Ramstein center provides a place to decompress post-deployment

By Karin Zeitvogel
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Leaving Bagram Airfield near Kabul last week after a five-month deployment was bittersweet for Tech. Sgt. Anthony Rescigno.

He was doing what he loves in Afghanistan as part of the 405th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron — picking up critically wounded patients and “keeping them alive until we can get them to the higher echelon of care,” he said Friday at the Deployment Transition Center at Ramstein, where service members decompress after an overseas deployment and are given the tools they need to ease back into life at home.

Rescigno’s commander at Bagram had recommended that he pass through the DTC on the way home so that he could let go of some of the stress he and his unit were under in Afghanistan. Others, particularly security forces, have been referred to the program before deploying because their commanders know what they’re likely to go through.

SEE CENTER ON PAGE 4

Staff Sgt. Naomi Graham throws a right to the chin of Briana Che during a USA nationals bout at Salt Lake City, Utah, in December 2019.

Fighting for her country

Army staff sergeant will make history when she boxes for Team USA at Tokyo Olympics

By Seth Robson
Stars and Stripes

Army Staff Sgt. Naomi Graham’s jab is the boxing equivalent of a Hellfire missile launched from an attack helicopter at a distant opponent.

The 32-year-old ammunition specialist from Fayetteville, N.C., is one of the United States’ best hopes for a medal at the Tokyo Olympics, which kick off July 23. Graham will be the first female active-duty U.S. service member to box for gold, according to Team USA.

 Ranked No. 1 among U.S. middleweights and eighth in the world, Graham has steadily climbed the international ladder, taking fifth at the 2016 World Boxing Championships before moving up to third in 2018. In 2019, she won gold at the Pan American Games.

But boxing was only a peripheral part of Graham’s life when she enlisted in February 2013. “I just wanted to serve my country,” she told Stars and Stripes during a telephone interview Friday.

Her first duty station was with the 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment at Fort Carson, Colo.

In addition to issuing ammo for the...
J&J will pay $230M to settle NY opioid claim

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Johnson & Johnson has agreed to pay $230 million to New York state to settle claims that the pharmaceutical giant helped fuel the opioid crisis, Attorney General Letitia James said Saturday.

The drugmaker also agreed to permanently end the manufacturing and distribution of opioids across New York and the rest of the nation, James said in a statement announcing the settlement.

The company “helped fuel this fire, but today they’re committing to leaving the opioid business — not only in New York, but across the entire country,” she said.

The deal involving a lawsuit brought by James in 2019 removes Johnson & Johnson from a trial that is slated to begin this week on Long Island — part of a slew of litigation over an epidemic linked to nearly 500,000 deaths over the last two decades.

In its own statement on Saturday, Johnson & Johnson downplayed the attorney general’s announcement. It said the settlement involved two prescription painkillers — developed by a subsidiary and accounting for less than 1% of the market — that are already no longer sold in the United States.

The settlement was “not an admission of liability or wrongdoing,” Johnson & Johnson said. It added that its actions “relating to the marketing and promotion of important prescription pain medications were appropriate and responsible.”

### EXCHANGE RATES

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### INTEREST RATES

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<td>10-year bond</td>
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The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

**MONDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

**MONDAY IN EUROPE**

**TUESDAY IN THE PACIFIC**

**WEATHER OUTLOOK**

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Round-the-world news for America’s military.

Stripes.com supplies constant updates, on news of interest — including reports from our overseas military bases in Europe, Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Mideast, and coverage of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill.

Also available on mobile apps for Android and iOS.
**Analysts: Russia ups deception ahead of drills**

**By Alison Bath**

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, Virginia — Spoofing the location of NATO ships, spreading disinformation on social media and threatening military repercussions are typical ploys from a well-worn Moscow playbook, analysts said ahead of an international naval exercise in the Black Sea co-hosted by the United States and Ukraine.

The annual Exercise Sea Breeze comes ahead of Russian threats to potentially fire on participants if they intrude in their territorial waters, and following a heated dispute over the passage of a British destroyer through the Black Sea on Wednesday.

“Russia has used deception before,” said Michael Kofman, an expert on Eurasia’s exercise, which took place last week and included almost two dozen warships, submarines and support vessels. The Russian Defense Ministry last week published an online account of that training, which included a scenario that “worked out the tasks of detecting, countering and delivering missile strikes against an aircraft carrier strike group of a mock enemy.”

The U.S. Defense Department in recent years has shifted its strategic focus away from the Middle East and toward so-called “great-power competition” with China and Russia.

“Our strike group is prepared to carry out the full spectrum of missions, from humanitarian relief to combat operations,” Rear Adm. Dan Martin, commander of the Carrier Strike Group 1, said in a Navy news release last week.

The San Diego-based Carl Vinson is “part of our routine presence in the Black Sea,” said Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Murphy; Destroyer Squadron 1; the fast-attack submarine USS Seawolf; and the Coast Guard cutters Midgett and Oliver Berry, the Navy said in a news release Friday.

“Synchronizing our capabilities through combined operations sharpens our edge and reinforces our commitment to a stable and secure global maritime environment,” Vice Adm. Steve Koehler, the commander of U.S. 3rd Fleet, said in the release.

The Carl Vinson completed a 17-month upgrade late last summer so it could support the newest generation of fighter jets, making it the Navy’s first carrier capable of handling both F-35C Lightning II fighters and CMV-22B Ospreys, the tilt-rotor aircraft that can land vertically like a helicopter and fly like a fixed-wing plane.

During the two weeks of Hawaii training, seven guided-missile destroyers under tactical control of Destroyer Squadron 1 joined with the two Coast Guard cutters to execute combat-systems training scenarios, damage control and general quarters drills and live-fire exercises, the Navy said.

“High-level training of joint forces ensures the U.S. military remains the preeminent military power in the region. Capt. Jay Clark, the commodore of Destroyer Squadron 1, said in the Friday release. “These operations are vital to our readiness and are part of our routine presence throughout the western Pacific.”

**Carl Vinson trains off Hawaii as Russia holds exercise nearby**

**By Wyatt Olson**

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**The USS Porter sails the Black Sea during the annual Sea Breeze exercise in July 2020.**
US, UK find 50 drones violating base airspace

BY KYLE ALVAREZ
Stars and Stripes
RAF MILDENHALL, England — New technology used in a collaboration between the U.S. military and British authorities has detected more than 50 small drones violating the airspace around two bases used by the U.S. Air Force in England and Scotland in the past nine months, officials have said.

Since last October, when the technology was first used, the Air Force has tracked the small unmanned aircraft systems, or sUAS, flying in airspace surrounding RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath, and notified British Defense Ministry police.

Mildenhall is home to the U.S. Air Force’s 100th Air Refueling Wing, and the Air Force’s only F-15 fighter wing in Europe is based at Lakenheath.

Of the 50 drones detected, five were recovered by police. They were piloted by hobbyists who “were found to have malicious intent,” said Staff Sgt. Austin Grimmer, the 100th Security Forces Squadron non-commissioned officer in charge of counter-sUAS operations at Mildenhall.

But the growing number of violations of military and commercial airspace by drones has led the U.S. Defense Department to draft a strategy to counter SUAS and the British to pass legislation giving police more power to stop them.

Drones may impede flight operations and endanger personnel and equipment, military officials have said.

“It is evident that the potential for hazards or threats (from small drones) has the ability to impact the Joint Force,” then-Acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller said in the plan, which calls for the U.S. military to work with partner countries — as the U.S. did with Britain — “to respond to the needs of a rapidly changing security environment.”

Integrating the U.S. and British counter-drone systems “provides a layered defense” to detect, track, identify and defeat unmanned aircraft, said Lt. Col. Charles Carabell, chief of police and security for the U.S. Air Forces Europe U.K. coordination cell.

Further details on the new technology were unavailable due to security reasons. Carabell said the counter-drone effort brings together at least five different joint agencies, including the Air Force Research Laboratory, making it “one of the great coordination opportunities that we have with the U.K.,” Carabell said.

Beginning Tuesday, U.K. police will gain powers to ground drones such as confabulate flying hazards under a new law passed by parliament. The law also allows police to search an operator or their property if there is suspicion of illegal activity.

British police may also use technology such as radio frequency jammers, to stop drones from flying.

Drones in the U.K. are barred from flying over crowds or built-up areas, and near aircraft, airports and airfields.

Pakistan to shut border if Taliban in Afghan rule

BY ASIM TANVEER
Associated Press
MULTAN, Pakistan — Pakistan’s foreign minister said Sunday that violence and lawlessness could reign in Afghanistan after the United States’ withdrawal, and that Pakistan would shut its border to the country if the Taliban takes control of it.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that Pakistan has already taken in 3.5 million Afghan refugees over the years, but would not accept any more. He was speaking in a weekly media briefing held in the central city of Multan.

“We can’t take more, we will have to shut our border, we have to safeguard our national interest,” he said, adding that Pakistan will continue its diplomatic efforts for peace in the country, and welcome its democratically elected leadership.

Millions of Afghans fled to Pakistan from infighting between mujahedeen groups after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. The Taliban ruled Afghanistan until they were ousted by a U.S.-led coalition after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in America. In recent weeks, Taliban fighters have overrun several districts in south and northern Afghanistan, convincing government security forces to surrender and seizing their weapons and military vehicles.
Luong transfers US Army Japan reins, ending long career

BY ERICA EARL
Stars and Stripes


“To quote U.S. Army Pacific commanding general Charles A. Flynn, it has been an honor to serve in the most consequential theater during the most consequential time in our history,” Luong said during a change-of-command ceremony at Camp Zama that was broadcast live on Facebook.

“I would say we are in crisis now and the situation remains highly urgent,” added Luong, who spent half of his three-year tenure tackling the coronavirus pandemic.

Vowell comes to Japan from Indo-Pacific Command headquarters in Hawaii, where he served as deputy commander of the Strategic Planning and Policy Directorate.

He mentioned during the ceremony that he and Luong have crossed paths a few times in their careers, including serving together in the Middle East.

Vowell served three combat tours to Afghanistan and one to Iraq, according to his Army biography. He was a War College Fellow at Stanford University in 2012 an Army Chief of Staff’s Senior Fellow to the Brookings Institution in 2016.

“Our purpose is to work with our allies to make our collective deterrent and our defense during crisis robust and strong,” he said as he took command on Friday. “I pledge my best efforts to support the soldiers and families of U.S. Army Japan and our Japan Ground Self-Defense Force partners as we go forward together.”

Luong was 9 years old when he fled Vietnam with his family in 1975. He shared his story during a USAJF Facebook Live event on May 18 as part of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

In 1993, he became one of only 27 battalion commanders of Asian descent in the history of the 82nd Airborne Division. At the time, Luong said, he felt a need to outperform his white counterparts to earn equal recognition.

“Maybe I was too naive, but I thought if we all just do our jobs and do well, everything will work out,” he said during the May event. “But it doesn’t work like that. In order to be successful, you need a lot of support, you need mentorship and you need advocacy.”

City to name streets after modern generals

Associated Press

QUINCY, Mass. - The city of Quincy is naming two roads after modern-day military generals with strong ties to the city.

The City Council recently voted to name two new roads being constructed as part of a new bridge and park project under- way downtown General McConville Way and General Joseph F. Dunford Drive, The Patriot Ledger reported.

Joseph Francis Dunford Jr. was born in Boston and raised in Quincy. He is a retired Marine Corps four-star general who was the 19th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

James Charles McConville was born in Quincy and is an active U.S. Army general who is the chief of staff of the Army.

“In the theme of the bridge and the park, we found it appropriate to honor two of the more modern day generals,” Mayor Thomas Koch said. “It kind of has a nice touch to it. Both of them were sons of veterans and came from pretty amazing local families.”

The $35.6 million Generals Bridge project will ultimately honor seven generals from Quincy. A dedication is planned for Sept. 11.
**US Navy in Naples relaxes rules on wearing masks outdoors**

NAPLES, Italy — Starting Monday, Naval Support Activity Naples will no longer require masks outdoors if social distancing of at least six feet can be maintained, the base said Friday.

The rule change falls in line with Italy’s eased coronavirus restrictions, which allow citizens in white zone regions to go without masks outside as long as social distancing of about 3 feet is maintained.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines recommend social distancing of at least 6 feet. NSA Naples adheres to the more stringent policy, the installation Facebook page said.

Non-immunized individuals, ages 2 and up, must continue to follow Defense Department policy of wearing masks on all installations, the announcement said. Masks must be worn at all NSA Naples facilities before approaching or entering certain areas.

This includes the Capo Spine walkway from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. if social distancing can’t be maintained, any commercial shopping area, customer service areas, along with corridors, hallways and stairwells, and while riding a bus, the base announcement said.

Masks may be taken off in spaces that are not open or accessible to the general public, such as office spaces and where 6 feet of separation can be maintained.

Individuals who desire to wear masks may continue to do so. Personnel should avoid asking questions about vaccination status or personal reasons for wearing a mask, the announcement stated.

**US Navy in Naples remains return to Hawaii for burial**

Hawaii on Thursday, partly because DNA samples from some next of kin could not be found.

The remains will be kept at DPAA’s identification laboratory on the base until their reburyal by the Navy on Dec. 7 at the Punchbowl.

“The Navy is not actively pursuing family reference samples anymore for the Oklahoma project,” LaGarde said. “We did a big push in the last year, and they got a lot of family reference samples actually in the last year. That has made a huge difference and why we’re still making identifications now.”

The USS Oklahoma was moored on Battleship Row on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, when Japanese torpedoes descended on Pearl Harbor. Several made direct hits on the ship, capsizeing it and killing 429 crew members.

After being moved to several gravesites, the remains of 394 sailors and Marines who died that day — all too badly burned, disfigured or decayed to identify — were laid to rest in 46 plots for the unknown in 1950. A few of those remains had been identified in the years leading up to 2015.

During brief remarks to a small group of people gathered for the ceremony, Adm. Sam Paparo, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, reflected on the military’s ethos of striving to never leave a fallen comrade behind.

“These heroes that you see here have begun their final journey to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific,” he said.

**Naval Academy midshipman who died on leave played for football team**

A Naval Academy midshipman who died while on summer leave is being remembered as a kind-hearted jokester who once played linebacker for the school’s football team.

Michael Myles James, 22, of Hiram, Ga., was found unresponsive at his uncle’s home there on Wednesday morning, academy spokeswoman Cmdr. Alana Gabriels told the Military Times.

The cause of death is under investigation, and foul play is not suspected, according to a news release from the academy.

James was an English major who attended the Naval Academy Prep School before enrolling at the school in Annapolis, Md., as a member of the class of 2022, according to an academy news release.

“I’m not ashamed to say that I loved every moment I spent with him,” James’ academic adviser, Pamela Schmitt, said in the statement. “He was as kind-hearted a soul as I’ve ever met, and he will be missed by everyone who knew him.”

James was also a member of the academy’s football team and played linebacker his plebe year, according to a Navy Football roster.

“We are heartbroken to hear of Myles’ passing,” head coach Ken Niumatalolo said in a statement. “Myles was a great young man and was beloved by his brothers’ teammates. He was fun to be around and was a real jokester.”

Classmate Yenuel OrtizRodriguez said James “would remind you to celebrate every aspect of your life and to look good while you did it.”

“Myles was your brother, someone who always had your back and made sure that you knew it,” he said in the statement.

James is survived by his uncle, mother, brother and sister. Funeral arrangements are pending.
BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

All “local area activities,” including visiting to bars, nightclubs and karaoke rooms, are no longer off-limits to fully-vaccinated personnel at the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo.

However, unvaccinated personnel at Yokota Air Base remain barred from these and other nonessential activities that have a potential for crowds, close contact or closed spaces. The update to Yokota’s COVID-19 public health emergency was announced Friday in a letter from 374th Airlift Wing commander Col. Andrew Campbell.

Yokota’s local area is now defined as the “country of Japan,” minus Okinawa prefecture, which is under a state of emergency until July 11. Fully vaccinated is defined as 14 days after a person’s final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

“All limits on social gatherings and fitness activity group sizes have been removed” for fully vaccinated personnel, the base wrote in a Facebook post Friday.

The unvaccinated must continue to wear masks on and off base, according to the new policy, though fully vaccinated individuals have been granted some leeway regarding masks on base.

Yokota’s policy update follows a Tuesday decision at nearby Yokosuka Naval Base to relax many off-duty restrictions. Bars, nightclubs and tattoo parlors are no longer off-limits to most sailors in Japan, thanks to the decision by base commander Capt. Rich Jarrett.

U.S. military bases across the country have also updated off-limits area maps as infections number continue to fall in most parts of the country.

As of 7 p.m. Friday, the U.S. military in Japan had reported only one new coronavirus patient, an unvaccinated employee at Yokosuka Naval Base, 35 miles south of central Tokyo. That person tested positive after displaying symptoms of COVID-19, the base said in a statement Friday afternoon.

Yokosuka has had 10 people test positive for COVID-19 this month. There were 10 infections in all of May.

Japan on Friday reported 1,245 new patients, 315 fewer than the same day last week, according to public broadcaster NHK and the World Health Organization. There were 22 deaths nationwide.

The government has counted just shy of 790,000 COVID-19 cases during the pandemic and more than 14,500 deaths, the WHO said. Tokyo on Friday reported another 562 coronavirus infections and two deaths, according to NHK, which cited metropolitan government data. That’s 109 more than the same day last week. Okinawa prefecture, home to most of the U.S. troops stationed in Japan, reported 82 new infections Friday, four fewer than the same day last week, according to NHK. There were four deaths.

us, French artists use mural to reviye hope

PARIS — A colorful human face emerges from waves like a call for hope above a Parisian street, in a giant message of optimism from American and French street artists painting a massive mural in the French capital that’s slowly climbing out of its virus isolation.

Illustrator AJ Dungo, 29, who lives in California, and French graffiti artist Da Cruz, 44, started working in mid-June on the 82-foot high mural in the 19th arrondissement, in the northeast of Paris.

The project is a symbol of creative rebirth, and of both cultures reconnecting after lockdowns.

Da Cruz, who grew up in this Parisian neighborhood and used to travel regularly to different continents, said it was hard for him to see his projects stopped amid the pandemic.

“I’m working in the street because I like showing my message to lots of different people, and I miss hearing people speaking another language and being able to communicate with them through painting. There’s always a bridge that is created by colors,” he told The Associated Press.

The project is supported by the French American Mural Art (FAMA) program, led by the U.S. Embassy, in association with local festival Ourcq Living Colors.

“We wanted to make something really optimistic and something celebratory, because after the tragic year everyone went through, we thought it could help the community to lift their spirits a bit and give them some hope with a meaningful image,” AJ Dungo said.
Firm said in ’18 building needed $9M in repairs

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Nearly three years before an oceanfront building collapsed near Miami, an engineering firm estimated that major repairs the building needed would cost more than $9 million, according to newly released emails.

The email from the firm of Morabito Consultants was among a series of documents released by the city of Surfside as rescue efforts continued at the site of the collapsed building, where more than 150 people remained unaccounted for. At least nine people were killed in the collapse.

The release of the 2018 cost estimate followed the earlier publication of another document from the firm showing the ground-floor pool deck of the building was resting on a concrete slab that had “major structural damage” and needed to be extensively repaired. That report also uncovered “abundant cracking and spalling” of concrete columns, beams and walls in the parking garage.

The report did not warn of imminent danger from the damage, and it is unclear if any of the damaged building was responsible for the collapse of Champlain Towers South.

The cost estimate showed that repairs across the entire building would cost more than $9.1 million, with the cost of work at the garage, entrance and pool deck alone accounting for more than $3.8 million. The work had not been done by the time the building collapsed.

The earlier report said the waterproofing under the pool deck had failed and had been improperly laid flat instead of sloped, preventing water from draining off.

“The failed waterproofing is causing major structural damage to the concrete structural slab below these areas. Failure to replace the waterproofing in the near future will cause the extent of the concrete deterioration to expand exponentially,” the report said.

The firm recommended that the damaged slabs be replaced in what would be a major repair. Some of the damage to the concrete in the parking garage was minor, while other columns had exposed and deteriorating rebar. It also noted that many of the building’s previous attempts to fix the columns and other damage with epoxy were marred by poor craftsmanship and were failing.

Beneath the pool deck “where the slab had been epoxy-injected, new cracks were radiating from the originally repaired cracks,” the report said.

In a statement Saturday, Morabito Consultants confirmed its report “detailed significant cracks and breaks in the concrete, which required repairs to ensure the safety of the residents and the public.”

Family finds hope as search continues

Associated Press

SURFSIDE, Fla. — When Mike Noriega heard that part of the condominium tower where his grandmother lived had collapsed, he rushed with his father to the scene. They arrived at a nightmarish 30-foot pile of pancaked concrete and mangled metal, the remains of her 12-story building — and no sign of 92-year-old Hilda Noriega.

But among the flying debris, they stumbled across mementos that bore witness to Hilda’s life on the sixth floor in Champlain Towers South: an old picture of her with her late husband and their infant son, and a birthday card that friends from her prayer group sent two weeks earlier with the acronym “ESM,” Spanish for “hand-delivered,” scrawled across the yellow envelope with a butterfly etching.

“There was a message in the midst of all this,” Noriega said. “It means not to give up hope. To have faith.”

Days after Thursday’s collapse, Hilda remains among more than 150 people unaccounted for in Surfside, north of Miami Beach, with nine confirmed dead and authorities and loved ones fearing the toll will go much higher.

As scores of rescuers continue to use heavy machinery and power tools to clear the rubble from the top and tunnel in from below, the Noriega family still has hope she will be found alive.

“Some miracles are very big, others are small,” said Mike, 36, who last spoke to Hilda the day before the disaster.

Hot air balloon crashes in Albuquerque street killing all aboard

Associated Press

A hot air balloon hit a power line and crashed onto a busy street in Albuquerque on Saturday, killing all five people on board, including the parents of an Albuquerque police officer, police said.

The crash happened around 7 a.m. in the city’s west side, police spokesman Gilbert Gallegos said. Police identified two of the passengers as Martin Martinez, 59, and Mary Martinez, 62 — the parents of a prison transport officer with the Albuquerque Police Department.

Police did not immediately release the others’ names but said the male pilot, and a female and male passenger were from central New Mexico.

Martin Martinez also worked for Albuquerque police on bicycle patrol but most recently was a sergeant with the local school district’s police force, authorities said. Some Albuquerque officers who responded to the crash had worked with him and were sent home because it took a toll on them, said police Chief Harold Medina.

“It really emphasized the point that no matter how big we think we are, we’re still a tight-knit community and incidents like this affect us all,” Medina said.

The Albuquerque Public Schools District said Martin Martinez “will forever be remembered for his lifelong dedication, courage and selflessness to the profession of law enforcement.”

The intersection where the balloon crashed was still cordoned off late Saturday afternoon. The multicolored balloon had skirted the top of the power lines, sending at least one dangling and temporarily knocking out power to more than 13,000 homes, said police spokesman Gilbert Gallegos.

The gondola fell about 100 feet in the median, catching on fire, the Federal Aviation Administration said. Bystanders frantically called out the flames and prayed aloud, video posted online showed.

The envelope of the balloon floated away, eventually landing on a residential rooftop, Gallegos said. The FAA did not immediately have registration details for the balloon but identified it as a Cameron 0-120.

Authorities haven’t determined what caused the crash. The National Transportation Safety Board sent two investigators to the scene Saturday who will look into the pilot, the balloon itself and the operating environment, said spokesman Peter Knudson. A preliminary report typically is available in a couple of weeks.

Gallegos said hot air balloons can be difficult to manage, particularly when the wind kicks up. “Our balloonists tend to be very much experts at navigating, but sometimes we have these types of tragic accidents,” he said.

Towers South: an old picture of her with her late husband and their infant son, and a birthday card that friends from her prayer group sent two weeks earlier with the acronym “ESM,” Spanish for “hand-delivered,” scrawled across the yellow envelope with a butterfly etching.

There was a message in the midst of all this,” Noriega said. “It means not to give up hope. To have faith.”

Days after Thursday’s collapse, Hilda remains among more than 150 people unaccounted for in Surfside, north of Miami Beach, with nine confirmed dead and authorities and loved ones fearing the toll will go much higher.

As scores of rescuers continue to use heavy machinery and power tools to clear the rubble from the top and tunnel in from below, the Noriega family still has hope she will be found alive.

“Some miracles are very big, others are small,” said Mike, 36, who last spoke to Hilda the day before the disaster.
Monday, June 28, 2021

NATION

Biden walks back veto threat on infrastructure bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Aiming to preserve a fragile bipartisan deal on infrastructure, President Joe Biden endorsed it “without hesitation” Saturday, walking back from a threat to veto it if Congress also didn’t pass an even larger package to expand the social safety net.

Biden said he didn’t mean to suggest in earlier remarks that he would veto the nearly $1 trillion infrastructure bill unless Congress also passed a broader package of investments that he and fellow Democrats aim to approve along party lines, the two together totaling some $4 trillion.

Speaking on Thursday moments after fulfilling his hopes of reaching a bipartisan accord, Biden appeared to put the deal in jeopardy with his comment that the infrastructure bill would have to move in “tandem” with the larger bill.

Though Biden had been clear he would pursue the massive new spending for child care, Medicare and other investments, Republicans balked at the president’s notion that he would not sign one without the other. “If this is the only thing that comes to me, I’m not signing it,” Biden said then of the infrastructure bill. “It’s in tandem.”

By Saturday, Biden was seeking to clarify those comments, after his top negotiators Steve Ricchetti and Louisa Terrell worked to assure senators that Biden remained enthusiastic about the deal.

“My comments also created the impression that I was issuing a veto threat on the very plan I had just agreed to, which was certainly not my intent,” Biden said in a statement.

“I intend to pursue the passage of that plan, which Democrats and Republicans agreed to on Thursday, with vigor,” Biden added. “It would be good for the economy, good for our country, good for our people. I fully stand behind it without reservation or hesitation.”

Biden’s earlier remarks had drawn sharp criticism from some Republicans, including Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who tweeted on Friday, “No deal by extortion!” Others felt “blindsided” by what they said was a shift in their understanding of his position.

Tensions appeared to calm afterward, when senators from the group of negotiators convened a conference call, according to a person who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private meeting.

“My hope is that we still get this done,” said Sen. Bob Portman of Ohio, the lead Republican negotiator, in an interview Friday with The Associated Press. “Our infrastructure is in bad shape.”

Biden was set to travel on Tuesday to Wisconsin for the first stop on a nationwide tour to promote the infrastructure package, the White House said.

The sudden swings point to the difficulty in getting the bipartisan deal over the finish line, which Biden and fellow Democrats aim to approve by late Friday, when Republicans agreed to, which was certainly not my intent,” Biden said in a statement.

Thursday morning, “No deal by extortion!”

The Democrats’ two-track strategy has been to consider both the bipartisan deal and their own more sweeping priorities side by side, as a way to assure liberals the smaller deal won’t be the only one.

A bipartisan accord has been important for the White House as it tries to show centrist Democrats and others that it is working with Republicans before Biden tries to push the broader package through Congress.

Ten Republican senators would be needed to pass the bipartisan accord in the 50-50 Senate, where 60 votes are required to advance most bills.

While the senators in the bipartisan group are among some of the more independent-minded lawmakers, known for bucking their party’s leadership, it appears criticism by Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Biden’s approach could peel away GOP support.

Man jumps from moving plane at Los Angeles airport

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A passenger was taken to the hospital Friday night after jumping out of a moving plane at Los Angeles International Airport, authorities said.

United Express Flight 5365, operated by SkyWest, was pulling away from a gate shortly after 7 p.m. when the man unsuccessfully tried to breach the cockpit by pounding on the door, then managed to open the service door and jumped down the emergency slide onto the tarmac, according to the airport, the FBI and SkyWest.

The twin-engine Embraer 175, which was headed to Salt Lake City, returned to its gate, the airport said.

Nobody else aboard the plane was injured.

The flight departed for Salt Lake City late Friday evening and arrived early Saturday morning, according to the flightaware.com website.

The FBI is investigating, spokeswoman Laura Eimiller said Saturday.

TSA will resume voluntary defense training for airline employees

Associated Press

DALLAS — Federal officials cited the surge of incidents involving disruptive and sometimes violent passengers in resuming self-defense training for airline flight attendants and pilots.

The classes, which are voluntary for airline flight crews, were halted last year because of COVID-19. The Transportation Security Administration said they will resume in early July.

The move was praised by leaders of major flight attendant unions, who lobbied to create the training programs after the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The terrorists who hijacked and crashed four planes attacked several flight attendants and passengers before storming the cockpits.

“Since a flight attendant was the first to perish, we wanted to make sure that we could protect ourselves from physical alterations, on and off the aircraft,” said Lyn Montgomery, president of the union and a Southwest Airlines flight attendant. “Right now it’s really needed, it’s incredibly valuable.”

The Federal Aviation Administration said last week that airlines have reported more than 3,000 incidents involving unruly passengers since Jan. 1, with many involving passengers who refuse to comply with a federal requirement to wear face masks. The agency did not track such reports in prior years, but a spokesman said it was safe to assume this year’s numbers are the highest ever.

Since announcing a “zero-tolerance policy” against unruly passengers in January, the FAA has publicized potential fines — some topping $30,000 — against dozens of passengers and has investigated more than 400 cases. That is about three times the full-year average number of cases over the past decade, according to FAA figures.

Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants, who also advocated making the classes mandatory, nonetheless praised TSA for restarting voluntary ones now because of the surge in confrontations on flights.

“This should send a message to the public that these events are serious” and that flight attendants are there to ensure “the safety and security of everyone in the plane,” she said.
Impact of Chauvin case on policing is yet to be seen

By Tammy Webber

Associated Press

AUSTIN—The Texas Supreme Court says survivors and relatives of those killed in a 2017 mass killing at a church can’t sue a sporting goods chain for selling the gunman the rifle used in the attack.

The court Friday threw out four lawsuits against Academy Sports and Outdoors that alleged a San Antonio-area store negligently sold the gun to Devin Kelley in 2016.

Kelley killed more than two dozen people when he opened fire at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs. The 26-year-old then killed himself during a chase after the shooting.

Academy Sports and Outdoors, where the shooter purchased a Ruger AR-556 semi-automatic rifle that included a 30-round magazine, had appealed after two lower courts declined to dismiss lawsuits.

The Supreme Court agreed with Academy, and ruled the petitions were prohibited by the U.S. Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act. The act protects retailers from lawsuits arising from criminal acts by third parties.

The lawsuits said that Kelley provided store clerks with a Colorado ID, and the U.S. Gun Control Act required Academy to comply with Colorado gun laws before approving the purchase. Colorado, however, prohibits the sale of magazines holding more than 14 rounds, while Academy sold Kelley a rifle that came packaged with a 30-round magazine.

But the court said the sale was legal because the federal law applies only to the sale of firearms, not components.

Shooting survivors and relatives have also sued the U.S. Air Force, which failed to report a domestic violence conviction that would have prohibited Kelley from purchasing a firearm.

Kelley had been found guilty of assaulting his wife and stepson and was dishonorably discharged from the service in 2012, but Air Force officials failed to report the conviction to the FBI background check system despite a requirement to do so.

Court tosses lawsuits against store in Texas church killing

Associated Press

WELLINGTON, Ohio — Former President Donald Trump reproached his election grievances and baseless claims of fraud as he returned to the rally stage Saturday, holding his first campaign-styled event since leaving the White House.

“This was the scam of the century and this was the crime of the century,” Trump told a crowd of thousands at Ohio’s Lorain County Fairgrounds, not far from Cleveland, where he began making good on his pledge to exact revenge on those who voted for his historic second impeachment.

The event was held to support Senate Miller, a former White House aide who is challenging Republican Rep. Anthony Gonzalez for his congressional seat. Gonzalez was one of 10 GOP House members who voted to impeach Trump for his role in inciting the deadly Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol building. Trump has vowed to back those who run against them.

And while he praised Miller as an “incredible patriot” and a “great guy” who “loves the people of Ohio,” Trump spent much of the rally fixating on the 2020 election, which he insists he won, even though top state and local election officials, his own attorney general and numerous judges, including some he appointed, have said there is no evidence of the mass voter fraud he alleges took place.

Trump has been consumed with ongoing efforts to overturn the results in various states, and has even publicly entertained the idea that he could somehow be reinstated into office, even though no legal or constitutional basis for doing so exists.

“The 2020 presidential election was rigged,” he told the crowd, which at one point broke into a “Trump won!” chant. “We won that election in a landslide.” In reality, President Joe Biden’s victory was thoroughly validated by the officials who reported finding no systemic fraud.

Trump airs old election grievances in return to the rally stage

Associated Press

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Teens poured alcohol on nesting sea turtle

AL ORANGE BEACH — Police in coastal Alabama said a group of teenagers were arrested after pouring alcohol on a nesting sea turtle.

Officers responded to a call that juveniles were harassing a sea turtle on the beach.

Police said they found a group of teenagers near the nesting sea turtle and discovered that they had poured alcohol on the turtle. Officers made several arrests for underage possession of alcohol.

The Orange Beach Wildlife Center and Management Program wrote in a social media post that workers discovered signs of a false crawl, which is where a sea turtle comes to shore to nest but decides not to for one reason or another.

“This female turtle came ashore and did not nest because she was harassed by a group of teenagers. They poured alcohol on her while she was attempting to nest,” the group wrote.

Man charged after burning American flag

KS LARNED — Jason Wayne Cauble, 37, of Larned was charged with arson after a large U.S. flag was burned outside a business in Larned, Pawnee County Attorney Douglas McNett said.

Investigators said the 30-by-20 foot flag was burned at the Carr Auction and Realty Inc. building in Larned.

McNett said that people who burn their own flags are protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speech rights but arson can be protected by First Amendment free speaker.

Music manager says $200K in property stolen

MS SOUTHWICK — A music manager said someone stole $200,000 in cash, jewelry, credit cards and other property from his north Mississippi home.

WREG-TV reported Southaven police are investigating after the robbery at the home of Michael Sykes. He was out of town at the time.

Sykes said burglars entered his gated subdivision, broke into his home and then entered his house through a first-floor window, possibly disabling his alarm system.

There, he said they took credit cards, $36,000 in cash, Louis Vuitton luggage, watches, and custom jewelry with the logo of Sykes’ company, Palm Tree Entertainment.

The thieves had been making charges on the credit cards at various stores, said Sykes, who is a manager for rapper DeAndré Cortey Way, known as Soulja Boy.

Sykes said people could see from his social media accounts that he was out of town.

Rock ‘cairn’ vandalism found at national park

NM ALBUQUERQUE — Authorities at Petroglyph National Monument said visitors committed extensive vandalism by collecting rocks and stacking them in the form of cairns, sometimes used as a hiking trail marker.

The federally protected park was created to preserve rock designs scratched by Indigenous people starting at least 700 years ago, and Spanish settlers as far back as 400 years ago.

“Moving, stacking, or making shapes out of rocks is a form of vandalism and will impact every visitor who comes after,” said Park Superintendent Nancy Hendricks, asking visitors to “respect these sacred landscapes.”

National Park Service workers are dismantling the stacks of rocks, but can’t be sure they’ll return the rocks where they came from along the largely preserved desert landscape.

Woman arrested after newborn abandoned

CA LYNWOOD — A woman who said she was sexually assaulted in Guatemala was arrested and accused of leaving her newborn baby in a Los Angeles-area restroom, authorities said.

The 22-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of cruelty to a child after the baby, found two days after she was abandoned, was treated at a hospital and will be put up for adoption, authorities said.

The woman acknowledged to investigators that she entered the country illegally, gave birth to the boy and left him in the trash can of a women’s restroom in a Lynwood park, according to a statement from the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department.

The woman said she “discarded the child out of fear” because she had only been in the United States for two months and nobody knew she was pregnant, the statement said.

Small earthquake shakes up city, surrounding area

MD WOODLAND — A small earthquake shook the Baltimore area last week, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The quake had a preliminary magnitude of 2.6, according to Paul Caruso, a geophysicist at the USGS National Earthquake Information Center. It was centered in Woodlawn, just west of Baltimore, and was about 1.5 miles deep.

Fire department officials in Baltimore City and Baltimore County said they had no reports of injuries or damage from the quake more than an hour after it struck.

Workers will remove fill that existing trails were built on and replace it with accessible boardwalks and primitive trails to restore surface drainage. Unused roads that impede water flow also will be removed.

Native trees, shrubs, wildflowers and wetland plants will be planted where infrastructure is removed or altered.

Work began in March and is expected to continue through December 2023.

State seeks to attract lifeguards with more pay

MA BOSTON — Massachusetts officials are upping pay and offering bonuses in a bid to attract more lifeguards at the state’s beaches.

The new incentives come amid a shortage of lifeguards in the state and across the country.

Pay for Department of Conservation and Recreation lifeguards is going up from $17 to $20 an hour. Head lifeguards will start making $21 an hour, up from $18. Lifeguards who remain on the job the entire season can earn a $500 bonus.

The state has seen a spate of drownings in recent weeks. Massachusetts State Police have investigated 24 drownings so far this year.

Learning to lasso

Kiley Miller of Shrewsbury, Iowa, tries to lasso a hay bale cow as he tries his hand at roping at the western era encampment run by Perry Smith of Alleman, Iowa, during the 2021 Linn County Fair in Central City, Iowa.

From The Associated Press
Disappearances rising on Mexico’s ‘highway of death’

By Mark Stevenson
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — As many as 50 people are missing after setting out on three-hour car trips this year between Mexico’s industrial hub of Monterrey and the border city of Nuevo Laredo on a well-traveled stretch of road local media have dubbed “the highway of death.”

Relatives say family members simply vanished. The disappearances, and last week’s shooting of 15 apparently innocent bystanders in Reynosa, suggest Mexico is within both countries.

What happened to the rest remains a mystery. Most were residents of Nuevo Leon state, where Monterrey is located. Desperate for answers, relatives of the missing took to the streets in Monterrey on Thursday to protest, demanding answers.

Orozco, a member of the civic group Unit-Mexico, said the disappearances must stop because of the toll it has taken on families. “Nobody thinks it’s a good idea to start charging through on a major new peace initiative,” said Ivan Goldenberg, a MidEast security expert at the nonprofit Center for a New American Security.

The border from Laredo, Texas. About a half-dozen men have reappeared alive, badly beaten, and all they will say is that armed men forced them to stop on the highway and throw their vehicles.

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WORLD

Fire ravages 16 boats in Hong Kong

Associated Press
HONG KONG — A fire engulfed 16 vessels in a Hong Kong typhoon shelter early Sunday, resulting in at least 10 boats sinking and one person sent to a hospital.

The fire broke out at about 2:30 a.m. at the Aberdeen South typhoon shelter in Hong Kong, and was extinguished more than six hours later.

Firefighters rescued 35 people from vessels during the fire, according to public broadcaster RTHK.

There were no reports of any injuries, although one person who felt unwell was sent to the hospital.

The fire services department used 11 fire boat monitors, eight jets, and mobilized four breathing apparatus teams to fight the blaze, according to a statement.

It wasn’t immediately clear what caused the fire.

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Pride events: Arrests in Turkey; parties in Europe

Associated Press
ROME — Police in riot gear on Saturday blocked streets to try to thwart gay Pride marchers in Istanbul, while thousands turned out joyfully in Paris and elsewhere in Europe after pandemic privations — although setbacks against LGBT rights tempered some of the celebratory air.

Authorities have banned Istanbul Pride events since 2015, citing public security, and more recently, COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The Cumhuriyet newspaper said at least 25 people were detained.

In Berlin, demonstrators set off on three routes toward the central Alexanderplatz in a format meant both to avoid bigger gatherings during the pandemic and to reflect the diversity of the LGBT community.

In Italy, thousands of Pride celebrants rallied in Rome and in some smaller cities.

With a proposed law to combat hate crimes against LGBTQ people stalled in the Italian Senate for months, the Vatican and right-wing political leaders have been lobbying to eliminate some of the provisions, citing fears the legislation will crimp freedom of expression.

After it became public that the Vatican earlier this month had raised objections to Italy’s embassy to the Holy See over some of the bill’s aspects, the Holy See tried to defuse anger by insisting it doesn’t want to block passage. But its No. 2 official, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, expressed concern that the legislation could leave open to prosecution those expressing opinions about “any possible distinction between man and woman.”

A new Hungarian law prohibits sharing content on homosexuality or sex reassignment to people under 18 in school sex education programs, films or advertisements. The European Union nation’s government says the law aims to protect children and insists it doesn’t target gays.

The overarching mood among tens of thousands of participants at the Paris event was of celebration after nearly a year-and-a-half of pandemic-triggered restrictions on gatherings and socializing.

In North Macedonia, hundreds of people marched through the capital, Skopje, as the Balkan country hosted its second-ever Pride parade. The crowd carried a large rainbow banner, blew whistles and cheered and danced to music playing from a vehicle with loudspeakers.

A general view of the annual Gay Pride march Saturday in Paris.
Biden will pay politically for making a deal with Iran

By Doyle McManus

Los Angeles Times

P resident Joe Biden's negotiators are moving toward renewing former President Barack Obama's 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, a deal renounced by former President Donald Trump. If the Biden team succeeds, it will be the biggest foreign policy win of the prez- ident's first year — as well as a massive political headache.

"Trump believed that by canceling the deal Obama had sanctioned Iran to accept far tougher terms. So he walked away, slapping massive economic sanctions on Tehran, and waited for the regime to collapse. But the nutters didn't buck. Instead, freed from the agreement's limits, they accelerated uranium enrichment and moved closer to the point at which they could build a bomb.

A renewed agreement would not only halt that progress, but reverse it. And it would reimpose international inspections that made it impossible for Iran to build a nuclear-weapon more rapidly than the United States could stop it.

So what's the problem?

Like many international agreements — and this is true of Iran and the United States, but five other countries — the nuclear deal isn't perfect.

For one thing, it isn't permanent. Most of its major provisions expire in 2030, which seemed a long time away in 2015 but doesn't now. After that date, in the absence of a new agreement, Iran could return to increasing its stockpile of enriched uranium.

For another, the deal leaves many other problems unsolved. Beyond nuclear weap- ons, Iran's militant Islamist regime challeng- es U.S. interests across the entire Middle East, supporting anti-American factions in East, supporting anti-American factions in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. The closest U.S. ally in the region, Israel, considers Iran a mortal enemy.

And the Tehran government is a singularly evil, one-party, joined a letter urging that any deal ex- tends from the sale of the commemorative coin to the common defense of the nation and to peace and freedom from tyranny throughout the world.

Recently, I learned that the Memorial needs critical repairs and maintenance. The National Park Service, which oversees the maintenance of the Memorial, has an estimated $1 billion backlog — approximately $1 billion allocated for the National Mall alone. Repairs and maintenance to the Memorial are not high on the priority list.

In February, Reps. Marcy Kaptur, D-Ohio, and Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., introduced the National World War II Memorial Commemorative Coin Act of 2021. The legislation would allow the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the National World War II Memorial. Proceeds from the sale of the commemorative coins would be used to maintain and repair the Memorial, as well as for commemorative and educational programs.

The commemorative coin would serve as an important representation of the brave Americans who fought to defend the nation and advance peace and freedom throughout the world. The legislation ensures that the World War II Memorial will be properly maintained, and that the commemorative coin and educational programs at the Memorial will remain robust and substantial. Two hundred fourteen members of the House of Representatives have co-sponsored the legis- lation, and at least 290 are needed for it to come up for a vote. I applaud those members of the House of Representatives and the Sen- ate who support The Greatest Generation Memorial Act (S. 1506). A Senate companion bill introduced by Sens. Mike Rounds, R- S.D., and Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H. I hope that all of our Congress members will join together to support this legislation.

While my generation might not have much time left to visit the Memorial, we must forev- er teach the lessons of yesterday to unite the United States for today and tomorrow. The Memorial serves as an important symbol of American national unity, a timeless reminder of the moral strength and awesome power that can flow when a free people are at once united and bonded together in a common and just cause.
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45 Japanese noodle
46 “Absolutely!”
47 Misery
48 Press for payment
49 Without haste
50 Journal
51 ET’s craft
52 King, in Cannes
53 Slithery fish
54 Tolkien monster
55 Chowderheads
56 Nemesis

DOWN
1 Unpaid TV ad
2 Youngster
3 The whole enchilada
4 Japanese drama
5 Overlay material
6 — Majesty
7 Metric measure
8 Cameo stones
9 Back to making trouble
10 Calf-length
11 United nations
16 Cyclades isle
20 Last write-up
21 Throat clearer
22 Oscar-winner
23 Upon quick examination
24 Country’s McEntire
25 Smack
26 Jurist Lance
28 Weary sounds
31 Airline to Tel Aviv
33 Catchall abbr.
35 Lacking slack
36 Wizardry
38 Quarterback Brady
39 Zedong follower
40 Land in la mer
41 Meadows
42 Squelched
43 Noted showman
44 In medias —
45 Japanese noodle
46 “Absolutely!”
47 Misery
48 Press for payment
49 Without haste
50 Journal
51 ET’s craft
52 King, in Cannes
53 Slithery fish
54 Tolkien monster
55 Chowderheads
56 Nemesis

Answer to Previous Puzzle

CRYPTOQUIP

Wednesday’s Cryptoquip: I WOULDN’T INTERACT WITH THAT MAN FROM TOPEKA WHO ESCAPED FROM PRISON. HE’S A LOOSE KANSAN.

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: T equals Y
Get the news that matters to you, from the source you trust.

Daily Headlines | Veterans News | Military History | and more

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stripes.com/newsletters
**Actress says show returns with relevance, madness in Season 5**

**By Katie Feldman**

*New York Daily News*

Sarah Steele is almost convinced “The Good Fight” creators can predict the future.

The 32-year-old actress, who stars as investigator Marissa Gold on the legal series, marvels that for five years Robert and Michelle King seemingly have seen everything coming — from systemic racism to cartoonish villains like Milo Yiannopoulos.

“I was reading a script one day and I didn’t quite understand some aspect of the case we were working on, and then (a podcast) … that day was all about what we were doing,” Steele told the Daily News. “We got that script weeks ago! How did they know?“

“I think that’s what great artists do. They tap into something that’s simmering under the surface. That’s how they stay so relevant.”

After its fourth season was delayed, then hastily wrapped due to the COVID-19 shutdown last spring, the fifth season returned to Paramount+ on June 24 to tie up loose ends — particularly the planned departures of Cush Jumbo and Delroy Lindo — then launch into the typical chaos of “The Good Fight.”

Between COVID-inspired downsizing and the constant fight over the law firm’s identity, Reddick/Lochbar has plenty to deal with, leaving Marissa to use the pandemic to do what many promised and failed to do: She changed her life and started law school.

“She gets frustrated quickly with all the red tape and all of the grunt work,” Steele said.

But by happenstance — or fate — Marissa stumbles on what Steele described as an “alternative” courtroom: a makeshift tribunal in the back of a copy shop, with a makeshift judge (Mandy Patinkin) and makeshift rules. Against the wishes of Diane (Christine Baranski) and Liz (Audra McDonald), Marissa can’t seem to stay away from the sideshow, even as the chaos compounds.

“They found a way to make Marissa a lawyer in her own way. The very normal, straight courtroom scenes didn’t feel right for a character, as unconventional as she is,” Steele said. “It’s been so interesting to finally be practicing law on a law show but in a way that’s subverting the whole form.”

That’s how “The Good Fight” operates: Everything has a twist, not for some May sweeps or season finale cliffhanger, but because the show simply keeps getting bigger and weirder.

“I don’t think very much about how chaotic it is and how zany it is because you have to ground it in truth. I play everything really straight, as if it’s normal.”

**Lions, tigers, bears, love? Netflix’s ‘Sexy Beasts’ trailer baffling**

**By Annabel Aguirar**

*Washington Post*

A grasshopper and a dolphin walk into a bar. There’s no joke here, only romance: In Netflix’s newly announced reality show “Sexy Beasts,” which premieres July 21, hopeful daters don prosthetic-heavy disguises in search of a connection beyond physical attraction, a blind date by way of “Sexy Beasts,” which premieres July 21, Netflix’s newly announced reality show “The Good Fight,” which premieres July 21, Netflix’s newly announced reality show

There’s no joke here, only romance: In Netflix’s newly announced reality show “Sexy Beasts,” which premieres July 21, Netflix’s newly announced reality show

“Any day now we’ll find out all the Netflix HQ staff died in a fire or something years ago and their whole business strategy ever since has been the result of the servers achieving conscience and desperately trying to understand humanity, and failing miserably at it,” someone tweeted.

“The Good Fight” operates: Everything has a twist, not for some May sweeps or season finale cliffhanger, but because the show simply keeps getting bigger and weirder.

“I don’t think very much about how chaotic it is and how zany it is because you have to ground it in truth. I play everything really straight, as if it’s normal.”

**Norwegian-born Ullmann earned Oscar nominations for her lead turns in the Swedish dramas “The Emigrants” (1971) and “Face to Face” (1976), making her the first actor to pick up multiple nominations for international films.**

**Other news**

- **Winston Marshall, a founding member of folk-rock group Mumford & Sons, announced June 24 that he is leaving the band so that he can “speak freely” about political issues. Marshall took a break from the band in March after sparking a social media storm with tweeting admiration for “Unmasked,” a book by right-wing writer-activist Andy Ngo that attacked far-left militant groups collectively known as antifa. Marshall plays guitar and banjo with the group.**
- **Anne Rice’s bestselling novel “Interview with the Vampire” is rising again on screen, this time for TV. The novel, which was adapted for the 1994 Brad Pitt-Tom Cruise film, will be the basis for a new AMC and AMC+ series set for 2022. AMC Networks said June 24. The announcement follows the company’s 2020 acquisition of 18 international films.**
- **Jerry Seinfeld is taking his longtime infatuation of Pop-Tarts to Hollywood. The Emmy-winning funnyman is set to direct, produce and star in “Unfrosted,” a new Netflix comedy about the iconic brand of breakfast pastries. Production on “Unfrosted” is set to start in spring 2022.**
- **The lead singer of Blink-182, Mark Hoppus, revealed that he has been diagnosed with cancer. On June 23, Hoppus announced that for the past three months he had been undergoing chemotherapy. Hoppus did not reveal where the cancer was located.**

**Samuel L. Jackson among honorary Oscar recipients**

From wire reports

The motion picture academy will present honorary Oscars to Samuel L. Jackson, Elaine May and Liv Ullmann, and the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award to Danny Glover at its 12th Governors Awards on Jan. 15, 2022.

The ceremony will mark a resumption of the Governors Awards, which were canceled in 2020 because of the pandemic.

“We are thrilled to present this year’s Governors Awards to four honorees who have had a profound impact on both film and society,” Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences President David Rubin said in a statement.

Glover is best known for his pairing with Mel Gibson in the “Lethal Weapon” movie series and for work in films like “The Color Purple,” “Grand Canyon” and “The Royal Tenenbaums.” He has never been nominated for an Oscar.

Jackson’s career has encompassed his recurring role as Nick Fury in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and collaborations with directors Quentin Tarantino (“Pulp Fiction,” “Jackie Brown,” “Django Unchained”) and Spike Lee (“Do the Right Thing,” “School Daze”). He earned an Oscar nomination for his supporting turn as the Bible-paraphrasing hitman in “Pulp Fiction.”

May teamed with Mike Nichols as a groundbreaking comedy act in the 1950s and ’60s and went on to write and direct many notable films. She received Oscar nominations for writing adapted screenplays for “Heaven Can Wait” and “Primary Colors,” whichNichols directed.

Norwegian-born Ullmann earned Oscar nominations for her lead turns in the Swedish dramas “The Emigrants” (1971) and “Face to Face” (1976), making her the first actor to pick up multiple nominations for international films.

**Hugh Dancy as Caleb Garlin (left) and Sarah Steele as Marissa Gold on “The Good Fight.”**
College World Series
At TD Ameritrade Park Omaha, Neb.
(Doubles Elimination)
Saturday, June 19

Game 1 - N.C. State 3, Stanford 4

Game 2 - No. 4 Vanderbilt 7, No. 5 Arizona 6

Sunday, June 20

Game 3 - Virginia 9, Tennessee 0

Game 4 - No. 7 Mississippi St. 3, No. 2 Texas 1

Monday, June 21

Game 5 - No. 9 Stanford 1A, No. 4 Arizona 5

Game 6 - No. 6 N.C. State 1, No. 4 Vanderbilt 0

Tuesday, June 22

Game 7 - No. 2 Texas 8, No. 3 Tennessee 4

Game 8 - No. 7 Mississippi St. 3, No. 5 Arizona 2

Wednesday, June 23

Game 9 - Stanford 1, No. 1 Vanderbilt 0

Thursday, June 24

Game 10 - Texas 6, No. 1 Arizona 1

Game 11 - No. 4 Vanderbilt 3, N.C. State 1

Game 12 - No. 5 Arizona 2, No. 7 Mississippi St. 11

Game 13 - N.C. State vs. No. 4 Vanderbilt

Game 14 - Bay 4 - No. 7 Mississippi St. 2, N. 4 Texas

Tennessee at Stanford

Monday, June 28: No. 7 Mississippi St. vs. No. 1 Vanderbilt

Tuesday, June 29: No. 4 Vanderbilt vs. N.C. State

Wednesday, June 30: No. 7 Mississippi St. vs. No. 4 Vanderbilt

**DEALS**

**BASEBALL**

Major League Baseball
American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES —
Opted LHP John Means to 10-day IL.

DETROIT TIGERS —
Called up INF Andrew Romine from Triple-A.

HOUSTON ASTROS —
RHP Hector Perez from Triple-A.

LA ANGELES DODGERS —
Sent 3B David Dahl to 10-day IL.

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS —
Sent RHP Caleb Smith to 60-day IL.

CINCINNATI REDS —
Sent LHP Artie Lewicki from 10-day IL to minor league contract.

CINCINNATI REDS —
RHP Matt Wisler from 60-day IL to minor league contract.

CINCINNATI REDS —
RHP Tyler Mahle from 60-day IL to minor league contract.

CINCINNATI REDS —
RHP Tyler Mahle from 10-day IL to minor league contract.

CINCINNATI REDS —
Optioned RHP Luis Urias from Triple-A.

TENNESSEE Volunteers

TENNIS

Eastern Southern Championship
At DeVault Tennis Center East

Saturday, July 10

Women's Doubles Championship
Alex de Miguel, 32, Spain, def. Lorenzo Zoppo (2), Italy, 6-4, 6-3

Women's Singles Championship
Jelena Ostapenko, 22, Latvia, def. Anett Kontaveit, Estonia, 7-6 (4), 6-3

Women's Doubles Championship
Alize Cornet, France, def. Elise Mertens, Belgium, 6-2, 6-4

Shuko Aoyama and Ena Shibahara (2), Japan, def. Anna-Lena Groenefeld, Germany, and Demi Schuurs (1), Netherlands, 6-1, 6-4

Badminton Open

Saturday, July 3

Main Draw Women's Singles
Simone Bolelli, Italy, def. Maximo Gonzalez, Argentina, 2-6, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4

Main Draw Men's Doubles
Daniele Michienzi, Italy, and Simone Bolelli, Italy, def. Sam Querrey, United States, 6-4, 6-2

**GOLF**

Scottie Scheffler 66-65-71-205

KPMG Women's Championship

TPC networking

LPGA Odyssey Pro Tour —
KPMG Women's Championship at Shoal Creek Country Club

Wednesday, July 7

PGA ORG.

**AUTO RACING**

NASCAR Cup Series
At Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas, Nev.

Saturday, July 3

Pole: Ross Chastain, 94.176 mph

Rửa: 1.4 seconds

Winston Cup Series
At Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas, Nev.

Saturday, July 3

Pole: Ross Chastain, 94.176 mph

Rửa: 1.4 seconds

**BRIEFLY**

Williams said she won't play at Tokyo Olympics

Serena Williams said she will not go to the Tokyo Olympics, but did not want to say why during her pre-Wimbledon video conference with reporters Sunday.

"I actually not on the Olympic list. ... Not that I'm aware of. If so, then I shouldn't be on it," Williams said.

The 29-year-old Williams has won four gold medals at Summer Games for the United States: in both singles and doubles at the 2012 London Olympics — which held the tennis competition at the All England Club — and in doubles at the 2000 Sydney Olympics and 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Bowman wins at Pocono

Alex Bowman watched teammate Kyle Larson zip past him in the waning laps at Pocono and apologized to his crew over the radio for blowing the lead.

Larson's blown tire cost him so much more. Larson's left front tire went down when his Chevrolet ran over debris less than a mile from the finish — and a fourth straight win in sight — that stunningly slammed NASCAR's hottest driver into the wall.

Bowman had a second chance in a flash and this time would not waste it.

van der Poel wins 2nd tour de France stage

Tour de France debutant Mathieu van der Poel snatched the race leader's yellow jersey with a win in the second stage on Sunday in Pernes- Guairé.

van der Poel, grandson of Tour great Raymond Poulidor, attacked in the sharp climb leading to the finish line.

Two share lead at travelers Championship

Kramer Hickock finished the third round of the Travelers Championship in Cromwell, Conn., too late in the day to go fly fishing again. He'll have to wait until Sunday to try to tie for the lead in the three-time winner Babcock Watson.

In other golf news:

■ Three opening birds gave Steve Stricker an eight-shot lead in what looked to be a runaway in the Bridgestone Seniors Players Championship in Akron, Ohio, on Saturday.

Stricker started missing greens and fairways and wound up with a 2-under 72 to lead Jerry Kelly by four shots into going into the final round.

■ In the KPMG Women's Championship in Johns Creek, Ga., Lizette Salas and Nelly Korda shared the third-round lead at 15-under, five shots ahead of anyone else.

Associated Press
Malone secures spot on US team

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Brody Malone tried to block it all out. The stakes. The scores. The noise. His ears wouldn’t cooperate.

So yeah, Malone knew exactly where he was in the standings at the U.S. Olympic Trials on Saturday. In the lead. In control. And comfortable.

Good thing, because the 20-year-old with the soft southern drawl that betrays his Northwest Georgia roots better get used to it. He’s probably going to be there for a while.

Equal parts stoic and spectacular, Malone put on a command performance while racing to victory and the automatic berth on the Olympic team that came with it. Malone’s all-around total of 171.600 was a good three points first in the event.

On Saturday in St. Louis, he placed ahead of Yul Moldauer and in the top three on three disciplines with a three-time world champion and a six-time national champion over fourth. Malone’s all-around total of 138.060 was enough to secure third.

Sissin shrugs off heat to win 10,000 meters at trials

Associated Press

EUGENE, Ore. — Nobody could blame Emily Sisson for wanting to get this over with as quickly as possible.

On a sweltering Saturday at the U.S. Olympic track and field trials, the 29-year-old runner bowed her husband’s sunglasses, got out to the front early and set a meet record in the 10,000 meters. She finished in 31:03.82 to earn a trip to the Tokyo Games.

“I kept telling myself, ‘If you’re feeling the heat, so is everyone else too,’” Sisson said. “I’m used to leading from the front, so it doesn’t really spook me.”

With highs expected to reach 102 degrees, meet organizers took pity on the distance runners and moved their race to the morning instead of its early afternoon slot.

“I felt like it was a set-up, and they did it on purpose,” Berry said of the timing of the anthem. “I was 马 lease, to be honest.”

Berry’s reaction to the “Star-Spangled Banner” took its fair share of the spotlight on a blazing-hot second-to-last day at trials that also featured some blazing-fast times.

Gabby Thomas became the second-fastest woman ever in the 200, winning the final in 21.61 seconds. The only woman faster: Florence Griffith-Joyner.

Other winners Saturday included Katie Nageotte in the hammer throw. Not winning: Allyson Felix, who finished fifth in the 400 hurdles and Britney Reese (long jump).

Leggett’s hit sends Bulldogs to CWS finals

BY ERIC OLSON

OMAHA, Neb. — Tanner Leggett’s first hit in more than a month was the biggest of the season for Mississippi State.

Leggett’s single in the bottom of the ninth inning scored the tie-breaking run, and the Bulldogs advanced to the College World Series finals with a 4-3 victory over Texas on Saturday night.

“What an opportunity,” he said. “Some people get nervous for that situation, but I pray for that situation. Thank Coach for putting me in the game.”

The No. 7 national seed Bulldogs (48-17) reached the finals for the first time since 2013, when they were runners-up to UCLA. Mississippi State will play for its first national title against No. 4 Vanderbilt in an all-SEC, best-of-three series starting Monday night.

The Commodores (48-16) got their spot in the finals when the NCAA removed North Carolina State from the tournament because of COVID-19 protocols. Vanderbilt and NC State were supposed to play a bracket final on Saturday, but that game was declared a no-contest.

The Commodores won two of three against the Bulldogs in Nashville in the regular season. Vanderbilt is the reigning national champion, having won the CWS in 2019. There was no tournament last year because of the pandemic.

“We have to go against the best,” MSU coach Chris Lemonis said, “and that’s the way we want it.”

Leggett grew up 2½ hours from Starkville, rooted for the Bulldogs in all sports growing up, and said yes, with no hesitation, when MSU recruited him out of a junior college two years ago.

Leggett has appeared in 40 games and typically is a defensive replacement in the late innings. The .206 career hitter has only got ten occasional chances to bat late in the season.

Leggett got his opportunity in the ninth after Cole Quintanilla hit Kellum Clark with a pitch. Brayland Skinner pinch ran for Clark and stole second to set the stage for Leggett, who drove a 1-1 pitch into left-center.

Skinner came around to score easily, and Leggett rounded first base and tossed his helmet into the grass as teammates rushed to mob him.

“You black out,” Leggett said. “It’s a great feeling, knowing we’ve worked so hard to get here. Just what a moment, what a moment.”
**Scoreboard**

**American League**

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**Road show: D-backs end record skid**

“Proud of these guys,” Lovullo said. “We played a real good baseball game today, we had a good approach and we won our first road game in a couple months. It’s actually hard to even think about, it’s hard to say, but I’ve heard several people talking about it already so it’s a burden that’s been around with and it feels real nice to get rid of.”

Baseball’s worst team at 21-56 coming in, the Diamondbacks had dropped 20 of 21 games and 34 of 37 overall. They lost 11-5 in the series opener Friday night when Padres star Fernando Tatis Jr. homered in his first three at-bats.

But Arizona bounced back with a run away victory against San Diego, which opened this home stand by taking four against the Reds and three against the defending World Series champion Dodgers.

The Diamondbacks managed to quiet the fans who had rocked Petco Park the previous eight games, which were the first since 100% capacity was allowed under the state’s reopening plan.

Escobar connected for a two-run homer, and drove in runs with a double, a single and a groundout. He finished a triple shy of the cycle.

**TUPELO**

**Red Sox win 5th in a row over Yankees**

Boston Red Sox pitcher Nathan Eovaldi signals during a 5-0 win over the New York Yankees on Saturday in Boston.

Associated Press

**ROUNDPUP**

**Boston —** Playing against the New York Yankees seems to bring out the best in Nathan Eovaldi. His latest performance has the Boston Red Sox on the verge of a second straight sweep of their longtime rivals.

Eovaldi pitched neatly into the eighth inning, Adam Ottavino escaped a pair of late jams and the Red Sox held off New York 4-2 on Saturday night. The Red Sox improved to 5-0 against the Yankees this season.

It was a bounce-back night for Eovaldi (8-4), who was coming off his shortest outing of 2021 in which he lasted just four innings at Kansas City.

He was more composed at Fenway Park, keeping his fastball in the high 90s while allowing one run off seven hits, issuing no walks and striking out six over 7⅓ innings.

“I thought that opened things up for the rest of the game as well,” Eovaldi said.

Mets 4, Phillies 3: Jacob deGrom gave up two runs for the first time this season and New York rallied after he exited, beating visiting Philadelphia on Michael Conforto’s sacrifice fly in the ninth inning.

DeGrom’s bid to set the Mets record for the longest scoreless-inning streak fell just short. His run ended at 31 innings on rookie Nick Maton’s RBI single in the second. R.A. Dickey set the team shutdown mark of 32⅓ innings in 2012.

Blue Jays 12, Orioles 4: Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit his major league-leading 26th home run, Teoscar Hernandez and Randal Grichuk also connected and Toronto rolled past visiting Baltimore.

Guerrero homered during a four-run burst in the third inning that also included Bo Bichette’s RBI double and Hernandez’s homer.

Dodgers 3, Cubs 2: Cody Bellinger homered with two out in the ninth inning, and host Los Angeles beat Chicago for its first walk-off victory of the season.

Max Muncy and Justin Turner each drove in a run in the first inning, and the Dodgers then made 26 outs before Bellinger crushed a 422-foot solo shot to center off Keegan Thompson (3-2).

Rays 13, Angels 3: Shane McClanahan pitched six effective innings, Brett Phillips drove in three runs and host Tampa Bay beat Los Angeles for its fourth straight win.


Giants 6, Athletics 5 (10): Curt Casali hit a game-tying single in the 10th inning as host San Francisco beat Oakland.
By Beth Harris
Associated Press
LOS ANGELES — Neither team could make a shot. The ball bounced crazily on and around the rim, but rarely went in.

In timeouts, the Suns only talked defense. The Clippers deliberated missed free throws in a desperate attempt to retain possession and take the lead in a close game.

In the end, former Clipper Chris Paul made clutch free throws on a night when everyone was missing.

Devin Booker scored 25 points before fouling out in the final minute and Phoenix escaped with an 84-80 victory Saturday night to take a 3-1 lead in the Western Conference finals.

The Suns can advance to the NBA Finals for the first time since 1993 with a victory Monday night in Phoenix.

“We’re not looking too far ahead,” Booker said.

Los Angeles rallied from 0-2 deficits to win against Dallas and Utah and reach the West finals for the first time in franchise history.

“It’s going to be hard and tough, but it has to be one game at a time,” Paul George said. “Play as hard as we can in Game 5.”

The Clippers struggled with poor shooting in all but the third quarter, when they made 10 of 17 shots to pull within three points. They got within one four times in the fourth, but could never take the lead in front of a sellout crowd of 18,222 that hung on every agonizing miss.

“It was a crazy, emotional game,” Paul said.

LA shot 32% (27-for-83) for the game; Phoenix was barely better at 36% (31-for-86). The Clippers, who led the league in three-point shooting during the regular season, made five; the Suns hit four.

“That was a slugfest,” Phoenix coach Monty Williams said. “It wasn’t Offense 101, for sure.”

Los Angeles coach Tyrone Lue said, “We had a chance to take the lead on 12 possessions and couldn’t do it. It just wouldn’t fall for us.”

DeAndre Ayton added 19 points and a career playoff-high 22 rebounds, and Paul had 18 points and seven assists.

George had 23 points, 16 rebounds and six assists before fouling out with 1 second left. Reggie Jackson added 20 points for the Clippers. Ivica Zubac had 13 points and 14 rebounds.

Los Angeles successfully challenged a call in the final minute that led to Booker’s sixth foul. Terance Mann scored and they trailed 79-76.

The final 13 seconds turned into a free-throw shooting contest, with the Suns fouling to try to keep the Clippers off the three-point line. Paul made 5 of 6. Los Angeles was 4 of 8.

With injured Kawhi Leonard out again watching from a suite, the Clippers are the first team to lose the first two games in a series and come back to win twice in a postseason. They will attempt to become the fourth to be down 3-1 in a conference final and rally. The last time it happened was in the 2016 West finals, when Golden State beat Oklahoma City.

“There’s no room for error. We’ve just got to take it a game at a time now,” said Terance Mann, who had 12 points off the bench.

The lack of energy was especially telling in two areas that have been bedrocks of success for the Clippers this season: free throws and three-point shooting.

Los Angeles set an NBA record for free throw accuracy during the regular season (83.9%), but was 21 of 32 on Saturday night, including 8-for-13 in the fourth quarter.

They were far worse from beyond the arc, going 5 of 31. According to Sportradar, that 16.1% shooting percentage is tied for sixth worst in an NBA playoff game where a team has tried 30 or more three-pointers.

“It could be. But it’s no excuses at this time of the season,” Lue said about the fatigue factor. “Guys could be a little tired. We’ve just got to fight through.”

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With injured Kawhi Leonard out again watching from a suite, the Clippers outscored Phoenix 30-19 in the third after trailing by 16 in the first half.

Both teams’ offense collapsed in the fourth, when the Suns outscored the Clippers 15-14.

“It was tough because we fought all the way to get it to a one-point game, and we had looks that we normally make all season and they weren’t falling,” Mann said.

“The game could have easily went a whole different way if we were hitting those shots.”

Not so masked man

After missing a layup, Booker ditched the clear plastic mask he’d been wearing since getting his nose broken in a head-to-head collision with Patrick Beverley in Game 2.

“You don’t realize how much you get hit in the face until after you take it off,” he said, adding that he isn’t used to playing with it on.

Booker said he’s not sure whether he’ll wear it in Game 5.

Ayton showed up at the arena wearing a T-shirt of Booker and his bandaged nose.

“He said, ‘I was hiding it from you on the bus,’ ” Booker said.

Ayton said, “My boy got all banged up. Just sending a little message.”

Do as I do

Paul said he was thinking of his 12-year-old son, Chris, when he went to the line in the fourth.

“I talk to my son all the time about the importance of making free throws,” he said. “How the hell am I going to tell him to stay poised if I don’t?”

Los Angeles Clippers guard Reggie Jackson, left, shoots as Phoenix Suns center Deandre Ayton defends during Game 4 of the Western Conference Finals on Saturday in Los Angeles.

The Suns outlasted the Clippers, take 3-1 series lead.

Los Angeles Clippers guard Reggie Jackson, left, shoots as Phoenix Suns center Deandre Ayton defends during Game 4 of the Western Conference Finals on Saturday in Los Angeles.

Fumes: Clippers have come back from 0-2 twice this postseason.
Habs face biggest test in reigning champ Lightning

BY JOHN WAWROW AND STEPHEN WHYN
Associated Press

MONTREAL — Artturi Lehkonen is keeping his composure after becoming part of the Montreal Canadiens’ illustrious history by scoring the franchise’s most important goal in nearly three decades.

The former three-weight world champion was successful in his return to the ring, stopping Japanese veteran Masayoshi Nakatani in the ninth round Saturday night.

With Nakatani’s left eye closed after eight devastating rounds, Lomachenko (19-2, 11 KOs) used a flurry of battering lefts in front of an announced sellout crowd of 2,072 inside Virgin Hotel’s The Theater, to finish off his much taller opponent in a statement return in his first bout since an upset loss to Teofimo Lopez in October.

“I’ve accomplished my goals and I’m back on track,” Lomachenko said through an interpreter.

Lomachenko landed 59% of his power punches, as he dominated from the opening bell, peppering Nakatani with a steady stream of hard, straight lefts. Lomachenko was only hit by 12% of Nakatani’s power punches.

Lomachenko’s biggest round prior to the ninth was a destructive sixth, during which he landed a number of punches that caused Nakatani’s head to snap backward several times, eventually blooding the Osaka native’s eye, nose and mouth.

Lomachenko also knocked down Nakatani in the fifth, using a three-punch combo near the end of the round.

In his last fight, Nakatani was knocked down twice by Felix Verdejo before responding with a ninth-round KO win. This time, Nakatani never stood a chance as he was outclassed by the former pound-for-pound Ukrainian great in every round.

It marked the first time Nakatani (19-2) was stopped in a fight, considering the NHL was limited to inter-division play only this year.

“You look up and down their lineup ... you can talk about them all day long,” Perry said.

“They added grit at the deadline last year, and kind of taken off,” he added. “We’re excited for this opportunity. We’re here for a reason. They’re here for a reason.”

The teams haven’t met since Tampa Bay completed a four-game season-series sweep of Montreal with a 4-0 win at home on March 5, 2020. The Canadiens are 2-8-2 in their past 12 meetings and 0-5-1 at Tampa Bay since a 2-1 overtime win on April 1, 2017.

The Lightning have a 2-1 playoff series edge over Montreal, including a six-game second-round win in the first round to Toronto. And Montreal keeps winning despite having interim coach Dominique Ducharme spending the past week in self-isolation after testing positive for COVID-19.
Paul George and the Los Angeles Clippers have pulled off three comebacks during this year’s postseason. They might have hit the wall during their marathon run.

Los Angeles — playing its 17th game in 36 days — lost 84-80 to the Phoenix Suns on Saturday night in Game 4 of the Western Conference finals. The Clippers have been down 2-0 in each of their series this postseason, but are staring at a 3-1 deficit for the first time with Game 5 set for Monday night in Phoenix.

“We’ve been down before. It’s tough. We’ve had our backs against the wall and we’ve been in elimination games,” said Reggie Jackson, who scored 20 points.

Los Angeles rallied from a 16-point deficit in the third quarter to get within one, but couldn’t complete the comeback. It went 0-for-12 from the floor with a chance to tie or take the lead, which is the worst shooting stretch over the past 25 post-seasons, according to ESPN Stats & Information.

LA got within 71-70 with 10:11 remaining on George’s free throw, but neither team scored again for 3 minutes, 49 seconds until Chris Paul threw it to Deandre Ayton for an alley-oop to put Phoenix back up by three. The Clippers missed seven shots and committed two turnovers during that near four-minute stretch.

“We were just trying to play through it, get a breakthrough and play faster. It was tough to get it to go down,” said George, who scored 21 points but was 5 of 20 from the field and made only one of his nine three-point attempts.

For a team that hasn’t had any rest between series, the heckle...