got within three points in the fourth quarter.

"I think we controlled the game the whole time," said Jokic, who had 29 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists.

Murray added 21 points, Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 20, Aaron Gordon had 15 and Michael Porter Jr. had 12.

All of LA's starters also scored in double figures, led by James' 21 points in 29 minutes — his playing time is being monitored at the start of his 21st season.

"It helps," Murray said with a smile.

James ended up playing about five fewer minutes than he's used to.

"I mean, I always want to be on the floor," James said, "especially when you got an opportunity to win a game or feel like you can make an impact. But I guess there's a system in place and I'll



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Nuggets center Nikola Jokic, left, looks to pass the ball as Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis defends during the first half of the season opener Tuesday in Denver. The Nuggets won 119-107.

follow it."

James, the league's oldest player at age 38, stressed, "I'm not surprised or upset" about the Lakers monitoring his minutes as the season gets going.

Taurean Prince scored 18 points his his debut for the Lakers, his fifth team in nine seasons. Anthony Davis had 17 points, Austin Reaves 14 and D'Angelo Russell 11.

The Lakers trailed by 18 early, but trimmed that deficit to 63-54 at halftime and used a 13-0 run spanning the third and fourth quarters to pull within 87-84 before Aaron Gordon stopped the run with a 3-pointer.

The Lakers never got closer.

After James' basket got Los Angeles within 103-96 with just over

five minutes remaining, the Nuggets called a timeout and came out of it with a 10-3 run featuring 3-pointers by Murray and Porter to put the Lakers away.

"We were trending in the right direction for a while there," Lakers coach Darvin Ham said. "Each quarter we had given up less and less, and then they just kind of blew the game open."

The Nuggets received their gold, diamond-encrusted championship rings — featuring a mini championship banner that rolls out from one side — in a pregame ceremony. Murray, wearing a microphone, told teammate Gordon, "I might play the first quarter with it!"

Nuggets coach Michael Malone relished one last hurrah over last

season's breakthrough before turning his attention entirely to this season.

"Jason of Beverly Hills, I want to thank them for some really nice hardware. And then at that point, I was like, 'Let's get the game going,'" Malone said of watching the banner rise to rafters at sold-out, shaking Ball Arena.

"And I was also thinking about my father. Just wish he was here."

Brendan Malone, the longtime coach and driving force behind the Detroit Pistons "Bad Boys" defenses in the late 1980s and early '90s, died earlier this month at age 81.

"So a lot of emotions tonight, but all really positive," Malone said, "and to end it with a win is a great way to start the season off."

Booker, Durant lead Suns past Warriors

BY JANIE MCCAULEY
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Kevin Durant greeted many of the people he knew so well during three sensational seasons with the Warriors, then hardly showed off his best shooting performance on a night the Golden State fans finally got to cheer him all these years later.

He still spoiled the home team's opening night as the Phoenix Suns won the first matchup between the Pacific Division powerhouses.

"It's always good to be recognized for the work you put in, so it was exciting to see people I hadn't seen in a while, some familiar faces," Durant said. "I feel like the fan base here got nothing but love and respect for me as an individual player and as a person. That's all I can ask for."

Devin Booker scored a go-ahead layup with 4:51 remaining followed by a 3-pointer on the way to 32 points in a 108-104 Phoenix victory on Tuesday night in a back-and-forth finish.

Stephen Curry scored 27 points to former shooting partner Durant's 18 on a night the Warriors welcomed KD back for his first game in front of Bay Area fans since he left after the 2019 NBA Finals.

Curry scored seven straight points early in the third to pull the Warriors within 64-61 at the 8:21 mark and Phoenix called a timeout. Golden State opened the third on a 27-5 burst while the Suns went 2-for-14.

Jusuf Nurkic had 14 points and 14 rebounds with a driving layup in the closing seconds in his Suns debut. Josh Okogie knocked down a baseline 3 with 1:09 to play and Eric Gordon connected from long range with 45 seconds left before Curry hit from deep.

Booker started and also had eight assists and six rebounds after coming into the game questionable with soreness in his left big toe. He made his first three shots and scored eight of the Suns' initial 13 points.

Durant was greeted with warm applause from the fans in their first time seeing him since he led the Warriors to a pair of cham-

pionships with two NBA Finals MVP awards and three straight Finals berths from 2017-19.

The Warriors played video highlights on the big screen during pregame introductions. Durant patted his heart and raised his arm in the air to acknowledge the love, then shot 7-for-22 with 10 rebounds.

"A lot of good moments in the video. We was able to relive some of those memories real quick," Durant said. "But it was good to come in here and get the season started off right with a W."

Durant played at Chase Center in February 2021 with Brooklyn when no fans were allowed in the building because of the COVID-19 pandemic, then was injured in March when the Suns last visited.

Chris Paul contributed 14 points, nine assists and six rebounds in his Warriors debut facing his most recent team. Golden State acquired him on draft night from the Wizards — he never played in Washington — for Jordan Poole.

Paul missed his first six shots and all six of

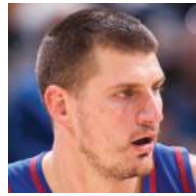


JEFF CHIU/AP

Phoenix Suns forward Kevin Durant, right, drives to the basket against Golden State Warriors guard Klay Thompson on Tuesday.

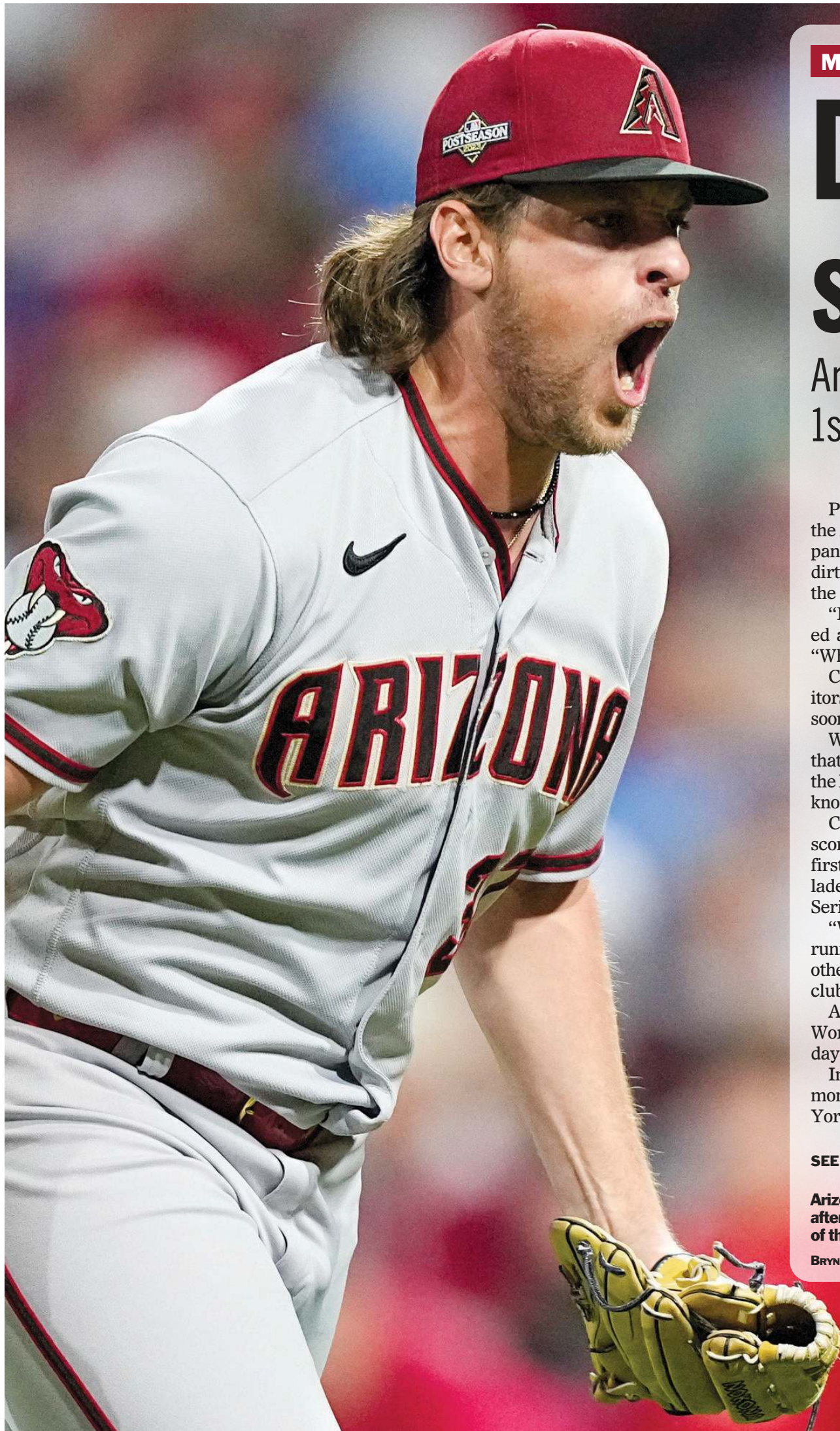
his 3-point tries, but had three early assists. "He's a rhythm player so he's really good at getting you the ball in spots you want it," guard Moses Moody said.

SPORTS



Mile-high bash

Nuggets celebrate last season's title, top Lakers in first game » **NBA, Page 23**



MLB PLAYOFFS

D-backs stun Phils

Arizona will face Texas in its 1st World Series since 2001

BY DAN GELSTON
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Corbin Carroll ducked late into the Arizona Diamondbacks' clubhouse with his uniform pants stained in dirt — two stolen bases will get a player dirty — but was otherwise clean when he was spotted by the rest of his bubbly-bathed teammates.

“Have yourself a Game 7!” jubilant teammates shouted as they chased down the breakout postseason star. “Why are you dry?”

Carroll had little room to escape inside a cramped visitors' locker room — not that he wanted to — and was soon doused with beer before a victory cigar followed.

World Series trips don't come often for this franchise that plays in the desert. So when it was time to celebrate, the Diamondbacks did it with the same vigor they used to knock off last year's NL champs.

Carroll went 3-for-4 with two RBIs and two runs scored, and Arizona advanced to the World Series for the first time in 22 years Tuesday night by stunning the Philadelphia Phillies 4-2 in Game 7 of the NL Championship Series.

“We did it! That's all I can say,” said Carroll, the front-runner for NL Rookie of the Year. “Just believe in each other, believe in our guys. We know what we have in that clubhouse, and it's special. We've known it all year.”

Arizona will play the Texas Rangers in an all-wild card World Series no one saw coming, with Game 1 set for Friday night at Globe Life Field.

In their only other trip to the Fall Classic, the Diamondbacks won a seven-game thriller against the New York Yankees in 2001.

SEE STUN ON PAGE 22

Arizona Diamondbacks relief pitcher Kevin Ginkel celebrates after striking out the side during the eighth inning of Game 7 of the NLCS against the Phillies in Philadelphia on Tuesday.

BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Sources: Army joining AAC for football » Sports briefs, Page 18

