BY CAITLIN DOORNBOSS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan

Daisy Morales was heartbroken Thursday when her husband, Ensign Matthew Morales, finally arrived back in port aboard the guided-missile cruiser USS Antietam after weeks at sea. Morales, like other Navy spouses, discovered there would be no welcoming kisses. No hugs. No holding hands or hoisting children and babies.

The U.S. military at home and abroad over the past two days has heightened restrictions on the movements of service members and their families, access to bases and warships and other measures, to curb the spread of coronavirus, now a global pandemic.

Nonetheless, Morales and other spouses came to the pier Thursday afternoon to sneak a peek at their loved ones.

SEE HEARTBREAKING ON PAGE 6

RELATED STORIES

USS Theodore Roosevelt pauses operations after sailors test positive
Page 8

Esper orders halt to movement overseas, raises threat level
Page 6

Some Army promotion boards move online
Page 5

Services vary on haircut policies
Page 7

3.3 million in US seek jobless aid

BY CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Nearly 3.3 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week — nearly five times the previous record set in 1982 — amid a widespread economic shutdown caused by the coronavirus.

The surge in weekly applications was a stunning reflection of the damage the viral outbreak is inflicting on the economy. Filings for unemployment aid generally reflect the pace of layoffs.

Layoffs are sure to accelerate as the U.S. economy sinks into a recession. Revenue has collapsed at restaurants, hotels, movie theaters, gyms, and airlines. Auto sales are plummeting, and car makers have closed factories. Most such employers face loan payments and other fixed costs, so they’re cutting jobs to save money.

As job losses mount, some economists say the nation’s unemployment rate could approach 13% by May. By comparison, the highest jobless rate during the Great Recession, which ended in 2009, was 10%.

“What seemed impossible just two weeks ago is now reality,” said Nancy Vanden Houten, an economist at Oxford Economics, a consulting firm. “The U.S. economy will experience the largest economic contraction on record with the most severe surge in unemployment ever.”

The economic deterioration has been swift. As recently as February, the unemployment rate was at a 50-year low of 3.5%. And the economy was growing steadily if modestly.

SEE JOBLESS ON PAGE 9

Release of Afghan, Taliban prisoners could begin next week » Page 3
Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. — A federal judge on Wednesday ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a full environmental review of the Dakota Access pipeline, nearly three years after it began carrying oil despite protests by people who gathered in North Dakota for more than a year.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg wrote that the ease-ment approval for the pipeline, did not immediately re-

and a more extensive review is necessary than the environmen-
tal assessment that was done.

Standing Rock Chairman Mike Faith called it a “significant legal win” and said it’s humiliating that the protests continue to “inspire national conversations” about the environment.

Officials with the Corps and Energy Transfer, which owns the pipeline, did not immediately re-

spend to phone messages left by

The Associated Press. Craig Ste-

vans, spokesman for the GAIN Coalition, a group that supports large infrastructure projects, said the decision could jeopardize the nation’s economic and energy security.

“This is a stunning decision that flies in the face of decades of widely accepted practice,” Stevens said in a statement. “The Dakota Access Pipeline is already the most studied, regu-

lated, and litigated pipeline in the history of our country and has been safely operating for nearly three years.”

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

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WEATHER OUTLOOK

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

**Afghan, Taliban prisoner release to start soon**

**BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN**
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Thousands of prisoners in Afghanistan could start being released by early next week, fulfilling a key condition of the nearly month-old U.S.-Taliban deal to bring the two countries closer to peace.

The long-planned transfer of the base, 40 miles south of Mosul, which was supposed to start before that, the Taliban and the government said they’d reach a compromise on the prisoner release, which was supposed to start more than two weeks ago, after holding a four-hour video conference facilitated by Washington.

The government agreed to release 100 Taliban prisoners by the end of March, the National Security Council said in a statement released after the video conference. Details of further releases would be announced in the coming days, the statement said.

“It was decided in the virtual meeting that the process of the prisoner release will practical start on March 31,” Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said in a tweet.

Members of the Taliban would visit Bagram prison — near the largest U.S. military base in Afghanistan — to identify detainees from its side that would be released, Shaheen said. He did not provide a timetable or number of Taliban prisoners who would be freed.

The U.S.-Taliban deal called for up to 5,000 Taliban and up to 1,000 detainees held by the insurgent to be freed by March 10, when intra-Afghan talks were supposed to begin. It spells out that freeing the prisoners and the intra-Afghan talks are conditions that must be filled if U.S. forces are to complete their withdrawal from Afghanistan by next spring.

But both the inmate releases and talks between the government and insurgents are behind schedule.

The Afghan government, which was sidelined from negotiations that led to the U.S.-Taliban deal, initially balked at the prisoner release, saying it wanted assurances that freed Taliban fighters would not return to battle.

The deal, which was signed in February, has been blamed for stalling the peace process by delaying the naming of a government delegation to hold talks with the Taliban, another key condition of the Feb. 29 deal between the U.S. and Taliban.

But on Wednesday the government published the names of its delegates to the intra-Afghan talks with the Taliban. Shortly before that, the Taliban and the government said they’d reach a compromise on the prisoner release, which was supposed to start more than two weeks ago, after holding a four-hour video conference facilitated by Washington.

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Guam Air Force base getting $260 million upgrades

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam — The Air Force is building more than $260 million worth of new facilities on Guam to support its largest aircraft, including transports, tankers and B-52 bombers, according to military officials.

Work is already underway at construction sites next to Andersen runway, where the hulking steel frames of several massive half-built hangars, whose contracts were awarded between December 2014 and February 2015, rise above the base.

One of the new facilities is a $132.6 million “Tanker General Purpose Maintenance Hangar,” 36th Wing spokesman Master Sgt. Richard Ebensberger said in an email Friday.

“This is a hardened facility, sized and configured to sustain critical missions,” he said.

The hangar, due for completion by July 2021, is designed to accommodate large planes such as the C-17 Globemaster III transport, the KC-46A Pegasus tanker and the B-52 Stratofortress bomber, as well as various types of jet fighters, he said.

“The hangar bay will support aircraft maintenance, repair and regularly scheduled inspections that require complete protection from the elements, to include routine maintenance and airframe repairs,” he said.

It will include space for command and administration, flight planning, aircrew briefing and debriefing, training and other activities that are necessary to keep a squadron mission capable during a contingency, Ebensberger said.

Nearby, workers are building a $128 million cast-in-place reinforced concrete fuel systems maintenance hangar with support space.

“The support space will provide heating, plumbing, ventilation, compressed air and fire detection and suppression,” Ebensberger said.

The facility, due for completion in June 2021, includes space to store spare parts, tools and hazardous materials, as well as administration areas.

“This hangar will provide a single aircraft parking bay and support personnel space,” he said.

It will support missions such as rotational bombers, fighters, tankers and RQ-4 Global Hawk drones, he said.

The work is in addition to $8.7 billion worth of Navy construction.

Supreme Court won’t hear case on Marine recruit’s death

BY MELISSA NANN BURKE
The Detroit News

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that it wouldn’t hear the case brought against the U.S. military by the parents of Raheel Siddiqui in 2017.

Siddiqui, 20, was on active duty when he was killed in an assault during basic training at Parris Island, S.C., because of his treatment by superiors, including the abuse of three Muslim recruits, including Siddiqui.

The family’s lawyer expressed disappointment after the order was published Tuesday.

“Young Muslims are a protected class under the Constitution and the military is obligated to provide them equal protection,” said attorney Shiraz Khan, Siddiqui family attorney.

The complaint argued that Marine recruiters misled Siddiqui by not warning him about the abuse of other Muslim recruits at Parris Island, and that military officials were negligent in failing to protect him once at the training depot, where Siddiqui died in March 2016 after falling three stories.

Siddiqui’s parents, Ghazala and Masood Siddiqui, argued that the government was also negligent by immediately declaring their son’s death a suicide without fully investigating the circumstances.

The family’s lawyer expressed disappointment after the order was published Tuesday.

“This case was an ideal opportunity for the court to address the injustice that the Feres doctrine has created and perpetrated for decades,” Khan said.

While we are disappointed that we will not have an opportunity to argue this case before the Supreme Court, our fight for justice is not over. Evidence has a way of speaking for itself, and we will be looking into the possibility of legislative solutions for the benefit of all Americans.

Khan had argued that the Feres doctrine did not apply to the case because Raheel Siddiqui had not yet started his active military service and was a civilian when he first started meeting with Marine recruiters in 2015.

The appeals court disagreed by arguing that “if Siddiqui’s death was incident to his military service, then a claim of negligent enlistment relating to his death is also barred by Feres.”

“There is no dispute that Siddiqui was on active duty when he died, and we conclude that his death during basic training falls squarely within the wide reach of the Feres doctrine,” Judge Jane B. Stranch wrote for a three-judge panel of the 6th Circuit.

Like the district court, the appellate panel criticized the Feres doctrine’s reliance on the military’s so-called “generous” no-fault compensation, saying that it’s outdated.

U.S. District Judge Arthur Tarnow in his November 2018 ruling said that the $100,000 death benefit and $400,000 life insurance payout that the Siddiquis received “are mere fractions of most wrongful death awards.”

The September 11th Fund’s awards for wrongful death ranged from $2 million to $3 million, Tarnow noted.

A Marine investigation into Siddiqui’s death recommended discipline against several Marine supervisors, including Gunnery Sgt. Joseph A. Felix Jr.

A military court last year affirmed Felix’s conviction and 10-year prison sentence for crimes including the abuse of three Muslim recruits, including Siddiqui.

Felix’s former supervisor, Lt. Col. Joshua Kosseon, pleaded guilty to charges including negligently returning Felix to work while he was under investigation for hazing another Muslim recruit.
Army says some promotions to be allowed online

By Corey Dickstein
Stars and Stripes
WASHINGTON — The Army will allow commanders to conduct some promotion boards by video conference and has suspended temporarily some requirements for enlisted soldiers to be promoted as it responds to the deepening coronavirus pandemic that has forced military posts to close to nonessential personnel.

The adjustments balance the need for the Army to continue to promote soldiers to ensure combat readiness while taking measures to protect the force from the virus, which has sickened at least 44 active-duty soldiers, Army officials said Wednesday.

“We are trying to get ahead and be proactive and creative,” said Sgt. Maj. Mark A. Clark, the Army’s director of military personnel management office. “We want commanders and soldiers to understand that we’re thinking about what’s best for them and what’s best for the Army all at the same time.”

The announcement came Wednesday, just one day after the Army advanced its health protection protocol at its installations worldwide to HPCON Charlie, the second-highest threat level. That condition restricts post access to essential personnel and forces installations to close many of their access points in an effort to keep much of its workforce at home.

Most of the temporary policy changes for promotion boards will begin in May and are expected to continue through fiscal year 2020, which ends Sept. 30. They could be extended further or halted sooner, depending on the impact of the coronavirus, Army officials said in a statement. The policies apply to active-duty and Reserve soldiers and exemptions for National Guard soldiers will be announced in the future, they said.

The Army will allow commanders to conduct so-called semi-centralized promotion boards for staff sergeants and sergeants first class via internet video communications, Clark said. The temporary change allows commanders to observe social distancing practices as public health officials have encouraged in an effort to slow the spread of the virus.

Clark said the service has provided commanders a way to determine precisely how to conduct the virtual promotion boards, such as through popular video teleconferencing software programs such as Skype or WebEx.

The service has also elected not to require professional military education courses typically needed by staff sergeants and sergeants first class to be selected for promotion. It will allow soldiers to use their most recent fitness test and weapons qualifications scores for their promotion boards, Clark said.

The temporary exemption to the professional military education course requirement applies to the Advanced Leader Course for staff sergeants and the Senior Leader Course for sergeants first class — does not mean soldiers will not attend those courses. They will be required to complete those courses in the future, Clark said.

Soldiers who have a record of completing their required education courses will be promoted before others who have not completed such courses, he said.

The Army Physical Fitness Test will remain a requirement for soldiers to be promoted, but because many units are not able to conduct such tests during the coronavirus pandemic, soldiers will be allowed to submit their most recent score for the board, Clark said.

The temporary policy change also means soldiers whose last APFT score is expired — fitness test scores are valid for one year — will not be deemed ineligible for promotion as long as the outbreak continues, he said.

The service is making a similar policy exemption to allow soldiers to submit their most recent weapons qualifications scores for their promotion boards regardless of when those scores were recorded, Clark said.

The service, Clark added, will continue to require promotion boards policies every 30 days throughout the coronavirus outbreak and provide the force further guidance as warranted.

Teresa Olivas prepares single face mask bags at a store in Upland, Calif., this month.

Defense firms work to make masks, ventilators – but will it be fast enough?

By Tara Copp
AND Michael Wilner
McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department has begun signing contracts with defense firms to ramp up production of ventilators and respirator masks in short supply around the country, but the medical equipment may not reach hospitals before coronavirus cases peak in the next few weeks, the Pentagon’s head of acquisition said.

“We will strive to do everything we can before June, but we have no data to address that now,” Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Ellen Lord said Tuesday at a media briefing at the Pentagon.

The fast-tracked production is being managed under the Defense Production Act, a law that gives the president authority to regulate critical national defense supplies by allowing him to prioritize contracts or provide loans, grants or other economic incentives to accelerate their production.

Through the DPA, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency will identify what items are needed and then DOD will place and manage orders. But only a few contracts have been executed so far.

Over the weekend, HHS signed a contract with five firms to produce N95 respirator masks, and DOD, under its DPA authority, will now work with those vendors to be able to produce the masks quickly and in large quantities, Pentagon spokesman Col. Mike Andrews said.

Asking why the ramp-up for mask production was so late in coming, when the Pentagon had known about the severity of the pandemic for weeks, Lord said the Pentagon had not yet been directed by HHS or FEMA on what were the specific needs.

“They have to give us the demand signal,” Lord said. “Once we get clarity on the demand signal we’ll evolve. If you’ll recall, FEMA just got the lead role on Friday.”

“This is all very new,” she said. “I know COVID-19] has been here for several weeks, but this coordination at this level of detail just started on Friday.”

Likewise, the military’s top medic was questioned Tuesday as to why DOD had not obtained more machines to process test kits for deployed forces and get a better picture of the virus’s spread among the military.

It will be weeks to months before the machines will be available, said Air Force Brig. Gen. Paul Friedrichs, surgeon general for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“We’d love to have had it in January, but we didn’t know the virus was going to be this big of an issue in January,” he said.

JOIN THE TEAM THAT FIGHTS FOR CHANGE

U.S. Army Special Operations Civil Affairs

VISIT GOARMYSOF.COM OR TEXT STRIPES TO 462-769

Over 60% of the U.S. Army workforce are civilians, serving in 22 different career fields.

DICKSTEIN.COREY@STARS.COM
Twitter: @CDicksteinDC
**By Corey Dickstein, Caitlin M. Kenny and Kat Bouza**  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Mark Esper has issued orders barring nearly all official movement for Department personnel overseas and instituted new health protection measures worldwide as the Pentagon attempts to slow the spreading coronavirus, which has sickened at least 600 people in the military community.

Esper’s stop-movement order applies to all service members, DOD civilians and sponsored family members serving in any location overseas, the Pentagon announced late Wednesday. The order halts almost all travel for at least 60 days related to “exercising or mitigating that growth are the measures that we’ve been talking about,” Secretary of Defense Mark Esper has elected to raise the health protection condition level to its second-highest threat level, HPCON Charlie. That decision places restrictions on large gatherings, access points and largely limits base access to mission-essential individuals.

Air Force Brig. Gen. Paul Friedrichs, the Joint Staff surgeon, told reporters Wednesday that he expected military-related cases of the virus to continue to increase for the foreseeable future. “I would not call it a flattening,” Friedrichs said during a Pentagon news briefing. “We think the best way to limit that growth or mitigate that growth are the measures that we’ve been talking about.”

“Thursday morning, Pentagon officials announced an increase of 163 coronavirus cases worldwide among its service members, their dependents, DOD civilian workers and defense contractors. Pentagon officials said 600 individuals linked to the military had now tested positive for the virus worldwide. One person, a defense contractor, died of the disease Saturday.”

The largest increase was among military troops with 73 new cases reported Wednesday, the biggest single-day jump of cases among troops announced during the outbreak. As of Thursday, 304 service members had tested positive for the virus in recent weeks. Among them, 24 had recovered from the disease and 15 were hospitalized, DOD reported.

The new data also included the first case of a service member permanently stationed at the Pentagon to test positive for the virus, a Marine who has been in self-isolation since March 13. The Air Force previously announced two individuals — an active-duty airman stationed elsewhere and a defense contractor assigned to the Pentagon — had been in the military’s Arlington, Va., headquarters in March and later tested positive for the virus. Both had since been isolated and received medical care, officials said.

Friedrichs on Wednesday declined to speculate about a timeline for slowing the virus’ spread or ending measures implemented across the force — like telework to allow for social distancing. On Tuesday, Esper and Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said people should expect the outbreak to last at least three months in the United States.

Esper’s overseas stop-movement order will likely impact some 90,000 service members slated to deploy or return to their home stations during the next 60 days, Pentagon officials said.

However, it should not slow the ongoing drawdown of American forces in Afghanistan, which started this month as part of a peace plan agreed to with the Taliban last month. The drawdown of some 3,400 troops, leaving about 8,600 in Afghanistan, “is scheduled to be complete within 135 days following the signed agreement,” the memo stated.

Esper’s order also allows for other exceptions, which could be granted by commanders for issues such as obtaining medical treatment, mission-essential travel or humanitarian reasons on a case-by-case basis, the memo states. Other authorized exceptions include scheduled deployments or redeployments of Navy vessels, provided they have met the restriction of movement requirements now in place.

This measure is taken to aid in further prevention of the spread of the coronavirus disease to protect U.S. personnel and preserve the operational readiness of our global force,” according to the memo.

Friedrichs said he hopes the measures taken thus far in the United States will start to show similar success as seen in South Korea in stopping the spread of the virus. But it could take weeks to find out for certain.

“This is a pandemic,” he said. “This is a significant infectious disease outbreak, and it is going to take a few weeks, not days. It’s going to take intensive measures as we are implementing, to mitigate it.”

 единение海军海上自卫队驻扎于横须贺的“安提坦”号舰艇。三名来自“安提坦”号舰的舰员在20日被检测到含有病毒。虽然这三名舰员没有离开横须贺，但舰上也发现了病毒，这可能意味着病毒已经开始在舰上蔓延了。

“Everyone is sending lists. A lot don’t have spouses who can go to the NEX (for them),” said Ashton Andrews, whose husband, Lt. Cmdr. Ryan Andrews, is an operations officer aboard the Antietam.

Andrews said that though she was disappointed her husband could not come home, the Antietam’s “family readiness group and the community are so supportive.”

Star and Stripes staff member Joseph Dickstein contributed to this report.

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Twitter: @CDicksteinDC

**BY NANCY MONTGOMERY**  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is asking customers to pay with credit and debit cards, not cash, saying it will help protect people from the coronavirus. Some stores might “transition to a cashless system for the foreseeable future.”

“Historically considered filthy, cash is under increased suspicion and many stores are going cashless to try to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The Federal Reserve is enforcing a holding period of seven to 10 days before processing currency shipments from Asia and Europe.”

Swipe-and-dip machines have reduced the need for store clerks to touch consumers’ cards.

But credit cards, payment tablets and ATM keypads also carry a variety of bacteria on some cases more than cash, a 2018 study said.

The study by CreditCards.com and the University of Texas at Austin found that some cards carried staph and salmonella bacteria.

Another study published March 17 in the New England Journal of Medicine suggested the coronavirus could live up to three days on plastic. It could live on copper for four hours and a day on cardboard, which is a porous surface like paper.

Additionally, shoppers using cards that require signatures may be using the same stylus or pen that others used.

It’s hard to clean cash. But credit cards can be cleaned the same way as hands: with soap and water.

**AAFES: Hang on to cash, pay with credit or debit cards**
VIRUS OUTBREAK

Services seek balance on grooming policies

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Sailors will get to grow out their locks while Marines will keep their high-and-tight haircuts as military services take different approaches to grooming as they adhere to social distancing to help stop the spread of the coronavirus.

The Navy Exchange Service Command, which runs barber shops and salons on Navy installations, directed the closure of all its shops worldwide except for those at the Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Ill., so recruits have access to haircuts, according to a statement issued Monday.

The closures are expected to last for at least 14 days.

The announcement follows Navy guidance issued March 18 about relaxed standards for hair lengths, though not facial hair. However, longer hair cannot interfere with wearing protective personal equipment such as helmets and masks, according to the guidance.

Marine Corps Community Services is allowing barber shops and exchanges to remain open on installations, according to a statement by Bryan Driver, a spokesman for Marine Corps Community Services.

Marine Corps installations are taking precautions to prevent the spread of the virus based on local conditions, according to the statement, including deep cleaning procedures several times a day, limiting access to active-duty service members only, and limiting how many people are inside buildings.

The Army is still following its grooming policies, however, it is trusting installation commanders to make exceptions if necessary to protect their soldiers.

“Grooming standards are an important part of good order and discipline in the Army, though at the end of the day, we need to make sure we’re doing what we can to keep our people safe,” Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said in a statement. “Just like with readiness and protecting the force, it’s not an easy balance to strike. There isn’t a one-size-fits all solution. We have to be agile, and I know we have the right leaders in the right places to make those tough decisions.”

Some installations have taken actions in regard to base grooming services. Barber shops, salons, and spas at some Army and Air Force Exchange Services facilities, or AAFES, have been closed by the installation commanders, according to a statement by Chris Ward, a spokesman for AAFES.

“For those locations that remain open, exchange barbers are increasing their focus on sanitation, including staying home if sick, frequent hand washing and routinely cleaning door knobs, faucet handles, etc.,” he said.

Another US military child care center in Japan closes pending virus test results

BY JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

Another child development center on a U.S. military facility in Japan has been closed due to possible exposure to the coronavirus.

The Sagamihara Family Housing Area Child Development Center was shuttered Thursday “out of an abundance of caution,” according to a message posted that afternoon on the Army Garrison Japan Facebook page.

Sagamihara, near Tokyo in Kanagawa prefecture, is a housing area for service members and their families posted to Camp Zama, the home of U.S. Army Japan and other Army units.

“This closure is being directed due to possible contact with an individual who is pending COVID-19 test results,” the post said, using the official name of the new coronavirus.

The center of the children or staff members within the center have tested positive for the virus, it added.

Parents were asked to pick up their children as soon as possible Thursday.

The center will be closed Friday “for deep cleaning and sanitation,” according to the Garrison

Yokosuka-based sailor confirmed to have illness

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A Yokosuka-based sailor tested positive Thursday for coronavirus, becoming the first U.S. service member in Japan confirmed to have the illness.

The sailor — whose name was not released — had been confined to a room since returning from leave in the United States on March 15, said USFJ spokesman Maj. Genieve White.

The confinement was in accordance with a restriction of movement directive for those returning from international travel that USFJ issued four days prior.

The sailor has been isolated and is being treated at Naval Hospital Yokosuka, White said.

USFJ went nearly three months without a positive case after the coronavirus was first discovered in Wuhan, China, in December. The illness has since become a global pandemic.

As of Wednesday, Japan has reported 1,193 confirmed cases, an increase of 320 over the course of a week, according to the World Health Organization situation reports. Forty-three people have died of the illness in Japan — more than double the number of deaths reported a week prior.

The Yokosuka base on Thursday set its health protection condition to Charlie following Indo-Pacific Command’s Wednesday decision to upgrade the threat level. At Charlie, the community is considered a “substantial risk” of infection and further restrictions are implemented to control the coronavirus’ spread.

On Wednesday, Navy Forces Japan restricted all Navy personnel to the installations or their off-base homes.

“All off-base restaurants, bars, cafes, night clubs and like establishments, indoor fitness facilities, onsens and public baths are off limits,” Naval Forces Japan commander Rear Adm. B. P. Fort wrote in a memorandum announcing the change Wednesday. Naval Hospital Yokosuka gained the capability to process coronavirus test results last week and can now analyze about 40 a day. Previously, tests were sent to laboratories off base in Japan or to the U.S. for processing, and results could take up to a week to return.

A new recruit with Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, receives his initial haircut during receiving at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego in February.

- • STARS AND STRIPES • -

keith.pannell/U.S. Army

Staff members on a U.S. base in Germany deep clean a child development center as a precaution against coronavirus on March 19. Similar measures were taken at centers in Japan.

keith.pannell/U.S. Army

Gracie J. Knoboe/U.S. Marine Corps

A new recruit with Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, receives his initial haircut during receiving at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego in February.

A new recruit with Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, receives his initial haircut during receiving at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego in February.
By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON— Five more sailors have tested positive for the coronavirus on the USS Theodore Roosevelt, forcing the ship to travel to Guam to conduct widespread testing of the crew, the acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly said Thursday. “We found several more cases on board the ship,” Modly told reporters in a news briefing from the Pentagon. “We are in the process now of testing 100% of the crew of that ship to ensure that we’re able to contain whatever a leak might have occurred there on the ship. But I also want to emphasize that the ship is operationally capable and could do its mission if required to do so.”

The new cases bring the total confirmed cases on the ship to eight. But Modly said that several more sailors are in isolation.

A defense official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that the cases on the Roosevelt are increasing and the ship is focused now on doing testing and more deep cleaning in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday that at least 23 cases on the aircraft carrier, according to an unnamed defense official.

There are 800 coronavirus test kits on the ship and more being flown there Thursday, Modly said. The Roosevelt can do limited testing and processing of tests on the ship, but most tests will be sent to Defense Department laboratories for processing. The testing of the 5,000 crew members will be a mix of walk tests and surveillence tests.

While the ship is at a pier in Guam, no sailor will leave the area, according to Modly.

The Navy seems to have the highest number of positive coronavirus cases at 13, or one-third of cases in the Defense Department, he said. But Modly also said he was uncertain why that is and would not speculate on any cases. He said that more analysis needed to be done to determine the reason for the higher number of cases.

A Reuters story Thursday reported that the Pentagon would no longer provide detailed data about the coronavirus cases in the department, such as locations of people who are infected. The service has been sending out daily updates on new cases across the service, and Modly said Thursday that while they have to consider operational and privacy concerns, he wanted to continue to share how the virus is impacting the service.

“We will follow the direction of the secretary of defense in terms of this, but from our perspective, being as transparent as possible is probably the best path,” he said.

The Marine Corps has 44 positive coronavirus cases, of which 31 are Marines, five are civilian workers, five are dependents and three are contractors.

At Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., where basic training is conducted, two Marine Corps have tested positive, Modly said. Additionally, two other Marines stationed at the base, but who work separate from recruit training, have also tested positive.

The Marine Corps has canceled or postponed exercises and nonessential training, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger said.

Readiness of the force is still a priority, according to Berger, so essential training is ongoing with modifications to deal with social distancing, such as more spacing between Marines at points.

“We are mandated by law to be the nation’s most ready force and that’s what I think you expect us to do,” Berger said.

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By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

SPANGDAHLEM AIR BASE, Germany — The coronavirus pandemic has stood daily routines on their head around the world, but at this Air Force base in Germany’s rural Eifel region, one thing hasn’t changed: The F-16s are still flying.

The 52nd Fighter Wing has been taking advantage of a late-March sunny day in southeastern Germany and launching F-16 sorties as part of a base readiness exercise — modified, of course, because of the coronavirus.

The exercise, which usually involves practicing for combat, this year takes into account the real-life threat of contracting the virus, which, in some cases, causes severe lung illness and death.

“We are in a real-world COVID-19 environment, and in the future, it may be some other contagion or something like it that we’re dealing with,” said wing commander Col. David C. Epperson, using the简称 for the coronavirus disease.

“Our adversaries are watching how we’re going to react to something like COVID-19,” he said. “It’s important for us to continue to exercise and to demonstrate that we have that mission readiness today.”

The virus has infected nearly half a million people on every continent except Antarctica and been blamed for more than 22,000 deaths.

Although Spangdahlem has had no confirmed cases of the virus so far, adjustments have been made to routines to minimize risk.

Operations and maintenance crews have been split into teams that work on different days during the exercise to allow them to maintain more social distance, Epperson said.

They alternate 10-hour shifts daily instead of splitting two 12-hour shifts per day, shortening the typical round-the-clock exercise schedule to reduce exposure.

“We do even a training missile on our aircraft requires three people,” he said. “But by making sure that team is not close to any other team that loads munitions, I can make sure if one team gets exposed to COVID, the other team is still safe.”

Keeping a safe distance from each other is tricky, but airmen are doing their best, said Master Sgt. Nicholas Kailing, a maintenance production supervisor.

“We’re used to working very closely. We’ll normally have three people in a three-foot area,” he said.

Another adjustment is that video conferencing has replaced the face-to-face meetings which would normally take place during an exercise between the wing and leadership, Epperson said.

“It’s just reminding people … that we can spread out, we can still communicate at a greater distance away from each other,” he said. “And, really, it creates better security … we’re not a concentrated target for an adversary.”

The Agile Combat Employment part of the exercise, in which forces spread out and operate at various locations with minimal personnel, resources and time, has also been altered because of the coronavirus.

The plan before the pandemic was for a small team to set up at Ramstein for a few days and drop into another base farther afield to refuel, practicing how to pick up and go with the right items to sustain them for several days.

But the virus changed that, and the team has instead set up on a separate part of Spangdahlem’s flight line to simulate a forward operating site.

The airmen involved said that even though they haven’t left Spangdahlem, they’ve had to deal with spotty communication and long waits for small items, making them feel as if they’re in a remote location.

After they unpacked, for example, and realized they’d forgotten to bring lightbulbs, they had to wait hours for them to be delivered — roughly the same time it would have taken had they been at Ramstein.

As a result, “we were in a dark tent for the first four hours of the day,” said F-16 pilot Capt. Tim Miller, who’s acting as a deployed squadron commander. “We’re building the checklist as we go.”

How to launch sorties with minimal resources while dealing with a contagious virus is among the many lessons being learned, Epperson said.

“We’ve had to adapt,” he said. “It’s not business as usual, but we have figured out ways to make sure we’re still mission-ready.”

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US Forces Korea confirms another case at Camp Humphreys

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Another person tested positive for the coronavirus at Camp Humphreys, the USFK said. The official did not release the name or position of the person or give any more details about the coronavirus on the largest U.S. military base in South Korea on Thursday, raising the total number of cases affiliated with U.S. Forces Korea to 11.

USFK provided no details about the person who was infected or the timeline in its announcement late Thursday, promising more information Friday.

Only one American soldier has been confirmed to have the virus so far in South Korea. The other was the soldier’s wife, two other active-duty dependents, the widow of a military retiree, an American contractor and four South Korean employees.

Officials were conducting contact tracing to determine if anybody else may have been exposed in the current case. Crews were also activated to clean the areas where the person was known to have been, including the main gym on Camp Humphreys, officials said.

“We have secured all areas that they were on and the clean team is rapidly moving through, conducting a thorough deep clean,” garrison commander Col. Michael Tremblay said in a brief statement on Facebook live.

It was the third infection confirmed at Camp Humphreys, home to USFK headquarters and a population of more than 37,000. The others were at bases in the southeastern city of Daegu and nearby areas, which were at the center of the outbreak that began in mid-February in South Korea.

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By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Master Sgt. Nicholas Kailing, a maintenance production supervisor and crew chief, reviews a checklist during a base readiness exercise at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, on Wednesday.

At Spangdahlem, US F-16s are flying as airmen adjust exercise

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

While the ship is at a pier in Guam, no sailor will leave the area, according to Modly.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK
Pelosi forecasts House will OK Senate’s aid bill

BY ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the massive $2.2 trillion coronavirus economic relief bill approved by the Senate will pass the House on Friday with “strong bipartisan support.”

Pelosi spoke to reporters at the Capitol on Thursday, a day after the Senate unanimously approved the measure. President Donald Trump is expected to sign the legislation immediately.

The pandemic’s toll continued to increase across the United States, with almost 70,000 confirmed cases and over 1,000 on Thursday afternoon, according to Johns Hopkins University’s tally.

The package comes to the House as fresh evidence emerges that the economy is in a recession. The government reported 3.3 million new weekly unemployment claims, four times the previous record.

“We will have a victory tomorrow for America’s workers,” Pelosi said, predicting the bill’s expansion of unemployment benefits. She encouraged companies battered by the pandemic to keep paying their workers, even those who are furloughed.

“Tomorrow we’ll bring the bill to the floor,” she told reporters. “It will pass. It will pass with strong bipartisan support.”

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said in a TV interview the economy “may well be in a recession.”

The unanimous Senate vote late Wednesday came despite misgivings on both sides about whether it goes far enough to prop up the struggling economy.

The 880-page measure is the largest economic relief bill in U.S. history. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell warned somber and exhausted as he announced the vote — and he released senators from Washington until April 20, though he promised to recall them if needed.

“The virus is one another, for all of our families and for our country,” said McConnell, R-Ky.

“The legislation now before us now is historic because it is meant to match a historic crisis,” said Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. “Our workers are not prepared for this. Their businesses cannot do business. Our factories lie idle. The gears of the American economy have ground to a halt.”

The package is funded as relief for a sinking economy and a nation facing a grim future. It includes a $1,200 per-person check for most Americans, expanded unemployment benefits and paid sick leave for workers.

 plunder for jobless aid last week. In Nevada, the figure was 6.8%, in Rhode Island 7.5%

In New York, the state’s website handling unemployment benefits has had longer wait times than usual.

A Costco employee looks toward a shopkeeper wearing a mask and snorkel to shop, as she sanitizes carts that are returned from the parking lot to fight coronavirus, in King of Prussia, Pa., on Wednesday.

Jobless: Funding, staffing limitations hamper states’ efforts to process claims

FROM FRONT PAGE

Yet by the April-June quarter of the year, some economists think the economy will shrink at its steepest annual pace ever — a contraction that could reach 30%.

In its report Thursday, the Labor Department said 3.283 million people applied for unemployment benefits last week, up from 282,000 during the previous week. Yet many people who have lost jobs in recent weeks have been unable to file for unemployment aid because state websites and phone systems have been overwhelmed by a crush of applicants and have frozen up.

That logjam suggests that Thursday’s report virtually understates the magnitude of job cuts last week. So does the fact that workers who lost their jobs through company layoffs or whose employers have called it quits are not even included.

With layoffs surging, a significant expansion of unemployment benefits for the millions who will lose jobs as a result of the coronavirus outbreak was included in an economic relief bill nearing final approval in Congress. One provision in the bill would provide an extra $600 a week on top of the unemployment aid that states provide. Another would extend 13 additional weeks of benefits beyond the six months of jobless aid that states offer.

The new legislation would also extend unemployment benefits, for the first time, to gig workers and others who are not on company payrolls.

Separate legislation passed last week provides up to $1 billion to states to enhance their ability to process claims. But that money will take time to be disbursed.

In California, claims for unemployment benefits more than tripled last week to 187,000. In New York, they rose by a factor of five to 80,334. Nationwide, about 2.25% of the entire workforce applied for jobless aid last week. In Nevada, the figure was 6.8%, in Rhode Island 7.5%.

In New York, the state’s website repeatedly crashed when she was halfway through filling out her request. When she finally managed to press submit, she received a pop-up saying she had to file over the phone. That hadn’t worked well, either.

“I called at all hours of the day, she said. “That’s been my life for a week, and I still can’t get through to anyone.”

On Monday, the New York State Department of Labor tweeted, “If you have been unable to get through our phone and/or online system this week, please keep trying.”

“We are working as hard as we can to ensure that all benefits are paid and appreciate your patience,” the agency said on Twitter.

Ellen Zentner, an economist at Morgan Stanley, said in a note to clients that 17 million jobs could be lost through May — twice the entire 8.7 million jobs that were lost in the Great Recession. Still, Zentner also expects the economy to start recovering by the second half of the year.
VIRUS OUTBREAK

Infection number nears 500,000

Associated Press

MADRID — The number of coronavirus infections closed in on a half-million worldwide Thursday, with Italy on track to surpass China.

Health care systems in Europe buckled under the strain, with Spain’s death toll climbing to more than 4,000.

At least 2.8 billion people, or more than one-third of the earth’s population, are under severe travel restrictions. But the head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, scolded world leaders for wasting precious time in the fight against the virus that has already killed more than 22,000 people and infected over 480,000, threatening millions of work and ravaged the world economy.

“The time to act was actually months ago, if not two months ago,” he said Wednesday. “We squandered the first window of opportunity. This is a second opportunity, which we should not squander and do everything to suppress and control this virus.”

In Brazil, the country’s governors are defying President Jair Bolsonaro over his call to reopen schools and businesses, dismissing his argument that the “cure” of widespread shutdowns is worse than the disease. As of Thursday, the country had more than 2,500 cases and 59 deaths.

Spain has become the country in Europe where the outbreak is spreading the fastest. On Thursday, the Health Ministry reported 8,600 new infections and 655 deaths, bringing the total cases to over 56,000 and more than 4,000 fatalities — second only to Italy’s death toll of about 7,500.

Health Minister Salvador Illa sought to assure Spaniards that government measures to slow the virus were working, telling Parliament that the rise had been smaller than in previous days and “indicate a changing trend that brings us to think that we are entering a phase of stabilization.”

In Italy, doctors and nurses begged the public to provide more masks, gloves and goggles and urged the public to understand how important social distancing measures really are. Scientists say stopping just one person from getting the virus means scores of others will not become infected down the road.

“In help us help you,” Dr. Francesca De Gennaro, who heads a small medical clinic in Italy’s hard-hit Bergamo region, wrote in an open letter.

The rate of increase in Italy has slowed slightly, noted Dr. Hans Kluge, the head of the WHO’s European office.

He said officials hope to soon figure out whether lockdown measures in numerous countries have worked.

Germany has had a high number of infections at more than 39,000 people, but just 222 deaths — which has widely been attributed to early and aggressive testing, among other factors.

On Thursday, Lothar Wieler, the head of Germany’s Robert Koch disease control center, said the country now has the ability to test 500,000 people a week, perhaps the greatest capacity in the world.

European Union leaders were holding their third summit in three weeks on the virus to manage the havoc it is wreaking on their 27 economies. As the number of deaths in Europe soared past 12,000, Spain extended a state of emergency that will allow it to impose broader lockdowns, while French President Emmanuel Macron launched “Operation Resilience,” a military-backed response to the crisis.

France began evacuating infected citizens from the north-eastern hotspot of Alsace using a special high-speed train. Britain ordered 10,000 ventilators, working with engineers from Dyson. The government wants to increase its capacity of the breathing machines from 8,000 to 30,000.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. But for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

So far, more than 115,000 people have recovered from the disease, according to a running count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

China’s cases have slowed, with only 67 new cases reported, all recent arrivals.

The leaders of the Group of 20 largest economies held a special video conference to better coordinate a response to the outbreak, amid criticism that the world’s wealthiest countries have not taken cohesive action. The conference was chaired by Saudi Arabia’s King Salman.

Iraq, Lebanon extend government restrictions on movement

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Iraq and Lebanon prepared Thursday to extend government-imposed restrictions on movement for two more weeks, the latest measures announced to stem the spread of the coronavirus. In Iran, the death toll jumped by 157 new fatalities, prompting new steps to limit public gatherings and domestic travel.

In Saudi Arabia, authorities announced a total lockdown on the capital, Riyadh, and Islam’s two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina, in addition to a nationwide curfew. In the United Arab Emirates, authorities announced an overnight weekend lockdown and used drones to tell residents to stay home.

In Lebanon, authorities in the region grappled with the fast-spreading virus, leaders of the world’s most powerful economies were to convene virtually in an effort to coordinate a response.

The meeting for the Group of 20 nations will be chaired by Saudi Arabia’s King Salman and comes amid criticism that the world’s wealthiest countries have not taken cohesive action to combat the outbreak, which has shuttered businesses and forced well over a quarter of the world’s population into home isolation.

Iraq’s Health Ministry reported a jump in coronavirus-related deaths by seven in 24 hours, according to a statement on Thursday, the highest since the government began recording cases. At least 36 people among 382 confirmed infected cases have died.

Iraqis have struggled to adhere to the daily curfew in place since March 17, prompting strong criticism from officials and prominent religious figures to call for the public to stay at home and avoid congregating in crowds. Iraq’s Prime Minister announced Thursday it would extend the curfew until April 11, the second extension since the curfew was first imposed.

Health officials said they expect numbers to rise as more are tested in the coming weeks. An Iraqi army statement said it would send units to enforce a weekend curfew to stem the spread of the virus, and even cordons off areas where cases were mounting. The provinces of Baghdad, Basra and Karbala saw the highest number of new cases, according to the ministry.

In Iran, which is facing the worst outbreak in the region, the death toll rose to 2,234 on Thursday with 157 new fatalities, according to the health ministry. There are more than 29,000 confirmed cases in Iran, where authorities have advised people to stay home but refrained from imposing nationwide movement restrictions or curfews as seen elsewhere.

However, President Hassan Rouhani said Thursday that the government will apply more travel and gathering restrictions for the next two weeks to “break the chain” of the virus, and announced an aid package to support struggling businesses.

The new restrictions will include a ban on domestic travel by road and public gatherings, the closure of all public parks and points of meetings, according to Deputy Interior Minister Hossein Zolfaghari who spoke on state TV.

Zolfaghari said authorities will punish shops that remain open with a one-month forced closure. Pharmacies, groceries and bakeries are exempt.

In Saudi Arabia, the lockdown of Riyadh, Mecca and Medina, include a 15-hour curfew starting at 3 p.m. The rest of the Kingdom has a 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew. King Salman ordered the latest restrictions and announced them on Wednesday.

Saudi Arabia has 1012 confirmed infected cases and four deaths from COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus.

In the UAE, malls, airports and beaches have already been closed, and authorities said a weekend overnight curfew would begin Thursday at 8 p.m., lasting till 6 a.m. Buses, trams and the metro will be suspended over the weekend so they could be disinfection. Police in Dubai and the nearby emirate of Sharjah were using drones to tell people to stay indoors.
VIRUS OUTBREAK

Charities face growing need without volunteers

Associated Press

RALEIGH, NC — Veterinary hospitals are donating breathing machines, masks, gowns and other vital equipment and supplies purchased with Fido in mind, but now being redeployed during the pandemic, charities that help the country's neediest are finding themselves in need.

"This is a time when we do need everybody pulling together to help us out," said Leslie Bacho, CEO of Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, one of the nation's largest food banks.

Many Americans have now been ordered to stay inside their homes, although there are exceptions for people providing essential services and, in orders reviewed by The Associated Press, that includes volunteering at banks.

Nonetheless, Bacho said that half of the bank's volunteers have declared that the equivalent of 107 full-time staffers aren't showing up. This means that as more people need food, there's less ability to get to the banks.

"Volunteers are needed the most in times of crisis," said Dr. Grover Gilmore, dean of Case Western Reserve University College of Veterinary Medicine.

"The volunteers who are usually there on weekdays are retirees and older people," he said. "So then you have a lot of these essential workers who are now going out to work who need the help in food banks.

"It's not just food banks whose volunteer workforce has dwindled. Laura Condonis, 38, a graphic designer, continued to show up for her weekly shift at the Maryland Society for the Prevention of the Cruelty to Animals in Baltimore during the coronavirus pandemic. But even then her work wasn't over: That night, Condonis brought a matt named Roxie, who'd been abandoned, to a new foster home.

"The volunteers who are usually there on weekends are retirees and older people," Condonis said. "Some of the people I normally see there can and should be staying home, so I've got to pick up slack."

While the humans were bustling, Roxie, whose muzzle is still slightly too large for her and who can seem unperturbed by her move.

Veterinarians donate vital supplies to fight against coronavirus

By Allen G. Breed

Associated Press

Byline: ALLEN G. BREED

RALEIGH, NC — More than a week, Elaine Peoples, who cooked for a now-shuttered day care center, has been out of work. At 68, she's also at a higher risk for catching the new coronavirus. Nonetheless, she's showing up four days a week for her volunteer shift at an inpatient canine and feline Brooklyn soup kitchen and food pantry.

"Volunteering is vital," said Peoples, who herself is experiencing financial strain. "Everything I get goes to bills. My budget is stretched to the limit. There is no exception.

These days, low-income families still need food. Homeless people still need beds. And those puppies in the animal shelter still need walks.

For decades, American non-profits have relied on a cadre of volunteers who — quite suddenly — aren't able to show up. With millions staying home during the pandemic, charities that help the country's neediest are finding themselves in need.

"This is a time when we do need everybody pulling together to help us out," said Leslie Bacho, CEO of Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, one of the nation's largest food banks.

Many Americans have now been ordered to stay inside their homes, although there are exceptions for people providing essential services and, in orders reviewed by The Associated Press, that includes volunteering at banks.

Nonetheless, Bacho said that half of the bank's volunteers have declared that the equivalent of 107 full-time staffers aren't showing up. This means that as more people need food, there's less ability to get to the banks.

"Volunteers are needed the most in times of crisis," said Dr. Grover Gilmore, dean of Case Western Reserve University College of Veterinary Medicine.

"The volunteers who are usually there on weekdays are retirees and older people," he said. "So then you have a lot of these essential workers who are now going out to work who need the help in food banks.

"It's not just food banks whose volunteer workforce has dwindled. Laura Condonis, 38, a graphic designer, continued to show up for her weekly shift at the Maryland Society for the Prevention of the Cruelty to Animals in Baltimore during the coronavirus pandemic. But even then her work wasn't over: That night, Condonis brought a matt named Roxie, who'd been abandoned, to a new foster home.

"The volunteers who are usually there on weekends are retirees and older people," Condonis said. "Some of the people I normally see there can and should be staying home, so I've got to pick up slack."

While the humans were bustling, Roxie, whose muzzle is still slightly too large for her and who can seem unperturbed by her move.

To New York are stepping up. There are 30 fully accredited veterinary medical schools in 26 states, according to the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges. Of those, 27 have veterinary teaching hospitals with comprehensive services treating everything from pet cats and dogs to horses and other large animals. Lunn said that the seven hospitals identified over 72 ventilators that could be commandeered for human treatment.

The 2009 outbreak of H1N1 influenza had veterinarians readying to help in this kind of emergency, he added. "This isn't the first time we've prepared for this, although it's the first time in my personal experience that we've actually had to pull the trigger."

"Private institutions are also heeding the call. Dr. Virginia Sinnott-Stutzman, chair of the Infectious Control Committee at Angell Animal Medical Center in Boston, said that members of the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society have identified about 100 full-service ventilators which can provide long-term breathing support. She said that there are also hundreds more relatively simple anesthesia ventilators — "basically like an automated hand squeezing a bag ... to get air into the patient" — nationwide that could be pressed into service. It only amounts to just a dent in the overall need, however, with officials saying that tens of thousands of ventilators are needed in New York alone.

"While that may not seem like a lot, if it's, you know, your grandmother, spoue that gets that ventilator, we're hoping it can save a life."
Once derided, some find their skills are in vogue

By Jason Nark
The Philadelphia Inquirer

RINGTOWN, Pa. — When Dan Wowak went to live alone in the wilds of Patagonia in 2016 for a chance to win a half-million dollars on reality television, he was allowed to bring 10 items. Toilet paper wasn’t one of them.

Wowak, a Mahanoy City native, did bring an ax, saw, sleeping bag and a ferro rod, which you can strike to make sparks in just about any condition. He also chose fishing line and hooks, which proved invaluable. Over 51 days, he ate nothing but fish he caught in a lake: nine of them.

“I lost 54 pounds,” he said. “I know what hunger feels like.”

Wowak, who worked in the juvenile justice system before becoming a full-time woodsman, left the reality show “Alone” early, choosing sanity, food and his family over the big prize. Today, at age 38, he teaches survival and outdoors classes through his company, Coal Cracker Bushcraft, giving crash courses in how to stay alive in the woods or when goods are scarce. He says that he’s recently gotten calls from men making smart decisions, like social distancing, and bizarre ones, like grabbing all the toilet paper they can.

“You don’t use toilet paper if you’re out in the woods. Just grab some leaves and wipe your butt. At home, you can cut up old T-shirts,” he said. “I think, honestly, a lot of people just don’t know what to do. They see me buying toilet paper, they see you buying toilet paper and Uncle Frank, and they go looking for it.”

Wowak, who earned an MBA from Alvernia University in Reading, Pa., defines essentials as shelter, water, fire and food. Translation: a city or suburban environment, that could be a house, heat sources like blankets and fireplaces, your faucet and extra cans of beans. If people remained calm and thought those needs out, he said, they’d find better alternatives at the store.

“Once derided, some find their skills are in vogue,” he said in a message.

Art Dawes, 51, of Lock Haven, runs PA Wilderness Skills, a business similar to Wowak’s. He said that he took a survival class offered by his junior high school decades ago and has been hooked ever since.

“We were starting fires on the front lawn of the school,” he said.

Dawes said that people should use the coronavirus pandemic to make plans, to list out things they would take with them if they had to leave home. They should brush up on basic car repair too.

“You never know if your car is going to break down,” he said.

Both woodsman teach primitive skills to their students, such as making fire with a “bow drill,” the way cavemen might have done. But they’re also practical and carry tools that make lighting fire far easier.

“Your students do boat down,” Dawes said.

All across the country, people who identify as “preppers” have spent years stockpiling food and ammunition for disaster scenarios, and many feel vindicated as the coronavirus and efforts to stop it spread. They’ve often been ridiculed or called paranoid, but they have said that many of their critics are now asking for their help, including whether they can spare some of their surplus if times get tough.

Wowak and Dawes agreed that in a survival scenario, finding food is the most critical and difficult task. Buying milk and fresh meat is thinking very much in the present, Wowak said, but when shopping for a protracted quarantine, look for canned foods, protein bars, nuts and even pasta — high-caloric foods that can last.

Some Pennsylvania preppers agreed to speak to The Philadelphia Inquirer, but none would divulge their full names out of concern that their locations would be uncovered. Many declined to be interviewed, saying that “the media” perpetuated the “prepper” stereotype.

Robert B., 40, of Lebanon County, said that he and his daughters have “bug out bags” packed in case they have to leave the house immediately. He owns 45 acres “elsewhere.” Bug out bags usually contain essentials like extra medicine, sleeping gear, tools, lighters and more.

“We have prepped for different scenarios, from home invasions to mass rioting and pandemics to possible war,” Robert B. said.

None of the preppers could think of a specific event that caused them to start stockpiling.

“I guess growing up in extreme poverty and seeing how one bad day can turn into a major problem easily,” said Michelle, 44, from Centre County.

Many said that the reaction to the coronavirus — massive layoffs, scarcity of food and goods, relaxed law enforcement for certain crimes — could be as bad as the virus itself, which might explain the uptick in gun and ammunition sales. A gun store owner in Montgomery County told The Inquirer last week that he could not order more ammunition. When asked if he had firearms, prepper Jon K., of Erie County, said, “Use your imagination.”

The most important aspect of prepping, in Jon K.’s opinion, is preserving water and food, either through drying or canning. Michelle has a greenhouse and root cellar at her home.

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In nature, Wowak said, smaller foods like blueberries or frogs are easiest to eat, but low in calories. Large sources of protein like deer or turkey are more complicated, even with a firearm.

“If you were able to kill a deer and it was 70 degrees out, would you be able to preserve it?” Wowak said.

Both men have told their students to avoid eating plants unless they’re really skilled at identifying them. Many can make you sick or worse. Dawes suggested buying field guides to edible plants.

Wowak said that a lot of strategies perpetuated by film and television aren’t quite practical in a true survival situation — like roasting a fish on an open fire and simply eating the fillets. He prefers to boil them whole and basically consume everything but the bones to get every calorie.

“Even the fish heads,” he said. “The eyeballs kind of liquefy.”

Photos by Michael Bryant/The Philadelphia Inquirer
New York continues to struggle as overall US deaths increase

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — New York authorities mobilized to head off a public health disaster Wednesday, with the nation's emergence as the nation's biggest coronavirus hot spot a warning flare — and perhaps a cautionary tale — for the rest of the country as U.S. deaths from the pandemic topped 1,000.

A makeshift morgue was set up outside Bellevue Hospital, where the city's police, their ranks dwindling as more fall ill, were told to patrol nearby empty streets to enforce social distancing.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, again pleading for help in dealing with the onslaught, attributed the drop in new deaths to the closeness that makes New Yorkers vulnerable, "But it's true that your greatest weakness is also your greatest strength. And our closeness is what makes us who we are. That's what New York is." 

Alabama

MONTGOMERY — Alabama on Wednesday reported its first coronavirus death as the number of confirmed cases in the state reached nearly 400, officials said.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey and the Alabama Department of Public Health confirmed that the Jackson County resident died from the COVID-19 disease. The governor said that she extends, "my prayers and deepest sympathies to the family and loved ones during these extraordinary circumstances." 

"I continue to urge everyone that this virus is real, it is deadly, and we should continue to maintain social distancing as much as possible. Together, we will overcome these challenges and difficult days," Ivey said.

The patient had underlying health problems and passed away in a facility outside the state of Alabama, Health Department said. The Jackson County Commission said that the person who passed away was a resident of the county courthouse, and they are having the area cleaned before employees return to work.

Arizona

PHOENIX — Officials from Arizona's health department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers spent Wednesday scouring a shuttered Phoenix hospital to see how quickly it could be reusing an expected surge of coronavirus cases.

The state is looking to reopen two closed Phoenix hospitals and convert a specialty hospital. The review of the closed St. Luke's Medical Center is part of an effort to nearly double hospital capacity from the current 16,900 to the nearly 30,000 officials said might be needed by May.

The quickest way to boost capacity is if existing hospitals convert other areas to patient care, something that they are already planning to do. Hospitals are planning to convert recovery rooms, unused surgical suites and other areas to boost capacity.

"Even if they can do that by 50%, that would be another 8,000 beds," Health Services Department Director Dr. Cara Christ said. The state currently has about 1,500 intensive care unit beds.

Maryland

ANNOYALSIS — The Maryland Board of Elections is planning to do away with polling stations for the state's already delayed primary. Voters would instead be required to mail in or drop off their ballots in an effort to limit coronavirus infections.

That move would eliminate any need for Maryland's more than 4 million registered voters to cast their ballots in person on June 2, according to a draft presented by elections officials at their Wednesday meeting, held by teleconference.

The board, citing advice from health officials, said that it could not guarantee poll workers the clear mask protection they need to prevent them against exposure to the virus.

The Baltimore Sun reported.

Ballots, with clear instructions explaining how to return them, would likely need to be mailed to all registered voters by the end of April, Nikie Newton, deputy administrator for the Board of Elections, said during the meeting.

Those ballots could include a generic Aägeues to the city Homeless Courtyard services. He was no longer considered a risk to others, officials said Wednesday.

Dr. Betty Chu, of Henry Ford, predicted an "upcoming surge." Beaumont chief executive John Fox called on the state to invoke its power to balance care across eight regions in the state.

In western Michigan, where counties to date have been significantly lower, Grand Rapids-based Spectrum Health said that it has room if the region gets a burst of patients.

Nevada

LAS VEGAS — A 524-bed Catholic Charities homeless shelter in Las Vegas closed and health officials began screening untold numbers of people who used it and a nearby city relief facility after a homeless person was diagnosed with the new coronavirus, health officials said Wednesday.

The Southern Nevada Health District said that the closure was prompted by a discovery that a man who used it and the nearby city Homeless Courtyard services center had COVID-19 but had recovered. He was now considered a risk to others, officials said.

City officials, who recently passed laws banning sleeping on public thoroughfares, closed a road off Las Vegas Boulevard to make room for up to 750 displaced homeless people to spend the night.

In Reno, the city's downtown Events Center is serving as a temporary shelter for up to 400 homeless people displaced by closure of that city's largest shelters because they couldn't meet social distancing requirements.

"We're going to recover from this crisis, but first we must get through it," Wolf said.

Texas

AUSTIN — Planned Parenthood joined other abortion providers Wednesday in suing Texas over moving to ban abortions during the coronavirus outbreak, including one clinic owner saying that Republican Gov. Greg Abbott's directive in an effort to have the ready resulted in more than 150 canceled appointments.

The federal lawsuit filed in Austin, Texas, is among the most high-profile challenges to a government response to the coronavirus pandemic. Adoption providers accused Republican leaders in Texas of exploiting the pandemic for political gains.

The answer can vary greatly from country to country, region to region. One recent study out of England attempted to gauge the measures that could impact people over 70, and found that the effectiveness of these ranged depending on how many people are infected and how easily the disease spreads.

The percent reduction in deaths depends on which of these measures is adopted.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS STAYING HOME OR CLOSING SCHOOLS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of reduction</th>
<th>Closing schools</th>
<th>Home isolation of the infected only</th>
<th>Home quarantine for everyone</th>
<th>Home quarantine and social distancing for everyone</th>
<th>Social distancing</th>
<th>Home quarantine and social distancing of those over 70 for 4 months</th>
<th>Doing all measures including closing schools</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>2% to 4%</td>
<td>17-21%</td>
<td>9-19%</td>
<td>15-30%</td>
<td>31-64%</td>
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Virginia

CHARLESTON — A West Virginia nursing home with at least 20 coronavirus cases has become "ground zero" for the state's growing caseload, officials said Wednesday.

Carl Shrader, medical director for the Sundale nursing home in Morgantown, said that 16 residents and four staffers have tested positive for the virus. Seventy-six tests were pending, he said.

"We're testing all untested residents for COVID-19 in West Virginia, and I'm sitting in it," Shrader told The Associated Press in a phone interview.

West Virginia's total cases have hit at least 52, with the largest number in Monongalia County, where the nursing home is located. The grim tally at Sundale also came on a day when officials moved to extend tax deadlines and the statewide school closures.

The state has yet to register a death due to the coronavirus. But testing remains limited, meaning most people now spreading the highly contagious virus may not know that they've been infected.
Family: US government believes ex-FBI agent Robert Levinson has died

By Eric Tucker

WASHINGTON — The U.S. government has concluded that retired FBI agent Robert Levinson, who vanished more than a decade ago, died while in the custody of Iran, his family and administration officials said Wednesday.

The circumstances and timing of Levinson's death were unclear, but White House national security adviser Robert O'Brien said Wednesday evening that the U.S. believes Levinson “may have passed away some time ago.” Hours earlier, his family said information U.S. officials had received led them to conclude he was dead. Neither the government nor the family described that information.

The death is believed to have occurred before the recent outbreak of the coronavirus that has gravely affected Iran and other countries, according to a statement from Levinson's family.

The government’s acknowledgment of Levinson’s death came hours after a White House briefing in which President Donald Trump appeared to equivocate on the news, saying, “I won’t accept that he’s dead.”

U.S. officials communicated the news to Levinson’s family in a meeting in Washington in recent weeks, according to a person familiar with the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private encounter. The person said the information about Levinson had come from Iran's foreign minister.

“IT is impossible to describe our pain,” the family’s statement said. “Our family will spend the rest of our lives without the most amazing man, a new reality that is inconceivable to us. His grandchildren will never meet him.”

Levinson disappeared on March 9, 2007, when he was scheduled to meet a source on the Al Noor mosque. “I feel conflicted,” he said that on the one hand, she had wanted to find out more about what happened at the trial but on the other, she was feeling relieved about not having to face the trauma of sitting through the trial.

Temel Atacocugu, who survived being shot nine times during the attack at Al Noor, said he was surprised by the turn of events and hoped the judge would set an example at the sentencing by imposing the harshest punishment in the country’s history and helping ensure nothing like it would happen again.

Judge Cameron Mander has not yet set a sentencing date. Tarrant faces life imprisonment, with the judge having some discretion in deciding the minimum number of years Tarrant must serve before becoming eligible for parole.

The change in plea came at a hastily arranged court hearing at a time that New Zealand was going through a four-week lockdown to try and combat the new coronavirus. The lockdown meant Tarrant appeared in the court via video link from his jail cell in Auckland and only a handful of people were allowed in the courtroom, including the imams from the two mosques that were attacked.

Mander said it was unfortunate the lockdown prevented victims and family members from being able to attend the hearing but the imams were happy to represent them. He said he wanted to quickly move ahead with the hearing, especially with the COVID-19 restrictions and delays to the court schedule.

Tarrant, who was wearing a gray prison sweater, showed little emotion as he pleaded guilty. He didn’t indicate why he had changed his plea, and his lawyer could not immediately be reached for comment.

More than 1.8 million people signed a petition asking the president to release the identities of members of a group-chat network where the videos had been posted. Local media said the network had 260,000 people, but police said some were double-counted and that others were not paying members.

Another petition calling for the main suspect to be publicly paraded in a park walk attracted more than 2.5 million signatures since his arrest last week. The National Police Agency said it decided to publicly release Cho’s identity in hopes of deterring similar offenses. It cited “his malicious and aggravating behavior” and said it “forced sexually abusive videos out of women whom he labeled slaves.”

“We decided to release his name, age and face after reviewing how it would serve the public interest regarding the people’s right to know and the prevention of similar crimes from recurring,” the agency said Tuesday.

Law enforcement authorities in South Korea usually refrain from personally identifying suspects on grounds of privacy rights and possible impacts on their family members.

Cho appeared in handcuffs Wednesday outside a Seoul police office, where he was faced by a swarm of reporters and protesters before being transported to the prosecutor’s office.

“Thank you for stopping the life of a demon that could not stop,” Cho said as he was escorted away as cameras flashed and protesters shouted. He apologized to “all people who harm behind, will be,” but he did not answer questions about the accusations.

President Moon Jae-in on Monday ordered a thorough investigation of all operators and members of the chat-room network, calling it “a cruelty that destroys a person's life.”

South Korea identifies suspected leader of sexual blackmail ring

By Min Joo Kim

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean police took the rare step of identifying and parading the suspected leader of a sexual blackmail ring in front of the press and protesters on Wednesday after the case triggered a national uproar.

The police asked prosecutors on Wednesday to indict Cho Joo-bin, 24, for allegedly blackmailing at least 74 women, including 16 minors, into producing sexually degrading videos of themselves, and then posting in pay-to-view chat rooms.

The allegations prompted a national outcry in South Korea over a growing spate of online postings of illegal sexual images obtained through blackmail or degrading videos of themselves, and then posting in pay-to-view chat rooms.

The police asked the court to order a thorough investigation of the people who have been hurt by the chat network, calling it “a cruelty that destroys a person’s life.”
Maura Quinn’s self-isolating days in Pennsylvania are packed with full-time work and home-schooling her two young children. So, exhausted one evening last week, she put her kids to bed and mindlessly flipped on the TV.

A character walked out of a building and onto a busy street packed with people, getting lost in the crowd. It shocked Quint.

"Without even noticing it, I was panic- ing in the same way as watching a horror film and you have that tense feeling that you’re about to be murdered," she said. "I had to check myself: Why am I upset? Oh, now I’ve conditioned myself to see that as a threat as much as I’d see Freddy Krueger or some terrible beast as a threat."

On television, scientists, journalists and chyrons keep warning us that the most important, civic-minded thing to do in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic is to stay away from other people. And then we change the channel or queue up Netflix for a reprieve and all we see are friends host- ing big parties, sharing strangers’ hands and oh, dear God, touching their faces. There is no Purell in sight and a shocking lack of hand-washing.

The contrast between our reality and our entertainment captures how life has changed. Television shows, movies and commercials filmed and finalized just months ago are now artifacts of a simpler time, one in which the term “social distancing” sounded less like a way to save lives and more like a Goop-approved retreat. TV and streaming services “provide an important health benefit by allowing people to get away from the crisis they’re experiencing ... and go into this fantasy, fictitious world for a couple of hours,” said Paul Levinson, a communications and media professor at Fordham University.

"But to some extent, that’s now even being undermined," because viewers notice the absence of the coronavirus on shows they watch. "It’s very hard to switch from, ‘You’re not supposed to be too close to anyone,’ to ‘there’s a show where everyone’s frolicking in a pool or bar or on the street’," Levinson added. "That’s diminished the value of television as a vehicle of escape."

People experiencing such dissonance have embraced the need to put public health first. They are staying home to isolate, even if they can eloquent the spread of the novel coronavirus and not overwhelm the health-care system.

It’s a message that Steve Carbone, who has been socially isolating in Texas, "can’t not think about it right now," even as he caught up last weekend on episodes he missed of "Curb Your Enthusiasm" and "This Is Us."

"It’s just clear that these shows were taped before the guidance. Yet every single scene where it seems like social distancing is being violated, I think, ‘Oh, it doesn’t look right. Or would it? Could this be like if they filmed it now,’ he said. "That’s all ‘This Is Us’ is: people being together and hugging."

Carbone tweeted about the surreal experience, and more than 6,000 people liked it. David Cohen in Pennsylvania has been having a particularly hard time watching commercials right now. He and his wife find falsely themed shows such as "Home- land" and "This Is Us," but then he’s seen ads for cars or cruise lines.

"It’s almost feels like every commercial where you see lots of people together doing things that are a lot of fun feels tone-deaf," he said. "They’re meant for another time when we had the freedom and bandwidth to spend money on frivolous things or things that would bring us into such close contact with other people."

Cohen understands that commercials are needed to support programming, but it’s jarring, in the same way as it’s jarring to sit on the porch on a nice early spring day “and then have to bring yourself back to remembering we’re in the middle of a pandemic, and much of this country is in the middle of social distancing and shutting down.”

Shows that pride themselves on realism can be especially unsettling. Last Wednes- day, Levinson and his wife sat down for their weekly viewing of NBC’s Chicago-themed block of dramas, including “Chi- cago Med” (which has since shut down production and announced it will donate its medical supplies to Illinois’ health depart- ment). The show takes place in a hospital with a medical team handling emergen- cies, but it had nary a word about COVID-19. “It was bizarre,” Levinson said.

Fictitious shows and movies that are far removed from reality, such as science fic- tion programs set a thousand years in the future, may offer viewers more of an escapist retreat, Cohen said. “The less real- istic the television show, the less that kind of discordant effect sets in.”

It may be annoying to not be able to for- get the counsel of public-health experts even when we watch stuff like “Love Is- land.” But there is a small glimmer of comfort within this: As a society, we are capable of changing our thoughts and behav- iors when needed.

“It’s fascinating to see how quickly we can adjust to what we consider normal,” Quint said. “And I’m sure that shows us as well that we will be able to readjust back when it’s time.”

But for now, we’ll continue to keep six feet apart and just deal with cringing at fictional characters who aren’t doing the same.

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Squirrel sparks power loss near mansion

AK JUNEAU — An squirrel knocked out power to residences near the governor’s mansion, Alaska electric company officials said.

The squirrel was interfering with equipment when the temporary loss of electrical service happened in Juneau on Monday, The Juneau Empire reported.

“Our crews were on site very quickly, and found it not alive,” said Debbie Driscoll, Alaska Electric Light and Power vice president of consumer affairs.

The squirrel generated a problem with fuses and sparked the power outage experienced by 15 customers.

Police: Another truck damages covered bridge

VT LYNDON — Another truck has damaged a historic covered bridge in northern Vermont that had been closed for months for repairs last spring after it was hit by a produce truck, police said.

The Miller’s Run Covered Bridge in Lyndon was damaged at both ends early Monday by a tractor-trailer and closed to traffic for several hours, the Caledonian Record reported.

The truck driver from Laval, Quebec, did not stop after hitting the bridge’s facade with the top of trailer, police said. Police Chief Jack Harris said he later found the truck in Lyndonville as the driver was waiting to make a delivery. The driver was issued a ticket and a $12,295 fine for being 71,000 pounds overweight on the bridge.

The bridge reopened later in the day after the town crew made some repairs but more extensive work is necessary, Lyndon Town Administrator Justin Smith said.

New Veterans Memorial Park planned

NM TAOS — Volunteers and veterans are helping lead an effort to build a new Veterans Memorial Park in Taos.

The Albuquerque Journal reported the nonprofit group Not Forgotten Outreach Inc. is taking the lead in a coalition that plans to begin work this spring.

Earlier this year, the nonprofit received a $23,000 grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeves Foundation. The grant will underwrite the construction of an Americans with Disabilities Act-accessible walking trail crossing over a spring-fed drainage way in a county park.

Taos County has a population of more than 3,000 veterans.

Woman wins bigger Lottery prize this time

MO ST. LOUIS — A St. Louis woman who won $50,000 in a Lottery game 18 years ago has won again, and this time the prize is much bigger.

The Missouri Lottery said Wednesday that Anne Kasal matched all six numbers in the March 11 drawing to win a $3 million jackpot. The winning numbers were 11, 16, 23, 26, 31 and 38. Kasal won the $50,000 prize in 2002.

Postal worker accused of running over woman

GA WOODSTOCK — A U.S. postal worker was cited Monday following a Wednesday afternoon incident during which they were accused of running over a woman in Georgia with her mail truck and lying about it.

The Cherokee Sheriff’s Office said Jaynie Underwood, 38, of Acworth, was arrested on charges of improper backing, failure to exercise due care and giving false statements to authorities about the incident, which happened March 18.

According to the sheriff’s office, Underwood told deputies Barbara Daniels, 60, of Woodstock, was standing in grass near her mailbox as she passed by. She said when she looked back, Daniels was lying in the road. Deputies asked if her truck hit Daniels, but she said it had not.

Investigators later found camera footage that shows the truck backing up and hitting Daniels, who is being treated at an area hospital for a serious head injury.

FBI agent charged with stalking ex-girlfriend

MT HELENA — A Montana FBI agent has been charged with stalking his ex-girlfriend and obstructing officers investigating the case.

Lewis and Clark County Sheriff’s Office said Ricky James Shelbourn was arrested on the misdemeanor charges on March 16, the Independent Record reported Monday.

Shelbourn, the supervisory senior resident agent in Montana, was released on his own recognizance. He is not allowed to possess or have access to any firearms.

The FBI branch did not immediately respond to calls.

An arrest affidavit by the Montana Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation said a woman described “substantial emotional distress” in 2019 after she ended an “intermittent, intimate relationship” of about three years.

Arson suspect charged in five trash bin fires

NJ HAMILTON — Two men have been arrested after hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of landscaping equipment was stolen, police in New Jersey said.

According to Hamilton Police, Clint Riley, 39, and Kevin Cedeno-Ruiz, 24, stole equipment worth more than $380,000 over the span of a year, NJ Advance Media reported.

Riley and Cedeno-Ruiz, both of Trenton, allegedly sold the leaf blowers, lawnmowers, edgers and weed whackers on Facebook Marketplace and in person.

Police executed a search warrant Thursday on a farm owned by Riley in Hamilton where he stored some of the stolen property, authorities say.

Deputies seize cocaine worth estimated $3.5M

NC DURHAM — Deputies in North Carolina say they’ve seized cocaine worth an estimated $3.5 million from a storage locker and related searches.

A news release Monday from the Durham County Sheriff’s Office said the busts that netted 35 pounds of uncut cocaine were coordinated with the Craven County Sheriff’s Office and state and federal investigators.

Authorities said that the seizure was preceded by a tip in Craven County that led to a traffic stop on March 19. Information gleaned from that traffic stop led Durham County deputies using a search dog to a storage locker where they found most of the cocaine.

In Craven County, deputies seized a smaller quantity of cocaine, firearms and about $175,000 in cash. Two men were charged, including one man in Greensboro who authorities described as a major trafficker.

From wire reports
By Adam Tooze
Special to The Washington Post

I n trying to gauge the coronavirus cri-
sis, we are all struggling for historical
reference points. Which is the histor-
cal parallel that’s considered as the off-
ticker?

The turmoil in the financial markets and the talk of bailouts reminds us of 2008. But though the contours of the case mortality rate of 0.2% to 0.4% for peo-
ple age 10-49, rising with age as people de-
velop more underlying medical conditions — all the way up to 14.8% for people 80 and
older. We were told that the closings and
restrictions were the only way to protect
the vulnerable among us. It would be impractically impossible to test nearly everyone to determine whether they agree with wreck-
ing the economy.

The virus outbreak turned into a kind of collective shutdown, but they are not whole to start with. Millions of people are leaving their homes to work in businesses that are similarly on the boundary between life and death. Checks for $1,200 and small-business loans are not going to fix that. It will not be enough for them to survive.

If the duration is crucial. It is the way economies bridge time. Faced with the coronavirus, some creditors will behave reasonably and offer forbearance, others will not. There is no guarantee we will be steering some of the loss. But not all will. Not all can. They themselves are under acute financial pressure. That is what is rocking the financial markets.

Economists recognize that you can’t undo the damage done by these kinds of shocks. Their go-to analogy is that we had to prepare the present crisis came recently from St. Louis Federal Reserve President James Bullard, who voiced his fellow economists to view the output collapse not as something to fight against, but as an investment, an investment in public health, the prices for which is paid not in cash but in kind, in the form of enforced idling of labor and capital. This is not the time to push the idea of a shutdown into a kind of collec-
tive abstention from economic activity and thereby reopen the optimistic vista of restart-
ing the economy as it was before.

But though we are about to absorb $2 trillion — nearly one-tenth of last year’s GDP — onto the public balance sheet, and though this will be hailed as the biggest stimulus in history, its impact on the daily struggles of Americans amid the coming recession pandemic is uncertain.

An alarmingly large percentage of American families pay by paycheck. Their Margins of safety are so slim that even a brief period of reduced hours has long-term catastrophic effects. What do people like to say, will be extremely difficult. They were not whole to start with. Millions of people are leaving their homes to work in businesses that are similarly on the boundary between life and death. Checks for $1,200 and small-business loans are not going to fix that. It will not be enough for them to survive.

It is not a black swan event, either. A pan-
demic risk was well-mapped by experts. We just chose to ignore them. And now we are paying the price for that.

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demic risk was well-mapped by experts. We just chose to ignore them. And now we are paying the price for that.
What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are se-
lected from a cross section of newspapers
throughout the United States. The editorial-
als are provided by The Associated Press and other stateide syndicates.

To tackle virus crisis, mimic an elite athlete’s approach

The Baltimore Sun

Historically, in the face of one or more calamities, we may call on the ancient Greeks or Romans to provide us with the moral and political guidance appropriate to the 21st century. Not this time. That’s the finish line.

A man walks in front of a Tokyo Olympics logo at the Tokyo metropolitan government headquarters building Wednesday. The Olympic torch relay was postponed Tuesday because the Tokyo Games themselves were pushed back to 2021.

Private companies know their processes best as they chip in

The Wall Street Journal

President Donald Trump can’t do right by some critics no matter what he does. For three years he’s been denounced as a reckless authoritarian, and now he’s attacked for refraining from authorizing the use of hydroxychloroquine by refusing to commandeer American in-
dustry. The truth is that private industry is responding to the coronavirus withou-

time and control and direct the federal government.

Last week Trump invoked the 1950 Defense Production Act that lets a president during a national emergency order busi-

tess to manufacture products for national defense, set up and control and allocate materials. On Tuesday the Federal

Emergency Management Agency used the Korean War-era law for the first time in this crisis to procure and distribute test-

ing kits and face masks.

But Democrats want the administration to take over much more of the private economy. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Sunday tweeted that the federal govern-

ment should “nationalize the medical supply chain” and “order companies to make gowns, masks and gloves.” He has been 

beaten, spat on, yelled at and insulted from coast to coast.

Therefore, we must aim to end the outbreak of lethal disease through actions based on science and evidence, not based on nationalism or other xenophobic policies.

The New York Times

We’ve been down this road before, too many times. In the 14th century the Black Death provoked mass violence against Jews, Catalans, clerics and beggars; when smallpox spread in the 15th century, it was called variably the Neapolitan, French, Polish and German disease, depending on who was pointing the blame; when the plague struck Honolulu in 1899, officials burned down Chinatown. And so on, down to our times, when epidemics like Ebola, SARS and Zika fuel animus toward specific regions or peoples.

Here we are in 2020, with Asians being
Every controversial topic has two sides. We look into the ones that matter to you.

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Baseball willing to get creative

Associated Press

TORONTO — If Major League Baseball needs to squeeze more games into a condensed season without exhausting pitching staffs, perhaps this idea could get tossed into play: seven-inning doubleheaders.

"I'm sure there are people that would challenge that and I'm not so sure it's something that would work," Boone said on a conference call Wednesday. "But it's certainly probably an opportunity to try some things that you wouldn't otherwise try in a normal 162-game schedule where everything's kind of going off according to plan." 

Asked what he saw as potential solutions to scheduling issues, Boone said holding several spring training games in doubleheaders. He said avoiding eight or nine games would be preferable, but he would rather have more roster spots above the current 26, with at least 14 pitchers.

"You're not playing the game that is written in the rulebooks," he said. "It's not the regulation game, it's a different game. But it's still a game, and we have a chance to play nine innings. I'm sure there are people that would challenge that and I'm not so sure it's something that would work."

No matter how many innings get played, the likelihood of a condensed schedule will require greater roster flexibility once baseball resumes, Atkins said.

FROM BACK PAGE on hold because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, ballparks were empty Thursday on what was supposed to be opening day.

"You're used to seeing people run all over the place. We have over 200 people (who are) at the park," said Roger Bossard, the groundskeeper in his 54th year with the Chicago White Sox. "Certainly, it's a very different feeling, the ballparks are empty, the hallsways or underneath the stands there, and there's nobody there — but understandably."

From Baltimore to Miami in the east, San Diego to Seattle in the west, teams had to reduce staff at ballparks, where one of the opening games was supposed to play an exhibition game there. You want to be ready, when the weather is warmer, the Rangers will be able to stay out of the heat by closing the retractable roof at their $1 billion-plus stadium.

"It's the opportunity, probably to try something that people think could stick a little bit or could be kind of a segue to something different down the line," Boone said. "I think everybody feels the exact same way."
Tokyo Olympics seek new date for opening, closing

By Stephen Wade
Associated Press

TOKYO — The Tokyo Olympics need new dates for the opening and closing ceremonies in 2021. Nothing much can get done until those dates are worked out by the International Olympic Committee, the Japanese government and Tokyo organizers.

“We must decide this soon, otherwise it will be hard to decide on other things to follow,” Toshiro Muto, the CEO of the organizing committee, told his 30 senior directors — all men but one — seated in a large meeting room on Thursday.

Two days after the unprecedented postponement was announced, the group gathered for the first meeting of what is being called the “Tokyo 2020 New Launch Task Force.” They must put the Olympics back together after they were torn apart by the coronavirus pandemic.

Muto and the president of the organizing committee, Yoshiro Mori, each gave pep speeches. Mori, an 82-year-old former Japanese prime minister, drew on war memories from his youth to summon the resolve to redo in a war-torn land.

Muto ran off a condensed string of words due to the delay of $2.7 billion. This would go on top of an official budget of $12.6 billion. A Japanese national audit agency, however, says the actual amount of spending is about twice that size.

“I didn’t imagine at all we’d be tested to this degree,” he acknowledged.

He also voiced another reality.

“Additional expenses are going to be quite massive we assume,” Muto said.

The Japanese financial newspaper Nikkei has estimated added costs due to the delay of $2.7 billion. This would go on top of an official budget of $12.6 billion. A Japanese national audit agency, however, says the actual amount of spending is about twice that size.

IOC President Thomas Bach said Wednesday that “all options are on the table” for new dates.

He also noted the game’s added significance:

“You’re talking about it gives the fans hope — and I doubt that’s going to happen. I’m all for it being discussed for years down the line.”

George Mason (2006)

George Mason was such a questionable tournament choice that then-coach Jim Larranaga joked his team was an “at-extra-large” entry. There was no second guessing the bid once the 11th-seeded Patriots went to the Final Four after an 86-84 overtime win against top-seeded Connecticut.

The Huskies had spent five weeks at No. 1 in the Top 25 and never dropped below fourth. Yet George Mason overcame disadvantages in size and athleticism to secure a trip to Indianapolis as the party crasher among the big-conference teams.

Richmond (1991)

Before UMBC, the biggest round-of-64 upsets had come with eight No. 15 seeds beating No. 2 seeds. It wasn’t until Richmond beat Syracuse 73-69 that fans believed it could happen.

The Ducks were 22-14 all but one week ranked in the top 10 under Jim Boehiem and were led by first-team AP All-American Billy Owens. Team members jokingly started saying the name of the school in everyday conversation, either.

Villanova (1985)

Villanova remains the lowest seed to win it all at No. 8. To do it, the Wildcats had to play the perfect game against AP national player of the year Patrick Ewing and defending national champion Georgetown.

The Hoyas were 35-2, including two regular-season wins over Villanova, and had been ranked No. 1 or No. 2 all year. But the 10-loss Wildcats shot a record 78.6% (22-for-28) behind Final Four most outstanding player Ed Pinckney in the 66-64 win.

Texas Western (1966)

Texas Western (now UTEP) changed college basketball with its win against top-ranked Kentucky for the national championship.

The Miners became the first team to start five black players in the final against the all-white Wildcats featuring Pat Riley and coached by four-time national champion Adolph Rupp. Coach Don Haskins, who died in September 2008, had said he was simply starting his best players instead of trying to make a social statement, though the 72-65 victory eventually expanded recruiting opportunities nationally for black players.
Fab Five falls to UNC on fatal timeout call

Webber’s unbelievable error helps Tar Heels capture national title

By Jim O’Connell
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Same building. Same result. Different blunder.

Dean Smith won his second national championship Monday night when North Carolina beat Michigan 77-71. And like the first title he won at the Superdome, this one wasn’t sealed until somebody made a costly, almost unbelievable, error.

The Tar Heels won in 1982 on a closing jumper by Michael Jordan and a bunched pass by Georgetown’s Fred Brown. Monday night’s game wasn’t settled until Michigan’s Chris Webber called a timeout the Wolverines didn’t have with 11 seconds to go.

“You can call it lucky, you can call it fortunate, but it still says NCAA championship,” Smith said.

Make no mistake, the Tar Heels were not handed this title. Eric Montross and George Lynch banged inside and Donald Williams stroked three-pointers in putting Smith, the second-winningest coach of all time, into some high NCAA tournament company.

The loss sent Michigan, a team so fabulous for two seasons, home again as a runner-up. The Wolverines didn’t have with 11 seconds to go. You can call it lucky, you can call it fortunate, but it still says NCAA championship,” Smith said.

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Put on hold
‘Opening Day’ will have to wait due to pandemic

By Stephen Hawkins
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas

There will be no hot dogs on the grill, no beer on tap, no vendors in the stands selling peanuts and Cracker Jack.

The shiny new stadium deep in the heart of Texas will still be waiting for its first Rangers game. Instead of warming up for his debut with the New York Yankees after a record $324 million, nine-year contract, Gerrit Cole is playing catch with his wife at home.

With the start of the Major League Baseball season indefinitely

SEE WAIT ON PAGE 21