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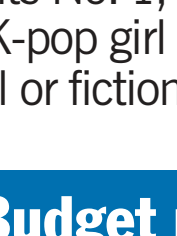
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Soldier had criminal past before spying case

By Rose L. Thayer
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — A Fort Bliss soldier was already under criminal investigation when he called a Russian embassy to share the weaknesses of the U.S. Army’s tanks in exchange for Russian citizenship and a job in the country’s defense operations.

Federal court records for the espionage charges filed against Spc. Taylor Adam Lee, 22, last week did not describe what previous criminal behavior he was accused of or what agency was investigating him. However, Lee disclosed during the FBI’s espionage investigation that his U.S. passport had been taken from him.



Lee

The soldier, who enlisted in 2021, now faces charges of attempting to transmit national defense information to a foreign adversary and exporting controlled technical data without a license, according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Texas.

He was arrested and charged days after delivering a computer he had taken from a tank at Fort Bliss to a storage facility in El Paso. Federal Magistrate Judge Laura Enriquez ordered Monday that Lee remain in jail without bail after prosecutors argued he was a flight risk with a criminal history.

An attorney for Lee declined to comment on the charges against him.

Army Criminal Investigation Division said Friday it has an on-

SEE SPY ON PAGE 4



Gavriil Grigorov, Sputnik, Kremlin Pool Photo/AP

President Donald Trump, second right, shakes hands with Russian President Vladimir Putin after their joint news conference on Friday, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

Ukraine security on table

Envoy: Putin agrees to NATO-style protections as Zelenskyy heads to DC

By Jill Colvin
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Russia’s Vladimir Putin agreed at his summit with President Donald Trump to allow the United States and its European allies to offer Ukraine a security guarantee resembling NATO’s collective defense mandate as part of an eventual deal to end the 3½-year war in Ukraine, special U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff said Sunday.

“We were able to win the following concession: That the United States could offer Article 5-like protection, which is one of the real reasons why Ukraine wants to be in NATO,” he told CNN’s “State of the Union.” He added that it “was the first time we had ever heard the Russians agree to that” and called them “game-changing.”

■ Trump struggles with Putin diplomacy and ending the long war
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Article 5, at the heart of the 32-member military alliance, states that an armed attack against one or more of the members shall be considered an attack against all members.

Witkoff, who had joined Secretary of State Marco Rubio for the talks Friday at a military base in Alaska, offered few details on how such an agreement would work. But it appeared to be a major shift for Putin and could serve as a workaround to his long-standing objection to Ukraine’s potential NATO membership.

Outlining some of the details about the pri-

SEE SECURITY ON PAGE 8

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Retail sales rise 0.5% in July as some prepare for tariffs

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Shoppers spent at a healthy pace in July, particularly at the nation's auto dealerships, even as President Donald Trump's tariffs start to take a toll on jobs and lead to some price increases.

But the figures also underscore anxiety among Americans: all the uncertainty around the expansive duties appears to be pushing them to step up their purchases of furniture and other items ahead of expected increases, analysts said.

Retail sales rose a solid 0.5% last month from the previous month, and June spending was stronger than expected, according to the Commerce Department's report released Friday. June's retail sales were revised upward to 0.9% from the original 0.6% increase, the agency said.

The increases followed two consecutive months of spending declines in April and May.

Auto sales rose 1.6%. They appear to have returned roughly to normalized spending after a surge in March and April as Americans attempted to get ahead of Trump's 25% duty on imported cars and parts and then slump after that, according to Samuel Tombs, chief U.S. Economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics.

However, at electronics stores, sales were down. And business at restaurants, the lone services component within the Census Bureau report and a barometer of discretionary spending, also fell, as shoppers eat at home to save money.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro costs (Aug. 18)	0.83
British pound (Aug. 18)	$1.32
Japanese yen (Aug. 18)	143.00
South Korean won (Aug. 18)	1346.00

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3742
Britain (Pound)	1.3554
Canada (Dollar)	1.3817
China(Yuan)	7.1817
Denmark (Krone)	6.3759
Egypt (Pound)	48.2436
Euro	0.8541
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8243
Hungary (Forint)	337.60
Israel (Shekel)	3.3782
Japan (Yen)	147.12
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.305
Norway (Krone)	10.1919
Philippines (Peso)	51.753
Poland (Zloty)	3.6352
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7489
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2802
South Korea (Won)	1387.87
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8063
Thailand (Baht)	32.43
Turkey (NewLira)	40.798

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

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	7.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50
Federal funds market rate	4.38
3-month bill	4.22
30-year bond	4.92

WEATHER OUTLOOK

MONDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



MONDAY IN EUROPE



TUESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



This weather is compiled from weather.com reports.

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MILITARY

PCS budget issue halts some Air Force moves

By Janiqua Robinson
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force has paused some pending moves by airmen heading to new duty stations around the world, according to a Facebook post Thursday by the service's top enlisted member.

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force David Flosi, in a short video posted on the Airman's Dispatch Facebook page, said that due to budgetary restraints the service had extended deadlines for many airmen to make their next permanent change of station.

Flosi posted from Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, to say he had just been notified of the news.

"I just got word, though, that back in the states we had a problem with PCS budget and unfortunately many of our airmen just got notified of an extension of their PCS cycle, some in close proximity of their PCS date," he said. "Terribly unsettling news, we're going to dig into it and see what's going on."

Airmen with projected departure dates after Sept. 30 were notified Wednesday that their dates had changed, Flosi said in a comment posted to the video.



STEPHENIE WADE/U.S. Transportation Command

Movers at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., pack items belonging to a U.S. service member moving to another state in 2019.

"I know that some of you may be experiencing a hardship and information's hard to come by right now," Flosi said.

"If that's the case and you're not getting what you need quickly and locally, please reach out to us at Airman's Dispatch, shoot us a direct message. I'll get you in contact with the resources we have and we'll make sure you get taken care of."

The Pentagon in May ordered all service branches to submit plans to cut their PCS-related budgets in half by 2030, with escalating targets set every fiscal year in between.

The Defense Department spends about $5 billion annually moving military personnel and their families between assignments, according to the May 22 memo from Jules Hurst, the acting defense undersecretary for personnel and readiness.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth in May also ordered changes to the modifications to the Defense Personal Property Management System.

"We're going to review the entire PCS process and recommend rapid actions inside the department for the best possible moving experience for our service members and their families," he said in a video posted on defense.gov May 21.

"Ultimately this is not just about moving boxes. This is about moving families, husbands, wives, kids, valuables, memories, everything, and you deserve that kind of respect across the board. So, we owe it to you to get it right."

Pentagon officials caution troops ahead of EU border system rollout

By Alison Bath
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — U.S. military officials are warning service members that they may face lengthy delays and confusion at the border crossings of 29 countries in Europe this fall as the European Union implements a new traveler screening system.

The European Union Entry/Exit System is scheduled to roll out gradually beginning Oct. 12, with full implementation planned by April 10, 2026, according to the EU's website.

American military members "assigned temporarily or permanently to a NATO country" aren't subject to EES, even for leave, U.S. European Command said in guidance issued last week. Defense Department civilians, dependents and contractors assigned to a NATO country under the same conditions also are exempt, EUCOM said.

U.S. government officials are engaging with the EU, NATO allies and partners to ensure the EU issues guidance to the countries, known as the Schengen Area, that is "consistent with this position," EUCOM said, adding that the exemption doesn't apply to DOD personnel traveling on leave who aren't assigned to a NATO country.

The stance appears to be based on NATO's Status of Forces Agreement, which sets the rules, rights and responsibilities under which U.S. personnel may live and work in member countries of the alliance.

Under the SOFA, service members do not need a residence permit to enter and remain in a NATO country as part of their job. DOD civilians and dependents typically are issued a residence card or permit.

Officials also are reminding service members to show only their military ID and orders when on official travel to a NATO country, and not their passport, U.S. Naval Support Activity Naples said in a base newsletter Thursday.

It was unclear on Friday what documentation military dependents, and DOD civilians and contractors and their families would need to submit.

But in their guidance, U.S. officials advised that personnel should travel with all necessary documents, such as military ID, orders and personal and official passports. Passports should be renewed within six months of their expiration date, EUCOM said.

Service members also should allow for extra time between connections when traveling in Europe and check the Electronic Foreign Clearance Guide for the most up-to-date travel requirements, EUCOM said.

EUCOM expects to issue updated guidance closer to the scheduled October implementation date of EES.

EES is an automated identification check system that digitally records the entry and exit of most non-EU nationals to Schengen Area countries, including Germany, Italy and Spain, where large numbers of U.S. military personnel live and work.

It collects personal information, such as a person's name and birth date, from travelers staying in a country 90 days or less. A facial photo and fingerprints are collected and are among data stored for about three years, according to the EU.

That data can be accessed by a range of European government agencies, including immigration and law enforcement authorities. It also can be transferred to another country under certain circumstances, according to the EU.

EU officials say the system makes the border check process more modern and efficient while helping authorities fight crime and terrorism.

Guard soldiers resuscitate man at KFC in west Poland

By Lydia Gordon
Stars and Stripes

A group of Alabama National Guard soldiers gave lifesaving CPR for nearly 30 minutes to a man suffering a heart attack at a KFC in western Poland, Army officials said Friday.

Staff Sgt. Jacob Roberts, Sgt. Justin Fagan, 2nd Lt. Indiana Rhodes and Sgt. 1st Class Alicia Haggins, all with the 214th Military Police Company, were traveling to the Drawsko Pomorskie Training Center when they stopped for lunch Thursday in Skwierzyna, a town about 80 miles west of U.S. Army Garrison Poland headquarters in Poznan.

While ordering, Haggins saw a man collapse outside the restaurant. She alerted the rest of the group, who rushed outside. They checked his breathing and pulse and then began lifesaving measures, Rhodes said Friday.

First responders arrived within minutes and asked Fagan and Roberts to continue rotating with them to keep CPR going while they awaited a medevac helicopter.

"When we started, I would say his pulse was very weak and very shortened," Fagan said. "Once the (first responders) got there, it still continued to be a team-oriented event," he added.

Haggins used a translation app to communicate with the victim's wife, gathering a brief medical history to aid treatment. She confirmed the man had a history of heart problems.

"We have some medical training and we train monthly at least on how to react to these types of situations," Haggins said. "We immediately responded, no thought, no hesitation."

The soldiers and paramedics ensured that the man's vital signs were stable before he was transferred to the helicopter.

Fagan said the victim's wife and another relative hugged the soldiers and thanked them for their efforts.

Further details on the victim's name and condition weren't immediately available Friday.

"Because they were there and at that time, (the victim) and his family have hope," Army spokesman Lt. Col. Cain Claxton said Friday.

"It is an example for all of us to emulate in helping people out, especially here being representatives for our country in Poland."

The four soldiers will be recognized in a ceremony for their heroic noncombat actions, with the date and location still to be determined, Claxton said.

The U.S. military has about 10,000 service members operating throughout Poland.

MILITARY

Perryman chosen to be top enlisted sailor

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

Fleet Master Chief John Perryman will become the next top enlisted sailor in the Navy next month, the sea service announced Friday.

Perryman, who has served as the top enlisted leader for Fleet Forces Command since 2021, will become the 17th master chief petty officer of the Navy in September, replacing MCPON James Honea who has held the job since 2022, according to a Navy statement. Honea is slated to retire after some 38 years of service.

"With decades of operational experience across the fleet, Perryman will play a vital role in advising Navy leadership, shaping enlisted policy and maintaining warfighting readiness in an era of strategic competition," the statement reads.



Perryman

Perryman, a San Antonio native, enlisted in the Navy in 1994 and spent his early years as an electronics technician submariner, according to his biography. He deployed aboard the USS Bremerton and USS Cheyenne nuclear-powered, fast-attack submarines and the USS Dolphin, a research and development submarine.

He later served as the command master chief aboard the USS Hawaii, another nuclear-powered, fast-attack submarine.

More recently, he has served as the top enlisted adviser to the commanders of Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet, Submarine Group Seven and at Submarine Force Atlantic.

Before joining U.S. Fleet Forces Command, he served as the top enlisted service member for U.S. Strategic Command, which oversees all of the U.S. nuclear weapons and forces.

At Fleet Forces Command, the Navy's largest organization, Perryman was responsible for overseeing issues the enlisted force faces for some 100,000 active-duty and Reserve sailors, more than 120 ships and submarines and nearly 80 shore activities within the command's purview.

As the top enlisted sailor in the Navy, he will rejoin Adm. Daryl Caudle, who relinquished control of Fleet Forces Command last week after he was confirmed to become the chief of naval operations. Caudle, also a career submariner, had led the command since 2021.

Caudle is expected to be sworn in soon as the Navy's top officer. Adm. James Kilby has served as acting CNO since February when President Donald Trump removed Adm. Lisa Franchetti from the job.

Perryman is expected to take his new role next month in a ceremony at the Navy Memorial in Washington, the Navy said.

Spy: FBI sting took down leak attempt

FROM PAGE 1

going investigation into Lee that is separate from the espionage case underway with the FBI and Army Counterintelligence Command. CID did not state when they began to track Lee and if it was their investigation that exposed his phone calls to the Russian Embassy.

The Army declined to comment on whether it was aware of that first investigation, which should have triggered a review of his top-secret security clearance.

"The way the process is supposed to work is everybody should be enrolled in continuous evaluation and continuous monitoring," said Anthony Kuhn, an Army veteran turned attorney who now specializes in security clearance cases. "Depending on what the criminal investigation is about, and the information contained or uncovered during that investigation, the individual should have been notified that they're the subject of a criminal investigation and been asked questions about whatever information surfaced."

The soldier's unit or the Defense Department can initiate that review, he said. That first investigation began in October 2024 — nine months after he received a top-secret security clearance to attend school to reclassify to explosive ordnance disposal, according to court documents. He failed out of EOD school in May 2024 after just two days and returned to Fort Bliss where he was assigned to Bravo Company, 4th Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment within the 1st Armored Division.

Phone records obtained in that investigation showed Lee made three phone calls in May 2025 to phone numbers for the Russian Embassy in Washington, according to court documents.

"To subpoena his phone records and get those records, usually you're facing a security clearance revocation when that happens," Kuhn said. "I don't know if he was in the process, but he certainly should have been."

The FBI in May opened its investigation to "better understand the purpose of Lee's outreach to the Russian Embassy," according to court documents. The FBI declined to comment whether its agents were already involved in the investigation or they were brought in by another agency.

"My colleague give [sic] me this email for possible cooperation," an undercover FBI agent wrote May 30 to Lee. "What is your interest and how do you wish to work together?"

Lee responded the same day asking who the person represented. Then asked three days later to discuss cooperation. The conversation continued with Lee offering to provide "armored operations information" and "operator experience on the M1 Abrams [tank]."

During the next few weeks, Lee expressed urgency to make the deal because he had tried to be a whistleblower, which he said left his safety in question, according to court documents. He added he had more information on drone platforms, ordnance disposal and psychological operations.

To prove his credentials, he sent the agent a screenshot from his Army Talent Profile, according to court documents.

Throughout the conversations, Lee urged the person he believed to be part of Russia's military to accept his information quickly because Lee believed he had uncovered human trafficking and criminal activity in the U.S. military. He tried to report the cover ups, which angered someone above him, he said.

"Other soldiers have gone missing or ended up dead," Lee told the undercover FBI agent.

He demanded citizenship, a Russian passport under the name "Artyom Lee" and a safe way to travel to Russia. His own U.S. passport had been "confiscated," he said, according to court documents.

After sending the first wave of classified documents about the Abrams tank, Lee said: "I do apologize for my urgency, the USA is not happy with me for trying to expose their weaknesses. ... At this point I'd even volunteer to assist the Russian federation when I'm there in any way."

An in-person meeting was scheduled for July 9 in El Paso, where Lee handed an undercover FBI agent an SD card that he had hidden in his watch strap. The card held four updated operations manuals for the Abrams tank, several documents related to the Bradley Fighting Vehicle and other manuals for combat operations, according to court documents.

If they wanted more information, Lee said his security clearance would allow him to get any document on tanks. He promised by their next meeting, he would hand over the Joint Battle Command Platform, a computer inside American tanks that is a friendly force tracking system, according to court documents. Once he stole the computer, he would be unable to return to Fort Bliss, he said.

On July 30, Lee told the agent he had the computer.

"Great news for you today, two tanks were damaged and recovered from the field and I have everything needed you requested," Lee wrote, according to court documents. "And no one knows I have them. They think they got lost out in desert."

The following day, Lee brought the computer system to a storage unit that he did not know was under FBI control.

"Mission accomplished," he wrote. Federal agents arrested Lee on Aug. 6 in El Paso, according to federal court records.

In a two-day hearing held this week in El Paso federal court, Enriquez, the judge for the case, found prosecutors presented enough evidence for the charges against Lee to proceed to a federal grand jury.



AP

Deputy Ambassador of Australia to the Philippines Moya Collett, right, and military chief General Romeo Brawner Jr. during the opening ceremony of joint drills in Palawan province, Philippines on Friday.

Australia, Philippines hold exercise near disputed sea

BY JIM GOMEZ
Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Australia on Friday launched its largest military exercises with Philippine forces, involving more than 3,600 military personnel in live-fire drills, battle maneuvers and a beach assault at a Philippine town facing the disputed South China Sea, where the allies have raised alarm over Beijing's assertive actions.

The exercises are called Alon, meaning wave in the Philippine language, and will showcase Australia's firepower. The drills will involve a guided-missile navy destroyer, F/A-18 supersonic fighter jets, a C-130 troop and cargo aircraft, Javelin anti-tank weapons and special forces sniper weapons.

Military officials said defense forces from the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Indonesia will join as observers. The exercises will run until Aug. 29.

Australia is the second country after the U.S. with a visiting forces agreement with the Philippines, allowing the deployment of large numbers of troops for combat exercises in each other's territory.

The Philippines has signed a similar pact with Japan, which will take effect next month. It is in talks with several other Asian and Western countries including France and Canada for similar defense accords.

China has deplored multinational war drills and alliances in or near the disputed South China Sea, saying the U.S. and its allies are "ganging up" against it and militarizing the region.

China claims most of the South China Sea, a busy global trade route, where it has had a spike of territorial faceoffs with the Philippines in recent years.

On Monday, a Chinese navy ship collided with a Chinese coast guard ship while trying to drive away a smaller Philippine coast guard vessel in the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea.

The Australian Embassy in Manila expressed concern over "the dangerous and unprofessional conduct of Chinese vessels near Scarborough Shoal involving the Philippine Coast Guard" and said the incident "highlights the need for de-escalation, restraint and respect for international law."

MILITARY

Fort Hood tests IDs to pay at restaurants

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

FORT HOOD, Texas — The Army for the first time this week granted 200 soldiers the power to use their military ID card to buy food outside of the dining facility with their meal entitlements.

For the next two weeks, the soldiers can visit participating restaurants at Fort Hood and swipe their ID cards as payment. The concept seems basic and ordinary, but as far as Army dining is concerned it is a groundbreaking step toward dining options that soldiers have long requested.

Spc. Ceri Phillips, a soldier in the pilot program, said the short hours at dining facilities make it difficult for him to get there before they close. As a fueler, there are times when he gets stuck in the motor pool later than expected.

"When you do get out and go to the [dining facility], you only have that certain amount of time left and what they have left that you have to choose from," he said.

The restaurants stay open later, and the offerings aren't diminished by the end of the day, Phillips said.

Rick Bennett, senior logistics management specialist in Army Materiel Command's Army Food Innovation and Transformation Division, said Phillips' feedback is exactly what they were hoping to hear.

"We wanted to give them a variety of menu choices and capabilities and allow the soldiers to explore with it," he said.

The Army has been working on ways to improve soldier access to food on bases using their meal entitlements as eating in dining facilities has dropped over time, which has been driven by changes in soldiers' meal preferences and fewer cooks being enlisted to work in the facilities.

Each month, a portion of soldiers' paychecks is set aside to use for meal entitlements and the dining facility has been the only place to spend that money. To expand use of those entitlements, the Army has been working to innovate and overhaul its food programs through several initiatives such as this pilot program. It is also looking at how to allow soldiers to shop with the entitlement at the commissary, Bennett said.



ROSE L. THAYER/Stars and Stripes

Army Spc. Ceri Phillips reviews meal options for purchase Thursday at Burger King through a meal entitlement pilot program at Fort Hood, Texas.

This pilot program that opens access to certain restaurants that operate on installations through the Army and Air Force Exchange Service is the first of its kind and has been at the top of soldiers' requests for a while, Bennett said.

Primarily, soldiers want options that are fast and open beyond the 90-minute meal windows that traditional dining facilities offer.

Pfc. Renee Myatt, a driver who is also in school, said the expanded hours make a huge difference in her ability to use her meal entitlements.

"Once I'm done with work, I need a quick and easy meal to go. I don't want to be waiting in a [dining facility] line," she said. "It's quick, simple and easy for me."

In the first three days of the two-week program, 111 soldiers bought 324 meals, Bennett said. At the end of the trial run, he said they plan to review how it worked and whether there is an opportunity to reopen and expand access. What that looks like and when is up to Army leaders, Bennett said.

"When soldiers pass up that benefit and that entitlement every single day, we fail them," said Lt. Gen. Chris Mohan, acting commander of Army Materiel Command, which is responsible for the Army Food Program. "We are changing that. It's imperative that the Army gets this right. Our goal is to ensure that soldiers remain the best-sustained, best-fed and fittest fighting force in the world."

To create the pilot program, the materiel command had to work with the exchange service so the point-of-sale systems at the restaurants could communicate with the Army's meal entitlement systems to prevent soldiers from purchasing more meals than they are allotted and make certain each meal is accounted for and funded.

Restaurants in the trial program are Freshens, Qdoba, Burger King and Starbucks at the T.J. Mills Food Court and Subway and Starbucks at the Clear Creek Exchange.

Soldiers participating in the test can purchase multiple meal types — breakfast, lunch and dinner — in a single visit, using separate transactions for each. They can swipe their ID card once per meal type.

The command worked with a team of nutritionists who reviewed menus of participating restaurants to build meals that meet the nutritional standards that the Army is required to provide troops using meal entitlements. The price of the meals also factored into the selection because the Army is limited on the price range of each meal entitlement.

At Starbucks, which has two locations participating in the program, soldiers can pick between five breakfast meals, three lunch menus and three dinner menus. One breakfast menu includes a bacon, egg, and Gouda sandwich with 2% milk, almond milk or steamed apple juice.

A lunch at Subway could be a foot-long ham sandwich with a cookie and low-fat milk. Dinner at Burger King could be a salad and a fish sandwich. Lunch could be a vegetarian Whopper or a crispy chicken sandwich. French fries are available on two of the lunch menus.

The command will be able to track where soldiers choose to eat and what they order, Bennett said. But the program isn't meant to evaluate the food chosen, it's focused on the systems and if they work.

Soldiers can preview the meals and restaurant hours in the My Army Post smartphone app.

Access to on-base restaurants is one of many changes under review by the command to convert the Army's meal program to mirror those at large college campuses that offer a variety of options and meal schedules, including some well-known restaurant brands.

The Army also is reviewing contracts to put private vendors in dining facilities.

Sgt. Maj. Kresassidy McKinney, the III Corps chief culinary manager, has spent much of the last year making changes to Fort Hood dining facilities and said the pilot program is a welcome addition to meal options. It's not a threat to her facilities.

"I think it's a welcome addition. We are adding to what is available and increasing choices for the soldier," she said.

Postal Service seeks temporary price hike for package deliveries

BY MARC CASTANEDA
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Postal Service is planning a temporary price hike for some deliveries during the 2025 holiday season, a move that could raise costs for packages to and from overseas military addresses.

The proposed changes, filed Aug. 11 with the Postal Regulatory Commission, would take effect Oct. 5 and remain in place until Jan. 18, according to an email notice to customers from the Military Postal Service Agency.

The fee increase would be applied according to package weight and postal zone destination. Fee hikes range from 30 cents to $16.

"As long as our package gets there, that's all that really matters," Haydee Lake, a military spouse, said at Yokota Air Base, Japan. "It's the holidays so people are already expected to spend money. You could just ship the packages earlier to avoid the cost and stress altogether."

Lake also suggested commercial options, such as Pirate Ship, which saved her money in the past, although they may not be available overseas.

The seasonal adjustment is aimed at covering extra handling costs during the agency's busiest time of year.

For example, under the proposal, a 10-pound Priority Mail package sent from the United States to an Army Post Office address in Japan — roughly equivalent to Zone 5 rates — would cost $1.45 more for retail customers during the peak season. A similar package sent via Priority Mail Express could increase by $4.85.

The same package from U.S. to Europe, which falls under Zone 9, would incur similar price hikes.

The highest rate increase — $16 — would apply to Priority Mail Express packages between 26 and 70 pounds shipped in Zones 5 through 9, according to the Military Postal Service.

The price hikes would apply to Priority Mail, Priority Mail Express and U.S. Postal Service Ground Advantage, which also apply to shipments sent to APO and Fleet Post Office addresses overseas.

No changes are planned for first-class mail letters or other services.

If approved, the rates would revert to current levels after Jan. 18.

More details on the proposed rates are available at www.usps.com and through local military post offices.



MARC CASTANEDA/Stars and Stripes

The cost to ship packages via the U.S. Postal Service may be temporarily higher this holiday season if a Postal Service price hike is approved.

MILITARY

Noem living for free in home used for Coast Guard leader

The Washington Post

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem is living for free in a military home typically reserved for the U.S. Coast Guard's top admiral, officials familiar with the matter said. The highly unusual arrangement has raised concern within the agency and from some Democrats, who describe it as a waste of military resources.

Noem recently moved into Quarters 1, a spacious waterfront residence at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling in Southeast Washington, D.C., where the Coast Guard commandant typically resides. She did so because of concerns over her safety after the Daily Mail, a British tabloid, published photographs in April of the area around Noem's residence in Washington's Navy Yard neighborhood, DHS spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin said.

McLaughlin described Noem's time at the commandant's residence as temporary. She did not specify how long the setup would last or how long Noem has lived there.

Noem pays no rent to live in the commandant's house, according to an official familiar with the matter granted anonymity to speak candidly. That's a departure from how other Cabinet secretaries have handled similar arrangements. Other Cabinet officials, including during both Trump administrations, have paid to use military housing that otherwise would be occupied by top generals and admirals.

Noem's housing has raised eyebrows from current and retired Coast Guard officials, as well as Democrats, who warn that Noem risks creating the perception that she is exploiting the perks of her position, in which she supervises the Coast Guard. They say her decision could set off a chain reaction that could displace other senior members of the service in a situation with limited housing.

Current and former Coast Guard members have also cited Noem's frequent use of a Coast Guard Gulfstream aircraft as a point of tension. Agency guidelines require the DHS secretary to use a plane with secure communications for both personal and professional business, though they are required to reimburse the government for personal travel. DHS did not say whether Noem has done so.

Noem faced scrutiny for her expenses when she served as governor of South Dakota. She spent $68,000 in taxpayer funds to refurbish the governor's mansion with a sauna, chandelier and other amenities, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported in 2021. And South Dakota picked up the tab for at least $150,000 in campaign and personal travel for Noem related to her security when she was governor, The Associated Press reported this year.



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem arrives for a July news conference at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

Noem's housing arrangement could create the impression that she is exploiting her position of authority over the Coast Guard to accrue perks for herself, said Cynthia Brown, senior ethics counsel at the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a left-leaning watchdog.

"What are the optics?" Brown said. "And is this taking advantage of your individual position as a government official to benefit unduly?"

McLaughlin defended the living arrangement in an email, saying it was necessary because the secretary had been "so horribly doxxed and targeted that she is no longer able to safely live in her own apartment."

She added that it was "sad" for a Post reporter to "suggest a rancher should have to pay a second rent because of a reporter's irresponsible decisions to dox where she lives."

How airmen lift 12 tons without breaking a sweat, or a plane

By Lara Korte
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — American and Serbian airmen gathered in a hangar Friday morning and made a 12-ton aircraft hover a foot off the ground — but it wasn't a magic trick.

It was part of an annual exercise run by the 86th Maintenance Squadron to prepare airmen to clear damaged planes from a runway.

Much of the learning took place in a classroom but was followed Wednesday and Friday by hands-on simulations with a decommissioned G222 cargo plane.

The weeklong training brought about 11 airmen from the Ohio Air National Guard, Chievres Air Base in Belgium and the Serbian air force to train with airmen based at Ramstein, the largest U.S. Air Force base overseas.

Aircraft mishaps include popped tires and lost landing gear, or a plane may overshoot the runway and end up stuck in the mud. That's where maintenance squadron members come in, using air bags and cranes to get the plane out of its predicament.

The airmen practiced lifting the plane by placing mattress-sized air bags underneath the wings and the belly. Trainees monitored 15 pressure gauges as they carefully inflated each bag until the wheels of the aircraft lifted off the ground.

After that, crews can perform maintenance or place the aircraft on a vehicle to haul it off the runway.

"The primary focus is not causing secondary damage to the aircraft," said Tech. Sgt. Jesse Hayes of the Ramstein-based 86th Maintenance Squadron. "Then, the number one priority is making sure all personnel are safe during the operation."



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

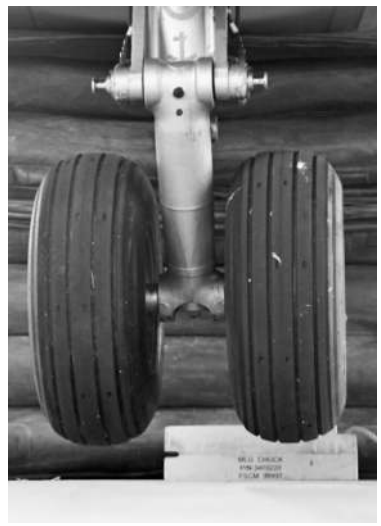
Pressure gauges are used to monitor the air going into the mattress-sized air bags lifting a decommissioned G222 cargo aircraft off its wheels Friday, at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.



Staff Sgt. Tristen Foret watches air pressure gauges as giant air bags are filled to lift the cargo plane during the CDDAR exercise.

The G222, which is no longer used by the U.S. military, is similar to a C-17 or C-130 cargo plane, Hayes said. The squadron also conducts training throughout the year on how to move different types of aircraft.

In past years, the squadron has worked with other international partners, including Estonian and Lithuanian air force firefighters. The partnership with Serbia this year meant U.S. airmen could learn about various types of unfamiliar aircraft, Hayes said.



The nose landing gear of a decommissioned G222 cargo plane is off the ground after being raised by giant air bags Friday during the CDDAR (crashed damaged disabled aircraft recovery) exercise.

"They're teaching us just as much as we're teaching them," he said.

For Tech. Sgt. Robert Harger of the Ohio Air National Guard's 121st Air Refueling Wing, the presence of the G222 helped make the experience at Ramstein more effective.

At some bases, crews practice simply by inflating air bags, Harger said.

"To have an aircraft to actually pick up is really beneficial," he said.

MILITARY

Policy denies transgender troops hearings

By Konstantin Toropin
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Air Force says in a new memo that transgender airmen ousted under a recent Trump administration directive will no longer have the chance to argue before a board of their peers for the right to continue serving their country.

The memo dated Tuesday says military separation boards cannot independently decide whether to keep or discharge transgender airmen and instead "must recommend separation of the member" if the airman has a diagnosis of gender dysphoria — when a person's biological sex does not match with their gender identity.

Military legal experts who have been advising transgender troops told The Associated Press that the new policy is unlawful, and while they were not aware of the other services releasing similar memos, they fear it could serve as a blueprint across the military.

Advocacy groups say the change threatens to weaken trust in the military's leadership.

It is the second policy change the Air Force has taken in recent weeks to crack down on transgender service members. The Associated Press reported earlier this month that the Air Force would deny transgender troops early retirement benefits and was moving to revoke requests already approved.

The Air Force declined to answer questions about the policy and its legal implications.

The service provided a statement saying the new guidance "is consistent with and responsive to Department of Defense policy regarding Service members with a diagnosis of, or history of, or exhibiting symptoms consistent with, gender dysphoria."

The boards traditionally offer a quasi-legal hearing to determine if a service member set to depart is still of value to the military and should stay on. Fellow service members hear evidence of whatever wrongdoing occurred and about the person's character, fitness and performance.

The hearings are not a formal court, but they have much the same structure. Service members are often represented by lawyers, they can present evidence in their defense and they can appeal the board's findings to federal court.

The Pentagon's policy on separating officers notes that they are entitled to "fair and impartial" hearings that should be "a forum for the officer concerned to present reasons the contemplated action should not be taken."

Priya Rashid, a military lawyer who has represented service members before hundreds of separation boards, said she "has never seen an order like this."

"I've seen people with three DUIs retained, I've seen people that beat their wives retained, I've seen all kinds of people retained because the board is empowered to retain anyone for any reason if they feel it's in the best interest of the service," she said. Rashid said she and other lawyers working with transgender troops view the guidance as telling the boards to automatically order separation based solely on a diagnosis or symptoms of gender dysphoria.

She said that constitutes an unlawful command by the Air Force and upends impartiality.



Hegseth

Pentagon officials say 4,240 troops have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria, which the military is using as an identifier of being transgender.

The Pentagon got the green light from Supreme Court in May to move forward with a ban on all transgender troops. It offered two options: volunteer to leave and take a one-time separation payout or be discharged at a later date without pay.



Paul W. Gillespie/AP

Outgoing U.S. Naval Academy Superintendent Navy Vice Adm. Yvette Davids high fives with new Superintendent Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Michael Borgschulte, in Annapolis, Md., on Friday.

US Naval Academy gets its first Marine superintendent

By Brian Witte
Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Lt. Gen. Michael Borgschulte became the first Marine Corps officer to be superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy in its 180-year history on Friday.

Borgschulte was deputy commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs in Quantico, Va., before being nominated to be the 66th superintendent of the military academy in Annapolis.

Borgschulte, who graduated from the academy in 1991, said he would safeguard its proud traditions while preparing future generations of officers for the challenges of an increasingly complex world.

"The academy exists not to pursue academic rankings or institutional accolades — yes, we have those — but to fulfill a sacred mission and that's to develop the next generation of Navy and Marine Corps officers who will protect and defend the freedoms we as Americans so often take for granted," Borgschulte said during a ceremony marking the change in command.

John Phelan, the secretary of the Navy, called Borgshulte "a decorated naval aviator and a veteran of three combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan who's led sailors and marines at all levels."

"He is someone who his fellow Marines describe as a military hybrid of modern tactics and ancient attitudes," Phelan continued, adding that he oversaw the highest recruitment and retention in Marine Corps history and will further cultivate "a culture of winning and warfighting here at the academy."

"Get ready, midshipmen. It's time to buckle your chinstraps," Phelan said.

This year the academy commissioned 776 Navy ensigns and 258 second lieutenants in the Marine Corps.

Borgschulte replaces Vice Adm. Yvette Davids, who in January 2024 became the first woman to be superintendent. Davids is moving to the Pentagon to be deputy chief of naval operations for Operations, Plans, Strategy and Warfighting Development.

Swiss may reduce its F-35 purchase amid US tension

By Bastian Benrath-Wright
Bloomberg News

Switzerland may cut its order of 36 Lockheed Martin Corp. F-35 stealth fighters after failing to push through a fixed-price deal with the U.S. government, driving up the cost by as much as $1.6 billion.

Negotiations between Swiss and U.S. officials, including Defense Minister Martin Pfister and his U.S. counterpart Pete Hegseth, failed to sway the U.S. to consider a fixed price, according to the government. Cost overruns will be somewhere between 650 million and 1.3 billion Swiss francs, the government said, another setback for Switzerland after the U.S. slapped surprisingly high tariffs on the country.

Pfister said at a news conference on Wednesday that the government might buy fewer F-35s. But he added that the jet still had large technological advantages relative to other options and that buying a different jet would take longer and possibly cost more.

"Without new fighter jets, Switzerland won't be able to protect its airspace any more from the early 2030s on," Pfister said. "So this is very much a question of security for the Swiss people."

The minister also said that "from the Federal Council's point of view, there is no link to the tariffs discussion" with the U.S.

The government said in a separate statement that The Federal Department of Defence will "examine various options in depth" by the end of November, including whether "current air defence requirements still correspond to the principles on which the evaluation of the F-35A was based."

"The discussions clearly showed that the USA is not prepared to deviate from its position," the government said. As a result, it must now accept a price per production batch that corresponds to the value negotiated between the U.S. government and the manufacturer, the release said.

The latest tussle between the Swiss and the U.S. government comes after President Donald Trump slapped the highest tariff in the developed world on Switzerland, a surprise move that only heightened public criticism of the already controversial F-35 purchase. Lawmakers across parties have pushed for canceling the contract outright after the tariff decision.

Switzerland had for years taken the stance that the 36 F-35As it ordered would be delivered at a fixed price of 6 billion francs. In June, it acknowledged a disagreement over the price and said it would seek a diplomatic solution.

The Swiss Air Force now flies older F-5 and F/A-18 jets that date to the 1970s and 1980s and is looking to replace all of its combat fleet with advanced aircraft. The F-35A stealth fighters it has ordered, at a cost now set to reach as high as 7.3 billion Swiss francs, would be a major step up in capability, and a dozen friendly European countries also operate them.

While the F-35 is widely used in Europe, Lockheed faces an emerging sales challenge as governments come under pressure to direct spending toward homegrown equipment. Spain's government shelved plans to buy F-35s because it clashed with a government goal to spend 85% of its defense budget in Europe, El Pais reported this month.

NATION

Russia sees victory as Trump pivots on war

The Washington Post

MOSCOW — For Russia, the results of the Alaska summit between President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin marked a turning point in relations with the United States, underlined by Trump subsequently abandoning demands for a halt in fighting in Ukraine.

Russian officials and commentators were especially enamored by Trump's unusually warm red-carpet greeting to Putin on Friday in which they saw an opening to pull America away from its traditional allies in Europe. "A new European and international security architecture is on the agenda and everyone must accept it," said Andrei Klishas, an influential Russian senator, after the summit.

Within hours of the meeting, Trump had discarded his previous position — one also held by Ukraine and Europe — that a full ceasefire was required to allow the details of a peace agreement to be hammered out. The move enables Russia to keep fighting without the risk of U.S. sanctions and puts pressure on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to agree to Russian terms.

After Friday's summit, Trump told Zelenskyy and European leaders that Putin had demanded that Ukraine cede all of Donbas, which includes the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, and other occupied territory, according to three people familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

Trump told them of his shift from a ceasefire to negotiations on a comprehensive peace deal, according to two people familiar with the matter. Trump spoke to Zelenskyy before European leaders joined the call.

Russia does not control the roughly 3,500 square miles of Donetsk, a highly reinforced region of strategic importance to Ukraine's capacity to defend itself from future Russian attacks, military analysts say.

Trump told Zelenskyy that Putin was "ready to promise" to end the war and not start wars against other nations, in exchange for Donbas and the other Ukrainian territory he has seized, the official said. Zelenskyy is unwilling to give up any more territory, he added, but Trump wants a fast deal — setting the stage for a difficult clash.

Kyiv insists that handing more territory to Putin would violate Ukraine's constitution and embolden Russia to plan further attacks on the rest of Ukraine.

A triumphant Putin told top Russian officials Saturday that the meeting was "very useful" and "in my opinion, it brings us closer to the right decisions."

Trump's call to Zelenskyy and European leaders, which included Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and the leaders of France, Germany, Finland, Italy, Britain, Poland, NATO and the European Commission, was more tense than the phone call between the Europeans and Trump earlier in the week, a second official said.

In another setback for Kyiv, the Kremlin on Saturday raised doubts over the one public result of the summit that went some way to meeting Ukrainian demands — Trump's promise of a three-way meeting with Putin and Zelenskyy.

Senior Putin aide Yuri Ushakov said such a meeting had not been discussed, even after Trump referred to it in comments after the summit. The Kremlin has so far firmly resisted any meeting with Zelenskyy until the very last stages of peace negotiations.

One bright spot for European leaders, however, appears to be a continued American buy-in for some form of security guarantees for Ukraine in the wake of any agreement.

Security: Leaders react to US guarantees for Ukraine, peace

FROM PAGE 1

vate discussions, Witkoff also said Russia had agreed to enact a law that it would not "go after any other European countries and violate their sovereignty. And there was plenty more."

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, speaking at a news conference Sunday in Brussels with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, applauded the move. "We welcome President Trump's willingness to contribute to Article 5-like security guarantees for Ukraine and the 'Coalition of the willing' — including the European Union — is ready to do its share," she said.

Zelenskyy thanked the United States for signals that Washington was willing to support such guarantees but much was unclear.

"It is important that America agrees to work with Europe to provide security guarantees for Ukraine," he said, "But there are no details how it will work and what America's role will be, Europe's role will be and what the EU can do, and this is our main task, we need security to work in practice like Article 5 of NATO, and we consider EU accession to be part of the security guarantees," he said.

European leaders, including heavyweights France, Britain and Germany, are rallying around the Ukrainian leader after his exclusion from Trump's summit on Friday with Putin. They announced Sunday they will be at Zelenskyy's side at the White House on Monday, which appears to be an effort to ensure the meeting goes better than the last one in February, when Trump berated Zelenskyy in a heated Oval Office encounter.

"The Europeans are very afraid of the Oval Office scene being repeated and so they want to support Mr. Zelenskyy to the hilt," said retired French Gen. Dominique Trinquand, a former head of France's military mission at the United Nations.



AP

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, right, and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy participate in a media conference at EU headquarters in Brussels on Sunday.

"It's a power struggle and a position of strength that might work with Trump," he said.

The European leaders' demonstration of support could help ease concerns in Kyiv and in other European capitals that Ukraine risks being railroaded into a peace deal that Trump says he wants to broker with Russia.

Neil Melvin, director of international security at the London-based Royal United Services Institute, said European leaders are trying to "shape this fast-evolving agenda." After the Alaska summit, the idea of a ceasefire appears all-but-abandoned, with the narrative shifting toward Putin's agenda of ensuring Ukraine does not join NATO or even the EU.

Rubio said on Sunday that a possible ceasefire is "not off the table" but the best way to end the war would be a "full peace deal."

Putin has implied that he sees Europe as a hindrance to negotiations. He has also resisted meeting Zelenskyy in person, saying that such a meeting can only take place once the groundwork for a peace deal has been laid.

Speaking to the press after his meeting with Trump, the Russian leader raised the idea that Kyiv and other European capitals could "create obstacles" to derail potential progress with "behind-the-scenes intrigue."

For now, Zelenskyy offers the Europeans the "only way" to get into the discussions about the future of Ukraine and European security, says RUSI's Melvin.

However, the sheer number of European leaders potentially in attendance means the group will have to be "mindful" not to give "contradictory" messages, Melvin said.

"The risk is they look heavy-handed and are ganging up on Trump," he added. "Trump won't want to be put in a corner."

Witkoff defended Trump's decision to abandon his push that Russia agree to an immediate ceasefire, which Trump had set as a benchmark going into the meeting. Witkoff said the Republican president had pivoted toward a peace deal because so much progress was made.

"We covered almost all the other issues necessary for a peace deal," Witkoff said, without elaborating. "We began to see some moderation in the way they're thinking about getting to a final peace deal."

Rubio, who appeared on three Sunday news shows, said there was not going to be any kind of truce reached because Ukraine was not at the summit.

"Now, ultimately, if there isn't a peace agreement, if there isn't an end of this war, the president's been clear, there are going to be consequences," Rubio said on ABC's "This Week." "But we're trying to avoid that."

Rubio, who is also Trump's national security adviser, said he did not believe imposing new U.S. sanctions on Russia would force Putin to accept a ceasefire.

"The minute you issue new sanctions, your ability to get them to the table, our ability to get them to table will be severely diminished," Rubio told NBC's "Meet the Press."

He also said "we're not at the precipice of a peace agreement" and that getting there would not be easy and would take a lot of work.

"We made progress in the sense that we identified potential areas of agreement, but there remains some big areas of disagreement. So we're still a long ways off," Rubio said.

"I think everybody agreed that we had made progress. Maybe not enough for a peace deal, but we are on the path for the first time," Witkoff said.

He added: "The fundamental issue, which is some sort of land swap, which is obviously ultimately in the control of the Ukrainians — that could not have been discussed at this meeting" with Putin. "We intend to discuss it on Monday. Hopefully we have some clarity on it and hopefully that ends up in a peace deal very, very soon."

NATION

‘We’re back to where we were before’

Trump runs into both the difficulty of ending a war and Putin diplomacy

By Jill Colvin and Emma Burrows
Associated Press

NEW YORK — President Donald Trump walked into a summit with Russia’s Vladimir Putin pressing for a ceasefire deal and threatening “severe consequences” and tough new sanctions if the Kremlin leader failed to agree to halt the fighting in Ukraine.

Instead, Trump was the one who stood down, dropping his demand for a ceasefire in favor of pursuing a full peace accord — a position that aligns with Putin’s.

After calls with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European leaders, Trump wrote as he flew home from Friday’s meeting in Alaska that it had been “determined by all that the best way to end the horrific war between Russia and Ukraine is to go directly to a Peace Agreement, which would end the war, and not a mere Ceasefire Agreement, which often times do not hold up.”

It was a dramatic reversal that laid bare the challenges of dealing with Putin, a cunning adversary, as well as the complexities of a conflict that Trump had repeatedly boasted during his campaign that he could solve within 24 hours.

While European leaders were relieved that Trump did not agree to a deal that ceded territory or otherwise favored Moscow, the summit allowed Putin to reclaim his place on the world stage and may have bought Russia more time to push forward with its offensive in Ukraine.

“We’re back to where we were before without him having gone to Alaska,” said Fiona Hill, who served as Trump’s senior adviser on Russia at the National Security Council during his first term, including when he last met Putin in Helsinki in 2018.

In an interview, Hill argued that Trump had emerged from the meeting in a weaker position on the world stage because of his reversal. Other leaders, she said, might now look at the U.S. president and think he’s “not the big guy that he thinks he is and certainly not the dealmaking genius.”

“All the way along, Trump was convinced he has incredible forces of persuasion,” she said, but he came out of the meeting without a ceasefire — the “one thing” he had been pushing for, even after he gave the Russian leader the “red carpet treatment.”

Trump has “run up against a rock in the form of Putin, who doesn’t want anything from him apart from Ukraine,” she said.

At home, Democrats expressed alarm at what at times seemed like a day of deference, with Trump clapping for Putin as he walked down a red carpet during an elaborate ceremony welcoming him to U.S. soil for the first time in a decade. The two rode together in the presidential limousine and exchanged compliments.

Trump seemed to revel in particular in Putin echoing his oft-repeated assertion that Russia never would have invaded Ukraine if Trump had been in office instead of Democrat Joe Biden at the time.

Before news cameras, Trump did not use the opportunity to castigate Putin for launching the largest ground invasion in Europe since World War II or human rights abuses he’s been accused of committing. Instead, Putin was the one who spoke first, and invited Trump to join him in Moscow next.

“President Trump appears to have been played yet again by Vladimir Putin,” said Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. “The president rolled out a red carpet and warmly greeted a murderous dictator on American soil and reports indicate he got nothing concrete in return.”



JULIA DEMAREE NIKHINSON/AP

President Donald Trump meets with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin on Friday, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. At left is Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and second from right is Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

“Enough is enough,” she went on. “If President Trump won’t act, Congress must do so decisively by passing crushing sanctions when we return in the coming weeks.”

Sen. Jack Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat who is the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he supports diplomacy but “peacemaking must be done responsibly.”

“Instead of caving to Putin, the U.S. should join our allies in levying tough, targeted new sanctions on Russia to intensify the economic pressure,” he said.

Trump has tried to cast himself as a peacemaker, taking credit for helping deescalate conflicts between India and Pakistan as well as Thailand and Cambodia. He proudly mediated a peace agreement between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo and another between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan to end decades of fighting.

Trump has set his eye on the Nobel Peace Prize, with numerous allies offering nominations. But he has struggled to made headway on the world’s two most vexing conflicts: the Russia-Ukraine war and Israel’s offensive in Gaza against Hamas.

In Washington, the summit was met by little response from Trump’s allies. Republican lawmakers who spoke out were largely reserved and generally called for continued talks and constructive actions from the Trump administration.

“President Trump brought Rwanda and the DRC to terms, India and Pakistan to terms, Armenia and Azerbaijan to terms. I believe in our President, and believe he will do what he always does — rise to the challenge,” Rep. Brian Mast, a Florida Republican who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said in a statement to The Associated Press.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican and close Trump ally, offered that he was “very proud” of Trump for having had the face-to-face meeting and was “cautiously optimistic” that the war might end “well before Christmas” if a trilateral meeting between Trump, Zelenskyy and Putin transpires. Zelenskyy plans to meet with Trump in Washington on Monday, joined by European and NATO leaders.

“I have all the confidence in the world that Donald Trump will make it clear to Putin this war will never start again. If it does, you’re going to pay a heavy price,” he said on Fox News.

Trump-Putin summit began with cozy chat alone in ‘The Beast’

By Derek Wallbank
Bloomberg News

Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin’s summit in Alaska started with a very stage-managed opening — each leader descending from their respective airplanes, a visibly warm handshake on the tarmac. Pats on the arm. A military overfly.

Then things veered off script.

Putin slipped into the back of the U.S. president’s armored limousine, known as “the Beast,” alongside Trump. As the car slowly pulled away, the two began their first substantial in-person conversation since the Group of 20 in Japan six years ago essentially alone — out of earshot of their aides, officials and the assembled world media.

The short ride from the tarmac to the summit room at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, a U.S. military facility, took less than 10 minutes. But it gave both leaders the chance for the most private of conversations at a meeting the whole world is watching and studying intensely.

It was unclear whether their ride together was planned, or a last-second improvisation by the pair. The White House didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

On a podium moments earlier, Trump and Putin posed for photographs as reporters shouted out questions. One yelled whether Putin would “still be killing civilians” but the Russian president pointed to his ear and shook his head that he couldn’t hear.

Trump then called time and gestured for Putin to walk with him toward the vehicle. The Russian leader was captured by the cameras smiling through the window as it drew away.

The Russian presidential limousine stood nearby.

At the summit site, a blue-walled room was set up for the talks, adorned with American and Russian flags. Text on the backdrop behind the two leaders read “PURSUING PEACE” in all capital letters. Next to Trump were an interpreter, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff. On Putin’s side, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov.

Shortly before 11:30 a.m. local time, the formal summit began. At stake: the future of Ukraine, peace in Europe, and the economies of Russia and its trading partners, under threat of increased U.S. financial penalties if talks fail.

In practice, the actual discussions had already started. Only Trump and Putin may know what was said.

NATION

Hurricane Erin weakens to Category 3

Associated Press

Hurricane Erin weakened to a Category 3 hurricane Sunday as its outer bands continued to lash the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico with heavy rains and tropical-storm force winds.

While Erin's maximum winds diminished, the storm's overall size grew and forecasters issued a tropical storm warning for the Turks and Caicos Islands and a watch for the southeast Bahamas.

The storm wasn't expected to directly impact the U.S. East Coast, but by doubling or tripling in size it could bring rip currents all along the Southeast coast. Gusty winds and flooding tides could wash out parts of the highway that connects the North Carolina Outer Banks by midweek, the National Weather Service said.

Bermuda could have similar conditions as Erin is forecast to turn to the north and then northeast, forecasters said.



ALEJANDRO GRANADILLO/AP

A warning flag flies on the beach as people swim in Condado, Puerto Rico, as Hurricane Erin approaches, on Friday. Erin wasn't expected to directly impact the U.S. East Coast, but it could bring rip currents.

Erin, the first Atlantic hurricane of 2025, reached Category 5 status Saturday with maximum winds of 160 mph before weakening.

The storm's maximum sustained winds were 125 mph late Sunday morning, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

The winds decreased as the storm went through internal changes. Erin is expected to remain powerful for the next several days, forecasters said.

"You're dealing with a major hurricane. The intensity is fluctuating. It's a dangerous hurricane in any event," said Richard Pasch of the National Hurricane Center.

Erin's center was about 235 miles north-northwest of San Juan, Puerto Rico, and 200 miles east of the Grand Turk Island, moving west-northwest at 13 mph.

The rain and winds from the outer bands of the storm left about 147,000 customers without power Sunday morning in Puerto Rico, according to Luma Energy, a private company that oversees the transmission and distribution of power on the island. The weather canceled more than 20 flights, officials said.

Swells were also expected to affect portions of the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Hispaniola and the Turks and Caicos Islands during the next couple of days, forecasters said.

A tropical storm warning means tropical storm conditions are expected somewhere within the warning area, and in this case, within 24 hours, the hurricane center said. Heavy rain is still expected across the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, with rainfall of 3 to 6 inches, with 8 inches in some isolated areas.

The government of the Bahamas also issued a tropical storm watch for the Southeast Bahamas.

Scientists have linked the rapid intensification of hurricanes in the Atlantic to climate change. Global warming is causing the atmosphere to hold more water vapor and is spiking ocean temperatures, and warmer waters give hurricanes fuel to unleash more rain and strengthen more quickly.

3 killed, 9 injured in NYC shooting

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A club shooting in the New York City borough of Brooklyn early Sunday morning has left three people dead and nine others wounded in a year of record-low gun violence in the city.

Investigators believe up to four shooters opened fire with multiple weapons at Taste of the City Lounge in Crown Heights after a dispute just before 3:30 a.m. The violence appeared to be gang-related, New York Police Department Commissioner Jessica Tisch told reporters.

"It's a terrible shooting that occurred in the city of New York," Tisch said at a news briefing, later calling the killings "a tragic, senseless act of violence."

Investigators found at least 42 shell casings from 9 mm and 45-caliber weapons and a firearm in a nearby street.

Those wounded in the shooting were are being treated at hospitals for non-life-threatening injuries, Tisch said. The ages of the victims range from 19 to 61. A 19-year-old man died at the scene and two other men — ages 35 and 27 — died after being transported to a hospital.

Trump says semiconductor tariffs coming soon, could reach 300%

Bloomberg News

President Donald Trump said he would set levies on semiconductors in the coming two weeks, the latest indication he's readying a substantial expansion of his tariff regime.

"I'll be setting tariffs next week and the week after, on steel and on, I would, say chips — chips and semiconductors, we'll be setting sometime next week, week after," Trump told reporters Friday aboard Air Force One en route to Alaska for a summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

It wasn't clear if Trump misspoke about steel tariffs. He already hiked duties on steel and aluminum imports to 50% in June.

The president has repeatedly promised that levies on chips and pharmaceuticals are coming within weeks, but no formal announcements have yet been made.

Both sectors have been under Commerce Department investigation since April, a prerequisite for Trump to impose tariffs on national security grounds. That process can prove complicated and probes can take months or longer to resolve.

Manufacturers and artificial intelligence firms have been eager for more clarity about his plans for semiconductor rates, since chips are included in a wide range of modern consumer products.

Earlier this month, Trump said during an event with Apple Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook that he planned a 100% tariff on semiconductors, while exempting products from companies that are moving manufacturing to the U.S.

The White House hasn't offered a subsequent explanation for how that exemption would work, but Trump implied that Apple — which has pledged a $600 billion domestic manufacturing initiative — could be exempt.

On Friday, Trump suggested the charge on imported semiconductors could be even higher.

"I'm going to have a rate that is going to be 200%, 300%?" Trump said.

VMI appoints new leader to replace school's 1st Black superintendent

BY DAN ROSENZWEIG-ZIFF
The Washington Post

The Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors appointed retired Marine Corps Lt. Gen. David Furness as its 16th superintendent on Friday, replacing retired Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins, the institute's first Black leader, who was ousted from his position this year over his diversity, equity and inclusion policies.

"His impeccable military record, passion for the VMI experience and proven record advancing the mission of complex organizations make him the right person to lead the Institute in this next chapter of its history," board president Jamie Inman said of Furness in a statement.

Furness, who is white and graduated from VMI in 1987, takes over an institute reeling after years of tension on campus that began with a 2020 Washington Post report about racism at the school. A statewide investigation followed, finding the institution tolerated a "racist and sexist culture." When Wins implemented policies to try to rectify that, conservative white alumni fought back, alleging those policies themselves were racist and eventually calling for Wins' removal.

Furness served in the Marine Corps for 36 years, retiring in 2023 as a three-star general. He had been rumored as the board's pick for the job since the spring, after the board decided not to extend Wins' contract, but was chosen after the governing body formed a selection committee with alumni and students and hired an outside firm.

"The committee's search process was transparent, inclusive, and, above all, thorough, screening hundreds of candidates, interviewing six, and conducting on post visits with three finalists," the school said in a statement.

Furness said in a statement he was "thrilled" to return to his alma mater as its new leader.

"I am indebted to the Institute for molding me into the man I am today, and it is an immense honor to give back and serve the VMI community as Superintendent," he said.

Furness, originally from Columbus, Ohio, majored in history at VMI before entering the Marine Corps. There, he served as a senior military officer in Djibouti and later helped oversee operations around the world, managing more than $2 billion in assets. He also earned two master's degrees, including one in military studies from Marine Corps University and another in national security and strategic studies from the National Defense University.

After retiring, he worked at J.A. Green & Co., a bipartisan government relations firm, as executive vice president of defense programs.

NATION

Democrats find a new aggressive identity

By Bill Barrow
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Fight! Fight! Fight!

It's not just Donald Trump's mantra anymore. As the Republican president pushes states to redraw their congressional districts to the GOP's advantage, Democrats have shown they are willing to go beyond words of outrage and use whatever power they do have to win.

Democrats in the Texas Legislature started it off by delaying, for now, Republican efforts to expand the GOP majority in the state's delegation and help preserve party control of the U.S. House through new districts in time for the 2026 midterm elections.

Then multiple Democratic governors promised new districts in their own states to neutralize potential Republican gains in Washington. Their counter has been buoyed by national fundraising, media blitzes and public demonstrations, including rallies Saturday around the country.



Rodolfo Gonzalez/AP

Former US Rep. Beto O'Rourke speaks during the Fight The Trump Takeover Rally at the State Capitol, Saturday in Austin, Texas, against congressional redistricting efforts by Republicans and President Donald Trump.

"For everyone that's been asking, 'Where are the Democrats?' — well, here they are," said U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett of Texas, one of several Democrats who could be ousted under her state's new maps.

There is no guarantee Democrats can prevent the Republican-powered redistricting, just as Democrats on Capitol Hill have not been able to stop Trump's moves. But it's a notable turn for a party that, by its own leaders' admissions, has honored conventional rules and bypassed bare-knuckled tactics.

So far, progressive and establishment Democrats are aligned, uniting what has often been a fragmented opposition since Republicans led by Trump took control of the federal government with their election sweep in November. Leaders on the left say the approach gives them a more effective way to confront him. They can challenge his redistricting ploy with tangible moves as they also push back against the Republicans' tax and spending law and press the case that he is shredding American democracy.

When the president's Texan allies announced a new political map intended to send five more Republicans to the U.S. House, state Democratic representatives fled Texas, denying the GOP the numbers to conduct business in the Legislature and approve the reworked districts.

Those legislators surfaced in Illinois, New York, California and elsewhere, joined by governors, senators, state party chairs, other states' legislators and activists. All promised action. The response was Trumpian.

Govs. Gavin Newsom of California, JB Pritzker of Illinois and Kathy Hochul of New York welcomed Texas Democrats and pledged retaliatory redistricting.

Former Rep. Beto O'Rourke has encouraged Democratic-run statehouses to redraw districts now rather than wait for GOP states to act. On Friday, California Democrats released a plan that would give the party an additional five U.S. House seats. It would require voter approval in a November election.

O'Rourke said at a recent rally: "You may say to yourself, 'Well, those aren't the rules.' There are no refs in this game. F—- the rules. ... Whatever it takes."

In the meantime, said U.S. Rep. Julie Johnson, D-Texas, voters are grasping a stark reality.

"They say, 'Well, I don't know. Politics doesn't affect me,'" she said of constituents she meets. "I say, 'Honey, it does' If you don't do politics, politics will do you.'"

As Trump decries lawless cities, their Black mayors say otherwise

By Terry Tang
Associated Press

As President Donald Trump declared Washington, D.C., a crime-ridden wasteland in need of federal intervention this week and threatened similar federal interventions in other Black-led cities, several mayors compared notes.

Now members of the African American Mayors Association are determined to stop Trump from burying accomplishments that they already felt were overlooked. And they're using the administration's unprecedented law enforcement takeover in the nation's capital as an opportunity to disprove his narrative about some of the country's greatest urban enclaves.

"It gives us an opportunity to say we need to amplify our voices to confront the rhetoric that crime is just running rampant around major U.S. cities. It's just not true," said Van Johnson, mayor of Savannah, Ga., and president of the African American Mayors Association. "It's not supported by any evidence or statistics whatsoever."



Scott

After deploying the first of 800 National Guard members to Washington, the Republican president is setting his sights on other cities including Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles and Oakland, Calif., calling them crime-ridden and "horribly run." One thing they all have in common: They're led by Black mayors.



Johnson

"It was not lost on any member of our organization that the mayors either were Black or perceived to be Democrats," Johnson said. "And that's unfortunate. For mayors, we play with whoever's on the field."

Trump argued that federal law enforcement had to step in after a prominent employee of the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, was attacked in an attempted carjacking. However statistics published by Washington's Metropolitan Police contradict the president and show violent crime has dropped there since a post-pandemic peak in 2023.



Van Johnson

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson scoffed at Trump's remarks, hailing the city's "historic progress driving down homicides by more than 30% and shootings by almost 40% in the last year alone."

Mayor Karen Bass of Los Angeles, where homicides fell 14% between 2023 and 2024, called the federal takeover nothing but a performative "power grab."

In Baltimore, officials say they have seen historic decreases in homicides and nonfatal shootings this year, and those have been on the decline since 2022, according to the city's public safety data dashboard.

The lower crime rates are attributed to tackling violence with a "public health" approach, city officials say. In 2021, under Mayor Brandon Scott, Baltimore created a Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan that called for more investment in community violence intervention, more services for crime victims and other initiatives. Scott accused Trump of exploiting crime as a "wedge issue and dog whistle" rather than caring about curbing violence.

"We will continue to closely work with our regional federal law enforcement agencies, who have been great partners, and will do everything in our power to continue the progress despite the roadblocks this administration attempts to implement," Scott said.

Fired DOJ employee may face prison for throwing sandwich at officers

By Joe Heim, Sophia Solano and Salvador Rizzo
The Washington Post

Attorney General Pam Bondi said Thursday that a Justice Department employee has been fired after he was arrested for allegedly throwing a sandwich at a federal law enforcement officer Sunday evening.

In court documents filed Wednesday, police allege that Sean Charles Dunn approached law enforcement officers, including Metro Transit Police and U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers, and began yelling obscenities and calling them "fascists."

At about 11:05 p.m., according to the federal court filing, Dunn, 37, approached an officer and threw a sandwich at him. He was charged with "assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers and employees of the United States."

After his arrest, Dunn allegedly told one of the officers: "I did it. I threw a sandwich."

"If you touch any law enforcement officer, we will come after you," Bondi posted on X Thursday.

"This is an example of the Deep State we have been up against for seven months as we work to refocus DOJ."

Jeanine Pirro, U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, announced in a video posted on X on Wednesday afternoon that Dunn would be charged with a felony.

Dunn was an international affairs specialist in the criminal division of the Justice Department, according to a person who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss personnel matters. The D.C. resident made an initial appearance before a magistrate judge in federal court Thursday afternoon.

Prosecutors said he was being charged with forcibly assaulting, resisting or impeding a federal officer, which is punishable by up to eight years in prison. Dunn has no criminal history and would not be eligible for the maximum penalty at sentencing if convicted.

Dunn gave only a few brief answers to the magistrate judge's questions, but smiled as he conferred with his defense attorney, Sabrina Shroff, after the court agreed to release him on his own recognizance for now.

Shroff said that following his arrest on Sunday, Dunn was taken to D.C. Superior Court and then released without being charged. On Wednesday, a federal warrant was issued, charging him with a felony.

In court, Shroff said that she and Dunn worked to facilitate his voluntary surrender Wednesday but it was unclear which prosecutor at the U.S. attorney's office was responsible for the case.

Shroff said the government sent "20 police officers to his home" to arrest Dunn Wednesday night and did not allow him to call her.

"He did absolutely the most responsible thing by trying to surrender," said Shroff, who noted that Dunn is an Air Force veteran. The court scheduled a preliminary hearing in the case for Sept. 4.

NATION

Protections upheld for immigrant children

BY VALERIE GONZALEZ
Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas — A federal judge ruled Friday to deny the Trump administration's request to end a policy in place for nearly three decades that is meant to protect immigrant children in federal custody.

U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee in Los Angeles issued her ruling a week after holding a hearing with the federal government and legal advocates representing immigrant children in custody.

Gee called last week's hearing "déjà vu" after reminding the court of the federal government's attempt to terminate the Flores Settlement Agreement in 2019 under the first Trump administration. She repeated the sentiment in Friday's order.

"There is nothing new under the sun regarding the facts or the law. The Court therefore could deny Defendants' motion on that basis alone," Gee wrote, referring to the government's appeal to a law they believed kept the court from enforcing the agreement.

In the most recent attempt, the government argued they made substantial changes since the agreement was formalized in 1997, creating standards and policies governing the custody of immigrant children that conform to legislation and the agreement.

Gee acknowledged that the government improved some conditions, but wrote, "These improvements are direct evidence that the FSA is serving its intended purpose, but to suggest that the agreement should be abandoned because some progress has been made is nonsensical."



ERIC GAY/AP

Immigrants play soccer at what then was a new U.S. government holding center for migrant children in Carrizo Springs, Texas, July 9, 2019.

Attorneys representing the federal government told the court the agreement gets in the way of their efforts to expand detention space for families, even though Trump's tax and spending bill provided billions to build new facilities.

Tiberius Davis, one of the government attorneys, said the bill gives the government authority to hold families in detention indefinitely. "But currently under the Flores Settlement Agreement, that's essentially void," he said.

The Flores agreement, named for a teenage plaintiff, was the result of over a decade of litigation between attorneys representing the rights of migrant children and the U.S. government over widespread allegations of mistreatment in the 1980s.

The agreement set standards for how licensed shelters must provide food, water, adult supervision, emergency medical services, toilets, sinks, temperature control and ventilation. It also limited how long U.S. Customs and Border Protection could detain child immigrants to 72 hours. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services then takes custody of the children.

The Biden administration successfully pushed to partially end the agreement last year. Gee ruled that special court supervision may end when HHS takes custody, but she carved out exceptions for certain types of facilities for children with more acute needs.

In arguing against the Trump administration's effort to completely end the agreement, advocates said the government was holding children beyond the time limits. In May, CBP held 46 children for over a week, including six children held for over two weeks and four children held 19 days, according to data revealed in a court filing. In March and April, CPB reported that it had 213 children in custody for more than 72 hours. That included 14 children, including toddlers, who were held for over 20 days in April.

The federal government is looking to expand its immigration detention space, including by building more centers like one in Florida dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz," where a lawsuit alleges detainees' rights are being violated.

Gee still has not ruled on the request by legal advocates for the immigrant children to expand independent monitoring of the treatment of children held in U.S. Customs and Border Protection facilities. Currently, the agreement allows for third-party inspections at facilities in the El Paso and Rio Grande Valley regions, but plaintiffs submitted evidence showing long detention times at border facilities that violate the agreement's terms.

Judge strikes down Trump DEI guidance

BY COLLIN BINKLEY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge on Thursday struck down two Trump administration actions aimed at eliminating diversity, equity and inclusion programs at the nation's schools and universities.

In her ruling, U.S. District Judge Stephanie Gallagher in Maryland found that the Education Department violated the law when it threatened to cut federal funding from educational institutions that continued with DEI initiatives.

The guidance has been on hold since April when three federal judges blocked various portions of the Education Department's anti-DEI measures.

The ruling Thursday followed a motion for summary judgment from the American Federation of Teachers and the American Sociological Association, which challenged the government's actions in a February lawsuit.

The case centers on two Education Department memos ordering schools and universities to end all "race-based decision-making" or face penalties up to a total loss of federal funding.

It's part of a campaign to end practices the Trump administration frames as discrimination against white and Asian American students.

The new ruling orders the department to scrap the guidance because it runs afoul of procedural requirements, though Gallagher wrote that she took no view on whether the policies were "good or bad, prudent or foolish, fair or unfair."

Gallagher, who was appointed by President Donald Trump, rejected the government's argument that the memos simply served to remind schools that discrimination is illegal.

"It initiated a sea change in how the Department of Education regulates educational practices and classroom conduct, causing millions of educators to reasonably fear that their lawful, and even beneficial, speech might cause them or their schools to be punished," Gallagher wrote.

New Orleans mayor indicted over alleged relationship with bodyguard

BY JIM MUSTIAN, JACK BROOK AND HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell was indicted Friday in what prosecutors called a yearslong scheme to hide a romantic relationship with her bodyguard, who is accused of being paid as if he was working even when they met alone in apartments and traveled to vineyards for wine tasting.

Cantrell faces charges of conspiracy, fraud and obstruction, less than five months before she leaves office due to term limits. The first female mayor in New Orleans' 300-year history was elected twice but now becomes the city's first mayor to be charged while in office.

"Public corruption has crippled us for years and years," Acting U.S. Attorney Michael Simpson said, referring to Louisiana's notorious history. "And this is extremely significant."

Cantrell's bodyguard, Jeffrey Vappie, was already facing charges of wire fraud and making false statements. He has pleaded not guilty. A grand jury returned an 18-count indictment Friday that added Cantrell to the case.

They are accused of exchanging encrypted messages through WhatsApp to avoid detection and then deleting the conversations. The mayor and Vappie have said their relationship was strictly professional, but the indictment portrayed it as "personal and intimate."



Cantrell

In a WhatsApp exchange, the indictment says, Vappie reminisced about accompanying Cantrell to Scotland in October 2021, saying that was "where it all started."

Cantrell and Vappie had more than 15,000 WhatsApp messages between them, including efforts to harass a citizen, delete evidence, make false statements to FBI agents, "and ultimately to commit perjury before a federal grand jury," Simpson said.

They met in an apartment while Vappie claimed to be on duty, and she arranged for him to attend 14 trips, Simpson said. The trips, he added, were described by her as times "when they were truly alone."

New Orleans taxpayers paid more than $70,000 for Vappie's travel, the prosecutor said.

Authorities cited a September 2022 rendezvous on Martha's Vineyard, a trip Cantrell took instead of attending a conference in Miami. Vappie's travel to the island was covered by the city to attend a separate conference.

Simpson said Cantrell lied in an affidavit that she activated a function on her phone that automatically deleted messages in 2021 when she really didn't activate that feature until December 2022, a month after the media began speculating on the pair's conduct.

When a private citizen took photos of them dining together and drinking wine, Cantrell filed a police report and sought a restraining order, Simpson said.

Vappie retired from the police department in 2024.

WORLD

Israel decries Gaza hostage families' tactics

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israeli police made dozens of arrests on Sunday as tens of thousands of protesters demanding a deal to free hostages in Gaza aimed to shut down the country in one of the largest and fiercest protests in 22 months of war.

Groups representing families of hostages organized the demonstrations, and gave an even larger estimate of attendees, as frustration grows in Israel over plans for a new military offensive in some of Gaza's most populated areas. Many Israelis fear that could further endanger the remaining hostages. Twenty of the 50 who remain are believed to be alive.

"We don't win a war over the bodies of hostages," protesters chanted. Even some former Israeli army and intelligence chiefs now call for a deal to end the fighting.

Protesters gathered at dozens of places including outside politicians' homes, military headquarters and on major highways. They blocked lanes and lit bonfires. Some restaurants and theaters closed in solidarity. Police said they arrested 38 people.

"The only way to bring (hostages) back is through a deal, all at once, without games," former hostage Arbel Yehoud said at a demonstration in Tel Aviv. Her boyfriend Ariel Cunio is still held by Hamas.

One protester carried a photo of an emaciated Palestinian child from Gaza. Such images were once rare at Israeli demonstrations but now appear more often as outrage grows over conditions for Palestinian civilians after more than 250 malnutrition-related deaths.

An end to the war does not seem near. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is balancing competing pressures including the potential for mutiny within his coalition.

"Those who today call for an end to the war without defeating Hamas are not only hardening Hamas' position and delaying the release of our hostages, they are also ensuring that the horrors of Oct. 7 will be repeated," Netanyahu said, referencing the Hamas-led attack in 2023 that killed some 1,200 people and sparked the war.

The last time Israel agreed to a ceasefire that released hostages earlier this year, far-right members of his Cabinet threatened to topple Netanyahu's government.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich on Sunday called the demonstrations "a bad and harmful campaign that plays into Hamas' hands, buries the hostages in the tunnels and attempts to get Israel to surrender to its enemies and jeopardize its security and future."

The new offensive would require the call-up of thousands of reservists, another concern for many Israelis.

Spain deploys 500 more troops as wildfires expand during heatwave

Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal — Spain is deploying a further 500 soldiers to battle wildfires that have torn through parched woodland during a prolonged spell of scorching weather, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said Sunday.

The decision to add to the more than 1,400 troops already on wildfire duty came as authorities struggled to contain forest blazes, especially in the northwestern Galicia region, and awaited the arrival of promised aircraft reinforcements from other European countries.

Firefighters are tackling 12 major wildfires in Galicia, all of them near the city of Ourense, the head of the Galician regional government Alfonso Rueda told a press conference with Sánchez.

"Homes are still under threat so we have lockdowns in place and are carrying out evacuations," Rueda said.

Galicia has been battling the spreading flames for more than a week.

Temperatures in Spain could reach 113 degrees Fahrenheit in some areas on Sunday, the Spanish national weather agency AEMET said.

On Saturday, the maximum temperature was 112.46 degrees Fahrenheit in the southern city of Cordoba, it said.

"This Sunday, when extraordinarily high temperatures are expected, the danger of wildfires is extreme in most of the country," AEMET said on the social platform X.

The fires in Spain this year have burned 390,000 acres, according to the European Union's European Forest Fire Information System. That is an area roughly as big as metropolitan London.

Scientists say that climate change is exacerbating the frequency and intensity of heat and dryness in parts of Europe, making the region more vulnerable to wildfires.

Spain was expecting the arrival of two Dutch water-dumping planes that were to join aircraft from France and Italy already helping Spanish authorities under a European cooperation agreement.

Firefighters from other countries are also expected to arrive in the region in coming days, Spain's Civil Protection Agency chief Virginia Barcones told public broadcaster RTVE.

Blackwater founder readies deployment of nearly 200 personnel to Haiti

By Dánica Coto
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The security firm of former U.S. Navy SEAL Erik Prince will soon deploy nearly 200 personnel from various countries to Haiti as part of a one-year deal to quell gang violence there, a person with knowledge of the plans said Thursday.

The deployment by Vectus Global is meant to help the government of Haiti recover vast swaths of territory seized in the past year and now controlled by heavily armed gangs, said the person, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss the plans.

The company, which provides logistics, infrastructure, security and defense, is run by Prince, a major donor to U.S. President Donald Trump. Prince previously founded the controversial security firm Blackwater.

The deployment was first reported by Reuters.

Vectus Global also will assume a long-term role in advising Haiti's government on how to restore revenue collection capabilities once the violence subsides, the person said.



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WORLD

Air Canada pauses restart plans after union defies order

By Rob Gillies
Associated Press

TORONTO — Air Canada said it suspended plans to restart operations on Sunday after the union representing 10,000 flight attendants said it will defy a return to work order.

The Canada Industrial Relations Board ordered airline staff back to work by 2 p.m. Sunday after the government intervened and Air Canada said it planned to resume flights Sunday evening.

Canada's largest airline now says it will resume flights Monday evening.

"Our members are not going back to work," Canadian Union of Public Employees national president Mark Hancock said earlier Sunday outside Toronto's Pearson International Airport. "We are saying no."

Hancock said the "whole process has been unfair" and said the union will challenge what it called an unconstitutional order.

"Air Canada has really refused to bargain with us and they refused to bargain with us because they knew this government would come in on their white horse and try and save the day," he said.

The federal government didn't immediately provide comment on the union refusing to return to work.

The country's largest airline had said early Sunday in a release that the first flights would resume later in the day but that it will take several days before its operations return to normal. It said some flights will be canceled over the next seven to 10 days until the schedule is stabilized.

Less than 12 hours after workers walked off the job, Federal Jobs Minister Patty Hajdu ordered the 10,000 flight attendants back to work, saying now is not the time to take risks with the economy and noting the unprecedented tariffs the U.S. has imposed on Canada. Hajdu referred the work stoppage to the Canada Industrial Relations Board.

The airline said the Canada Industrial Relations Board has extended the term of the existing collective agreement until a new one is determined by the arbitrator.

The shutdown of Canada's largest airline early Saturday was impacting about 130,000 people a day. Air Canada operates around 700 flights per day.

According to numbers from aviation analytics provider Cirium, Air Canada canceled a total of 494 flights on Sunday morning. That's in addition to the hundreds of flights it canceled in the previous days.

The bitter contract fight escalated Friday as the union turned down Air Canada's prior request to enter into government-directed arbitration, which allows a third-party mediator to decide the terms of a new contract.

Flight attendants walked off the job around 1 a.m. EDT on Saturday. Around the same time, Air Canada said it would begin locking flight attendants out of airports.



Darko Vojinovic/AP

Serbian gendarmerie officers guard a street during an anti-government protest near the Serbian Progressive Party office in Belgrade, Serbia, on Friday.

Tensions soar in Serbia as angry protesters clash with police officers

Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia — Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic on Sunday announced tough measures against anti-government protesters following days of riots in the streets throughout Serbia that have challenged his increasingly autocratic rule in the Balkan country.

In one of his frequent TV addresses to the public, Vucic accused the anti-government demonstrators of "pure terrorism" and reiterated his claims that months of persistent protests against his rule have been orchestrated in the West and aimed at destroying Serbia.

"Our country is in grave danger, they have jeopardized all our values, normal life, each individual," Vucic said, alleging an elaborate scheme that would eventually install "anarcho-leftist" authorities in the future. He did not offer any concrete evidence for his claims.

"Unless we undertake tougher steps it is a question of days when they (protesters) will kill someone," Vucic said. "I am saying this for history."

The stern warnings came after five consecutive nights of clashes between the protesters on one side and police and Vucic's loyalists on the other. Angry protesters on Saturday evening torched Vucic's governing Serbian Progressive Party offices in a town in western Serbia, and of other ruling coalition allies.

The demonstrators on Saturday evening also clashed with police in Belgrade, the capital, and in the northern city of Novi Sad. Riot officers used tear gas against demonstrators who hurled stun grenades, flares and bottles at them.

Vucic did not specify what will be the state response that he said would come within a week. But he stressed that a state of emergency is not imminent. Scores of people already have been detained and injured in the past days while police have faced accusations of excessive force and arbitrary detentions of protesters.

The clashes this week marked a major escalation following more than nine months of largely peaceful demonstrations that started after a concrete canopy collapsed at a train station in Serbia's north, killing 16 people.

Senegal's 'schools for husbands' aim to shift gender roles

By Mark Banchereau
Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal — On a recent evening in Senegal's capital of Dakar, an imam named Ibrahima Diane explained to a group of men why they should be more involved in household chores.

"The Prophet himself says a man who does not help support his wife and children is not a good Muslim," the 53-year-old said, as he described bathing his baby and helping his wife with other duties.

Some of the 14 men chuckled, not quite sold. Others applauded.

Diane was taking part in a "school for husbands," a United Nations-backed initiative where respected male community members learn about "positive masculinity" in health and social issues and promote them in their communities.



Sylvain Cherkaoui/AP

Worshippers listen to Imam Ibrahima Diane, advocate for gender equality and an end to harmful practices like female genital mutilation and gender-based violence, deliver his sermon at the Great Mosque of Nietty Mbar in Thiaroye, a suburb of Dakar, Senegal, on July 4.

In Senegal, as in many other West African countries with large rural or conservative populations, men often have the final say in major household decisions, including ones related to health.

Following his sessions at the school for husbands, Diane regularly holds sermons during Friday prayers where he discusses issues around gender and reproductive health, from gender-based violence to fighting stigma around HIV.

"Many women appreciate my sermons," he said. "They say their husbands' behavior changed since they attended them." He said some men have told him the sermons inspired them to become more caring husbands and fathers.

The program launched in Senegal in 2011 but in recent years has caught the attention of the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender and Child Protection, which sees it an effective strategy to combat maternal and infant mortality.

"Without men's involvement, attitudes around maternal health won't change," said 54-year-old Aida Diouf, a female health worker who collaborates with the program. Many husbands prefer their wives not be treated by male health workers, she said.

The classes for husbands follow similar efforts in other African countries, particularly Niger, Togo, and Burkina Faso, where the United Nations Population Fund says it improved women's access to reproductive health services by increasing male involvement, growing the use of contraceptives by both men and women and expanding access to prenatal care and skilled birth attendants.

Discussions for men also have focused on girls' rights, equality and the harmful effects of female genital mutilation.

The program now operates over 20 schools in Senegal, and over 300 men have been trained.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Age verification on social media OK'd by high court

MS JACKSON — The Supreme Court on Thursday refused for now to block enforcement of a Mississippi law aimed at regulating the use of social media by children, an issue of growing national concern.

The justices rejected an emergency appeal from a tech industry group representing major platforms like Facebook, X and YouTube. NetChoice is challenging laws passed in Mississippi and other states that require social media users to verify their ages, and asked the court to keep the measure on hold while a lawsuit plays out.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote that there's a good chance NetChoice will eventually succeed in showing that the law is unconstitutional, but it hadn't shown the law must be blocked while the lawsuit unfolds.

NetChoice argues that the Mississippi law threatens privacy rights and unconstitutionally restricts the free expression of users of all ages.

2-carat discovery to go toward engagement ring

AR MURFREESBORO — A New York woman has unearthed a 2-carat white diamond at an Arkansas state park, a gem she says will be used in her engagement ring.

Micherre Fox of Manhattan spent several weeks at the state park in July after deciding to forage for a diamond, according to a news release from Waymon Cox, an assistant superintendent at Crater of Diamonds State Park.

The 31-year-old woman searched for diamonds during much of July in a 37-acre field that is part of the eroded surface of an ancient volcanic crater.

It wasn't until her last day at the park, while walking, that she spotted something glistening at her feet. Park staff confirmed that the sparkly gem about the size of a person's canine tooth was a 2.3-carat diamond.

It's the third-largest diamond of more than 350 diamonds found at the park this year. The park is open to the public and adults can engage in gem hunting by paying $15 per day. Park staff plows the field periodically to loosen the soil and make diamond hunting easier.

Marijuana shops close to schools might move

NY ALBANY — Since New York began licensing recreational marijuana stores about three years ago, the state has been using a simple tactic to ensure pot shops are kept a legally-mandated distance from local schools: Measure from the door of the dispensary to the door of the school.

But officials recently made a startling admission: They'd misread the law and had been measuring incorrectly the whole time. Now, about 100 cannabis shops are in limbo, crossing their fingers for a legislative fix while wondering whether they'll have to relocate.

Business owners found out about the issue from the Office of Cannabis Management last month, which admitted it should have been measuring from the edge of a school's property line, rather than its entrance, to ensure weed stores were kept at least 500 feet away.

White shooting suspect: Grand jury was too white

NY BUFFALO — Attorneys for the white supremacist gunman who killed 10 Black people at a Buffalo supermarket told a judge Thursday that the federal charges against him should be dropped because there weren't enough Black people and other minority groups on the grand jury that indicted him.

Payton Gendron did not attend the hearing, during which his lawyers argued that his constitutional rights to a grand jury drawn from a cross section of the community were violated.

At the hearing's start, U.S. District Judge Lawrence Vilardo noted Gendron's objection to the prevalence of white people on the panel seemed "a little incongruous" in the hate crimes case. He did not immediately rule on the motion.

Gendron could face the death penalty if convicted in the 2022 mass shooting at a Tops supermarket, which he targeted because of its location in a primarily Black neighborhood. Those killed ranged in age from 32 to 86. Three others were wounded.

Gendron already is serving a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole after pleading guilty in November 2022 to multiple state charges, including murder.

A trial on the pending federal hate crime and weapons counts is expected to begin next year.

No more prison but big bill for gate crasher

GA ATLANTA — A U.S. Navy veteran who attempted to breach the gate at the FBI's Atlanta office last year won't have to go back to prison but will spend the next 21 years paying back more than $25,000 in restitution to the federal government as part of his sentence.

Ervin Lee Bolling, from South Carolina, originally pleaded guilty in April to one count of destruction of government property related to the April 1, 2024, incident.

He was arrested and spent about six weeks in federal custody before being granted a signature bond and released to a local halfway house, where his movements were restricted to the campus of the house.

On Tuesday, U.S. District Judge Sarah E. Geraghty gave Bolling credit for time served in prison and ordered him put on probation for two years and to make restitution for the gate.



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

Strokes in the surf

Athletes train at a beach sprints camp organized by USRowing at Alamitos Bay in Long Beach, Calif., last week.

Failed candidate gets 80 years in shooting spree

NM ALBUQUERQUE — A failed political candidate was sentenced to 80 years in federal prison Wednesday for his convictions in a series of drive-by shootings at the homes of state and local lawmakers in the aftermath of the 2020 election.

A jury convicted former Republican candidate Solomon Peña earlier this year of conspiracy, weapons and other charges in the shootings in December 2022 and January 2023 on the homes of four Democratic officials in Albuquerque, including the current state House speaker.

Prosecutors, who had sought a 90-year sentence, said Peña has shown no remorse and had hoped to cause political change by terrorizing people who held contrary views to him into being too afraid to take part in political life.

3,500 birds euthanized after cockfighting bust

CA LOS ANGELES — Authorities arrested 56 people and seized 3,500 birds, as well as firearms and drug paraphernalia, during a multiweek cockfighting investigation in San Bernardino County, officials said.

The operation, dubbed "Crowing Rooster," ran from June 14 to Aug. 1 and entailed 26 search warrants served at locations throughout the county, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

Of the 56 people arrested, 10 have been charged with a felony. The others have been charged with misdeameanor crimes that include animal cruelty, according to the Sheriff's Department.

The 3,500 cockfighting birds found throughout the course of the investigation were relinquished to animal care services and euthanized, the county Department of Public Health said.

Autoworker's wallet found 151,000 miles later

MI PETERSBURG — A retired Michigan autoworker looked at a Facebook message after midnight from a stranger: Did you lose your wallet years ago?

"If so," a Minnesota man wrote, "it was in the engine bay of a car."

Richard Guilford couldn't believe what he was reading on his phone — a decade-old mystery was remarkably solved.

Guilford's tri-fold leather wallet — stuffed with $15, a driver's license, work ID, gift cards worth $275 and lottery tickets — had turned up under the hood of a car in a repair shop in Lake Crystal, Minn. The wallet was discovered in June by mechanic Chad Volk, sandwiched between the transmission and the air filter box of a 2015 Ford Edge with 151,000 miles on it.

From The Associated Press and Tribune News Service

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OPINION

US defense industrial base needs ramping up

By George F. Will
The Washington Post

"There was a story about a woman who had been asked to christen a Portland yard ship but arrived too late; it had already been launched. 'Just keep standing there, ma'am,' she was told, 'there'll be another along in a minute.' "

—Arthur Herman, "Freedom's Forge."

In February 1900, a 20-year-old immigrant from Denmark arrived in New York, destitute of everything except his ambition to build bicycles. In Linz, Austria, that day, the son of Alois and Klara Hitler was 10. He became an aspiring but untalented artist who would find another career.

The immigrant and the Austrian never met, but their lives intersected in a way pertinent to today. U.S. military aid for Ukraine has been inhibited by this: Our nation, which faces global challenges from two near-peer adversaries, has chosen to not have an adequate defense industrial base.

It was similarly unprepared in the late 1930s. Then it chose to be as serious as the darkening world was. In his exhilarating 2012 book, historian Herman, now at the Hudson Institute, tells how the nation magnificently marshaled its talents for making things, and saved civilization.

By 1937, the Danish immigrant, William Knudsen, had risen from the factory floor to the apex of the automobile industry as General Motors' president. On May 28, 1940, as France was falling, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called: "I want you to work on some production matters." That bland job description disguised Knudsen's task of turning the Army, then barely larger than that of the Netherlands, and the rest of the U.S. military from a small, somnolent and technologically stagnant force into an emanation of U.S. industrial might.

When in 1940 FDR vowed production of 50,000 planes a year (the Army Air Corps then had about 1,700, most of them small and old), Hitler scoffed: "What is America but beauty queens, millionaires, stupid records, and Hollywood." "He was," Herman writes, "about to find out."

By 1945, American white-collar business executives and engineers, and properly valorized blue-collar workers, had produced two-thirds of all the Allies' war materiel: 86,000 tanks, 2.5 million trucks, 286,000 planes, 8,800 naval vessels, 5,600 merchant ships, 434 million tons of steel, 2.6 million machine guns, 41 billion rounds of ammunition, etc. Working at frenzied paces, often in hastily improvised workplaces with dangerous equipment and red-hot rivets, Herman writes, "workers in war-related industries in 1942-43 died or were injured in numbers twenty times greater than the American servicemen killed or wounded during those same years."

In 1939, the U.S. steel industry had its lowest capacity in 20 years, and the shipbuilding industry was producing four vessels a month. But in late 1939, a woman who had lived in Pittsburgh for most of a decade saw smoke billowing from nearby hills. She called the police, who said: "That's no fire, lady. Them's the mills." The giant was awakening.

With the indefatigable Knudsen setting the tone and pace, in mere months, U.S. industrialists planted shipyards and steel mills on mudflats and empty fields. In four years, the Richmond yard near San Francisco launched 747 prefabricated ships. Herman says this was the fruit of "spontaneous order": "It was the most powerful and flexible system of wartime production ever devised, because in the end no one devised it." This "industrial exuberance" sprang from the nimble adaptability of America's market economy.

Today, Vladimir Putin's aggression against Ukraine is rousing European nations from their military slumbers. For example, Germany now has the world's fourth-biggest defense budget and has loosened debt restraints for defense spending to become kriegstüchtig — war-ready, in the defense minister's terminology.

The United States is not ready. The Economist reports, "At current rates of procurement it will take seven years to bring America's ammunition stocks back to where they were before military aid to Ukraine began." In a Washington think tank's 2023 war game simulating a conflict with China over Taiwan, the U.S. inventory of long-range missiles was exhausted in three weeks.

The Economist also reports that in 2022, just after Russia attacked Ukraine, Poland ordered "a big batch" of U.S. Abrams tanks from the Joint Systems Manufacturing Center in Ohio, which since 1942 has been the main U.S. factory for armored vehicles. America no longer makes completely new Abrams tanks. Instead, the JSMC "refurbishes stripped-back hulls and turrets from old models, which are kept in storage in Alabama." Refitting one tank takes about two years. Poland has yet to receive most of the Abrams tanks it ordered three years ago.

Poland needs tanks. The United States needs a new Knudsen.

The hypocrisy of recognizing Palestine but not Taiwan

By Vincent C. Chen
Special to The Washington Post

Many Western democracies lining up to recognize a Palestinian state are in the process of conferring legitimacy on something that, legally speaking, doesn't yet exist. Meanwhile, an economically crucial and politically functional democratic state that Western leaders have vowed to aid in case of outside aggression — Taiwan — remains unrecognized. This kind of hypocrisy invites trouble.

Those trying to will a Palestinian state into being are doing so to constrain Israel's ability to intervene. And yet no such moves are being contemplated on Taiwan's behalf vis-à-vis China. By recognizing one entity and not the other, Western leaders are signaling to Beijing that its commitments to Taipei should not be taken too seriously. Tragic miscalculations are likely to follow.

Under Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention, a state must possess a defined territory, permanent population, effective government and a capacity for international relations. Taiwan meets — and often exceeds — all these criteria. It is home to more than 23 million people, with a vibrant democracy, an independent judiciary, a professional military, a national currency and a full administrative bureaucracy. It trades internationally as "Taiwan," maintains representative offices in dozens of countries and engages with virtually every major economy.

This year, Taiwan's gross domestic product is set to surpass $800 billion. Freedom House scores its democracy at 94/100 — more free than Britain and nearly on par with Germany. The Economist Intelligence Unit ranks it 12th in the world for democratic governance, the highest in Asia. Taiwanese passports grant visa-free travel to almost 140 countries. Taiwan also contributes globally across humanitarian, medical, educational and agricultural domains.

Compare Taiwan's reality to that of Palestine: Insofar as a coherent Palestinian entity can be identified, it remains politically divided, lacks stable governance and has completely undefined borders. Yet over 140 U.N. member states recognize it, and it has held nonmember observer status at the United Nations since 2012. Meanwhile Taiwan, with full sovereign functionality and its diverse international contributions, is excluded from the U.N. system and forced to operate under the name "Chinese Taipei."

This contrast reflects a failure of political courage. Western democracies' refusal to recognize Taiwan stems not from doubts over qualifications, but from fear of economic retaliation from China. Yet this diplomatic self-censorship undermines the rules-based international order the West purports to defend. If and when China launches an invasion and calls it an "internal matter," any legal and political legitimacy the West would hope to muster in opposing such a move would be hobbled.

In strategic terms, Taiwan's importance is indisputable. Over 90% of the world's most advanced semiconductors are produced by Taiwan. These chips power not only AI development but also military systems, health care technologies and global supply chains. Protecting Taiwan is essential to preserving the global technological ecosystem — and the economic stability of the free world.

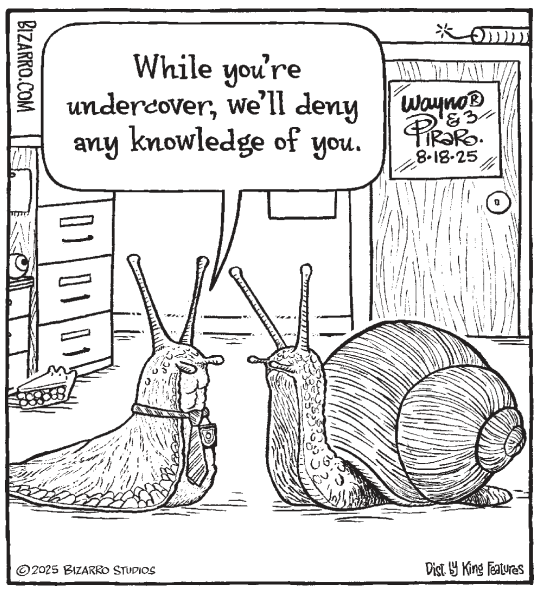
Nevertheless, Chinese President Xi Jinping has reaffirmed his (legally baseless) commitment to "reunifying" Taiwan with the mainland. And on his watch, China has abandoned any pretense of "peaceful rise" and is increasingly defining itself against the existing Western-led order.

Ambiguity on Taiwan's status is no longer geopolitically viable. Japan has declared that "Taiwan's security is Japan's security." French, German, and Canadian warships now pass through the Taiwan Strait. Lithuania and the Czech Republic have elevated diplomatic engagement with Taiwan. NATO's 2024 communiqué stated that peace in the Indo-Pacific is essential to global strategic stability. And the U.S. is also moving decisively. It is deepening military ties with Australia and the Philippines. In May, at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth declared, "Any attempt by Communist China to conquer Taiwan by force would result in devastating consequences for the Indo-Pacific and the world," adding, "If deterrence fails … we are prepared to do what the Department of Defense does best — fight and win — decisively."

But strong words will not be enough. Full recognition should follow. If the international community can consider recognizing as unqualified a candidate as Palestine, it can surely bring itself to quickly do the same for the far more developed democracy in Taiwan.

Vincent C. Chen, a telecommunications consultant, serves on the advisory boards of two Taiwan-based organizations, the Taiwan Thinktank and the Foundation for Future Generations.

Bizarro



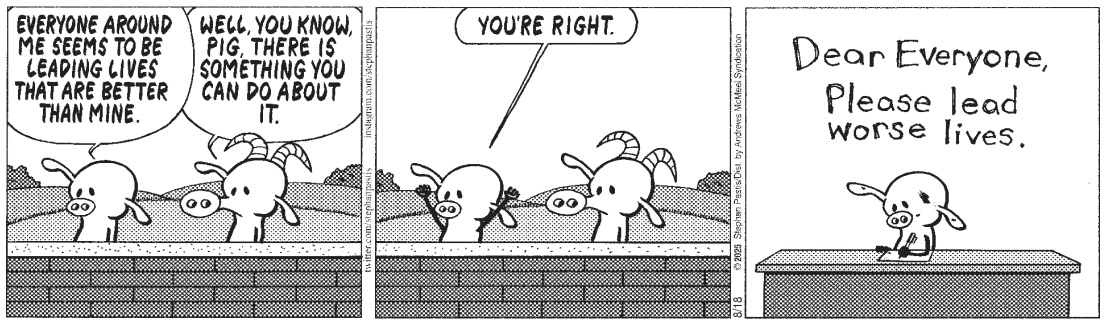
Loose Parts



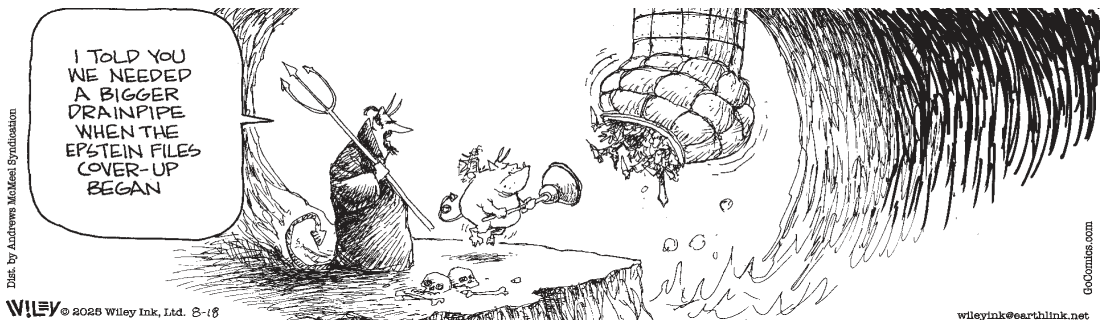
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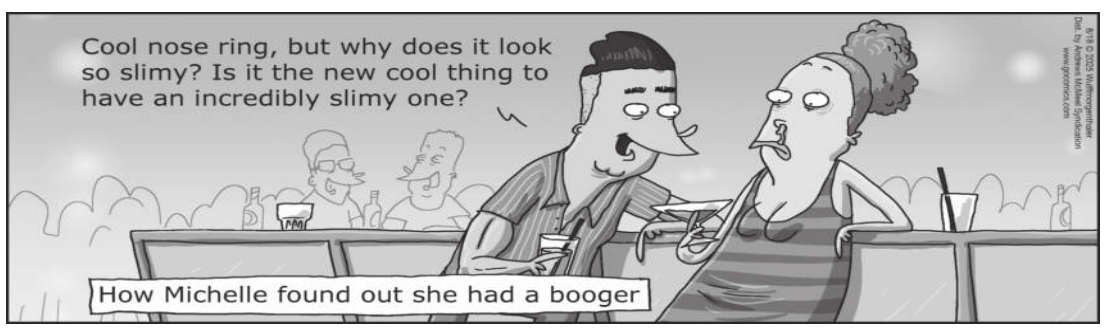
Pearls Before Swine



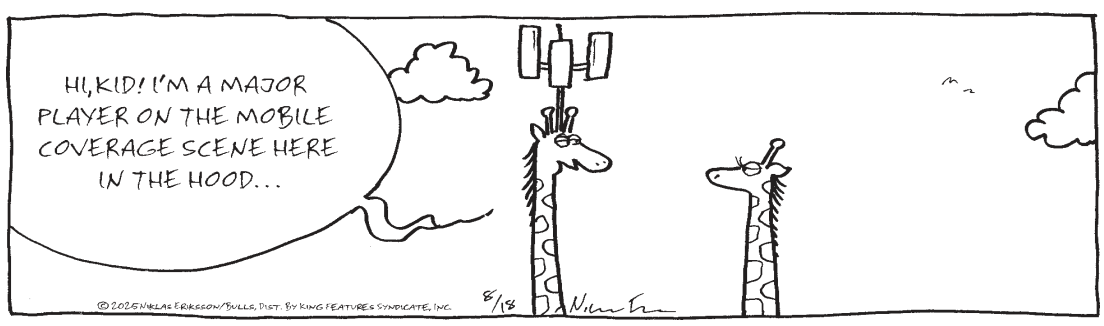
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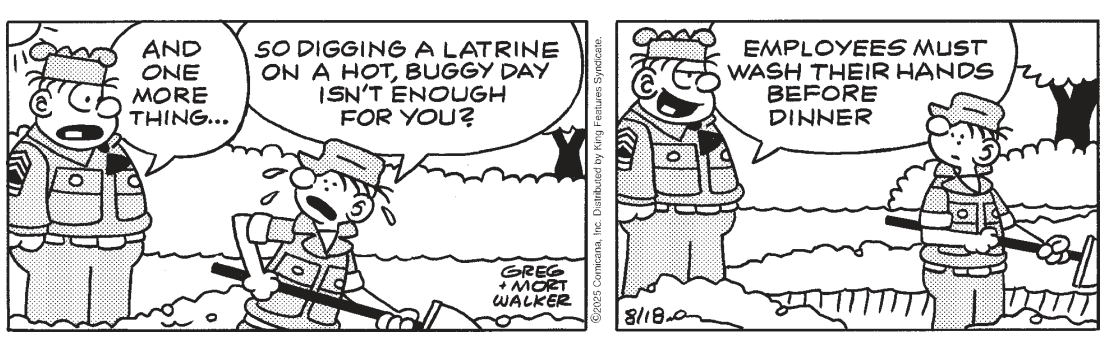
Wumo



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	■	4	5	6	7	8	■	9	10	11
12			■	13					■	14		
15			16						■	17		
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21	22	23				■	24				■	■
25			■	26		27	■	28			29	30
31			32	■	33		34	■	35			
36				37	■	38		39	■	40		
■	■	41			42	■	43		44			
45	46					■	47			■	■	■
48			■	49		50				51	52	53
54			■	55					■	56		
57			■	58					■	59		

ACROSS

1 Schlep
4 Delaware capital
9 Swab the decks
12 Blackbird
13 January, to Juana
14 Mineral suffix
15 Russell Stover candy
17 "Just joking!"
18 Ger. neighbor
19 Sultry singer Kitt
21 Fesses up
24 Trudge
25 Roman 1002
26 Shrill bark
28 Razor sharpener
31 Tolstoy's Karenina
33 Learning ctr.
35 Half (Pref.)
36 "— luck!"
38 Command to Rover
40 Aachen article
41 Ale measure
43 Art shop buys
45 Ritzy part of L.A.
47 — Canals
48 Wanted poster abbr.
49 Bourbon cocktail
54 Hamilton bill
55 Confused
56 "Selma" director DuVernay
57 White House monogram
58 Discover
59 Boomer's kid

DOWN

1 Felon's flight
2 Half of bi-
3 Tonic's mixer
4 Sheriff's helper
5 Jackie's Ari
6 Nov. honoree
7 Some Art Deco works
8 Kansas City team
9 Color of an aromatic leaf
10 "Alternatively," in a text
11 Anti-fur org.
16 — chi
20 Writer Philip
21 Human rights lawyer Clooney
22 Flintstones' pet
23 Herb garden feature
27 Mac alternatives
29 Skip
30 Bowling targets
32 China setting
34 With-it sort
37 Critter
39 USC athlete
42 Banal
44 Debtor's note
45 Tub session
46 Stretches (out)
50 Code-breaking gp.
51 Remiss
52 First lady?
53 Standard

Answer to Previous Puzzle

L	A	Y	■	S	T	E	P	■	G	L	E	E
E	R	E	■	P	I	N	E	■	H	A	R	K
A	L	A	■	L	A	I	R	■	O	B	I	E
F	O	R	W	A	R	D	P	A	S	S	E	S
■	■	■	A	S	A	■	L	I	T	■	■	■
H	A	R	S	H	■	W	E	D	■	F	O	B
U	H	O	H	■	T	E	X	■	G	I	N	A
N	A	B	■	O	A	T	■	Q	U	E	E	N
■	■	■	L	U	V	■	P	U	N	■	■	■
K	A	R	A	T	E	C	L	A	S	S	E	S
I	R	I	S	■	R	O	O	K	■	O	D	E
P	I	N	T	■	N	O	N	E	■	B	A	T
S	A	K	S	■	A	S	K	S	■	A	M	S

8-18

CRYPTOQUIP

UYZKCV, JWKCZ XKLLDC JWT LOXDF O QOZ TMM KC O UTPDQZ MKNP TM LWD DKVWLKDF: MDYYKF PDJNDY.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF OWNERSHIP OF A BLIMP WERE PASSED DOWN FROM FATHER TO SON, WOULD THAT BE AIRSHIP HEIRSHIP?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals G

FACES

TV's 'The Traitors' now open to everyday people

BY ITZEL LUNA
Associated Press

The U.S. version of "The Traitors" has brought a group of public figures to a castle in the Scottish Highlands for a game of deceit, with hundreds of thousands of dollars up for grabs. Now, the Emmy award-winning competition will open its doors to everyday people.

NBC is now casting for a civilian version of the popular Peacock series, the network announced on Aug. 14.

The competition reality series, an American spin-off to its British counterpart, had only cast celebrities for its first three seasons, the last of which aired early this year. The new version will bring a group of everyday people together to play what the host, Alan Cumming, called his "treacherous game" in a video announcing the public casting.

Cumming is set to host the new version as well, with production for the show starting in 2026, according to the network.

The fourth season of the celebrity version is set to launch next year, and a fifth season has already been confirmed. The star-studded cast for Season 4, announced in June, includes reality stars from "Love Island," "Big Brother" and "Survivor."

"We're thrilled to be working with NBC to open up the experience to a new group of civilian players, whose stories and strategies will make the gameplay even more unpredictable — and, we hope, even more addictive for viewers," Stephen Lambert, CEO of Studio Lambert, the producers of both the Peacock and NBC versions, said in a statement.

The show features a group of contestants who participate in a murder mystery game similar to Clue or Mafia. A subset of the cast are secretly labeled as traitors and must work together to eliminate the other contestants, who are considered faithfuls.

On the line is a prize fund worth up to $250,000. If the faithful manage to eliminate all the traitors, then they share the money. But, if a traitor makes it to the end, they take it all.



GEORGE WALKER IV/AP

Elmo, left, from "Sesame Street," and singer Lauren Alaina perform at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville on Aug. 14.

'Sesame Street' stars sing, host in Grand Ole Opry debut

Associated Press

For a 3½-year-old, Elmo sure has sung a lot on "Sesame Street" with some of the best musicians in the world.

But it wasn't until last week that the friendly red monster made his Grand Ole Opry debut, a country music rite of passage.

Elmo helped ring in the Grand Ole Opry's 100th anniversary on Aug. 14 by co-hosting with his "Sesame Street" pal Abby Cadabby. Elmo, in a blue cowboy hat and matching shirt, teamed up for a duet with Lauren Alaina, while Abby Cadabby sang with Tayla Lynn, the daughter of Loretta Lynn, the late country star who had visited "Sesame Street" herself.

"We sing all the time on 'Sesame Street,' but um, well, being able to sing in the home of country music is amazing!" Abby Cadabby said prior to their performance.

The puppet pair shared the spotlight in Music City during a stop on the "Sesame Street" crew's Road Trip Across America this summer and fall, when the characters that kids have watched on TV for decades are heading to events such as professional baseball games, state fairs and corn mazes.

Elmo and Abby Cadabby told AP that they dreamed of singing with Dolly Parton.

"Elmo would love to do a duet with Miss Dolly Parton," Elmo said. "Maybe we could do 'Jolene' together. Come on Dolly! Call Elmo!"



Netflix

The "KPop Demon Hunters" movie has been a huge hit for Netflix, and now its songs are hitting, too.

Fictional group hits No. 1

'Golden,' from 'KPop Demon Hunters,' 1st chart-topper for K-pop girls

BY ANNE BRANIGIN
The Washington Post

First they slayed seductive, singing demons. Then they smashed Netflix streaming records. Now Huntr/x (pronounced Huntrix), the fictional K-pop trio from the animated film "KPop Demon Hunters," has conquered the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 with "Golden," becoming the first K-pop girl group in Billboard history to claim the No. 1 spot.

It's an impressive peak for a movie soundtrack that has been dominating Billboard charts — and social media algorithms — in recent weeks. Three "KPop Demon Hunters" songs have cracked the Top 5 of the Billboard Global 200: "Golden," along with "Soda Pop" and "Your Idol," performed by the (also fictional) demonic boy band Saja Boys.

But the up-up-uplifting and anthemic "Golden" has been the film's runaway hit. Sung by seasoned K-pop songwriter Kim Eun-jae (better known by the stage name Ejae), Korean American singer Audrey Nuna and songwriter-rapper Rei Ami, the song's popularity can be measured not just in its streaming numbers but also in the scores of covers (dance, vocal and instrumental) and passionate lip-synching videos that it has inspired on TikTok and Instagram. Even real-life K-pop idols are fans, sharing their own interpretations of the dances and songs.

In a rare feat for a K-pop song, "Golden," which contains both English and Korean lyrics, is even being played on American radio.

The soundtrack's success continues a stellar run for "KPop Demon Hunters," released on Netflix in June. The movie revolves around Huntr/x, a trio of demon hunters who keep evil spirits at bay through their music. Their quest to protect the world, however, is jeopardized when a seductive (and demonic) K-pop boy band, Saja Boys, usurps the girls' place on the charts and in the hearts of their fans.

According to the streaming platform, the surprise summer hit has been viewed more than 180 million times and is the second-most-popular Netflix original movie ever.

Fictional groups have entered the Billboard charts plenty of times before, including a couple of animated ones: the Chipmunks (with their holiday hit "The Chipmunk Song") and the Archies (with "Sugar, Sugar"). The last time animated characters claimed a No. 1 song was in 2022, with "We Don't Talk About Bruno," from the Disney animated musical "Encanto."

"Golden" marks the first time a K-pop act that is not BTS (or one of its members) has topped the U.S. Hot 100.

Megadeth plans final album, farewell tour

Associated Press

Call it a symphony for dissolution. American thrash metal giants Megadeth have announced their forthcoming album will be their last. They will also embark on a farewell tour in 2026.

"There's so many musicians that have come to the end of their career, whether accidental or intentional," Megadeth founder and frontman Dave Mustaine shared in a statement Aug. 14. "Most of them don't get to go out on their own terms on top, and that's where I'm at in my life right now. I have traveled the world and have made millions upon millions of fans and the hardest part of all of this is saying goodbye to them."

Mustaine and the band have yet to reveal the album's title, release date or the band's tour dates.

"Don't be mad, don't be sad, be happy for us all, come celebrate with me these next few years," Mustaine's message continued. "We have done something together that's truly wonderful and will probably never happen again. We started a musical style, we started a revolution, we changed the guitar world and how it's played, and we changed the world. The bands I played in have influenced the world. I love you all for it. Thank you for everything."

The statement arrived after the band shared a teaser post on Aug. 13 that read "The end is near…"

Megadeth was founded in 1983 after Mustaine was kicked out of Metallica, a band he co-founded. Megadeth released their debut album in 1985, "Killing Is My Business... and Business Is Good!"

LL Cool J takes the mic for the 2025 MTV VMAs

LL Cool J has snagged wins, co-hosted and performed atop the MTV Video Music Awards stage. Now, the Grammy-winning rapper-actor-author is going solo to host the 2025 awards ceremony.

He's retaking the stage, this time without Nicki Minaj and Jack Harlow, with whom he co-hosted in 2022, the VMAs said Aug. 14.

He's also up for the best hip hop award for his single "Murdergram Deux" featuring Eminem. The single is part of his most recent album, "THE FORCE," which released in September and was his first album in 11 years.

The 2025 VMAs will take place Sept. 7 from the UBS Arena in New York.

SCOREBOARD/MMA

DEALS

Saturday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League

ATHLETICS — Sent SS Jacob Wilson to Las Vegas (PCL) on a rehab assignment.
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Designated OF Greg Allen for assignment. Selected the contract of OF Dylan Beavers from Norfolk (IL).
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Reinstated RHP Michael Lorenzen from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Luinder Avila to Omaha (IL).
MINNESOTA TWINS — Placed OF Alan Roden on the 10-day IL, retroactive to Aug. 15. Recalled OF James Outman from St. Paul (IL).
TAMPA BAY RAYS — Placed 1B Jonathan Aranda on the 10-day IL.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Reinstated OF George Springer from the 7-day IL. Optioned OF Joey Loperfido to Buffalo (IL).

National League

ATLANTA BRAVES — Sent RHP Davis Daniel outright to Gwinnett (IL).
COLORADO ROCKIES — Reinstated SS Orlando Arcia from the 10-day IL. Optioned SS Aaron Schunk to Albuquerque (PCL).
MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Placed LHP DL Hall on the 15-day IL. Recalled RHP Grant Anderson from Nashville (IL).
NEW YORK METS — Designated RHP Paul Blackburn for assignment. Selected the contract of RHP Nolan McLean from Syracuse (IL).
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Placed RHP Zack Wheeler on the 15-day IL.
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Sent LHP John King to Memphis (IL) on a rehab assignment.
SAN DIEGO PADRES — Optioned RHP Randy Vasquez to El Paso (PCL). Recalled RHP Ron Marinaccio from El Paso (PCL).
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Released 1B Nathaniel Lowe.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

CHICAGO BEARS — Waived TE Jordan Murray.
DENVER BRONCOS — Placed DB Gregory Junior on injured reserve.
HOUSTON TEXANS — Waived WR Johnny Johnson III.
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS — Waived TE Jordan Petaia.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer

LA GALAXY — Signed D Chris Rindov to a short-term agreement.

National Women's Soccer League

BAY FC — Placed D Emily Menges on maternity/parental leave list.

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA

Eastern Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	21	12	.636	—
New York	21	13	.618	½
Indiana	18	16	.529	3½
Washington	15	18	.455	6
Chicago	8	25	.242	13
Connecticut	6	26	.188	14½

Western Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Minnesota	28	5	.848	—
Phoenix	19	13	.594	8½
Las Vegas	20	14	.588	8½
Golden State	18	15	.545	10
Seattle	17	17	.500	11½
Los Angeles	16	17	.485	12
Dallas	9	25	.265	19½

x-clinched playoff spot

Thursday's games

No games scheduled.

Friday's games

Golden State 90, Chicago 59
Los Angeles 97, Dallas 96
Washington 88, Indiana 84
Las Vegas 86, Phoenix 83
Seattle 80, Atlanta 78

Saturday's game

Minnesota 86, New York 80

Sunday's games

Indiana at Connecticut
Los Angeles at Washington
Dallas at Las Vegas
Phoenix at Seattle
Atlanta at Golden State

Monday's games

No games scheduled.

Tuesday's games

Minnesota at New York
Connecticut at Washington
Seattle at Chicago
Atlanta at Las Vegas
Phoenix at Golden State

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
San Diego FC	15	7	4	49	50	32
Minn. United	13	6	8	47	44	30
Vancouver	13	6	6	45	43	28
Seattle	11	7	8	41	43	36
LAFC	11	6	7	40	43	30
Portland	10	9	7	37	35	37
Colorado	10	11	6	36	36	41
Austin FC	9	8	8	35	24	29
San Jose	8	10	8	32	49	45
Real Salt Lake	9	13	4	31	27	33
FC Dallas	7	11	8	29	38	46
Houston	7	11	7	28	32	41
Sporting KC	6	14	6	24	37	50
St Louis City	5	15	6	21	29	44
LA Galaxy	3	16	7	16	29	55

Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Cincinnati	16	7	4	52	42	34
Philadelphia	15	6	6	51	44	26
Nashville	14	7	5	47	43	29
Orlando City	13	6	8	47	53	35
Inter Miami CF	13	5	6	45	53	39
Columbus	12	5	9	45	42	37
Charlotte FC	14	11	2	44	45	39
Chicago	11	9	6	39	50	44
New York	11	10	6	39	42	37
NYC FC	11	8	5	38	34	29
New England	7	12	7	28	33	37
Toronto FC	5	13	8	23	27	34
Atlanta	4	12	10	22	31	49
CF Montréal	4	15	8	20	25	48
D.C. United	4	15	8	20	23	52

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Saturday's games

Charlotte FC 1, Real Salt Lake 0
Miami 3, LA Galaxy 1
D.C. United 1, CF Montréal 1, tie
Los Angeles FC 2, New England 0
New York 1, Philadelphia 0
Columbus 1, Toronto FC 1, tie
FC Dallas 1, Austin FC 1, tie
Chicago 3, St Louis City 2
Minnesota 1, Seattle 0
Colorado 3, Atlanta 1
Cincinnati 3, Portland 2
Orlando City 3, Sporting Kansas City 1

Sunday's games

Nashville at New York City FC
San Diego FC at San Jose
Houston at Vancouver

Saturday, Aug. 23

New York City FC at Cincinnati
New England at Columbus
Miami at D.C. United
Austin FC at CF Montréal
Chicago at Philadelphia
Los Angeles FC at FC Dallas
San Jose at Houston
Orlando City at Nashville
Minnesota at Real Salt Lake
St Louis City at Vancouver
Colorado at LA Galaxy
Portland at San Diego FC

Sunday, Aug. 24

Toronto FC at Atlanta
New York at Charlotte FC
Sporting Kansas City at Seattle

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Kansas City	13	2	1	40	32	10
San Diego	8	3	5	29	28	18
Orlando	8	4	4	28	22	12
Washington	8	4	4	28	25	22
Portland	7	4	5	26	25	17
Seattle	7	5	3	24	21	17
Louisville	6	6	4	22	22	27
Gotham FC	5	5	5	20	19	14
North Carolina	5	6	5	20	20	23
Bay FC	4	7	5	17	18	22
Angel City	4	7	5	17	21	27
Houston	4	8	3	15	17	25
Chicago	1	9	5	8	12	29
Utah Royals FC	1	11	4	7	12	31

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Friday's games

Louisville 2, Washington 2, tie
Angel City 0, Utah Royals FC 0, tie

Saturday's games

Orlando 0, Kansas City 0, tie
Portland 1, North Carolina 1, tie
San Diego 2, Bay FC 1

Sunday's game

Houston at Gotham FC

Monday's game

Chicago at Seattle

Thursday, Aug. 21

Orlando at Angel City

Friday, Aug. 22

North Carolina at Chicago

GOLF

BMW Championship

Saturday
At Owings Mills, Md.
Purse: $20 million
Yardage: 7,601; Par: 70
Third Round

Robert Macintyre	62-64-68—194-16
Scottie Scheffler	66-65-67—198-12
Ludvig Aberg	68-64-68—200-10
Sam Burns	68-67-67—202 -8
Harry Hall	68-67-67—202 -8
Tommy Fleetwood	65-69-69—203 -7
Maverick McNealy	70-64-69—203 -7
Rickie Fowler	67-70-67—204 -6
Viktor Hovland	67-68-69—204 -6
Michael Kim	68-66-70—204 -6
Harris English	70-68-67—205 -5
Russell Henley	69-68-68—205 -5
Cameron Young	74-66-65—205 -5
Corey Conners	70-71-66—207 -3
Rory McIlroy	70-66-71—207 -3
Jacob Bridgeman	74-66-68—208 -2
Jason Day	68-71-69—208 -2
Ben Griffin	67-72-69—208 -2

LIV Golf Indianapolis

Saturday
At Westfield, Ind.
Purse: $20 million
Yardage: 7,143; Par: 71
Second Round

Sebastian Muñoz	59-67—126-16
Dustin Johnson	62-64—126-16
Patrick Reed	64-66—130-12
Thomas Pieters	64-66—130-12
Joaquín Niemann	64-66—130-12
Henrik Stenson	66-64—130-12
Adrian Meronk	67-63—130-12
David Puig	67-63—130-12
Bubba Watson	66-65—131-11
Branden Grace	67-64—131-11
Jon Rahm	67-64—131-11
Andy Ogletree	67-65—132-10
Charles Howell III	69-73—132-10

Standard Portland Classic

Saturday
At Portland, Ore.
Purse: $2 million
Yardage: 6,497; Par: 72
Third Round

Akie Iwai	67-67-64—198-18
Grace Kim	68-65-67—200-16
Linn Grant	66-71-65—202-14
Gurleen Kaur	65-68-70—203-13
Aditi Ashok	69-70-65—204-12
Gina Kim	68-69-67—204-12
Lauren Coughlin	68-71-66—205-11
Chisato Iwai	69-70-66—205-11
Hae-Ran Ryu	66-72-67—205-11
Rio Takeda	69-70-66—205-11
Pajaree Anannarukarn	67-67-72—206-10
Perrine Delacour	66-70-70—206-10
Brooke Henderson	65-73-68—206-10
Jeongeun Lee5	65-67-74—206-10
Benedetta Moresco	68-70-68—206-10

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL preseason

Friday's games

Tennessee 23, Atlanta 20
Seattle 33, Kansas City 16

Saturday's games

Cleveland 22, Philadelphia 13
Green Bay 23, Indianapolis 19
Houston 20, Carolina 3
Miami 24, Detroit 17
New England 20, Minnesota 12
San Francisco 22, Las Vegas 19
Baltimore 31, Dallas 13
L.A. Rams 23, L.A. Chargers 22
N.Y. Giants 31, N.Y. Jets 12
Tampa Bay 17, Pittsburgh 14
Denver 27, Arizona 7

Sunday's games

Jacksonville at New Orleans
Buffalo at Chicago

Monday's game

Cincinnati at Washington

Thursday, Aug. 21

Pittsburgh at Carolina
New England at N.Y. Giants

Friday, Aug. 22

Philadelphia at N.Y. Jets
Atlanta at Dallas
Minnesota at Tennessee
Chicago at Kansas City

Saturday, Aug. 23

Baltimore at Washington
Denver at New Orleans
Houston at Detroit
Indianapolis at Cincinnati
L.A. Rams at Cleveland
Seattle at Green Bay
Jacksonville at Miami
Buffalo at Tampa Bay
L.A. Chargers at San Francisco
Las Vegas at Arizona

AUTO RACING

Cookout 400

Saturday
At Richmond Raceway
Richmond, Va.
Lap length: 0.75 miles
(Start position in parentheses)

1. (11) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 400 laps, 54 points
2. (9) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 400, 41
3. (20) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 400, 46
4. (38) Joey Logano, Ford, 400, 33
5. (13) Austin Cindric, Ford, 400, 41
6. (30) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 400, 32
7. (21) Daniel Suárez, Chevrolet, 400, 40
8. (17) Josh Berry, Ford, 400, 31
9. (6) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 400, 31
10. (4) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 400, 35
11. (29) Zane Smith, Ford, 400, 26
12. (14) William Byron, Chevrolet, 400, 27
13. (19) Chase Briscoe, Toyota, 400, 24
14. (27) Shane Van Gisbergen, Chevrolet, 399, 23
15. (15) Carson Hocevar, Chevrolet, 399, 26
16. (28) Kyle Busch, Chevrolet, 399, 21
17. (10) Michael McDowell, Chevrolet, 399, 20
18. (23) Ty Gibbs, Toyota, 399, 19
19. (33) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, 399, 18
20. (16) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet, 399, 17
21. (8) Christopher Bell, Toyota, 399, 21
22. (3) AJ Allmendinger, Chevrolet, 399, 15
23. (36) Ricky Stenhouse Jr, Chevrolet, 399, 14
24. (24) Cole Custer, Ford, 399, 13
25. (31) Todd Gilliland, Ford, 399, 12
26. (18) Erik Jones, Toyota, 398, 11
27. (22) Noah Gragson, Ford, 398, 10
28. (7) Bubba Wallace, Toyota, 398, 29
29. (32) Corey Heim, Toyota, 398, 0
30. (12) Chris Buescher, Ford, 398, 7
31. (26) Riley Herbst, Toyota, 398, 6
32. (37) Cody Ware, Ford, 397, 5
33. (35) Jesse Love, Chevrolet, 396, 0
34. (2) Tyler Reddick, Toyota, 396, 13
35. (1) Ryan Preece, Ford, 396, 7
36. (34) John H. Nemechek, Toyota, 389, 1
37. (25) Justin Haley, Chevrolet, accident, 198, 1
38. (5) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, accident, 197, 1

Race statistics

Average speed of race winner: 94.121 mph.
Time of race: 3 hours, 11 minutes, 14 seconds
Margin of victory: 2.471 seconds
Caution flags: 5 for 44 laps
Lead changes: 24 among 11 drivers
Lap leaders: R.Preece 0-58; T.Reddick 59-74; B.Wallace 75-130; R.Preece 131-132; A.Dillon 133-138; T.Reddick 139-163; B.Wallace 164-179; K.Larson 180-183; B.Wallace 184-233; D.Suárez 234; M.McDowell 235-240; B.Wallace 241; A.Dillon 242-291; A.Cindric 292; K.Larson 293; C.Hocevar 294-303; R.Blaney 304-331; A.Dillon 332; R.Blaney 333-339; A.Dillon 340; R.Blaney 341-344; A.Cindric 345; K.Larson 346-349; B.Keselowski 350-351; A.Dillon 352-400
Leaders summary (driver, times led, laps led): B.Wallace, 4 times for 123 laps; A.Dillon, 5 times for 107 laps; R.Preece, 2 times for 60 laps; T.Reddick, 2 times for 41 laps; R.Blaney, 3 times for 39 laps; C.Hocevar, 1 time for 10 laps; K.Larson, 3 times for 9 laps; M.McDowell, 1 time for 6 laps; A.Cindric, 2 times for 2 laps; B.Keselowski, 1 time for 2 laps; D.Suárez, 1 time for 1 lap
Wins: D.Hamlin, 4; S.Van Gisbergen, 4; K.Larson, 3; C.Bell, 3; W.Byron, 2; C.Elliott, 1; R.Blaney, 1; C.Briscoe, 1; B.Wallace, 1; J.Logano, 1; R.Chastain, 1; A.Cindric, 1; J.Berry, 1; A.Dillon, 1
Top 16 in points: 1. W.Byron, 839; 2. C.Elliott, 771; 3. D.Hamlin, 766; 4. K.Larson, 759; 5. R.Blaney, 756; 6. C.Bell, 748; 7. T.Reddick, 714; 8. C.Briscoe, 698; 9. A.Bowman, 685; 10. B.Wallace, 639; 11. C.Buescher, 625; 12. J.Logano, 616; 13. R.Preece, 591; 14. R.Chastain, 589; 15. A.Cindric, 543; 16. K.Busch, 537

NASCAR Driver Rating Formula

A maximum of 150 points can be attained in a race.
The formula combines the following categories: Wins, Finishes, Top-15 Finishes, Average Running Position While on Lead Lap, Average Speed Under Green, Fastest Lap, Led Most Laps, Lead-Lap Finish

TENNIS

Cincinnati Open

Saturday
At Lindner Family Tennis Center
Purse: $9,193,540
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Men's Singles
Semifinals

Jannik Sinner (1), Italy, def. Terence Atmane, France, 7-6 (4), 6-2.
Carlos Alcaraz (2), Spain, def. Alexander Zverev (3), Germany, 6-4, 6-3.

Men's Doubles
Semifinals

Rajeev Ram, United States, and Nikola Mektic, Croatia, def. Lloyd Glasspool and Julian Cash (2), Britain, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (2).
Lorenzo Sonego and Lorenzo Musetti, Italy, def. Neal Skupski and Joe Salisbury (5), Britain, 4-6, 6-3, 13-11.

Women's Doubles
Semifinals

Alexandra Panova, Russia, and Hanyu Guo, China, def. Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini (1), Italy, 6-3, 6-2.

Chimaev dominates on ground to win belt

By Patrick Rose
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Khamzat Chimaev continued his dominance in the UFC, capturing the middleweight belt on Saturday night by defeating Dricus Du Plessis by unanimous decision at UFC 319.

With a smile on his face, Chimaev (15-0) shot out of his corner in the first round with a takedown of Du Plessis (23-3) in the opening seconds and had him on his back for almost the entire first round.

Despite the ground control by Chimaev, Du Plessis avoided significant damage in the first round.

Chimaev continued with takedowns in the second and third rounds, and Chimaev's grappling skills took their toll on Du Plessis in the third round, where Chimaev landed a series of blows while Du Plessis was on his back.

Chimaev continued the ground game on Du Plessis in the fourth round.

Chimaev, who has alluded a championship fight since joining the UFC in 2020, gave credit to Du Plessis for challenging him.

"That guy is tough to finish. Respect that guy. (Du Plessis) was the only champion to say 'I'm in.' This guy has a big heart," said Chimaev.

Du Plessis showed life late in the fifth round with a takedown and attempted a guillotine, but it was too little too late.

For most of the fight, it was a complete domination of the former champ.

"Nobody wants to be in a crucifix getting punched in the head like that. It's got to be the most frustrating, suck the heart and soul out of you. Just getting dominated on the ground like the way he did is no fun for everybody," UFC president Dana White said.

All three judges scored the fight 50-44.

"At the end, I went for it, had the back. I can almost taste the victory. He beat me fair and square tonight; he was the better man tonight. I'll be back," said Du Plessis.

The UFC returned to Chicago for the first time in six years, making it the highest-grossing event at the United Center.

In the co-main event, Lerone Murphy (17-0-1), who took the fight on three weeks' notice, held off an early rush from Aaron Pico (13-5) with a right spinning elbow to end Pico's night with a loss in his UFC debut in the featherweight division. Murphy put himself in a position to face Alex Volkanovski for the featherweight belt.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL/LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES

Michigan fined millions, Moore suspended again

NCAA hands out more punishments in Wolverines' sign-stealing scandal

By Larry Lage and Maura Carey
Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — The NCAA fined Michigan tens of millions of dollars Friday and suspended coach Sherrone Moore for a third game as punishment for a sprawling sign-stealing scandal that has loomed over college football's winningest program for nearly two years, including its national championship season in 2023.

The NCAA said it had "overwhelming" and concerning evidence of a cover-up by Wolverines staff and noted there were "sufficient grounds for a multiyear postseason ban" against a program now considered a repeat violator. But the governing body stopped short of program-crippling punishments, saying a two-year postseason ban "would unfairly penalize student-athletes for the actions of coaches and staff" who are no longer there.

"The panel concluded that an elaborate, impermissible scouting scheme was embedded in the Michigan football program over the course of three football seasons, 2021, 2022 and 2023, and this occurred under former head coach Jim Harbaugh's oversight," said Norman Bay, chief hearing officer for the Division I Committee on Infractions. "What makes this case even more serious, in addition to the clear intent to impermissibly gain a substantial competitive advantage, is the elaborate effort to obstruct the investigation."

Moore, who is facing a school-imposed two-game suspension this season, will also sit out the first game of the 2026-27 season for a total of three games. Moore received a two-year show-cause order, but will be allowed to fulfill coaching commitments under the NCAA order.

The biggest blow came from the financial penalties, which are expected to exceed $20 million. They include a $50,000 fine, a 10% fine on the football program's budget, a 10% fine on Michigan's 2025-26 scholarships and a fine equivalent to the anticipated loss of postseason revenue for the 2025 and 2026 seasons. The program also faces a 25% reduction in official recruiting visits during the upcoming season and a 14-week prohibition on recruiting communications during its four-year probation period.



PAUL SANCYA/AP

Michigan head coach Sherrone Moore, center, talks with quarterbacks Jadyn Davis, loeft, and Bryce Underwood after a spring game in Ann Arbor, Mich., on April 19.

Harbaugh, a former Michigan quarterback and now the coach of the NFL's Los Angeles Chargers, faces a 10-year show-cause order following the conclusion of his previous four-year order effective Aug. 7, 2028. Connor Stalions, a former low-level staffer who ran the scouting and sign-stealing operation, was issued an eight-year show-cause order, which effectively bans a person from college athletics for the period handed down.

Michigan said it would appeal the decision.

"(R)espectfully, in a number of instances the decision makes fundamental errors in interpreting NCAA bylaws; and it includes a number of conclusions that are directly contrary to the evidence — or lack of evidence — in the record," the school said.

Athletic director Warde Manuel added that "a postseason ban should never have been a consideration in this case. I fully support the university's decision to pursue an appeal."

Harbaugh has always maintained he knew nothing about the scheme. NCAA investigators were clearly skeptical.

"Aspects of the record suggest that there may have been broader acceptance of the scheme throughout the program," the report says. "At a minimum, there was a willful intent not to learn more about Stalions' methods. However, the true scope and scale of the scheme — including the competitive advantage it conferred — will never be known due to individuals' intentional destruction and withholding of materials and information."

The NCAA does not have rules against stealing signs, but does prohibit schools from sending scouts to the games of in-season opponents and using electronic equipment to record another team's signals. The scheme run by Stalions, the NCAA said, was elaborate and detailed — in fact, the NCAA said, Stalions described it as "counterintelligence" and his network of helpers was referred to as the "KGB," a nod to the Soviet-era spy service.

Colorful accessories providing additional highlights

By Amanda Vogt
Associated Press

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — It's not an ice-cream cone. It's not an Italian rainbow cookie. It's the baseball bat being used at the Little League World Series.

Easton's 2026 Hype Fire USA Bat with the neon green grip and the pink-and-neon yellow barrel is hard to miss at the plate. And the players love them.

"I left it up to them which bats they wanted to use, most of them went with the bat they gave us," Pennsylvania manager Michael Shaw said. "You know, a great color for 12-year-old kids — sour gummy worms."

When Little League teams arrive in Williamsport, they get bright and colorful uniforms and hats at the Grove, the barracks where they live during the tournament. When they go to the batting cages for the first time, the rest of their gear is waiting for them. Bats, gloves, helmets, catching gear, you name it, the players are getting it.



JARED FREED/AP

Bonney Lake's Finn Harrington hits against Las Vegas during a Little League World Series game Friday in South Williamsport, Pa.

"They were kids in a candy store, and as a coach, I got goose bumps walking in there and I'm 38 years old, so I can only imagine what the 12-year-olds are thinking about while walking through that door, seeing all the gear they got," said South Dakota's manager, Ryan Vavruska. "We're very fortunate to get here and to be blessed with all that gear."

Easton has partnered with Little League for more than 40 years and in 2023, the partnership was extended through 2028. Rawlings merged with Easton in 2021 and is the official glove used in the tournament.

"When they opened the roller door down to the batting cages, the stampede started," Australia manager Keith Land said. "These kids are going to be excited to go home and go, 'Look what I've got and look what you haven't got.' They'll rub it in, don't worry about that."

After aluminum bats were turning games into home run derbies, Little League in 2018 changed its bat rules to comply with the USA Bat Standard, which switched the material used to make the bats, so they now perform more like wooden bats. These bats, however, are lighter and easier to swing for 12-year-old players.

The standard was created to ensure the "long-term integrity of the game," according to USA Baseball. There are now fewer home runs each year at the LLWS, even if the ball sounds good off the bat.

But the players aren't talking about the home runs they may or not hit — they just love having the bat in their hands. Most of them couldn't believe what they were getting.

"It was pretty hype," South Dakota's Camden Tycz said. "When we saw the bat table it was just astonishing."

Preston Ware's mouth dropped when his team from South Carolina got to the batting cages. He initially thought his whole team would get only one bat to share.

"Coach Dave (Bogan) tried to trick me and said, 'Yes,'" Preston said.

But quick to jump in was Joe Giulietti, who hit a grand slam in South Carolina's first game. "Preston," he said, "this isn't like the 1960s. When Coach Dave grew up, they had one bat size."

NFL



MATTHEW HINTON/AP

New Orleans quarterback Tyler Shough throws over quarterback Spencer Rattler during a practice session in Metairie, La., on May 22. Shough and Rattler are competing to be the Saints' starting quarterback.

Rattler, Shough feel stress of Saints' QB competition

BY DAN GREENSPAN
Associated Press

CARSON, Calif. — If there was one constant for New Orleans quarterbacks Spencer Rattler and Tyler Shough during their stay in Southern California, it was pressure.

Not just the pressure of the competition to be the Saints' starter, but pressure from pass rushers of the two Los Angeles teams, first in a preseason loss to the Chargers on Sunday and again in a joint practice with the Rams on Thursday.

Evaluating how Rattler, who started six games as a rookie last season, and Shough, a second-round NFL draft pick in April, handled that steady duress could go a long way in deciding who starts the season opener on Sept. 7.

"It's got to be process-focused," coach Kellen Moore said. "Just make sure they're going through the right process. And so a couple of those plays, sack, no sack, we'll see. Certainly there may have been (sacks), but you just got to finish the play."

The two young quarterbacks split work with the first-unit offense against Los Angeles' starters in a quickly arranged workout, which came together over the weekend after the Rams had a previously scheduled session with the Chargers canceled.

That meant subjecting Rattler and Shough to the Rams' fierce defensive line four days after they took five sacks combined against the Chargers in a 27-13 defeat. Rattler immediately found himself staring down a free rusher in the first period of the scrimmage, only being spared from having to pick himself up off the grass because defensive tackle Tyler Davis ran past him.

But in the infrequent instances where the pocket was kept clean, Rattler and Shough were able to move the ball. Rashid Shaheed caught a deep go route from Rattler for New Orleans' biggest gain of the day, while Shough was able to drive the offense into position to kick a field goal during an unscripted two-minute drill.

"When you play in some unscouted situations, it's great work," Moore said. "You got to respond, you got to trust yourself, you got to react. And so there's plenty of opportunities to grow, I think, first and foremost. But they did respond, and they kept fighting, and they kept making some plays, and so it'll be great film for our guys to watch."

Moore, a first-time head coach after stints as offensive coordinator for the Dallas Cowboys, Chargers and Philadelphia Eagles, would like to pick a quarterback as soon as possible. At the same time, he doesn't want a rushed decision to impair the development of the 24-year-old Rattler and the 25-year-old Shough.

"They need experience, they need exposure," Moore said. "There's some things they are doing for the first time, maybe the second time, and so we just need time on task for them."

Getting to run 83 plays on offense against another opponent helped in that process. There were also chances for Rattler and Shough to experience everything that comes when things aren't going well, with their leadership and attitudes being factors that will help determine who gets the first snap against the Arizona Cardinals in less than a month.

"Because you know there's going to be highs, there's going to be lows within drives and games, and how you kind of get the guys rallied together, I think it's an important aspect," Moore said. "These guys have done a nice job. They just got to keep getting better."

Moore has certainly had a good look at the resilience of Rattler and Shough this week. Center Erik McCoy acknowledged the struggles in pass protection, saying the Saints started "a little slow" but felt there was improvement as the practice went on. How the offensive line fares will go a long way in determining how much success whoever gets the nod at quarterback has.

"I think our quarterbacks have done a nice job of facing adversity, experiencing adversity and then responding," Moore said. "Now, we just got to limit the adversity as much as we can and keep growing."

Returning: Bridgewater productive in Bucs debut, could back up Mayfield

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came a star in the late 2000s before embarking on a decorated college career at Louisville, followed by a nomadic journey through the NFL.

Setting example from afar

When Bridgewater announced after the 2023 season that he was stepping away, he thought it would stick. He quickly agreed to become the head coach at Northwestern, eager to start the next chapter of his life.

Yet he also stayed in shape, even taking snaps during the spring game, headset on all the while. He also remained in contact with Detroit coach Dan Campbell and realized that playing could not only let him feed a passion to play that is very much still there, but set another kind of example in the process.

"I always see it as motivation for the kids to know that you can do whatever you put your mind to," Bridgewater said. "As long as you build those healthy relationships, continue to train, work hard year-round, opportunities are going to come."

Enter the Bucs, who reached out looking for someone experienced to join a quarterback room that includes Baker Mayfield, coming off the best season of his career.

Bridgewater isn't with Tampa to be the starter like he was during stints in Minnesota, Carolina and Denver, but a resource.

"Most good quarterbacks have another guy in there that's a veteran, that's pretty savvy, that understands the game and knows the game," Buccaneers coach Todd Bowles said. "And (Teddy) can help Baker out. Coaching helps (Baker) out, but there's nothing like seeing it from a player's standpoint, and (Teddy) can give that to Baker."

There's also a fair amount of life left in Bridgewater's right arm. Wearing No. 16, he more than held his own while taking snaps during the joint practice with Pittsburgh. He also took advantage of Mayfield getting the night off Saturday, throwing for two touchdowns in the first quarter of Tampa Bay's 17-14 preseason win.

However the rest of his 2025 goes, don't expect Bridgewater to commit full time to becoming one of those quarterbacks who are just fine with bouncing around the NFL deep into their 30s. His preference in the near term would be to find a way to still have the best of both worlds: coaching high schoolers during the fall, then seeing what work might be there for him when the calendar nears late December.

He received feelers during the offseason after his stint with the Lions, and his answer was always some version of "I'm up for it, check back when Northwestern is done."

When told preferring an unpaid coaching gig over the far more lucrative life of an NFL quarterback — even a backup one — makes him an outlier of sorts, Bridgewater just shrugged.

"Yeah, I can make a ton of money playing football and coaching high school ball, I get nothing," he said. "But it's not even about the money. It's about giving those kids a building block to go out into the real world and be productive."



MATT FREED/AP

Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Teddy Bridgewater warms up before a preseason game against the Steelers in Pittsburgh on Saturday.

MLB

ROUNDUP

Snell, Dodgers regain NL West lead

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Blake Snell limited his former team to five hits in six innings, and the Los Angeles Dodgers regained the NL West lead with a 6-0 victory over the San Diego Padres on Saturday night.

The Dodgers drew six walks over the first two innings against Padres right-hander Dylan Cease, when they scored five runs on just one hit. Teoscar Hernandez hit his 20th homer of the season in the fifth inning.

Snell (3-1) was making his first start against San Diego after leaving the club following the 2023 season, when he won the NL Cy Young Award. He walked two and struck out three.

Cease (5-11) gave up two hits but walked six in 3⅓ innings. He allowed five runs — three earned.

The first three Los Angeles batters of the game — Shohei Ohtani, Mookie Betts and Will Smith — all walked and scored in the first inning.

Ohtani and Smith also walked in the second and scored when Padres center fielder Jackson Merrill dropped Freddie Freeman's fly ball at the warning track in right-center field.



WALLY SKALIJ/AP

Dodgers pitcher Blake Snell throws against his former team, the San Diego Padres, during the second inning Saturday in Los Angeles. Snell gave up five hits in six shutout innings for the win.

Mets 3, Mariners 1: Nolan McLean provided struggling New York a much-needed lift on Saturday, tossing 5⅓ scoreless innings in his major league debut as the host Mets beat Seattle.

McLean (1-0) allowed two hits with four walks and struck out eight to help lift New York to just its third win in its last 17 games.

Francisco Lindor had an RBI double in the third before the Mets added insurance in the seventh, when Juan Soto had a sacrifice fly and Pete Alonso hit a run-scoring double.

Edwin Díaz gave up Eugenio Suárez's ninth-inning homer, but got the final six outs for his 24th save.

Red Sox 7, Marlins 5: Trevor Story hit a three-run homer, and host Boston held off Miami for a victory.

Roman Anthony and Alex Bregman each had two hits as the Red Sox improved to 41-22 at Fenway Park. Bregman's RBI single made it 7-0 in the fourth.

The Marlins rallied in the ninth against Isaiah Campbell. Heriberto Hernández hit a two-out RBI single and scored on Eric Wagaman's triple. Derek Hill added a run-scoring single.

Aroldis Chapman then replaced Campbell and retired Javier Sanoja on a grounder to shortstop, earning his 22nd save.

Yankees 12, Cardinals 8: Ben Rice homered and tied a career high with seven RBIs, Aaron Judge also went deep in his first multi-hit game since the All-Star break and visiting New York beat St. Louis.

Trent Grisham singled four times and scored four runs, and Ryan McMahon hit his first homer to overcome a shaky start by Max Fried (13-5).

Fried exited after yielding seven runs on eight hits in five-plus innings. Gorman's 389-foot blast ended his outing with no outs in the sixth.

Masyn Winn hit a three-run homer and Nolan Gorman had a two-run shot for St. Louis as Fried yielded multiple homers for the third time this season.

Royals 6, White Sox 2: John Rave homered playing in place of the ailing Vinnie Pasquantino, who left in the first inning due to heat-related illness, and host Kansas City beat Chicago to move above .500 for the first time since June 10.

Michael Lorenzen made his first start for the Royals since July 6. He allowed three hits in four scoreless innings.

Mike Yastrzemski led off the first with a homer off Sean Burke (4-10). Kansas City added an unearned run in the second, and Rave made it 3-0 in the third with his fourth homer.

In the fifth, Rave singled and scored on Maikel Garcia's two-run double. Nick Loftin had an RBI single in the sixth.

Athletics 7, Angels 2: Luis Morales struck out five in his second career start, Brent Rooker and Colby Thomas hit home runs, and the host Athletics beat Los Angeles.

Thomas' two-run homer, his third of the year, put the A's on the board in the first inning.

Darell Hernaiz drove in two on a third-inning single, and Rooker padded the Athletics' lead with his solo homer in the fifth.

Brett Harris and Rooker added insurance in the eighth with RBI singles. Sean Newcomb threw 1⅔ innings and struck out three to earn his first save of the year.

Cubs 3, Pirates 1: Seiya Suzuki hit a tie-breaking single in the eighth inning, and host Chicago beat Pittsburgh for a sorely needed home victory.

Kyle Tucker hit a leadoff single against Evan Sisk (0-1) and stole second before coming home on Suzuki's grounder into center field. The Cubs had dropped four of five, including a 3-2 loss in the series opener on Friday.

Chicago left-hander Shota Imanaga pitched seven innings of three-hit ball. Andrew Kittredge (3-3) got three outs before Brad Keller handled the ninth for his first save.

Blue Jays 14, Rangers 2: Myles Straw had five RBIs in his first career multihomer game, and host Toronto hammered struggling Texas.

Daulton Varsho and Davis Schneider also went deep as the AL-leading Blue Jays improved to 42-20 at home.

The Rangers lost for the eighth time in nine games.

Nationals 2, Phillies 0: Cade Cavalli earned his first major league victory, James Wood hit a two-run double, and host Washington defeated Philadelphia.

Cavalli struck out five and scattered seven hits over seven innings for the Nationals. Last-place Washington has won three of four.

Astros 5, Orioles 4 (12): Ramón Urìas beat Jackson Holliday's throw to first, allowing Carlos Correa to score from third, and host Houston outlasted Baltimore in 12 innings.

Urìas helped the AL West-leading Astros to their sixth walk-off victory of the season a night after ending a perfect game bid in the eighth against his old team. Houston increased its division lead to 1½ games.

Braves 10, Guardians 1: Michael Harris II homered and doubled, Nacho Alvarez Jr. and Nick Allen each had three hits and visiting Atlanta beat Cleveland.

The Braves have won four straight and eight or their last 10 games, both season highs.

Tigers 8, Twins 5: Trey Sweeney drove in the go-ahead run in the seventh inning, Casey Mize struck out 10 batters and visiting Detroit beat Minnesota.

With the score tied 3-3 in the seventh, the Tigers rallied for three runs against Brooks Kriske (0-1). Wenceel Pérez led off with a double and moved to third on an infield groundout.

Rockies 10, Diamondbacks 7: Kyle Farmer had a go-ahead two-run single and Tyler Freeman added a two-run homer in six-run eighth inning as host Colorado beat Arizona.

After Andrew Hoffmann (1-1) struck out Hunter Goodman to open the eighth, Brenton Doyle doubled to left, Warming Bernabel and Kyle Karros walked, and Doyle doubled to center to drive in two and cut it to 7-6. Andrew Saalfrank took over for Hoffmann, allowing Farmer's go-ahead single and Freeman's homer.

Rays 2, Giants 1: Yandy Díaz and Brandon Lowe hit consecutive two-out RBI singles in the eighth inning, and visiting Tampa Bay rallied for the second straight day to beat San Francisco.

After No. 9 hitter Nick Fortes was hit by a pitch with two outs, Chandler Simpson singled before Díaz singled in the Rays' first run off José Buttó (3-3). Lowe followed with his second hit of the game to drive in a run and hand the Giants their seventh consecutive loss.

Scoreboard

American League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	73	51	.589	—
Boston	68	56	.548	5
New York	66	57	.537	6½
Tampa Bay	61	63	.492	12
Baltimore	56	67	.455	16½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	73	52	.584	—
Cleveland	63	59	.516	8½
Kansas City	62	61	.504	10
Minnesota	57	66	.463	15
Chicago	44	79	.358	28

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	69	54	.561	—
Seattle	68	56	.548	1½
Texas	61	63	.492	8½
Los Angeles	59	64	.480	10
Athletics	56	69	.448	14

National League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	70	53	.569	—
New York	65	58	.528	5
Miami	58	65	.472	12
Atlanta	55	68	.447	15
Washington	50	73	.407	20

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	78	44	.639	—
Chicago	69	53	.566	9
Cincinnati	64	60	.516	15
St. Louis	61	63	.492	18
Pittsburgh	52	72	.419	27

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	70	53	.569	—
San Diego	69	54	.561	1
Arizona	60	64	.484	10½
San Francisco	59	64	.480	11
Colorado	34	89	.276	36

Saturday's games

Milwaukee 6, Cincinnati 5, 11 innings
L.A. Dodgers 6, San Diego 0
N.Y. Mets 3, Seattle 1
Boston 7, Miami 5
N.Y. Yankees 12, St. Louis 8
Kansas City 6, Chicago White Sox 2
Athletics 7, L.A. Angels 2
Chicago Cubs 3, Pittsburgh 1
Toronto 14, Texas 2
Washington 2, Philadelphia 0
Houston 5, Baltimore 4, 12 innings
Atlanta 10, Cleveland 1
Detroit 8, Minnesota 5
Colorado 10, Arizona 7
Tampa Bay 2, San Francisco 1

Sunday's games

Philadelphia at Washington
Miami at Boston
Texas at Toronto
Atlanta at Cleveland
Milwaukee at Cincinnati
Baltimore at Houston
Chicago White Sox at Kansas City
Detroit at Minnesota
N.Y. Yankees at St. Louis
Pittsburgh at Chicago Cubs
Arizona at Colorado
L.A. Angels at Athletics
Tampa Bay at San Francisco
San Diego at L.A. Dodgers
Seattle at N.Y. Mets

Monday's games

Milwaukee (Peralta 14-5, TBD) at Chicago Cubs (Horton 7-3, TBD), 2
Houston (Arrighetti 1-3) at Detroit (Flaherty 6-12)
Toronto (Gausman 8-9) at Pittsburgh (Skenes 7-9)
St. Louis (Liberatore 6-10) at Miami (Pérez 5-3)
Seattle (Gilbert 3-4) at Philadelphia (Suárez 8-6)
Baltimore (Rogers 5-2) at Boston (May 7-8)
Chicago White Sox (Gómez 2-1) at Atlanta (Strider 5-10)
Texas (Leiter 7-6) at Kansas City (Wacha 7-9)
L.A. Dodgers (Yamamoto 10-8) at Colorado (Freeland 3-12)
Cincinnati (Singer 10-9) at L.A. Angels (TBD)
Cleveland (Williams 7-4) at Arizona (Gallen 9-12)
San Francisco (Ray 9-6) at San Diego (Cortes 1-1)

Calendar

Aug. 31 — Last day to be in organization to be postseason eligible
Sept. 1 — Active rosters expand to 28 players
Sept. 28 — Regular season ends

MLB/AUTO RACING

Brewers rally again, extend win streak to 14

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — The Milwaukee Brewers set a single-season franchise record with their 14th straight victory Saturday. And, in keeping with recent form, it wasn't easy.

The major league-leading Brewers rallied for the second straight game and beat the Cincinnati Reds 6-5 in 11 innings. This Milwaukee club set a new benchmark — so far — for consecutive victories, surpassing the 1987 team that opened that season by winning its first 13 games. The Brewers will look to add to their streak in the series finale against division rival Cincinnati on Sunday.

Milwaukee's overall record for consecutive wins is 16 games, from 1986-87, when they won their last three games in 1986 and their first 13 in 1987.

On Friday night, the Brewers' run appeared to be in jeopardy before they rallied from seven runs down through two innings by scoring nine unanswered runs in beating the Reds 10-8.

Milwaukee looked to be in trouble again Saturday, but showed its resilience — for the second time in 24 hours — with the big blow being a pinch-hit, three-run homer in the 11th by Andrew Monasterio.

"It's an amazing feeling," said Monasterio, who wears the No. 14. "I wasn't ready for like 14 to 14. ... That's amazing."



MICHAEL SWENSEN/AP

Milwaukee Brewers Andruw Monasterio, left, and Sal Frelick celebrate Monasterio's pinch-hit home run in the 11th inning against the Reds on Saturday in Cincinnati.

Monasterio was seemingly prepped for his showstopping and streak-extending moment.

"(Manager) Pat Murphy asked me to be ready three or four times," the 28-year-old infielder said. "That was the fifth time he asked me to be ready during the game. He asked me in the seventh, 'Are you ready for a big moment?' I said, 'Of course, yeah.' But I didn't know it was going to happen like this."

Milwaukee starter Quinn Priester said his under-11-year-old team went 49-0 and called that fun.

"But not as fun as this," he said.

Priester said the Brewers have been making the most of every chance provided by opponents.

"We've just been giving ourselves every opportunity, and then certainly when we get extra opportunities, we seem to take advantage every single time," he said. "You get your opportunity, it's time to go in and make a big swing, make a big pitch. When guys are getting their opportunities, we're not timid, that's for sure."

The Brewers jumped to an early lead when Brice Turang doubled in a run in the second inning. The Reds got solo homers from Ke'Bryan Hayes and Spencer Steer in the sixth for a 2-1 lead.

As it turned out, the Reds helped Milwaukee keep its winning streak alive as the Brewers scored on a throwing error by Cincinnati shortstop Elly De La Cruz in the ninth to tie the game at 2-all. And, the Brewers went ahead in the 10th when Anthony Seigler scored on an error by left fielder Jake Fraley.

Cincinnati battled back in the bottom of the 10th and tied it at 3-all on an RBI double by Hayes. Ultimately, the Reds provided the Brewers with too many chances to continue their winning ways as Monasterio belted a three-run shot in the 11th — just his second of the season after his first on July 3 against the New York Mets.

The Reds pushed back again in the bottom half, cutting the deficit with a sacrifice fly by Santiago Espinal and trimming their deficit to a run on Noelvi Marte's ninth homer of the year. But Milwaukee prevailed when reliever Nick Mears got Matt McLain to fly out to the warning track in right-center, ending the game and extending the streak.

Milwaukee is now 34 games over .500 at 78-44 and boasts a nine-game lead in the NL Central over the Chicago Cubs. In the National League, the Brewers are eight games better than the East Division-leading Philadelphia Phillies (70-53).

Dillon earns Cup playoff spot with redemption win in Richmond

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Austin Dillon was hurting mentally and physically when he arrived at Richmond Raceway. He found the cure for what ailed him in victory lane Saturday night.

Racing with a broken rib and some wounded pride, Dillon locked into the Cup Series playoffs with a clean run to his second consecutive victory on the 0.75-mile oval.

It was a redemptive triumph for the Richard Childress Racing driver, whose championship eligibility was revoked by NASCAR last year after he wrecked Joey Logano and Denny Hamlin on the final lap to win at Richmond.

After missing the playoffs and enduring criticism from Logano, Hamlin and others who accused him of racing dirty, he went through a 37-race winless stretch before breaking through at Richmond with his first top five of the season.

"Man, that feels good," said Dillon, whose previous best finish had been a seventh at Texas Motor Speedway in May. "I really wanted that one. Last year hurt really bad just going through the whole process of it, but this one feels so sweet. Man, I love Richmond."

He revealed after his sixth career victory that he also had raced with the rib injury



Dillon

the past three weeks since falling off a ladder before the Aug. 3 race at Iowa Speedway.

"I was thrown down a lot this week and didn't feel great," he said.

He shrugged off the pain to outduel Ryan Blaney over the final 100 laps, seizing control with a shrewd strategy call to pit his No. 3 Chevrolet four laps earlier than the Team Penske driver's No. 12 Ford.

Dillon, who led 107 of 400 laps, won by 2.471 seconds over Alex Bowman. Blaney faded to third, followed by Joey Logano and Austin Cindric.

Dillon became the 14th race winner to lock into the 16-driver field for the Cup playoffs, which are contested over the final 10 races of the season.

The regular season will conclude next Saturday night at Daytona International Speedway, where the final two playoff drivers will be confirmed — and at least one will qualify through the points standings.

Tyler Reddick and Bowman are in the final two provisional spots on points, but either could be eliminated if another new winner emerges at Daytona (which has happened twice in the last three years).

"Really stressful on a lot of fronts," Bowman said. "I think with the way that race normally goes, it's about a must-win at that point because I think you're most likely going to have a new winner. Just need to go execute and try to win the race. That's all we can really do."

After a consistent start to his season, Chase Elliott is in a slump heading into the playoffs. The 2020 Cup champion finished last at Richmond and failed to finish for the first time since last October at Las Vegas Motor Speedway (27 races ago).

Elliott nearly had cleared the pileup on the 198th lap when he was tagged in the right rear by Kyle Busch.

"I think Kyle just didn't know that we were trying to squeeze by the wreck on the bottom," Elliott said. "We had a good start to the night, and it just slowly unraveled until it finally fell apart. Hopefully, we get on a better stretch starting next week."

Since briefly taking the points lead after his June 28 win at Atlanta, the seven-time Most Popular Driver has finished outside the top 10 in five of seven races.

About an hour before the green flag, Richmond Raceway announced its first sellout since 2008. During its heyday, the track had 112,000 seats that sold out twice annually. Because of softening ticket sales amid lackluster racing, Richmond was scheduled for only one Cup race this season for the first time since 1958, and its grandstand capacity has dwindled to under 50,000.

Denny Hamlin grew up about 20 miles south in Chesterfield, Virginia, and his family once had seats at Richmond.

"We always went to both races, but the sport is in a different place now," he said. "The way to get it back is you have to sell out at least the one time. That and improve short track racing. If you can do those things, then I think you will have a better case to having two races here."

A week after his fourth consecutive Cup victory on a street or road course, rookie Shane van Gisbergen finished an impressive 14th at Richmond after scraping the wall twice in qualifying and starting 27th.

Though the New Zealand driver said he feels more competitive and comfortable on short tracks such as Richmond, his inexperience remains a major hurdle. At Richmond, the rookie tried to improve by studying the laps of Hamlin and Trackhouse Racing teammate Ross Chastain.

"Different tracks might be different people," van Gisbergen said.

"Look at who stands out and just try and emulate what they're doing."

The Cup Series regular season will conclude Saturday, Aug. 23 at Daytona International Speedway.

SPORTS

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Snell shuts out Padres as Dodgers return to 1st in NL West ›› MLB, Page 22

NFL

Returning sooner than anticipated



JASON BEHNKEN/AP

Buccaneers quarterback Teddy Bridgewater watches from the sideline during the second half of a preseason game against the Tennessee Titans on Aug. 9 in Tampa, Fla.

Bridgewater hoping to make most of comeback amid high school coaching suspension

BY WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Teddy Bridgewater always planned to play football this year.

Just maybe not quite this early.

In a perfect world, the well-traveled quarterback wouldn't have spent this past weekend in Pittsburgh getting ready for his preseason debut with Tampa Bay, but in Miami helping Northwestern High prepare to defend the Florida Class 3A title he coached his alma mater to last winter.

Don't get Bridgewater wrong. The 32-year-old — whose retirement hasn't quite stuck more than 18 months after he announced it — is eager to go out and show he can still "spin it." And he's grateful to do it for a team that has ripped off four straight NFC South titles, a team that also happens to be not that far from home.

Still, Bridgewater would be lying if he said this was his first choice. The plan was always to coach until Northwestern's season was over, then explore his options in the NFL, just as he did last year when he made a cameo with Detroit as Jared Goff's backup during the Lions' playoff push.

A seemingly innocuous social media post changed everything.

Suspension changes plans

Bridgewater's Facebook message was designed to find donors willing to help offset team expenses not covered by the school, expenses — from food to rides home from practice — that he freely admitted he paid out of his own pocket in 2024.

Yet his admission also constituted potential violations concerning impermissible benefits. Bridgewater — who did not take a salary as head coach — self-reported the payments and was subsequently suspended. The Florida High School Athletic Association's investigation is ongoing.

"It's very upsetting," Bridgewater said following a joint practice between the Buccaneers and Steelers ahead of their preseason game at Acrisure Stadium on Saturday night. "Just knowing that you have good intentions and those good intentions will be turned against you and used against you."

It's unclear when a resolution might come. For Bridgewater, who still communicates regularly with his at-the-moment former players, it can't get here fast enough.

"I'm hoping to get it resolved because those kids have a special place in my heart," Bridgewater said. "And I'd love to finish what I started with them."

Bridgewater didn't even rule out making the four-ish hour drive from Tampa to Miami on Fridays when the Buccaneers' schedule allows to attend a Northwestern game as a fan, at least for now.

He'd love the opportunity to return one day as the coach of the school where he be-

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Dillon wins to earn Cup playoffs position ›› Auto racing, Page 23

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