FACES
Martin Short talks comedy, new challenges
Page 18



MILITARY
Pentagon unveils DARPA vessel that has no crew
Page 7



MLB
Pirates ace Skenes is dominant – aside from his record
Page 24

NATO defense chiefs hold virtual meeting on Ukraine security ›› Page 3

STARS AND STRIPES

stripes.com

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LINKEDIN/DANIEL BECK, GRIFFON AEROSPACE

The MQM-172 Arrowhead drone, shown here, is similar to the Iranian Shahed-136, which has caused much damage during the war in Ukraine. The Air Force is asking industry for proposals that would provide up to 36 reverse-engineered replicas of the Shahed-136.

Air Force is looking for reverse-engineered replicas of Iran's attack drones

BY LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force is on a quest for some drone clones, with a recent solicitation asking industry to replicate an Iranian aircraft that has wreaked havoc in the Russia-Ukraine war and elsewhere.

The service intends to buy at least 16 one-to-one copies of a reverse-engineered Shahed-136, with the option to purchase 20 more later, according to federal documents issued earlier this month.

First appearing in battle six years ago, the inexpensive class of one-way attack drones has become a principal weapon for Iran and its allies.



EFREM LUKATSKY/AP

A Ukrainian officer shows a thermobaric charge of a downed Shahed-136 drone launched by Russia in a research laboratory in an undisclosed location in Ukraine in November.

Sixteen of the drones are not enough to match the firepower of Iran or Russia, which is mass-producing the weapons and at one point was firing 140 Shahed variants into Ukraine every day.

Instead, the U.S. likely wants to use them for testing and training, experts say, underscoring the growing threat from cheap unmanned aircraft.

The drones are estimated to cost between $20,000 and $50,000 apiece, making them cheaper than most long-range attack drones, and have played a key part in Iran's layered attacks on Israel, where they are often de-

SEE REPLICAS ON PAGE 9

Residents in Europe least satisfied with Army housing

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Soldiers and their families in Europe give government housing substandard marks, while some serving in Asia were more upbeat, according to annual survey results.

Concerns reported by soldiers worldwide who participated in the 2025 Army tenant satisfaction survey included mold and pest infestations, cramped living conditions and security breaches, leading to theft and privacy invasions, according to a survey summary the Army provided to Stars and Stripes.

Some of the chief concerns among family housing tenants in all survey areas included overcrowding and outdated facilities, an unfair housing allocation process, "depressing" living conditions and inadequate trash management.

"Many of our government-owned units in our housing areas are roughly 70 years old and lack some of the modern amenities that our families might be accustomed to prior to arriving in Europe," Mark Heeter, a spokesman for Installation Command-Europe, said in a statement Wednesday.

In Europe, the Army plans to make significant investments "to either upgrade, replace or build new Army-owned family housing to a standard similar to housing at installations in the United States," Heeter said.

That work includes construction at U.S. Army Garrison Italy that he called the largest overseas housing project in the world.

Out of 16 installations in regions

SEE HOUSING ON PAGE 9

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Lowe's buying Foundation Building Materials for about $8.8B

Associated Press

Lowe's is buying Foundation Building Materials, a distributor of drywall, insulation and other products, for approximately $8.8 billion as the home improvement retailer intensifies its focus on professional builders.

FBM also provides metal framing, ceiling systems, commercial doors and hardware and other products that serve large residential and commercial professionals in both new construction and repair and remodel applications.

It has more than 370 locations in the United States and Canada serving 40,000 professional customers.

The acquisition is part of Lowe's move to provide more options for professional builders.

The Mooresville, N.C.-based company recently closed on its $1.3 billion acquisition of Artisan Design Group, a provider of design, distribution and installation services for interior surface finishes, including flooring, cabinets and countertops, to home builders and property managers.

Lowe's deal for FBM is expected to close in the fourth quarter.

Aside from the acquisition, Lowe's reported its fiscal second-quarter financial results on Wednesday. The company posted an adjusted profit of $4.33 per share, which topped the $4.23 per share that analysts expected.

The company's stock rose nearly 3% before the market open.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro costs (Aug. 21)	0.83
British pound (Aug. 21)	$1.32
Japanese yen (Aug. 21)	144.00
South Korean won (Aug. 21)	1361.00

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3743
Britain (Pound)	1.3476
Canada (Dollar)	1.3868
China (Yuan)	7.1819
Denmark (Krone)	6.4029
Egypt (Pound)	48.5541
Euro	0.8577
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8143
Hungary (Forint)	338.347
Israel (Shekel)	3.4044
Japan (Yen)	147.173
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3050
Norway (Krone)	10.2506
Philippines (Peso)	57.04
Poland (Zloty)	3.6419
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7486
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2847
South Korea (Won)	1398.60
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8063
Thailand (Baht)	32.525
Turkey (NewLira)	40.9251

(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	4.91

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



This weather is compiled from weather.com reports.

TODAY IN STRIPES

American Roundup 15
Classified 13
Comics 17
Crossword 17
Faces 18
Opinion 16
Sports 19-24

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MILITARY

NATO defense chiefs talk Ukraine security

Russian foreign minister objects to apparent exclusion from discussions on guarantees

By Sam McNeil and Illia Novikov
Associated Press

BRUSSELS — NATO defense chiefs held a "candid discussion" Wednesday about what security guarantees they could offer Kyiv to help forge a peace agreement that ends Russia's three-year war on Ukraine, a senior alliance official said.

Italian Adm. Giuseppe Cavo Dragone, the chair of NATO's Military Committee, said that 32 defense chiefs from across the alliance held a video conference amid a U.S.-led diplomatic push to end the fighting.

He said there was a "great, candid discussion" in the call. "I thanked everyone for their always proactive participation in these meetings: we are united, and that unity was truly tangible today, as always," he wrote on social platform X without providing further details.

Assurances that it won't be invaded again in the future are one of the keys for getting Ukraine to sign up for a peace deal with Russia. It wants Western help for its military, including weapons and training, to shore up its defenses, and Western officials are scrambling to figure out what commitments they might offer.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov chided efforts to work on security arrangements in Ukraine without Moscow's involvement.

"We cannot agree with the fact that it is now proposed to resolve collective security issues without the Russian Federation. This will not work," Lavrov said Wednesday, according to state news agency RIA Novosti.

Russia will "ensure legitimate interests firmly and harshly," Lavrov added at a news conference in Moscow with Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman al-Safadi.

U.S. Air Force Gen. Alexus Grynkewich, NATO's supreme allied commander Europe, took part in the virtual talks, Dragone said. U.S. Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was also due to participate, a U.S. defense official said.

Caine also met with European military chiefs Tuesday evening in Washington to assess the best military options for political leaders, according to the defense official, who wasn't authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.


Grynkewich

U.S. President Donald Trump met last Friday with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska and on Monday hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and prominent European leaders at the White House. Neither meeting delivered concrete progress.

Trump is trying to steer Putin and Zelenskyy toward a settlement more than three years after Russia invaded its neighbor, but there are major obstacles. They include Ukraine's demands for Western-backed military assurances to ensure Russia won't mount another invasion in the coming years.

"We need strong security guarantees to ensure a truly secure and lasting peace," Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post Wednesday after Russian missile and drone strikes hit six regions of Ukraine overnight.

Kyiv's European allies are looking to set up a force that could backstop any peace agreement, and a coalition of 30 countries, including European nations, Japan and Australia, has signed up to support the initiative.

Military chiefs are figuring out how that security force might work. The role that the U.S. might play is unclear. Trump on Tuesday ruled out sending U.S. troops to help defend Ukraine against Russia.

Russia has repeatedly said that it would not accept NATO troops in Ukraine.

Trump said Monday he has begun arrangements for a face-to-face meeting between Putin and Zelenskyy, although the Kremlin hasn't publicly confirmed such a possibility and no venue was suggested.

Lavrov, in his Moscow press conference, said Russia is prepared to continue negotiations with Ukraine in any format.

Ukraine and Western leaders have accused Putin of dragging out peace negotiations in the hope of capturing more land before any settlement.

French President Emmanuel Macron has said the summit could happen in Europe and proposed the Swiss city of Geneva. Switzerland has expressed its willingness to act as host.

Putin's ability to travel abroad is limited because he is wanted by the International Criminal Court in The Hague on a warrant dating back to March 2023 for alleged involvement in the abduction of Ukrainian children. More than 100 countries are ICC signatories and have a legal obligation to arrest the Russian leader on their soil.

Switzerland intends to ask the ICC to exempt it from sanctions in order to allow Putin in for a summit, according to a senior official in The Hague with direct knowledge of the request. The official was not authorized to speak about the proceedings and spoke on condition of anonymity.

9 Marines detained as Okinawa liberty patrols step up enforcement

By Brian McElhiney and Keishi Koja
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Nine Marines may face charges under the military justice system after encountering a joint patrol in Okinawa city, the latest sign that the military is cracking down on off-duty misconduct.

About 50 U.S. and Japanese civil and military authorities took part in the patrol near Gate 2 Street, a nightlife district outside Kadena Air Base, from midnight to 2 a.m. Saturday, a spokesman for Okinawa city's Base Policy Division said by phone Monday. Some Japanese government officials speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

Military police took the Marines into custody during the patrol and released them later that morning to their commands, which will determine possible charges, Marine Corps Installations Pacific spokeswoman 1st Lt. Kelsey Enlow said by phone Wednesday.

The detentions represent a step up in enforcing liberty rules imposed after a spate of sexual assault cases surfaced on the island, the installations commander said this week.

"As you do everything through operations, you slowly ramp up in the context of those operations, and over the last several months it's been kind of an education process," Maj. Gen. Brian Wolford told reporters Monday during a roundtable at Camp Foster. "Now over the last weekend we have transitioned to enforcement of those regulations."


Keishi Koja/Stars and Stripes

Mayor Daisuke Hanashiro, left, and Maj. Gen. Brian Wolford, commander of Marine Corps Installations Pacific, take part in a joint patrol of Gate 2 Street in Okinawa city, Okinawa, in April.

The patrol included 20 law enforcement officers from base Provost Marshal's Offices, 12 of them Marines, who continued until about 5 a.m., Enlow said. Local and prefectural police and representatives of the Okinawa Defense Bureau, an army of Japan's Ministry of Defense, made up the rest.

Three Marines were fingerprinted and entered into the provost marshal database for "alleged violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice," Enlow said by phone Wednesday, without elaborating. The other six "either refused to provide a valid ID, became aggressive, or tried to flee the area," she wrote in an email Monday.

One Marine who was shouting and acting aggressively was held down by police and later taken to Naval Hospital Okinawa, the Ryukyu Shimpo newspaper reported Tuesday, citing unnamed officials. Enlow and Okinawa Prefectural Police declined to confirm or deny the report.

All nine Marines were held at the Provost Marshal's Office on Foster before being released to unit representatives later Saturday morning, Enlow said.

"Each command has expressed their desire for fast and aggressive adjudication," she said.

Joint patrols began April 18 in response to a series of sexual assault allegations against U.S. service members over the past couple of years.

Senior Airman Brennon Washington was convicted last year of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a minor in December 2023. Marine Lance Cpl. Jamel Clayton was convicted in June of strangling and attempting to sexually assault a woman in May 2024. Both cases are under appeal. Two other cases are still pending.

No one was detained during the first three joint patrols, Marine Corps Installations Command spokesman Maj. Brett Dornhege-Lazaroff said in July.

On Saturday, law enforcement officers stopped at least 25 service members for violating liberty rules, which were modified by U.S. Forces Japan in September to prohibit troops from being in a drinking establishment or consuming alcohol publicly after 1 a.m. Military police photographed their IDs and reminded them of the policy, Enlow said.

Wolford said during Monday's roundtable that the Marine Corps is working to expand the patrols to Okinawa's capital, Naha, and is in discussions with local police and Mayor Satoru Chinen, though no date has been set. He added that he does not foresee patrol escalating to further levels of enforcement.

"We've been doing education, getting exposure out there in the towns and villages up to this point," Wolford said. "I think we're at the level we need to be at with the joint patrols, so I don't see it escalating, because the word is getting out. … I do not see it escalating; I see it staying constant."

MILITARY

US destroyers head to waters near Venezuela

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States is deploying three Aegis guided-missile destroyers to the waters off Venezuela as part of President Donald Trump's effort to combat threats from Latin American drug cartels, according to a U.S. official briefed on the planning.

The USS Gravely, the USS Jason Dunham and the USS Sampson are expected to arrive soon, said the official, who was not authorized to comment and spoke Tuesday on the condition of anonymity.

A Defense Department official confirmed that the military assets have been assigned to the region in support of counter-narcotics efforts. The official, who was not authorized to comment about military planning, said the vessels would be deployed "over the course of several months."

The deployment of U.S. destroyers and personnel comes as Trump has pushed for using the U.S. military to thwart cartels he blames for the flow of fentanyl and other illicit drugs into American communities and for perpetuating violence in some U.S. cities.

Trump has also pressed Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum to cooperate more on security than her predecessor, specifically being more aggressive in pursuit of Mexico's cartels. But she has drawn a clear line when it comes to Mexico's sovereignty, rejecting suggestions by Trump and others of intervention by the U.S. military.

Trump in February designated Venezuela's Tren de Aragua, MS-13 in El Salvador and six groups based in Mexico as foreign terrorist organizations. His Republican administration has also stepped up immigration enforcement against alleged gang members.

The designation is normally reserved for groups like al-Qaida or the Islamic State that use violence for political ends — not for money-focused crime rings such as the Latin American cartels.

Earlier this month, the Trump government announced it was doubling to $50 million a reward for the arrest of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, accusing him of being one of the world's largest narco-traffickers and working with cartels to flood the U.S. with fentanyl-laced cocaine.

The press office of Venezuela's government did not respond to a request for comment from the AP on the deployment of the destroyers.

But without mentioning the ships, Foreign Minister Yvan Gil in a statement Tuesday characterized the U.S. government's drug-trafficking accusations against Venezuela.

"Washington's accusing Venezuela of drug trafficking reveals its lack of credibility and the failure of its policies in the region," Gil said.



KYLE CHAN/U.S. Marine Corps

U.S. Marines prepare the southern border wall near San Ysidro, Calif., on Jan. 25.

Trump wants to paint border wall black so it will be too hot to touch

BY ALICIA A. CALDWELL
Bloomberg News

President Donald Trump has ordered the entire southern border wall to be painted black to stop migrants from crossing because it will be too hot to touch, according to Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

Speaking near the border in New Mexico on Tuesday, Noem said crews have begun painting sections of the 30-foot steel bollards that make up the barriers. She said the directive came directly from Trump, under the expectation the dark paint will extend the steel's lifespan by slowing rust and discourage migrants from climbing the wall by making it unbearably hot under the desert sun.

"We are going to be painting the entire border wall black," Noem told reporters. Asked about criticism that the practice could make conditions harsher for migrants, she responded: "Don't touch it. People have a choice."

Noem didn't say how much the project will cost or how long it will take. She applied paint herself to a small section of a fence during the media appearance in Santa Teresa, N.M.

Noem's visit came as arrests at the southwest border have plunged to levels not seen in decades as the administration enacts stricter enforcement measures. It has also shut down the CBP One mobile app that had previously been a key way for migrants to schedule appointments to cross the border and seek asylum.

Walter Slosar, the interim chief patrol agent in the El Paso Sector, covering far West Texas and all of New Mexico, said the current seven-day arrest average is about 41 a day, with an additional nine migrants crossing daily without being stopped. A year ago the average was closer to 400 a day and it was roughly 2,300 in 2023.

Still, the administration has pressed ahead with wall construction, filling in gaps in Santa Teresa, where about seven miles of new barriers are being installed.

Trump's plan to build out a southern border wall has long been a lightning rod, dating back to Trump's first term when his administration added razor wire to some sections, while painting some areas black, but ultimately built far fewer miles of new barriers than initially promised. Despite that, Trump has kept the wall central to his immigration message, portraying it as a tool of enforcement.

Troops deployed to US-Mexico border will get new medal

BY MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. troops serving along the southern border since Jan. 20 to support Border and Customs Protection agents can now receive the Mexican Border Defense Medal, according to a Pentagon memo.

A defense official who spoke on the condition of anonymity confirmed the authenticity of the Aug. 13 memo shared on social media but could not provide additional information.

To qualify for the Mexican Border Defense Medal, troops must have been "permanently assigned, attached, or detailed" to a unit that deployed as part of a designated Defense Department operation supporting federal border agents for 30 days, according to the memo.

Military personnel must have deployed within 100 nautical miles of the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas including San Antonio, New Mexico, Arizona and California, or in U.S. waters up to 24 nautical miles from the border.

Eligible service members will receive the Mexican Border Defense Medal instead of the Armed Forces Service Medal, which had been awarded to troops supporting federal agents along the U.S.-Mexico border starting in 2019, according to the memo.

Active-duty, Reserve and National Guard troops began deploying to the southern border in April 2018 after President Donald Trump referred to the influx of migrants at the time as an "invasion."

The Armed Forces Service Medal was created by executive order under former President Bill Clinton in 1996. It was given to troops who deployed to the border between May 2006 and July 2008 under former President George W. Bush. It has also been awarded to troops who have taken part in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in Bosnia, Haiti, Iraq and Africa.

Troops and veterans who have already received the Armed Forces Service Medal can apply with their military branches to receive the Mexican Border Defense Medal, but they cannot receive both medals for the same period of service, according to the memo.

Since Trump's return to the White House, his administration has made the crackdown on undocumented migrants one of its highest priorities.

About 8,500 troops are now deployed to the southern border working primarily to detect possible illegal activity, the Pentagon has said.

The military has established four military zones allowing troops to conduct law enforcement activities just as they would at military bases, including temporary detention, searches and crowd-control operations.

Similarly named medals were created more than a century ago.

The Mexican Service Medal was created in 1917 for troops who took part in operations in Mexico between 1911 and 1919.

The Mexican Border Service Medal, established in 1918, recognizes service members assigned to the U.S.-Mexico border between May 1916 and March 1917. The award also recognized those who served from January 1916 to April 1917, according to the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

The U.S. was then engaged in the Pancho Villa Expedition, a military operation conducted by the Army against the forces of Mexican revolutionary Francisco "Pancho" Villa.

MILITARY

N. Korea's Kim Yo Jong rejects peace push

By David Choi and Yoojin Lee
Stars and Stripes

The North Korean leader's influential sister has dismissed the South's recent calls for dialogue and urged her country's diplomats to prepare for "preemptive counteraction," state media reported Wednesday.

Kim Yo Jong, a senior official on the State Affairs Commission, called South Korean President Lee Jae-myung's push for improved ties a "pipe dream," according to a statement published by the Korean Central News Agency.


Kim Yo Jong

She accused Lee of trying to create an "amicable image" while hosting a large-scale military exercise with the United States. The allies began Ulchi Freedom Shield on Monday, involving about 20 field drills across South Korea. Washington and Seoul describe the training as routine and defensive, while Pyongyang routinely condemns the maneuvers as invasion rehearsals.

Kim said Lee's outreach while conducting military drills highlights South Korea's double standards, declaring Seoul "cannot be a diplomatic partner."

South Korea's Ministry of Unification responded Wednesday, saying in an emailed statement that "it is important to respect each other" to achieve peace.

The ministry said Lee's administration seeks stability and prosperity for both Koreas and pledged to move past an "era of confrontation and competition" to a "new era of peaceful coexistence and co-development."

Lee has vowed to gradually rebuild relations, starting with restoring a military agreement both countries abandoned last year. His predecessor, Yoon Suk Yeol, suspended the 2018 Comprehensive Military Agreement in June 2024 after North Korea conducted missile tests and floated trash-filled balloons across the border.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un withdrew from the accord entirely seven months earlier, citing the need to bolster his country's border defenses.

Separately, KCNA reported Tuesday that Kim inspected the North's newest destroyer, the Choe Hyon, at a shipyard in Nampo. During the visit, he accused the U.S. and South Korea of seeking to "ignite a war" through the Ulchi drills and called for a "rapid expansion of nuclearization."

Marines join allies for training in Philippines

By Seth Robson
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Marines have launched amphibious training in the Philippines with Filipino and Australian troops, shortly after completing a disaster-response mission in the country's north.

Members of Marine Rotational Force-Darwin joined Exercise Alon, which began Friday and runs through Aug. 29 on the islands of Luzon and Palawan, the unit said in a news release Monday.

Alon, first held in 2023, is Australia's largest overseas exercise with the Philippines, Australian chief of joint operations Vice Adm. Justin Jones said Friday in a statement from the Department of Defence.

The 2,500-member Marine force began a six-month deployment to Australia's Northern Territory in March but has participated in at least five exercises in the Philippines this year.

Last month, Marines helped deliver food and other supplies to northern communities affected by typhoons, tropical storms and monsoon rains.

"The pivot from crisis response to Exercise Alon is a testament of the relationships we've built with our regional partners and another chance to prove them in the field," Col. Jason Armas, the rotational force's commander, said in the release.

Alon — meaning "wave" in Tagalog — includes maritime security training. The Marines' contribution involves a headquarters element, a reinforced rifle company and an aviation detachment, according to the release.

More than 3,600 personnel are taking part, including forces from Canada.

The training comes amid heightened tensions in the South China Sea, where Beijing and Manila have clashed over disputed territory.

On Aug. 11, a Chinese navy ship collided with a Chinese coast guard vessel while trying to drive the Philippine coast guard away from Scarborough Shoal, about 140 miles west of Luzon. Two days later, the destroyer USS Higgins sailed past the shoal in a freedom-of-navigation operation.

Scarborough Shoal — one of many small rock formations in the South China Sea — is 750 nautical miles from mainland China, but that hasn't stopped Chinese fishermen excavating live coral and harvesting endangered species such as giant clams without permission from the Philippines.

During Alon, MV-22B Osprey aircraft from Hawaii-based Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 363 will drop Australian and Philippine special forces paratroops, according to the release. The Ospreys will also insert U.S. and Philippine troops alongside Philippine UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to simulate seizing key terrain, while Philippine and Australian forces conduct a simultaneous amphibious raid.


Keegan Jones/U.S. Marine Corps

Maj. Matthew Lowery, the fires and effects coordinator for Marine Rotational Force-Darwin, greets a Filipino service member Friday during Exercise Alon's opening ceremony in Puerto Princesa, Philippines.

The exercise includes a live-fire maritime strike with forces integrating command and control, aviation, logistics and fire, the release said.

Australia, like the United States, has a visiting forces agreement with the Philippines that allows for troop deployments between the countries.

Australia has deployed HMAS Brisbane, ground forces, F/A-18F Super Hornet fighters, EA-18G electronic attack aircraft and a C-130J Super Hercules to this month's drills, according to the Defence Department.

"This exercise reflects Australia's commitment to working with partners to ensure we maintain a region where state sovereignty is protected, international law is followed, and nations can make decisions free from coercion," Jones said.

US seeks shipbuilding expertise from S. Korea, Japan to counter China

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — American lawmakers are using a trip to South Korea and Japan to explore how the United States can tap those allies' shipbuilding expertise and capacity to help boost its own capabilities, which are dwarfed by those of China.

Sens. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., and Andy Kim, D-N.J., traveled to Seoul on Sunday and were to travel to Japan to meet top shipbuilders from the world's second- and third-largest shipbuilding countries. The senators want to examine the possibilities of forming joint ventures to construct and repair noncombatant vessels for the U.S. Navy in the Indo-Pacific and bring investments to American shipyards.

"We already have fewer capacity now than we did during Operation Iraqi Freedom" in 2003, Duckworth told The Associated Press. "We have to rebuild the capacity. At the same time, what capacity we have is aging and breaking down and taking longer and more expensive to fix."

Their trip comes as President Donald Trump demands a plan to revive U.S. shipyards and engage foreign partners. The Pentagon is seeking $47 billion for shipbuilding in its annual budget. The urgency stems from the fact that Washington severely lags behind China in building naval ships, a situation raising alarms among policymakers who worry the maritime balance of power could shift to China, now the world's No. 1 shipbuilder.

Duckworth, who serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said she hopes the trip could lead to joint ventures among the U.S. military, American companies and foreign partners to build auxiliary vessels for the Navy and small boats for the Army.

Another possibility is repairing U.S. ships in the Indo-Pacific region.

"If we have to bring ships all the way back to the United States ... to wait two years to be fixed, that doesn't help the situation," Duckworth said.

The discussions, she said, will focus on auxiliary vessels, which are noncombatant ships such as fueling and cargo vessels that support naval and military operations. The Navy's auxiliary fleet is aging and insufficient in numbers, she said.

PACIFIC

Officials: Okinawa balcony issues won't force moves

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY
Stars and Stripes

CAMP KINSER, Okinawa — None of the families living in 65 homes with balconies deemed at high risk for concrete spalling will be required to move, the Kadena Air Base housing office announced at a town hall meeting Tuesday evening.

The spalling is "a non-structural issue," Air Force Lt. Col. Aki Nervik, commander of the 718th Civil Engineer Squadron at Kadena Air Base, told approximately 50 tower residents during the meeting at Surfside Club.

High risk involves any cracking or major deflection seen in the concrete, he said.

"The only hazard is those chunks of concrete falling off from a high elevation and bonking somebody on the head who happens to be walking below," he said. "Which is why we have all the cordoned areas in the appropriate fall zone."

Spalled concrete was found July 29 outside tower 1088, according to an unsigned email from Kadena's 18th Wing, whose civil engineers maintain the housing towers on Kinser, a Marine Corps base. Inspections were conducted through Saturday at 544 homes in six occupied towers and two unoccupied towers, Nervik said.

The 263 occupied units are in towers 1086, 1087, 1088, 867, 871 and 872 on Kinser's north side.

Tensions flared occasionally during the 90-minute meeting, with residents taking issue with a lack of communication from the housing office. Another resident complained that the housing office did not answer questions.

Nervik apologized and said his office didn't have enough information about the issue to present to residents before Aug. 14.

Gunnery Sgt. John Beaver, 39, of Marine Air Control Squadron 4, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, said his home in tower 872 is at low risk for spalling, but his family has been moved twice in the past 1½ years from other Kinser towers due to safety issues.

"I feel there's a lack of empathy on behalf of the housing office," he said after the meeting. "Right now, we have one way in and out of my tower and it's a narrow pathway about maybe three feet wide."

Families in the high-risk units have the option to move cost-free, Nervik said. The housing office will work to keep families on Kinser if they want to stay there, but Nervik also said options were "limited."

He recommended families in high-risk units not use their balconies until further notice.

Another 99 units are at moderate risk for spalling, according to a slideshow presentation at the meeting. These units have "very little or no deflection" and are not a concern, Nervik said.

Spalling could be seen on the underside of balconies at towers 1087 and 1088 on Wednesday. Orange plastic net fencing surrounded each occupied tower except for pathways to one main entrance and emergency side exits.



RYAN M. BREEDEN/Stars and Stripes

Spalling concrete is seen on balconies at housing tower 1087 on Camp Kinser, Okinawa, on Wednesday.

Nervik, responding to a resident's questions, said he had no repair timeline, but his office is looking into a short-term solution.

The squadron solicited contracting bids for scaffolding to replace the fencing to allow easier access, Nervik said. That could take up to 60 days to be installed, housing maintenance chief Eric McClay said during the meeting.

Spalling concrete was also an issue in two family housing neighborhoods at Kadena earlier this year.

Nervik declined to answer questions after the meeting, referring inquiries to the 18th Wing.

"Engineers who have reviewed the design of the balconies have concluded that there is no compromise to the structural integrity of balconies or the units," the wing wrote Wednesday. "Our current focus is on ensuring resident safety, finishing inspections, and analyzing data. The health and safety of our residents is our primary concern, and we are prioritizing safety as the next steps are decided."

Stars and Stripes reporter Ryan M. Breeden contributed to this report.

Panda Express now taking orders at Osan Air Base

BY TREVARES JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — About 60 customers lined up Wednesday morning for the 9 a.m. opening of Panda Express at this installation south of Seoul.

The new location in the exchange food court is the fast-casual chain's second to open on a U.S. military base since November, when crowds lined up for Panda Express at nearby Camp Humphreys.

The Osan grand-opening coincided with the third day of Ulchi Freedom Shield, an 11-day joint exercise that brings more military personnel to the base and more hungry customers to the food court.

"We're very humbled, with the exercise happening on base — the support from the local community has been overwhelming," Brian Jarvis, executive director of non-traditional, licensing and international operations for Panda Express, told Stars and Stripes at the restaurant opening.



TREVARES JOHNSON/Stars and Stripes

Service members and others line up for Panda Express at Osan Air Base, South Korea, on Wednesday during the fast-casual dining chain's grand-opening.

Thirty members of the Panda Express Korean operations team, along with additional employees from Arizona, staffed the Osan location for opening day, Jarvis said.

The Osan opening, originally planned for May, was delayed due to logistical issues associated with "creating a new supply chain" for the restaurant, he said.

Customers lined up for American-Chinese cuisine such as orange chicken, Beijing beef and teriyaki chicken.

"There are healthier options at Panda Express compared to what's already in the post exchange," said Chaplain (Capt.) John Choi, of the 51st Fighter Wing, who picked up six meals for his team. "It's another option compared to the Burger King, Arby's and whatnot."

Military health officials have highlighted the importance of food choice on installations as obesity rates among active-duty service members more than doubled between 2012 and 2022, according to a 2023 report by the American Security Project, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit.

According to Panda Express' official nutrition guide, menu items range from 90 to 520 calories per entrée, with full plates averaging between 750 and 1,200 calories depending on selections.

For example, a plate with grilled teriyaki chicken, steamed rice and broccoli beef comes to approximately 850 calories.

Panda Express has three more stores under construction in Japan at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo and Kadena Air Base and Marine Corps Camp Foster on Okinawa, Jarvis said.

Work on another at Camp Hansen, also on Okinawa, will start later this year.

"It's tremendous pride and excitement to be able to give something back to our military community," Jarvis said. "We just hope to bring a little piece of home every time we open overseas."

University of Hawaii students to aid in war-dead recovery mission

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

HONOLULU — The University of Hawaii and the Defense Department have entered a five-year cooperation agreement aimed at enhancing efforts to find and identify the nation's missing war dead.

The deal, signed Tuesday by UH President Wendy Hensel and Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Director Kelly McKeague, will also allow students to work alongside scientists at the agency's state-of-the-art forensic laboratory on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Under the agreement, students and faculty will gain access to DPAA's scientific experts, data and lab resources, while the agency will benefit from the university's academic programs and research facilities.

Roughly 81,000 service members remain missing from World War II and later conflicts. McKeague said just over 37,000 are considered potentially recoverable, with the rest lost at sea or under circumstances that make recovery highly unlikely.

Federal law requires the Pentagon to fund recovery efforts at a level sufficient to account for at least 200 missing personnel each year. After falling short in recent fiscal years, the agency since Oct 1 had made 208 identifications as of Tuesday.

DPAA maintains 130 private partnerships in its mission to account for missing service members, McKeague said.

The university and DPAA have been cooperating in an informal manner for years, but the agreement will bring that to a much higher level, he said.

MILITARY

Pentagon unveils ship that has no crew

By Gary Warner
Stars and Stripes

SEATTLE — A previously unseen vessel cruising Puget Sound has been the talk of ship spotters, nautical bloggers, local television and newspapers as far away as the East Coast.

"Images of the odd-looking, 180-foot ship escorted by a tugboat through the Saratoga Passage in Puget Sound emerged on Reddit earlier this week," the New York Post reported in March.

The vessel had few markings, a blank, white-covered superstructure and no visible crew.

"A mysterious warship with no one aboard was recently seen in waters off of Washington state," wrote the WION news site.

The Pentagon confirmed soon after that the vessel was a project of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

On Aug. 11, the Navy went public with details on the ship, including photographs of a bottle of champagne being smashed across its bow as part of a naming ceremony at a Puget Sound shipyard in Everett, Wash., north of Seattle.

"DARPA has marked a traditional naval milestone with the christening of USX-1 Defiant, a first-of-its-kind autonomous, unmanned surface vessel designed from the ground up to never accommodate a human aboard," the agency reported.



U.S. Navy

The USX-1 Defiant ship cruises in Puget Sound near Seattle in the summer of 2025.

The 240-metric ton vessel, built by Nichols Brothers Boat Builders and Serco Maritime at a small shipyard on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound, is a demonstration model for the Pentagon's No Manning Required Ship, or NOMARS, program. It's designed to operate autonomously in open seas for up to a year without needing human maintenance.

The Navy could use unmanned vessels such as the Defiant on missions that might risk casualties on crewed ships, DARPA said.

At an U.S. Naval Institute conference Friday in Annapolis, Md., on the future of unmanned vessels, top Navy officials said the Defiant and other uncrewed ships are a key to match the number of Chinese ships and their capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region.

"That is the newest thing, the most complicated thing we're working on," said Rear Adm. Derek Trinque of the Navy's Surface Warfare Division.

Capt. Garrett Miller, commander of Surface Development Group One, the San Diego-based command of the experimental unmanned fleet, was more succinct.

"We definitely want unmanned. Period. I mean, it's that simple," he said.

The Defiant was built with a $25 million project development budget.

Congress just approved more than $2 billion for Navy uncrewed ship programs overall, primarily in the reconciliation bill that supplemented defense spending in addition to spending planned in the National Defense Authorization Act, annual legislation that sets expenditures and policies for the Defense Department.

The Defiant design "aims to revolutionize naval architecture by eliminating the need for human crew aboard ships," the Pentagon said in a statement last week.

The ship has no portals and doors, corridors, gangplanks, ventilation, bridge or other open spaces that would be needed for a crewed ship.

"Defiant is a tough little ship and defies the idea that we cannot make a ship that can operate in the challenging environment of the open ocean without people to operate her," said Greg Avicola, NOMARS program manager. "She's no wider than she must be to fit the largest piece of hardware, and we have no human passageways to worry about."

The simplified hull design also will allow for rapid production if the Pentagon approves the project following ongoing sea trials. The project is under DARPA and would shift to the Navy later if tests go as planned. At that point, the Defiant would be officially commissioned as a Navy ship. Defiant would operate under the Navy's Unmanned Maritime Systems Program Office, according to DARPA.

The Defiant is not armed, but the Pentagon has released concept plans that would include missile systems. Weapons control would be handled by humans from remote locations or nearby crewed vessels, according to the Pentagon

The unmanned surface vessel Ranger first test-fired a missile controlled from a nearby ship in 2021. The Ranger is homeported at Naval Base Ventura County.

The Navy also issued a "pre-solicitation notice" last month seeking defense industry submissions for a Modular Attack Surface Craft that could travel at least 25 knots up to 2,500 nautical miles in heavy seas — fast and durable enough to keep pace with an aircraft carrier strike group.

The proposed vessel would carry two 40-foot containers, which could be anything from supplies to a missile launcher capable of firing up to four missiles, according to the Navy.

DARPA said the Defiant model could be produced and maintained at smaller port facilities and shipyards that can work on yachts, tugboats and other small- to medium-size vessels.

The ships will not have crews, but they will be operated remotely by officers and sailors. The Navy in February created the robotics warfare specialist rating for crew who can operate and maintain the new ships and weapons.

Airman charged with manslaughter in off-base shooting

By Corey Dickstein
Stars and Stripes

An airman at F.E. Warren Air Force Base was charged with involuntary manslaughter in the shooting death of a man on Saturday in Cheyenne, Wyo., just outside the base, local police and military officials said.

Airman 1st Class Jadan Orr, 20, was arrested in the early morning shooting of an unnamed 23-year-old man at an apartment complex outside the intercontinental ballistic missile base, the Air Force and Cheyenne Police Department said Tuesday.

Orr, who is assigned to the Air Force's 90th Missile Wing, is the second F.E. Warren airman facing involuntary manslaughter charges in a gun death in recent weeks.

Cheyenne police said Orr had been drinking alcohol with friends in an apartment complex about four miles from the F.E. Warren gates when he entered a bedroom with two other individuals and picked up an AK-47 assault rifle at about 3:30 a.m.

"While manipulating the firearm, Orr charged it and fired it through the wall into the [same apartment's] living room, striking the victim in the torso," Cheyenne police said in a statement.

Emergency medical personnel responded, but the victim died at the scene, police said. The incident remained under investigation, and police declined further comment on the case.

F.E. Warren officials pledged support for the probe.

"We are fully supporting the investigation and remain committed to taking care of our airmen and their families during this extremely difficult time," Col. Terry Holmes, the 90th Missile Wing's commander, said in the news release.

The shooting death came just weeks after another member of the 90th Missile Wing was killed in an apparent accidental shooting incident on base. Airman Bradan Lovan, 21, died in that July 20 shooting.

Lovan's death led to an immediate halting of the use of the Sig Sauer-produced M18 pistol among airman in Air Force Global Strike Command and a service-wide order to inspect the safety of the Air Force's M18 inventory.

While the service has continued to investigate the safety of its M18s, Air Force officials announced last week that an airman had been arrested in Lovan's death and charged with involuntary manslaughter, making false statements and obstruction of justice.

Air Force officials have said the investigation's into Lovan's shooting is ongoing, but the charges appear to indicate investigators believe the incident was the result of an accidental discharge and not a so-called "uncommanded discharge," in which the gun went off without the trigger being pulled.

The service has yet to publicly name the airman arrested in Lovan's death because of the ongoing nature of the probe, a service official said Tuesday.

MILITARY

CENTCOM troops receive faulty equipment

BY LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

Fixes are in the works for the way the Army cares for its tent cities, spurred by a finding that some U.S. Central Command forces got defective gear as a result of years of improper storage and maintenance.

The service used outdated storage plans for its containerized living systems and delayed training for more than four years, resulting in inadequate management of the equipment stored in the CENTCOM region, according to a recent audit by the Defense Department Inspector General.

In one example, troops in an undisclosed location in 2022 received ripped tents and faulty generators and latrines as a result of the poor management and record keeping, said the report, which covered from 2020 to 2024.

Known as Force Provider Modules, the systems furnish soldiers with climate-controlled housing, showers, latrines, kitchens and laundry facilities in the field.

Each system consists of 24 to 32 shipping containers with optional add-ons that can outfit the camps with cold-weather facilities, large-scale kitchens or recreation facilities.



JOSEPH KUMZAK/U.S. Army

Defense Department Inspector General staffers examine the condition of equipment modules at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, in May 2024. The Army and its contractors did not adequately manage tent city equipment that was stored in the Middle East, according to recent report by the department's IG.

The systems are stored in four regions around the world, including the Middle East, and can quickly be deployed by land or sea to support soldiers within one or two days.

The heavily redacted report does not detail the total number of systems or their storage locations, but the inspector general found that at times the container units were improperly held in outdoor locations, exposing them to the elements.

Contractors were also not instructed in proper maintenance or inventory methods, meaning sometimes the Army sent out equipment that didn't work.

In response to the findings, Army officials at the unidentified units agreed to take sufficient action to address recommendations, the IG said.

One recommendation is that the Army agency responsible for managing the availability of parts and support for combat vehicles including tanks, armored vehicles and other tactical equipment, update its storage supply plan and create a detailed process for maintenance training.

The report also recommended that the Army's principal logistics adviser require all storage site personnel to record in the service's inventory database details about which components require maintenance.

Hurricane forces return of Iwo Jima group to Norfolk after just five days

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

The Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group returned stateside earlier this week as a hurricane in the western Atlantic Ocean threatened high winds and large swells along the U.S. Eastern Seaboard.

The amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima was photographed by a ship spotter on Tuesday as the vessel returned to Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia. The group includes the amphibious transport dock ships USS Fort Lauderdale and USS San Antonio, which also arrived in Norfolk, USNI News reported Tuesday, citing an unnamed Navy official.



JOHN MORGAN/X

The amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima is seen Aug. 19,returning to Naval Station Norfolk, Va., due to Hurricane Erin.

The 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit also is part of the group, which comprises more than 4,500 Marines and sailors, according to the Navy.

The ships returned to "stay safe" from the hurricane, the official told USNI.

Over the weekend, Erin intensified to a major hurricane but later weakened, downgrading to a Category 2 storm early Wednesday, with maximum sustained winds of about 100 mph, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

The hurricane was not expected to make landfall, but the center warned against swimming at most U.S East Coast beaches due to the potential for "life-threatening surf and rip currents."

The ARG's return came just five days after it departed Norfolk on what the Navy said was a regularly scheduled deployment. It was the first deployment for a U.S. amphibious ready group in eight months, according to USNI.

The group had traveled to waters off the North Carolina coast to onload the Marine expeditionary unit. It wasn't clear whether that embark was completed, USNI reported.

The Navy didn't say in a statement Friday where the group was headed. But Reuters and CNN, citing unidentified U.S. officials, reported that it was deployed to waters around Latin America and the Caribbean to fight drug cartels.

Additionally, the destroyers USS Gravely, USS Jason Dunham and USS Sampson were being deployed near Venezuela over the coming months as part of President Donald Trump's counternarcotics strategy, The Associated Press reported Tuesday, citing an unidentified U.S. official.

Also on Tuesday, the Navy said a U.S. Coast Guard detachment embarked on USS Sampson had interdicted a suspected drug smuggling vessel Aug. 11 in international waters, seizing nearly 1,300 pounds of cocaine.

The Navy said the ship was operating in a known drug trafficking corridor but did not specify where the interdiction occurred.

USS New Orleans catches fire off Okinawa's coast

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

Japan's coast guard and military are helping the Navy battle a blaze that broke out aboard an amphibious transport docking ship off Okinawa's southeastern coast on Wednesday evening.

"Crews are responding to a fire aboard USS New Orleans (LPD 18) this evening, Aug. 20, (Japan time) which is in the vicinity of Okinawa, Japan," U.S. 7th Fleet said. "We will provide more details as they become available."

Task Force 76 spokesman Lt. Cmdr. John Mike acknowledged additional inquiries but did not immediately provide responses.

Camp Foster sent a message to the Japan coast guard at 5 p.m. stating there was a fire aboard the San Antonio-class vessel near White Beach Naval Facility, according to a coast guard news release.

"The crew is currently engaged in firefighting efforts, but we have requested the Japan Coast Guard to assist with the firefighting," the message said, according to the release.

No injuries or oil spills were reported, according to a second coast guard release.

The fire started in the front part of the 684-foot-long vessel, a coast guard spokesman said.



JAPAN COAST GUARD

A Japan Self-Defense Force vessel and two tugboats shoot water at the USS New Orleans near White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa, on Wednesday.

"We do not know if it started on the outside or the inside of the ship; we are still investigating," he said.

Two tugboats and an unspecified Self-Defense Force vessel were participating in firefighting efforts at 6 p.m., the spokesman said.

Camp Foster withdrew the firefighting request at 5:55 p.m. and asked all vessels to stay about a mile away, the coast guard said. The request was reinstated at 7:28 p.m.

The coast guard initially dispatched one vessel and was preparing to join firefighting efforts as of 8:30 p.m., the spokesman said.

Some Japanese government officials may speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

MILITARY

Vets' voices shape report on Afghan War

BY JULIE CARR SMYTH AND PATRICK AFTOORA-ORSAGOS
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Veterans of the war in Afghanistan are telling a commission reviewing decisions on the 20-year conflict that their experience was not only hell, but also confounding, demoralizing and at times humiliating.

The bipartisan Afghanistan War Commission aims to reflect such veterans' experiences in a report due to Congress next year, which will analyze key strategic, diplomatic, military and operational decisions made between June 2001 and the chaotic withdrawal in August 2021.

The group released its second interim report on Tuesday, drawing no conclusions yet but identifying themes emerging from thousands of pages of government documents; some 160 interviews with cabinet-level officials, military commanders, diplomats, Afghan and Pakistani leaders and others; and forums with veterans like one recently held at a national Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Columbus, Ohio.



AP

Navy veteran Florence Welch speaks to commissioners at the Afghanistan War Commission panel at the VFW National Convention on Aug. 12, in Columbus, Ohio.

"What can we learn from the Afghanistan War?" asked an Aug. 12 discussion session with four of the commission's 16 members. What they got was two straight hours of dozens of veterans' personal stories — not one glowingly positive, and most saturated in frustration and disappointment.

"I think the best way to describe that experience was awful," said Marine veteran Brittany Dymond, who served in Afghanistan in 2012.

Navy veteran Florence Welch said the 2021 withdrawal made her ashamed she ever served there.

"It turned us into a Vietnam, a Vietnam that none of us worked for," she said.

Members of Congress, some driven by having served in the war, created the independent commission several months after the withdrawal, after an assessment by the Democratic administration of then-President Joe Biden faulted the actions of President Donald Trump's first administration for constraining U.S. options. A Republican review, in turn, blamed Biden. Views of the events remain divided, and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered yet another review this spring.

The commission wants to understand the bigger picture of a conflict that spanned four presidential administrations and cost more than 2,400 American lives, said Co-Chair Dr. Colin Jackson.

"So we're interested in looking hard at the end of U.S. engagement in Afghanistan, but we're equally interested in understanding the beginning, the middle and the end," he said in an interview in Columbus.

Co-chair Shamila Chaudhary said the panel is also exploring more sweeping questions.

"So our work is not just about what the U.S. did in Afghanistan but what the U.S. should be doing in any country where it deems it has a national security interest," she said.

"And not just should it be there, but how it should behave, what values does it guide itself by, and how does it engage with individuals who are very different from themselves."

Jackson said one of the commission's priorities is making sure the final report, due in August 2026, isn't "unrecognizable to any veteran of the Afghanistan conflict."

"The nature of the report should be representative of every soldier, sailor, airman, Marine experience," he said.

Housing: Germany, Italy have most of lowest rated housing communities

FROM PAGE 1

throughout the U.S., the Pacific and Europe, five of the six lowest-rated family housing communities are in Germany or Italy.

U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria's housing in Ansbach scored 59.1 out of 100, the only post to receive a rating of poor, indicating tenants' "strong displeasure with the property and/or the level of service" and the need for immediate improvements.

"We are currently evaluating and diving deep into the survey results for all our garrisons on an individual basis and will be looking at Ansbach and the others to identify trends and areas of improvement," Heeter said.

The other five locations, from the bottom up, in satisfaction were Stuttgart, Kwajalein Atoll in the Pacific and Rheinland-Pfalz, landing in the below-average range; and Wiesbaden, Germany.

The highest overall satisfaction scores came from Fort Eisenhower in Georgia, recently renamed Fort Gordon; Hawthorne Army Depot, Calif.; Dugway Proving Ground in Utah and U.S. Army Garrison Daegu, South Korea.

For the first time, this year's survey included service members without families. The Army annually seeks feedback on housing and services to prioritize areas for improvement, the service said in a statement about the findings.

The family housing survey was conducted from March to May. Surveys were sent to 9,095 homes, with a little over 1 in 5 responding, according to CEL & Associates, the consulting company hired by the Army to do the survey.

The unaccompanied housing survey was distributed to 93,725 tenants, with an 11% response rate. The consulting company said the number of responses is typical for the demographic in a first-year survey.

Europe as a region scored the worst overall among barracks residents, with a "poor" satisfaction score of 63.1. Pacific housing wasn't rated much higher, with a below average score of 65.9.

Wiesbaden's barracks had the lowest satisfaction rating in Europe, ranking 41st out of 46 installations, according to the survey summary.

Some results were encouraging for Europe, Heeter said. For example, U.S. Army Garrison Benelux received an award for providing a high level of service to barracks residents, he said.

In family housing, he added, Europe's total score either held steady or improved in property condition, service and satisfaction compared with last year's results.

The command remains committed to improving homes and the services it provides, Heeter said.

Replicas: Shahed drones harder for US forces to track and shoot down

FROM PAGE 1

ployed alongside ballistic and cruise missiles.

Last month, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth reviewed a new model known as the Low-Cost Uncrewed Combat Attack System, or LUCAS, designed by Arizona-based defense contractor SpektreWorks to rival the power of the Shahed-136.

The Air Force offered some basic parameters for the Shahed replicas, including dimensions, propulsion system and payload capacity, but it didn't specify anything about the interior electronics.

That suggests that the focus is more on kinetic deterrence than electronic warfare, said Wolf-Christian Paes, senior fellow for armed conflict at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

"(The Air Force) basically wants something that flies like a Shahed, looks like a Shahed and arguably has a similar sort of radar signature like a Shahed," Paes said.

"This is about how to potentially shoot it out of the sky if it approaches your position."

The specified quantity of up to 36 also suggests that the military may be trying to prepare for a mass drone attack, a known weakness of U.S. defense systems, Paes said.

U.S. forces are better-equipped for tracking and shooting down incoming fighter planes or bombers, not the slow, low-flying Shahed drones, which are difficult for radar to pick up, he said.

"That's something that is hard to train (for) if you don't have a suitable target drone that flies a similar profile," Paes said.

The first confirmed use of a Shahed came in 2019, when drone strikes on Saudi oil facilities temporarily disrupted the global oil supply.

Since then, the Iranian drones have been used by Tehran's allies in Yemen and Iraq, and have been co-opted by Russia under the name Geran-2.

There may be no more famous one-way attack drone in the world today than the Shahed-136, said Behnam Ben Taleblu, the senior director of the Iran Program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies

It can deliver up to 200 pounds of explosives to predesignated targets at a range of at least 1,200 miles, according to the Open Source Munitions Portal, an online database compiled by munitions experts.

A similar variant, the Shahed-131, has slightly smaller dimensions and can deliver a payload of up to about 45 pounds, according to the database.

The U.S., Israel and Ukraine have been able to defeat large numbers of the drones on the battlefield, but drone deterrence has become a question of both cost and military tactics, Taleblu said.

"Their low price and high volume have shifted the burden of interception into as much a financial equation as a military one, given the cost to track, detect, and most importantly, intercept and destroy these low and slow flying systems," he said.

The Air Force said in its request for info that the drone replicas will be sent to the Armament Directorate at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, which designs, develops and fields air-delivered weapons systems.

The service isn't providing detailed technical designs, which means potential vendors will be required to analyze and develop their own copies of the Shahed-136.

NATION

Gabbard revokes 37 security clearances

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration said Tuesday that it was revoking the security clearances of 37 current and former national security officials in the latest act of retribution targeting public servants from the federal government's intelligence community.

A memo from Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard accuses the singled-out individuals of having engaged in the "politicization or weaponization of intelligence" to advance personal or partisan goals, failing to safeguard classified information, failing to "adhere to professional analytic tradecraft standards" and other unspecified "detrimental" conduct.



Gabbard

The memo did not offer evidence to back up the accusations.

Many of the officials who were targeted left the government years ago after serving in both senior national security positions and lower-profile roles far from the public eye. Some worked on matters that have long infuriated Trump, like the intelligence community assessment that Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election on his behalf. And several signaled their concerns about Trump by signing a critical letter in 2019 that was highlighted on social media last month by right-wing provocateur and close Trump ally Laura Loomer.

The action is part of a broader Trump administration campaign to wield the levers of government against perceived adversaries, and reflects the president's continued distrust of career intelligence officials he has long seen as working against his interests. The revocation of clearances has emerged as a go-to tactic for the administration, a strategy critics say risks chilling dissenting voices from an intelligence community accustomed to drawing on a range of viewpoints before formulating an assessment.

"These are unlawful and unconstitutional decisions that deviate from well-settled, decades-old laws and policies that sought to protect against just this type of action," Mark Zaid, a national security lawyer whose own clearance was revoked by the Trump administration, said in a statement.

He called it hypocritical for the administration to "claim these individuals politicized or weaponized intelligence."

Gabbard on Tuesday sought to defend the move, which she said had been directed by Trump.

"Being entrusted with a security clearance is a privilege, not a right," she wrote on X. "Those in the Intelligence Community who betray their oath to the Constitution and put their own interests ahead of the American people have broken the sacred trust they promised to uphold."

Trump's crackdown ripples through DC neighborhoods

BY MATT BROWN, LINDSAY WHITEHURST AND CHRIS MEGERIAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The main drag in Washington's Columbia Heights neighborhood is typically crammed with people peddling pupusas, fresh fruit, souvenirs and clothing. On Tuesday, though, things felt different: The white tents that bulge with food and merchandise were scarcer than usual.

"Everything has stopped over the last week," said Yassin Yahyaoui, who sells jewelry and glass figurines. Most of his customers and fellow vendors, he said, have "just disappeared" — particularly if they speak Spanish.

The abnormally quiet street was one of many pieces of evidence showing how President Donald Trump 's decision to flood the nation's capital with federal law enforcement and immigration agents has rippled through the city. While troop deployments and foot patrols in downtown areas and around the National Mall have gotten the most attention, life in historically diverse neighborhoods like Columbia Heights is being reshaped as well.

The White House has credited Trump's crackdown with hundreds of arrests, while local officials have criticized the aggressive intervention in the city's affairs.

The confrontation escalated on Tuesday as the top federal prosecutor in D.C. opened an investigation into whether police officials have falsified crime data, according to a person familiar with the situation who wasn't authorized to comment publicly. The probe could be used to bolster Trump's claims that the city is suffering from a "crime emergency" despite statistics showing improvements. The mayor's office and the police department declined to comment.

National Guard members from West Virginia, South Carolina, Mississippi and Louisiana began arriving in Washington on Tuesday to assist in the crackdown, according to Joint Task Force District of Columbia, the military unit overseeing the D.C. Guard. Those troops from other states will perform similar duties to D.C. Guard members already on the streets, including protecting landmarks and crowd control, and will be staying at military base housing and hotels, JTF-DC said.



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

Armed Officers prepare to place handcuffs on a man from within an apartment complex, Tuesday in the Petworth neighborhood of northwest Washington. The officers pictured had "Washington Field Office" on their shirts underneath tactical gear that said Police.

Blocks away from where Yahyaoui had set up shop, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and local police stopped a moped driver delivering pizza. The agents drove unmarked cars and wore tactical vests; one covered his face with a green balaclava. They questioned the driver and required him to present documentation relating to his employment and legal residency status. No arrest was made.

On Thursday morning, a National Guard vehicle collided with a civilian car less than a mile from the U.S. Capitol.

One person was trapped inside the car after the accident and had to be extricated by emergency responders, according to D.C. fire department spokesman Vito Maggiolo. The person was transported to a hospital with minor injuries.

It was not immediately clear what caused the crash. A video posted online showed a tan-colored armored vehicle and a silver SUV with a crushed side. The military vehicle was twice the height of the civilian car.

"You come to our city and this is what you do? Seriously?" a woman yelled at the troops in the video.

The White House said there have been 465 arrests since Aug. 7, when the federal operation began, including 206 people who were in the country illegally. The Trump administration has ramped up immigration enforcement and the president signed an executive order on Aug. 11 to put the police department under federal control for 30 days; extending that would require congressional approval.

Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary, said Trump was "unapologetically standing up for the safety of law-abiding American citizens."

Glorida Gomez, who has been working a fruit stand in Columbia Heights for more than a decade, said business is worse now than during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said many vendors stopped coming because they were afraid of interacting with federal agents.

Customers seem less willing to spend money too. Reina Sosa, another vendor, said "they're saving it in case something happens," like getting detained by immigration enforcement.

Ana Lemus, who also sells fruit, said "we need more humanity on the part of the government."

"Remember that these are people being affected," she said. "The government is supposed to protect members of the community, not attack or discriminate against them."

Bystanders have captured some arrests on video. On Saturday morning, Christian Enrique Carias Torres was detained in another part of the city during a scuffle with ICE agents, and the footage ricocheted around social media. An FBI agent's affidavit said Carias Torres kicked one of the agents in the leg and another was injured when he fell during the struggle and struck his head on the pavement. A stun gun was used to subdue Carias Torres, who was charged Tuesday with resisting arrest.

An alphabet soup of federal agencies have been circulating in the city. In the Petworth neighborhood, roughly 20 officers from the FBI, Homeland Security, Park Police and U.S. Marshals descended on an apartment building on Tuesday morning. A man extended his hands out a window while officers cuffed him. Yanna Stelle, 19, who witnessed the incident, said she heard the chatter from walkie talkies as officers moved through the hallways.

"That was too many police first thing in the morning — especially for them to just be doing a warrant," she said.

From his actions and remarks, Trump seems interested in ratcheting up the pressure. His administration has asked Republican-led states to send more National Guard troops — a total of 1,100 on top of the 800 from the D.C.-based Guard. In addition to those states whose deployments started arriving Tuesday, Ohio and Tennessee have also said they will send forces.

Resistance to that notion is starting to surface, both on the streets and in Congress. On Tuesday, Democratic Rep. Sam Liccardo of California introduced a bill that would require a report outlining the cost of any National Guard deployment unrelated to a natural disaster, as well as its legal basis. It would also require reporting on any Guard interactions with civilians and other aspects of the operation.

Forty four Democrats have signed on in support. While the measure stands little chance of passing while Republicans control the chamber, it's a sign of a wider Democratic response to Trump's unprecedented moves in Washington.

"Are L.A. and D.C. a test run for a broader authoritarian takeover of local communities?" Liccardo asked. He added that the country's founders were suspicious of "executive control of standing armies."

NATION

Texas GOP set to vote on redistricting maps

BY JIM VERTUNO AND NICHOLAS RICCARDI
Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — The Republican-controlled Texas House of Representatives on Wednesday kicked off a heated debate over a new congressional map creating five new potential GOP seats that is expected to pass the chamber later in the day as part of a growing national redistricting battle.

The plan is the result of prodding by President Donald Trump, eager to stave off a midterm defeat that would deprive his party of control of the House of Representatives. Texas Democratic lawmakers delayed a vote for 15 days by leaving the state in protest, depriving the House of enough members to do business.

State Rep. Todd Hunter, who wrote the legislation formally creating the new map, noted that the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed politicians to redraw districts for nakedly partisan purposes. "The underlying goal of this plan is straight forward: improve Republican political performance," Hunter, a Republican, said as debate began.

Democrats responded that that was counter to the country's values. "In a democracy, people choose their representatives," said State Rep. Chris Turner, a Democrat. "This bill flips that on its head and lets politicians in Washington DC choose their voters."

The Texas State Senate, also controlled by Republicans, needs to also pass the map and GOP Gov. Greg Abbott must sign them before they become official. The House debate was expected to be the lengthiest and greatest obstacle to the Republican push, but both parties expected the legislation to ultimately pass given the GOP's significant majority in the chamber.



SARA DIGGINS, AUSTIN (TEXAS) AMERICAN-STATESMAN/AP

Protesters chant outside the Texas House chamber at the State Capitol in support of Texas Democrats and state Rep. Nicole Collier, confined to the House Chamber after refusing a Department of Public Safety escort on Tuesday in Austin.

Democrats said they're preparing to challenge the new map in court.

Some House Democrats returned from their flight on Monday, only to be assigned round-the-clock police escorts to ensure their attendance at Wednesday's session. Seven who refused were confined to the House floor, where they protested on a livestream Tuesday night, led by Rep. Nicole Collier, who represents a minority-majority district in Fort Worth. Her staff removed a pillow, blanket and bag of personal effects early Wednesday.

As lawmakers trickled into the chamber, several Democrats gave Collier a hug, said "Thank you," and took photos with her. In a social media post Tuesday night, Collier put a call from 2024 Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris on her cellphone's speaker. Harris told Collier that, "We are all in that room with you."

House Speaker Dustin Burrows announced as debate started that doors to the chamber were locked and any member leaving was required to have a permission slip before exting.

Furious national Democrats have vowed payback for the Texas map, with California's Legislature poised to approve new maps adding more Democratic-friendly seats later this week. The map would still need to be approved by that state's voters in November.

Normally, states redraw maps once a decade with new census figures. But Trump is lobbying other conservative-controlled states like Indiana and Missouri to also try to squeeze new GOP-friendly seats out of their maps as his party prepares for a difficult midterm election next year.

As House session was about to begin, about two dozen demonstrators supporting Democrats sang "Fighting for Democracy, we shall not be moved" outside the chamber. GOP House Speaker Dustin Burrows announced that the public gallery will be cleared if there are disruptions. The public gallery was mostly empty as the session was gaveled in.

But the 100 members required to do business were present. About 200 people have gathered in the Capitol's rotunda for a rally supporting Democrats, holding signs saying "End Gerrymandering — Save Democracy," "Defend the Constitution" and "Fascism is here."

Texas Democrats spent the day before the vote continuing to draw attention to the extraordinary lengths the Republicans who run the Legislature were going to ensure it takes place.

Collier started it when she refused to sign what Democrats called the "permission slip" required by Burrows to leave the House chamber, a form allowing Department of Public Safety troopers to follow them. Collier spent Monday night and Tuesday on the House floor, where she set up a livestream while her Democratic colleagues outside had plainclothes officers following them to their offices and homes.

Dallas-area Rep. Linda Garcia said she drove three hours home from Austin with an officer following her. When she went grocery shopping, he went down every aisle with her, pretending to shop, she said. As she spoke to The Associated Press by phone, two unmarked cars with officers inside were parked outside her home.

"It's a weird feeling," she said. "The only way to explain the entire process is: It's like I'm in a movie."

Nebraska plans immigration detention center, the 'Cornhusker Clink'

BY JOSH FUNK
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska announced plans Tuesday for an immigration detention center in the remote southwest corner of the state as President Donald Trump's administration races to expand the infrastructure necessary for increasing deportations.

The facility will be dubbed the "Cornhusker Clink," a play on Nebraska's nickname of the Cornhusker State and an old slang term for jail. The alliterative name follows in the vein of the previously announced "Alligator Alcatraz" and "Deportation Depot" detention centers in Florida and the "Speedway Slammer" in Indiana.

Republican Gov. Jim Pillen said he and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem had agreed to use an existing minimum security prison work camp in McCook — a remote city of about 7,000 people in the middle of the wide-open prairies between Denver and Omaha — to house people awaiting deportation and being held for other immigration proceedings. It's expected to be a Midwest hub for detainees from several states.

"This is about keeping Nebraskans — and Americans across our country — safe," Pillen said in a statement.

The facility can accommodate 200 people with plans to expand to 300. McCook is about 210 miles (338 kilometers) west of Lincoln, the state capital.

"If you are in America illegally, you could find yourself in Nebraska's Cornhusker Clink. Avoid arrest and self deport now using the CBP Home App," Noem said in a separate statement.

Noem's agency posted a picture on social media showing ears of corn wearing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement hats, standing in front of a prison fence.

The governor said later at a news conference in McCook that the center will have the advantage of being located at an existing facility and near a regional airport. He told reporters he didn't know if the center would house women as well as men or if children could be held there. He said he first learned the federal government was interested in the facility on Friday.



ARTHUR H. TRICKETT-WILLE, LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR/AP

Demonstrator and Lincoln native, Jaci Vetro holds a sign on the steps of the Nebraska State Capitol on Tuesday after a news conference at the Governor's Hearing Room, in Lincoln.

Pillen also announced he would order the Nebraska National Guard to provide administrative and logistical support to Nebraska-based immigration agents. About 20 soldiers will be involved. And he said the Nebraska State Patrol would allow six troopers to help federal immigration agents make arrests.

The Trump administration is adding new detention facilities across the country to hold the growing number of immigrants it has arrested and accused of being in the country illegally.

In a video posted to social media, state Sen. Megan Hunt, an independent, blasted a lack of transparency about plans for a detention center, citing her unfulfilled request to the governor and executive branch for emails and other records.

She urged people to support local immigrant rights groups.

Around a half-dozen protesters sat in the hallway outside the governor's office Tuesday afternoon making signs that said, "No Nazi Nebraska" and "ICE = Gestapo."

Maghie Miller-Jenkins of Lincoln said she doesn't think an ICE detention center is a good idea, adding the state should tackle problems like child hunger and homelessness. "This state has numerous things they could focus on that would benefit the constituents," she said.

NATION

Erin closes East Coast beaches, brings warnings

By Allen G. Breed and John Seewer
Associated Press

RODANTHE, N.C. — From Florida to New England, people trying to enjoy the last hurrahs of summer along the coast were met with rip current warnings, closed beaches and in some cases already treacherous waves as Hurricane Erin inched closer Wednesday.

While forecasters remain confident that the center of the monster storm will stay far offshore, the outer edges are expected to bring high winds, large swells and life-threatening rip currents into Friday. Life-threatening surf and 100 mph winds will lash the East Coast, National Weather Service forecasters warned Wednesday.

New York City closed its beaches to swimming on Wednesday and Thursday, and New York Gov. Kathy Hochul ordered three state beaches on Long Island to prohibit swimming through Thursday. Several New Jersey beaches also will be temporarily off-limits, while some towns in Delaware have cut off ocean access.

Off Massachusetts, Nantucket Island could see waves of more than 10 feet later this week. But the biggest threat is along the barrier islands of North Carolina's Outer Banks, where evacuations have been ordered.

Erin has become an unusually large and deceptively worrisome storm, with its tropical storm winds stretching 265 miles from its core. Forecasters expect it will grow larger in size as it moves through the Atlantic and curls north.

On Tuesday it lashed the Turks and Caicos Islands, where government services were suspended and residents were ordered to stay home, along with parts of the Bahamas before its expected turn toward Bermuda.

Tropical storm watches were issued for Virginia and North Carolina as well as Bermuda.

Erin lost some strength from previous days and was a Category 2 hurricane with maximum sustained winds around 100 mph, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said. It was about 400 miles south-southeast of North Carolina's Cape Hatteras.

On the Outer Banks, Erin's storm surge could swamp roads with waves of 15 feet. Mandatory evacuations were ordered on Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands. More than 1,800 people had left Ocracoke by ferry since Monday.

North Carolina Gov. Josh Stein warned coastal residents to be prepared to evacuate and declared a state of emergency Tuesday. Bulldozers shored up the dunes, and trucks from the local power company on Ocracoke were on hand to respond to downed wires.

Some side roads already saw some flooding on Hatteras, and the owners of a pier removed a few planks, hoping the storm surge would pass through without tearing it up.

Most residents decided to stay even though memories are still fresh of Hurricane Dorian in 2019, when 7 feet of water swamped Ocracoke, county commissioner Randal Mathews said.

Tom Newsom, who runs fishing charters on Hatteras, said has lived there almost 40 years and never evacuated. He was not going to this time either.



ALLEN G. BREED/AP

Three women walk the beach at sunrise as waves from Hurricane Erin crash ashore in Nags Head, N.C., on Wednesday. On the Outer Banks, Erin's storm surge could swamp roads with waves of 15 feet.

Comparing this hurricane to others he has seen, he called this one a "nor'easter on steroids."

The Outer Banks' thin stretch of low-lying barrier islands jutting into the Atlantic are increasingly vulnerable to storm surges. There are concerns that parts of the main highway could be washed out, leaving some routes impassible for days. And dozens of beach homes already worn down from chronic beach erosion and the loss of protective dunes could be at risk, said David Hallac, superintendent of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

Farther south, no evacuations were ordered but some beach access points were closed with water levels up to 3 feet over normal high tides expected for several days.



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/AP

People stop to take a closer look at a tree stump that was washed ashore from waves from Hurricane Erin along beach in Duck, N.C., on Tuesday. The Outer Banks' thin stretch of low-lying barrier islands jutting into the Atlantic are increasingly vulnerable to storm surges.

Dangerous heat descends on states in the Southwest, raising wildfire risk

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A dangerous heat wave descended on much of California and the U.S. Southwest, with triple-digit temperatures expected along with a higher risk of wildfires.

Officials opened cooling centers this week in Los Angeles, where residents are warned to avoid strenuous outdoor activities. California Gov. Gavin Newsom ordered state firefighting resources deployed in areas where blazes could ignite.

The National Weather Service issued an extreme heat warning for Southern California starting Wednesday into the weekend. If outdoor activities can't be avoided, forecasters say, they should be moved to early morning hours. And everyone should hydrate.

Downtown Los Angeles was forecast to reach 94 degrees Fahrenheit, while valleys to the north braced for temperatures as high as 108 F. It will be several degrees hotter in desert areas.

Further north, nearly-always-hot Death Valley could see a severe 120 F, the weather service said.

In Arizona, the peak of the heat wave will hit Thursday and Friday, with the mercury possibly reaching 110 F (43 C) in the southern and western parts of the state. Similar temperatures were likely in Las Vegas.

Red flag warnings, signaling elevated wildfire danger, have been issued across Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties until Saturday.

"If you live in a high fire danger area in the mountains or foothills, review your evacuation plans and route and stay tuned to your local emergency officials," the weather service said in a statement.

The state has sent 10 fire engines and multiple firefighting teams to LA County to assist local agencies if blazes break out.

"By prepositioning firefighting crews, equipment, and other resources in high-risk areas, we can respond faster and more effectively when needed," said Nancy Ward, director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

California's largest blaze this year, the Gifford Fire, reached 95% containment Tuesday after charring nearly 206 square miles of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties since erupting on Aug. 1. The cause is under investigation.

Appeals court blocks NM's 7-day gun waiting period

Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. — A panel of federal appellate judges ruled Tuesday that New Mexico's seven-day waiting period on gun purchases likely infringes on citizens' Second Amendment rights, putting the law on hold pending a legal challenge.

The ruling by the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sends the case back to a lower court. New Mexico's waiting period went into effect in May 2024, and does hold an exception for concealed permit holders.

"Cooling-off periods do not fit into any historically grounded exceptions to the right to keep and bear arms, and burden conduct within the Second Amendment's scope," wrote Judge Timothy Tymkovich in the split 2-1 ruling. "We conclude that New Mexico's Waiting Period Act is likely an unconstitutional burden on the Second Amendment rights of its citizens.

In a dissenting opinion, Judge Scott Matheson said New Mexico's waiting period "establishes a condition or qualification on the commercial sale of arms that does not serve abusive ends."

The National Rifle Association and Mountain States Legal Foundation, an advocacy group for gun rights, filed the lawsuit on behalf of two New Mexico residents, citing concerns about delayed access to weapons for victims of domestic violence and others. Democratic state lawmakers had enacted the restrictions in hopes of ensuring more time for the completion of federal background checks on gun buyers.

In a statement, Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham expressed "deep disappointment" and said Tuesday's ruling was likely to cost lives.

NATION

Alaska man gifted $22,000 motorcycle by Russia

Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — An Alaska man might have walked away as the biggest winner of last week's high stakes summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Anchorage. He rode off with a new motorcycle, courtesy of the Russian government.

Putin's delegation gifted Mark Warren, a retired fire inspector for the Municipality of Anchorage, a Ural Gear Up motorcycle with a sidecar, one week after a television crew's interview with Warren went viral in Russia. The motorcycle company, founded in 1941 in western Siberia, now assembles its bikes in Petropavlovsk, Kazakhstan, and distributes them through a team based in Woodinville, Wash..



BILL ROTH/AP

Mark Warren poses with the Ural motorcycle he received as a gift from the Russian government in Anchorage, Alaska, Monday.

Warren already owned one Ural motorcycle, purchased from a neighbor. He was out running errands on it a week before the summit when a Russian television crew saw him and asked for an interview.

Warren told the crew about his difficulty obtaining parts for the bike because of supply-and-demand issues.

"It went viral, it went crazy and I have no idea why, because I'm really just a super-duper normal guy," Warren said Tuesday. "They just interviewed some old guy on a Ural, and for some reason they think it's cool."

On Aug. 13, two days before the Trump-Putin summit to discuss the war in Ukraine, Warren received a call from the Russian journalist, who told him, "They've decided to give you a bike."

Warren said a document he received indicated the gift was arranged through the Russian Embassy in the U.S,

Warren said he initially thought it might be a scam. But after Putin and Trump departed Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson following their three-hour summit last Friday, he got another call informing him the bike was at the base.

He was directed to go to an Anchorage hotel the next day for the handoff. He went with his wife, and there in the parking lot, along with six men he assumed to be Russians, was the olive-green motorcycle, valued at $22,000.

"I dropped my jaw," he said. "I went, 'You've got to be joking me.'"

All the Russians asked in return was to take his picture and interview him, he said: "If they want something from me, they're gonna be sorely disappointed."

Two reporters and someone from the consulate jumped on the bike with him, and he drove slowly around the parking lot while a cameraman ran alongside and filmed it.

The only reservation he had about taking the Ural is that he might somehow be implicated in some nefarious Russian scheme. Warren said he doesn't want a "bunch of haters coming after me that I got a Russian motorcycle. … I don't want this for my family."

When he was signing the paperwork taking ownership of the motorcycle, he noticed it was manufactured Aug. 12.

"The obvious thing here is that it rolled off the showroom floor and slid into a jet within probably 24 hours," he said.

Ranger fired for hanging trans flag in Yosemite may face prosecution

Associated Press

A Yosemite National Park ranger was fired after hanging a pride flag from El Capitan while some park visitors could face prosecution under protest restrictions that have been tightened under President Donald Trump.

Shannon "SJ" Joslin, a ranger and biologist who studies bats, said they hung a 66-foot wide transgender pride flag on the famous climbing wall that looms over the California park's main thoroughfare for about two hours on May 20 before taking it down voluntarily. A termination letter they received last week accused Joslin of "failing to demonstrate acceptable conduct" in their capacity as a biologist and cited the May incident.

Joslin said their firing sends the opposite message: "If you're a federal worker and you have any kind of identity that doesn't agree with this current administration, then you must be silent, or you will be eliminated."

Park officials on Tuesday said they were working with the U.S. Justice Department to pursue visitors and workers who violated restrictions on demonstrations at the park that had more than 4 million visitors last year.

Joslin said a group of seven climbers including two other park rangers hung the flag. The other rangers are on administrative leave pending an investigation, Joslin said.

Flags have long been flown from El Capitan without consequences, said Joanna Citron Day, a former federal attorney who is now with the advocacy group Public Employees For Environmental Responsibility. She said the group is representing Joslin, but there is no pending legal case.

On May 21, a day after the flag display, Acting Superintendent Ray McPadden signed a rule prohibiting people from hanging banners, flags or signs larger than 15 square feet in park areas designated as "wilderness" or "potential wilderness." That covers 94% of the park.

Many parks have designated "First Amendment areas" where groups 25 or fewer people can protest without permits. Yosemite has several of those areas.

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WORLD

Israel mobilizes reservists for Gaza operation

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel's military said Wednesday it would call up tens of thousands of reservists and extend the service of others for an expanded military operation in Gaza City.

Defense Minister Israel Katz approved plans to begin a new phase of operations in some of Gaza's most densely populated areas, Israel's military said Wednesday. The scheme, expected to receive the final approval from the chief of staff in the coming days, includes calling up 60,000 reservists and extending the service of an additional 20,000 currently serving.

In a country of fewer than 10 million people, the call-up of so many reservists carries both economic and political weight and comes days after hundreds of thousands rallied for a ceasefire.

This comes as negotiators scramble to bring Israel and Hamas to agree to a ceasefire ending 22 months of fighting, while international leaders and rights groups warn an expanded assault could deepen Gaza's humanitarian crisis, with most residents displaced, neighborhoods in ruins and communities facing the threat of famine.

A military official, speaking on the condition of anonymity in line with military regulations, said that troops will operate in parts of Gaza City where they have not yet been deployed and where Israel believes Hamas is still active. Israeli troops in the Zeitoun and Jabaliya — a built-up refugee camp in Gaza City — are already preparing the groundwork for the expanded operation.

Gaza City is both Hamas' military and governing stronghold and one of the last places of refuge in northern Gaza, where hundreds of thousands are sheltering. Israeli troops will be targeting Hamas' vast underground tunnel network there, the official added.

Although Israel has targeted and killed much of Hamas' senior leadership, parts of the militant group are actively regrouping and carrying out attacks, including launching rockets towards Israel, the official said.

It remains unclear when the operation will begin, but it could be a matter of days and such a mobilization of reservists is the largest in months.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the objective of the war is to secure the release of remaining hostages and ensure Hamas and other militants can never again threaten Israel.

The planned offensive, first announced earlier this month, comes amid heightened international condemnation of Israel's restrictions on food and medicine reaching Gaza and fears of another mass displacement among Palestinians.

AP journalists saw small groups heading south from the city this week, but how many will voluntarily flee remains unclear. Some said they were waiting to see how events unfold before moving yet again, and many insist nowhere is safe from airstrikes.

"What we're seeing in Gaza is nothing short of apocalyptic reality for children, for their families and for this generation," Ahmed Alhendawi, regional director of Save the Children, said. "The plight and the struggle of this generation of Gaza is beyond being described in words."

The call-up comes as a growing campaign of exhausted reservists accuses the government of perpetuating the war for political reasons and failing to bring home remaining hostages.

The families of the hostages and former army and intelligence chiefs have also expressed opposition to the expanded operation in Gaza City. Most of the families of the hostages want an immediate ceasefire and worry an expanded assault could imperil bringing the 50 hostages still in Gaza home. Israel believes that 20 are still alive.

Guy Poran, a retired air force pilot who has organized veterans campaigning to end the war, said many reservists are exhausted after repeated tours lasting hundreds of days and resentful of those not called up at all. Most now just want to return to their lives.

"Even those that are not ideologically against the current war or the government's new plans don't want to go because of fatigue or their families or their businesses," he said.

Arab mediators and Hamas said this week the leaders of the Palestinian militant group had agreed to ceasefire terms, though similar announcements have been made in the past that did not lead to a lasting truce.

Egypt and Qatar have said they have been waiting for Israel's response to the ceasefire proposal.



AP

Police secure the area of a cornfield where an unidentified flying object has crashed and exploded in the country's east in Osiny, Poland, Wednesday.

Unidentified flying object crashes, explodes in field in east Poland

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — An unidentified flying object crashed into a cornfield and exploded in eastern Poland early Wednesday, the country's news agency PAP reported.

Local police said they received reports of the crash around 2 a.m. and found burned metal and plastic debris at the scene, near the village of Osiny.

As a result of the explosion, windows were broken in some houses but nobody was injured, PAP reported.

Poland's Armed Forces Operational Command said Wednesday on social media that no violations of Polish airspace from neighboring Ukraine or Belarus were recorded overnight.

Officials initially said the explosion may have been caused by a part of an old engine with a propeller.

Defense Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz later said the object was most likely a drone, adding that an analysis was underway to determine whether it was a military or smuggling one, PAP reported.

Lublin District Prosecutor Grzegorz Trusiewicz told reporters several investigators — both civilian and military — were examining the crash site.

"We have a lot of manpower, we have the army to help us. I hope that we will be able to finish the operation by the evening," Trusiewicz said.

Since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than three years ago, there have been a number of intrusions into Polish airspace, raising alarm in the European Union and NATO member state and reminding people how close the war is.

U.S.-led coalition captures senior Islamic State member in Syria

Associated Press

BEIRUT — A U.S.-led coalition captured a senior member of Islamic State in northwest Syria on Wednesday, state media and a war monitor reported.

It was not immediately clear if the man is the ISIS supreme leader. The U.S. military did not respond to a request for comment by The Associated Press.

The operation that included landing troops from helicopters occurred before dawn in Atmeh town near the Turkish border, and an ISIS commander known as Abu Hafs al-Qurayshi, an Iraqi citizen, was taken away while another Iraqi citizen was killed, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The Observatory said the man captured had a French-speaking woman with him, and it was not immediately clear if she was taken by the U.S. force or by Syrian security forces who later cordoned the area.

Two years ago, ISIS announced that a man called Abu Hafs al-Hashemi al-Qurayshi was named as its new leader after Turkish authorities killed his predecessor.

Syrian state TV on Wednesday quoted an unnamed security official as saying the Iraqi man targeted in the operation is known as Ali, adding that his real name is Salah Noman.

It said Noman was living in an apartment with his wife, son and mother. It said he was killed in the raid.

There was no immediate clarification for the difference in names reported by state media and the war monitor.

ISIS broke away from al-Qaida more than a decade ago and attracted supporters from around the world after it declared a so-called caliphate in 2014 in large parts of Syria and Iraq.

Despite its defeat in Iraq in 2017 and in Syria two years later, ISIS militants still carry out deadly attacks in both countries and elsewhere.

Al-Qurayshi is not the real name of ISIS leaders but comes from Quraish, the name of the tribe to which Islam's Prophet Muhammad belonged. IS claims its leaders hail from the tribe, and "al-Qurayshi" is part of their nom de guerre.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Ship blast causes fire near bridge collapse site

MD BALTIMORE — An explosion aboard a cargo vessel near the site of the collapsed Francis Scott Key Bridge late Monday is under investigation, Baltimore and federal officials said.

Part of a Liberian cargo vessel exploded, causing a fire in a portion of the ship located south of Fort Carroll, according to Baltimore City Fire Department.

At 6:30 p.m., Baltimore City Fire Department firefighters responded to reports of a commercial vessel exploding in the Patapsco River.

The ship, a 751-foot commercial cargo vessel named W-Sapphire, showed signs of a fire consistent with an explosion, according to Baltimore City Fire Department spokesperson John Marsh.

"Firefighters responded by both land and water, including the department's fireboats," Marsh said. "The vessel remained afloat and was being assisted by tugboats."

All 23 of the crew members were accounted for and uninjured after the incident, according to fire officials. The U.S. Coast Guard also assisted in the rescue of the crew and the recovery of the ship.



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Together in the Lone Star State

The sun sets as a couple holds hands after visiting Cadillac Ranch, on Saturday, in Amarillo, Texas.

State updates voter data, seeks more ID numbers

NC RALEIGH — Voter registration records for more than 20,000 people in North Carolina have been successfully amended thus far in an effort by election officials to add missing identification numbers.

In mid-July, the State Board of Elections began formally an effort that seeks to resolve a lawsuit filed by President Donald Trump's Justice Department that focused on voter registration records that lacked either a voter's driver's license number or the last four digits of their Social Security number. Federal and state laws have directed that election officials must request this ID information since 2004 of new registrants, but for about a decade the state's registration form failed to make clear that voters were supposed to provide it if they had it.

A "Registration Repair Project" created a public online database with the names of 103,270 registrants the lacking the numerical identifiers. They were asked to provide an ID number through the Division of Motor Vehicles website or by visiting their county election board offices.

As of Monday, the registrants on the list had fallen 20% to 82,540, an election board news release said.

State attorney general resigns to take FBI post

MO JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey, a Republican who has been an ardent backer of President Donald Trump, said Monday that he is resigning to take a leadership position at the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The move is the latest in a series of changes at the FBI under Director Kash Patel. Numerous senior officials, including top agents in charge of big-city field offices, have been pushed out of their jobs, and Justice Department officials have sought the names of agents who participated in investigations related to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Bailey said he is stepping down effective Sept. 8 to serve as the FBI's co-deputy director, alongside Dan Bongino. An Army veteran, Bailey won a full four-year term as attorney general last November.

Fake Labubu dolls pose choking hazard, US warns

MD BETHESDA — The counterfeit dupes of the popular plush Labubu dolls are sometimes called "Lafufus" — but the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has another name for them: choking hazards.

The commission issued a warning on Monday for consumers to avoid the counterfeit dolls because they pose "a serious risk of choking and death to young children." The knockoffs "break apart easily, releasing small pieces that can become choking hazards," the commission said, urging consumers to stop buying and using Lafufus "immediately."

Fakes of the "ugly-cute" toys have flooded the market after the grinning, bunny-eared bag charms became the latest fashion must-have.

Authentic Pop Mart Labubu dolls feature a holographic Pop Mart sticker and a scannable QR code linking to the official Pop Mart site, and newer editions also have a subtle UV stamp on one foot, the commission said. Meanwhile, fake Lafufus will "often have overly bright colors or the wrong number of teeth," the commission said — authentic Labubus have nine teeth.

First state-issued stablecoin launched

WY CHEYENNE — Wyoming launched its long-promised stablecoin, designed to offer instant transactions and reduced fees for consumers and businesses, in the latest effort by the Cowboy State to attract digital asset businesses.

The Frontier Stable Token, or FRNT, will be backed by dollars and short-term Treasuries and is meant to track the value of the U.S. currency one-for-one. The Wyoming Stable Token Commission is working with LayerZero to issue the tokens and plans for the coins to be overcollateralized by 2%. The reserves backing FRNT are managed by Franklin Advisers with financial audit and monthly attestations provided by The Network Firm. The stablecoin will be available on the Arbitrum, Avalanche, Base, Ethereum, Optimism, Polygon and Solana blockchains.

Wyoming is the first state to issue its own stablecoin after announcing its plans last year. The launch comes shortly after President Donald Trump signed the first federal bill to regulate stablecoins. While the act establishes federal licensing requirements, a quirk in the act's definition of "person" appears to exempt state governments from the federal oversight governing private stablecoin issuers.

Wyoming has been making inroads with the crypto industry for nearly a decade. Since 2016, the state has passed over 45 pieces of crypto-linked legislation.

Man who sent weapons to N. Korea gets 8 years

CA LOS ANGELES — A California man has been sentenced to eight years in prison after admitting to shipping weapons and ammunition to North Korea that he said were to be used for a surprise attack on South Korea, authorities said Tuesday.

Shenghua Wen, 42, came to the U.S. from China on a student visa in 2012 and remained in the country illegally after it expired, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney's office in Los Angeles.

Wen pleaded guilty in June to one count of conspiracy to violate the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and one count of acting as an illegal agent of a foreign government, the statement says. He was sentenced on Monday.

United Nations resolutions ban North Korea from importing or exporting weapons.

In 2022, North Korean officials contacted him via an online messaging app and instructed him to buy firearms, prosecutors said. He shipped two containers of weapons and other items from Long Beach, Calif., to North Korea via Hong Kong in 2023. He told U.S. authorities that he was wired about $2 million to do so, according to the complaint.

Capital plans to remove dam, restore floodplain

VT MONTPELIER — In Montpelier, city officials plan to remove the Pioneer Street Dam and restore a nearby floodplain. Together, the projects are predicted to have compounding positive effects that reduce flood risk in the city.

The Pioneer Street Dam — an old mill dam — is about 1.3 miles upstream from the capital city's downtown along the Winooski River. Not only is the dam filled with cracks, but engineers consider it a flood hazard.

"It's got about everything wrong with a dam you can imagine," said Roy Schiff, an engineer who's monitoring the dam.

Nearby sits an 18-acre parcel of land at 5 Home Farm Way, where the Stevens Branch of the Winooski River joins the main branch. That land, which houses the Jacob Davis Farmstead, was historically a floodplain. Restoring it to such, coupled with the dam removal just downstream, could significantly reduce flood risk, Schiff said.

The project offers a look at how recovery efforts from the 2023 flood are underway in the city.

From wire reports

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Jacqueline Smith

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OPINION

Ukraine's status still uncertain after wild weekend

By Daniel DePetris
Chicago Tribune

If President Donald Trump's summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin last week in Alaska was designed to bring some clarity to conflict-ending diplomacy, it failed. The talks generated more questions than answers, with the Russians insisting on a Ukrainian withdrawal from the Donbas region, Trump claiming that significant progress was made and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reiterating that under no circumstances will Kyiv trade away territory for an unjust peace.

Trump's subsequent meetings on Monday at the White House with Zelenskyy and several European leaders came at a critical time in a war deep into its fourth year. All the sides continue to stress the necessity of a peace agreement that ends the killing, provides Kyiv with security guarantees and ensures the Russians halt their actions. But there are considerable disagreements among these partners on what a final settlement would entail and whether it's even possible to forge one with Putin, who remains as committed to subjugating Ukraine through force as he was when the war started in February 2022.

You can't blame the Europeans and the Ukrainians for feeling whiplash. As Trump was flying into Alaska, he was threatening severe consequences if Putin didn't play ball. Trump stressed that he wouldn't be happy if he left the summit without an immediate ceasefire and that new sanctions may be necessary if the Russians were intransigent. And yet, after his discussions with Putin, he climbed aboard Air Force One essentially having changed his mind about how to go about striking a peace accord.

Trump took to social media Sunday and threw out the ceasefire idea, and he did so again during his news conference with Zelenskyy. Trump wrote that moving straight to a full, comprehensive peace accord between Kyiv and Moscow would be a better way to solve the problem than waiting for the combatants to stop firing. The Europeans were appalled, if only because this sounds awfully like Putin's own position. Zelenskyy, meanwhile, continues to stress that his disputes with Russia can't be addressed without the guns falling silent first, which is something Putin is never going to agree to given the territorial gains the Russian army has made over the last two weeks.

Trump has reportedly changed his tune on another key element of the conflict: whether to gift Ukraine security guarantees from the U.S. Until this weekend, the Trump administration was adamant that Washington will not support Ukraine entering NATO, nor will it provide Ukraine with a NATO-like security mechanism. This was the correct policy: As much as the war in Ukraine is a humanitarian tragedy and a 21st century land grab, the country itself is not so important to U.S. national security interests as to warrant a direct conflict between the United States and Russia, the world's two largest nuclear powers. Even Joe Biden, the quintessential trans-Atlanticist, wasn't willing to run the risk of going to war with Russia to defend Ukraine.

And yet on this issue, Trump might have flipped the script. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and peace envoy Steve Witkoff were on the Sunday news shows claiming that Washington was now committed to Ukraine's security over the long term. "We will give them very good protection and very good security," Trump told reporters as Zelenskyy was seated beside him. The Europeans, which have spent months trying to drag the Trump administration into its reassurance force in Ukraine, were thrilled.

But the term "security guarantee" is a loose one, particularly when Trump is the one using it. Different actors have different interpretations. The Europeans and Ukraine are maximalist in their interpretation: The United States has agreed that Ukraine is a NATO member in all but name and will back up the European troops stationed on Ukrainian soil if Putin resumes the war. Trump may have an altogether different view. Based on his understandable inclination to reduce U.S. security burdens around the world, it's hard to imagine he would be fine with signing up to an arrangement that effectively brings Ukraine underneath the U.S. security umbrella. And let's face it: Knowing what we know about Trump's rhetorical shifts, would Putin even view such a U.S. security commitment as credible in the first place?

The allies are also divided about territorial concessions. For any peace settlement to stick for longer than five minutes, the Ukrainians will have to give away a portion of the land the Russian army already occupies. This will be incredibly difficult politically for Zelenskyy and his government, and in a way, critics of such a concession aren't wrong when they argue that allowing Russians to keep what they've stolen is nothing short of rewarding Putin for his aggression. Unfortunately, no matter how it's spun, the Ukrainians don't have the human power to recapture the roughly 20% of the country currently occupied by the Russian army. Even Zelenskyy recognizes this.

Rather, the disagreements rest on the extent of those territorial concessions. In Alaska, Putin gave Trump his outline of a peace plan, which required the Ukrainian army to withdraw from the Donbas in exchange for a freezing of the front line in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. Trump hasn't explicitly supported such a plan but in the past has at least been open about land swaps to end the war. Zelenskyy, for his part, refuses to pull all his forces from Donbas, arguing that doing so gives Putin territory he hasn't been able to capture on the battlefield. The Europeans for their part are backing Zelenskyy and sticking with philosophical principles: Borders can't be changed by force.

All of which is to say that Trump's sojourn in Alaska is the beginning of a long, excruciating process whose success is unknown.

Daniel DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

20 years on, Katrina still affects the entire landscape

By Audrey L. Tanksley
Tribune News Service

When Hurricane Katrina touched down near New Orleans 20 years ago on Aug. 29, 2005, I was just beginning my journey as a first-year medical student. I remember watching the footage of families stranded on rooftops, hospitals submerged, and the bodies of people and pets floating in the floodwaters.

I had not yet developed the language of public health or trauma-informed care, but I felt that something bigger than a hurricane had happened. I didn't know then that my future patients — many of them plagued by poverty, violence and environmental injustice — would share similar pathology to the survivors.

Today, as an addiction medicine physician, I care for patients whose lives are shaped by trauma, displacement and loss. Many of them were children at the time of the hurricane. As adults now, they speak of depression, abandonment and the silence of our systems that failed to ask how they were doing. "They just wanted us to survive," said one of the interviewees in the 2022 documentary film "Katrina's Babies." But surviving isn't the same as healing.

Katrina was not only a climate catastrophe. It was also a mental health emergency. In its wake, studies revealed spikes in post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and substance use among evacuees. The disaster helped accelerate the overdose epidemic, a public health crisis that rages on to this day.

Clinics and recovery centers were destroyed. Providers were displaced. Support systems disappeared. A study of low-income mothers affected by Katrina found that nearly half met the criteria for PTSD and 12 years later, one in six still exhibited symptoms that met criteria for the diagnosis. Another study linked displacement to increased drug use among survivors. Parents, workers and youth struggle to cope in the absence of care.

And the disasters keep coming. Wildfires in California. Heat waves in Phoenix. Hurricanes in North Carolina. As climate disasters become more frequent, so does the trauma.

In poorly resourced communities, especially Black and brown ones, disaster recovery often means rebuilding roads before rebuilding lives. When trauma is untreated, substances become survival tools. When care is disrupted, recovery becomes unreachable.

If we are serious about ending the overdose crisis, we must prepare for trauma the way we prepare for storms. That means funding long-term, culturally grounded behavioral health services, embedding addiction and mental health professionals into disaster response teams. We must ensure access to medication-assisted treatment and harm-reduction tools, listening to and uplifting community wisdom in recovery planning.

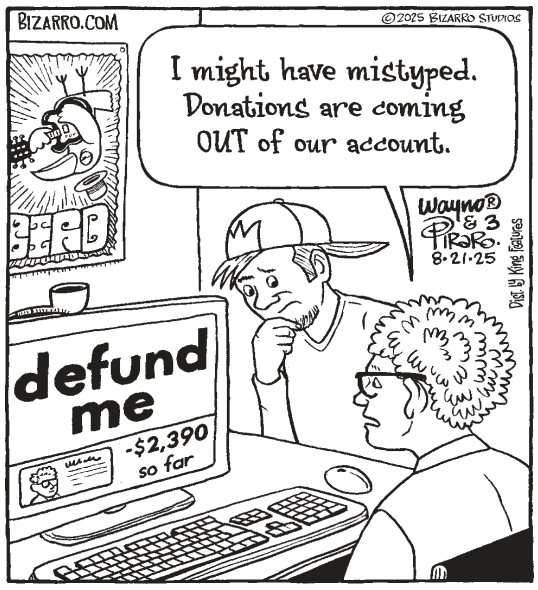
This year, the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina falls just two days before International Overdose Awareness Day (Aug 31), and the kickoff of National Recovery Month in September. It's more than symbolic. It's a reminder that climate trauma and addiction are intertwined, and recovery must be intersectional.

"Katrina's Babies" reminds us that the children of that storm are now adults, many raising families, working, grieving and striving. Some are still fighting for stability. And some are gone.

Let's not wait for the next disaster to act. The levees may have broken 20 years ago, but our obligation to rebuild with care, dignity and equity remains.

Audrey L. Tanksley is a double board-certified physician in internal medicine and addiction medicine and co-founder of Onyx Medical Wellness, which offers a patient-centered approach to address chronic disease, mental health and addiction. This column was produced for Progressive Perspectives, a project of The Progressive magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.

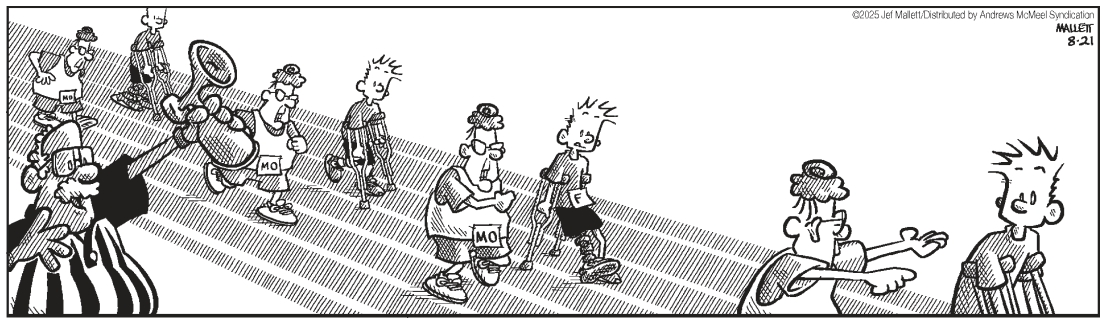
Bizarro



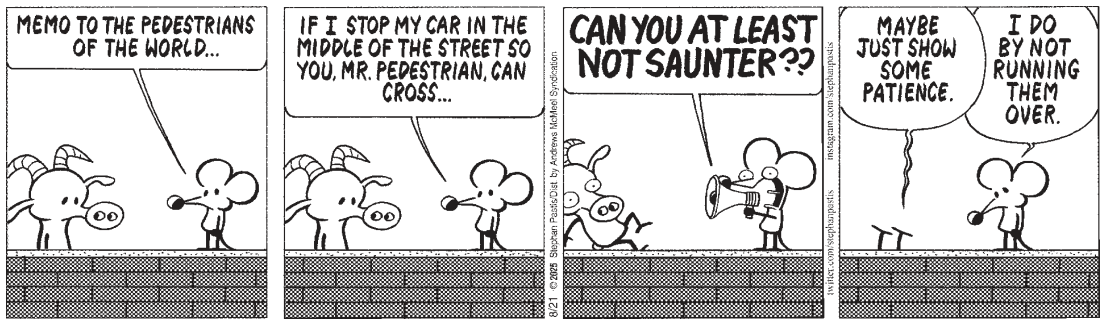
Loose Parts



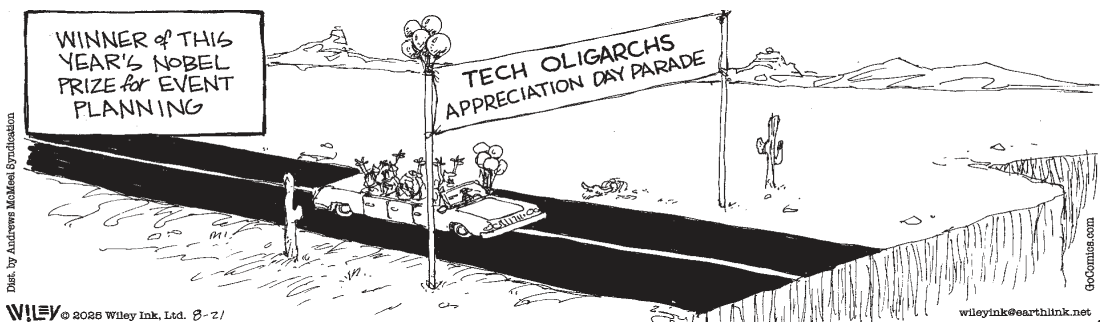
Frazz



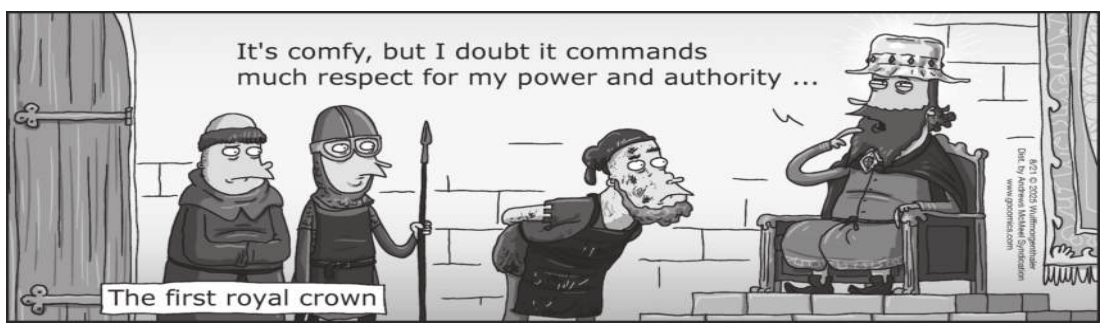
Pearls Before Swine



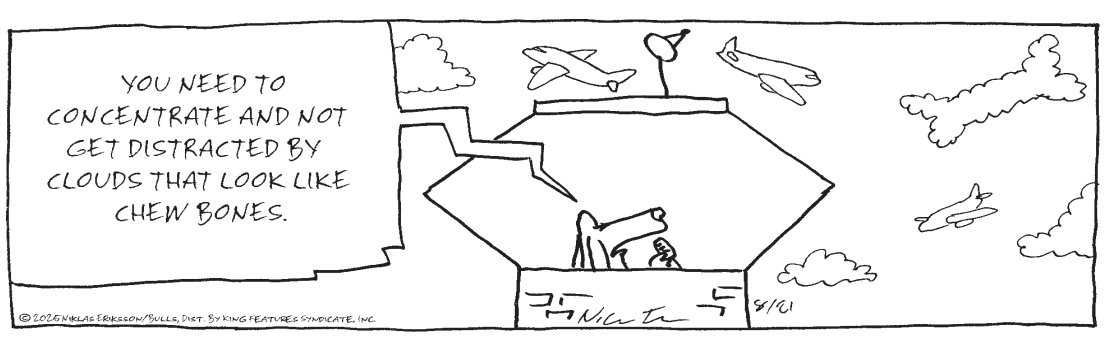
Non Sequitur



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			
18				19		■	20	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			

ACROSS

1 Farm grazers
5 Recline
8 Glimpse
12 One
13 Goal
14 Big wind
15 Diminutive suffix
16 Actress Basinger
17 Hidden valley
18 Second childhood
20 Meddlers
22 Elmer, to Bugs
23 Texter's chuckle
24 Online craft shop
27 Compel
32 Blue
33 Actress Farrow
34 Sportage maker
35 Class publication
38 Pants part
39 Neither here — there
40 Many millennia
42 Back teeth
45 Pushes
49 Lab gel
50 Japanese sash
52 Eight (Pref.)
53 Lap dog, for short
54 Abysmal
55 Ship's front
56 Start a garden
57 Sailor's assent
58 Taxpayer IDs

DOWN

1 Prompted
2 Aware of
3 Skater Katarina
4 Firm
5 Resort in Lombardy
6 Jr.'s son
7 TV trophy
8 Holiday quaff
9 Large Utah expanse
10 Entreaty
11 Desires
19 "Monopoly" square
21 Quarterback Manning
24 TV Tarzan Ron
25 Water-testing digit
26 Tchaikovsky ballet
28 Life story
29 Summer cottage site
30 — Maria
31 Chow down
36 Bellowed
37 "It's c-c-cold!"
38 Nosy people
41 "Sideways" actress Sandra
42 Atlas pages
43 Curved molding
44 Japanese noodles
46 TiVo forerunners
47 Thames town
48 Does a farm job
51 Howl at the moon

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

8-21

CRYPTOQUIP

SIEJI TQWPQ LN XLWTX YL GLM XMUULXQ Z TPLMU LN PQZHHG GLMWT YLTX SLMHY UQPNLPK? UMU KMXEJ.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT COULD ONE CALL FOLKS WHO ARE GIVING SICK MALE BOVINES SHOTS OF MEDICINE? BULL-DOSERS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals Y

FACES

Q&A

Spry and ever ready for a new challenge

Martin Short talks about working on 'Only Murders in the Building' and how his initial interest in comedy developed

BY ROBERT LLOYD
Los Angeles Times

From the mad sprite Ed Grimley to Oliver Putnam, the flamboyant, forever failing Broadway director he plays in Hulu's "Only Murders in the Building" — for which he's nominated for an Emmy — Martin Short has a gift for playing colorful characters who take up a lot of space. This summer Short, 75, became eligible for a different category of Emmy as well, as host of ABC's "Match Game" (also big, also colorful).

"You reach a point where you've done everything," Short said by Zoom recently, about taking that job. "But you haven't done that. It could be fun — or it could be a big mistake. And that kind of challenge is still provocative to me."

Los Angeles Times: You were nominated as lead actor in a comedy this year, but your co-star Steve Martin wasn't. Did that occasion any interesting conversations between you?

Short: Oh, yeah. Steve called me up midafternoon and said, "I've been out all day and I've been hiking and hiking. Heard anything about the Emmys yet?" But I think Steve's pretty confident in who he is, what he does.

In 1982, you won an Emmy for writing on "SCTV." As a Canadian, did an American award mean something special to you?

Absolutely. Being in Canada, you weren't in an igloo somewhere; you were living 50 miles from the border. You got CBS, NBC, ABC — my whole world from the time I was born was watching American television. I knew every show that was on in every hour or half-hour of prime time, on all three networks. And of course, the family in those days watched one show together, so usually parents dictated anyway.

Did any of that find its way into your own work?

When I was in my 20s, I'd put in a circle beside some script "DVD" or "SL" — "Do Dick Van Dyke" or "Stan Laurel." You're not going to do your own style. You don't have one. I had a lot of "JL," Jack Lemmon. There was a kind of rhythm, a fast staccato he could get. You were just delighted to see him.



EVAN AGOSTINI, INVISION/AP

Martin Short, who's been nominated for an Emmy for "Only Murders in the Building," attends the Disney 2025 Upfront presentation on May 13 in New York.

When I was 12 and 13, television was mainly variety shows, Jackie Gleason, Red Skelton, Danny Kaye. And you respond to the sketches and you're influenced by them. I mean, I was most influenced by Nichols and May; they had a Broadway show that was basically variety, and they played sketches.

When did you first feel you wanted to be part of that world?

Oh, very late. In my mid-20s, I would say.

Before then?

I was in social work. I was about to do a master's [degree], and I took a year off to explore this interest I had in theater — 'cause I was doing plays, Shakespeare and all these things, with [future "SCTV" co-stars] Eugene Levy and Dave Thomas at McMaster University in Hamilton [Ontario]. And in the course of this year I gave myself, I got the show "Godspell," and that begat other things. But I thought of myself as musical performer, an actor — maybe I'd be Sinatra someday. That's where I was thinking. Not, "I want to be Jerry Lewis."

What are the pleasures of being in a double act with Steve Martin, and a triple act with Selena Gomez?

Well, even when I was a cast member at "SNL" and having a relatively successful year, I was in two pieces a show. So I think less is more. What's great about sharing a stage or sharing a television show is that the camera is not always on you. And then when they see you, they kind of like to see you again — hopefully. I came from Second City improv; to me, the reaction was as powerful as the action. You look at a film like "The Philadelphia Story," and Cary Grant is dealing with a drunken Jimmy Stewart, just reacting. But Cary's just as funny.

What's it like working with Selena, who's from a different generation?

She's a different generation, but she's also just a sweet, lovely person — you can be lovely at 80, lovely at 20, or the opposite. But also she's a pro, she knows her lines, she's on time. I think the thing that's been most beneficial to the success of the show is that the three of us work in a similar way — loose, fun, laughs on the set, mistakes laughed at, no tension. Because that's the only thing you can control. You don't know if the film's going to be any good, but you can control the working situation.

You're very physical in "Only Murders." Do you have any sort of regimen to stay in shape?

I think a lot of that's DNA and luck. But I always have done Pilates, which is all about stretch and core.

Is there also a psychological element to how you fly through the world?

I think it all goes to health. I remember when I was turning 30 I decided to get into the best shape I'd ever been in in my life. And I was going to the gym and working out, and two days before turning 30 I pulled my back lifting weights and could barely walk, and felt like I was 90. But I have great health; I don't get up [and] go, "Oh that's right, I'm not spry anymore." That might affect my behavior. But I don't put an age on myself, because I don't feel restricted by age.

Plaza: Coping with husband's Baena's death 'daily struggle'

Associated Press

Aubrey Plaza has described her grief over husband Jeff Baena's death, likening it to "a giant ocean of awfulness."

The actor spoke on the podcast "Good Hang with Amy Poehler," telling her former "Parks and Recreation" co-star in her most detailed public remarks to date that it's been a daily struggle to overcome her grief. Writer-director Baena's January death at age 47 was ruled a suicide.

"Overall, I'm here and I'm functioning," Plaza tells Poehler at the outset of their interview after being asked how she is coping. "I feel really grateful to be moving through the world. I think I'm OK. But it's like a daily struggle, obviously."

She likens her grief to an image from an Apple TV+ horror movie starring Miles Teller and Anya Taylor-Joy.

"Did you see that movie 'The Gorge?'" Plaza asks Poehler. "In the movie, there's a cliff on one side and then there's a cliff on the other side, and there's a gorge in between, and its filled with all these monster people trying to get them," Plaza says. "And I swear when I watched it I was like, 'That feels like what my grief is like,' or what grief could be like ... where it's like at all times, there's a giant ocean of awfulness that's right there and I can see it."

Plaza adds: "And sometimes I just want to dive into it, and just be in it, and sometimes I just look at it. And then sometimes I try to get away from it. But it's just always there, and the monster people are trying to get me, like Miles Teller and Anya Taylor-Joy."



LEWIS JOLY, INVISION/AP

Aubrey Plaza poses at the photo call for the film "Honey Don't!" at the 78th international film festival in Cannes, southern France, in May.

Baena was a writer and director who frequently collaborated with Plaza. He co-wrote David O. Russell's 2004 film "I Heart Huckabees" and wrote and directed five of his own films. Plaza starred in his 2014 directorial debut, the zombie comedy "Life After Beth."

After largely remaining silent since Baena's death, Plaza is now promoting her new film, "Honey Don't!" The dark comedy from director Ethan Coen stars Margaret Qualley as a private investigator looking into nefarious goings-on in Bakersfield, Calif.

Other News

■ Next year's **Eurovision Song Contest** will take place in Vienna. Austria's public broadcaster ORF announced the location Wednesday. The world's largest live music event is always held in the country whose singer won the most recent competition. JJ won this spring with "Wasted Love" in Basel, Switzerland. The Austrian city of Innsbruck also applied to host the May 2026 contest. Vienna will be host for the third time.

■ **The ATP**, the governing body of men's professional tennis, announced Tuesday it will be partnering with TikTok to further develop tennis content and bolster engagement on the platform. One of its stated goals is player engagement. Its other goal is the creation of the "Tennis Creator Network," an initiative that will help existing nonathlete creators create TikTok content at ATP tour events.

From The Associated Press

SCOREBOARD/GOLF

DEALS

Tuesday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball

MLB — Suspended Seattle OF Victor Robles, who is currently with Tacoma (PCL), for 10 games and fined an undisclosed amount for his conduct during Sunday's game at Las Vegas (PCL).

American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — OF Greg Allen elected free agency in lieu of accepting an outright assignment to Norfolk (IL). OF Jordyn Adams has cleared outright waivers and accepted an assignment to Norfolk.

BOSTON RED SOX — Sent RHP Justin Slaten on a rehab assignment to Worcester (IL) . Recalled LHP Brennan Bernardino from Worcester. Optioned LHP Jovani Moran to Worcester.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Placed RHP Owen White on the 15-day IL. Recalled RHP Elvis Peguero from Charlotte (IL).

HOUSTON ASTROS — Recalled RHP Logan VanWey from Sugar Land (PCL). Designated RHP Tayler Scott for assignment. Sent LF Yordan Alvarez and RHP Luis Garcia on a rehab assignment to Corpus Christi (TL). Sent RF Pedro Leon on a rehab assignment to Sugar Land.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Sent RHP Robert Stephenson on a rehab assignment to Inland Empire (CAL). Sent LHP Connor Brogdon outright to Salt Lake (PCL)

NEW YORK YANKEES — Reinstated INF/OF Amed Rosario from the 10-day IL. Placed LHP Brent Headrick on the 15-day IL, retroactive to August 16. Sent RHP Fernando Cruz on a rehab assignment to Somerset (EL).

SEATTLE MARINERS — Reinstated RHP Bryce Miller from the 15-day IL. Selected the contract of RHP Sauryn Lao. Optioned RHPs Jackson Kowar and Casey Legumina to Tacoma (PCL). Transferred RHP Trent Thornton to the 60-day IL.

National League

ATLANTA BRAVES — Claimed RF Jake Fraley off waivers from Cincinnati. Recalled RHPs Dane Dunning and Connor Seabold from Gwinnett (IL). Optioned RHPs Daysbel Hernandez and Hunter Stratton to Gwinnett.

CHICAGO CUBS — Optioned LHP Tom Cosgrove to Iowa (IL). Returned RHP Gavin Hollowell to Iowa. Optioned LHP Luke Little to Iowa. Reinstated RHP Jameson Taillon from the 15-day IL. Activated LHP Jordan Wicks.

CINCINNATI REDS — Claimed OF Jake Fraley off waivers from Atlanta. Signed SS Alexander Vargas to a minor league contract.

COLORADO ROCKIES — Sent RHP German Marquez on a rehab assignment to Albuquerque.

MIAMI MARLINS — Placed RHP Anthony Bender on the 15-day IL. Reinstated LHP Cade Gibson from Jacksonville (IL)

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Sent 1B Rhys Hoskins to Nashville (IL) on a rehab assignment.

NEW YORK METS — Placed C Francisco Alvarez on the 10-day IL retroactive to August 18. Reinstated C Hayden Senger from Syracuse (IL).

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Returned LHP José Alvarado from his rehab assignment with Lehigh Valley (IL) and reinstated him from the restricted list. Optioned RHP Nolan Hoffman to Lehigh Valley. Designated LHP Josh Walker for assignment.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Sent RHP Justin Lawrence on a rehab assignment to Bradenton (FSL). Sent LHP Tim Mayza on a rehab assignment to Bradenton (FSL)

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Recalled 1B Andres Chaparro from Rochester (IL). Optioned INF Jose Tena to Rochester.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

ARIZONA CARDINALS — Waived WR Kelly Akharaiyi.

ATLANTA FALCONS — Placed QB Emory Jones on injured reserve after clearing waivers.

BUFFALO BILLS — Signed RB Jarveon Howard and WR Grant DuBose to contracts. Placed RB Darrynton Evans on injured reserve. Waived/injured CB Te'Cory Couch and WR Kaden Prather.

DALLAS COWBOYS — Placed DB Bruce Harmon on injured reserve after clearing waivers.

DETROIT LIONS — Activated DB Khalil Dorsey.

GREEN BAY PACKERS — Placed DT Keith Randolph on injured reserve after clearing waivers.

HOUSTON TEXANS — Released RB J.J. Taylor. Signed WRs Cornell Powell and Juwann Winfree to contracts.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Signed OL Jerome Carvin and RB Kevin Harris to contracts. Waived WR Darius Lassiter and DL Eli Mostaert.

LOS ANGELES RAMS — Placed DE Keir Thomas on injured reserve. Waived/injured TE Anthony Torres and WR Mario Williams.

MIAMI DOLPHINS — Signed LB Matthew Judon and CB Cameron Dantzler Sr. to contracts. Waived WR Tarik Black and P Ryan Stonehouse.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Signed OL Zack Bailey and RB Xazavian Valladay to contracts. Waived LB Max Tooley.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed RB Micah Bernard and DT Philip Blidi to contracts. Released CB Tre Avery and DE Jereme Robinson.

NEW YORK GIANTS — Activated T Andrew Thomas.

PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Placed LB Devin Harper on injured reserve after clearing waivers. Signed DE Kenny Willekes to a contract. Waived/injured Gareth Warren.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Placed RB Patrick Taylor on injured reserve. Waived/injured RB Ameer Abdullah and WR Equanimeous St. Brown. Signed QB Nate Sudfeld to a contract.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Released LB Khaleke Hudson.

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — Signed T George Fant to a contract.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer

INTER MIAMI — Acquired $400,000 in 2025 general allocation money (GAM) and $350,000 in 2026 GAM from Charlotte FC in exchange for G Drake Callender.

PHILADELPHIA UNION — Signed D Jakob Glesnes to a contract.

PORTLAND TIMBERS — Signed M Matías Rojas to a contract.

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA

Eastern Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	22	13	.629	—
New York	22	13	.629	—
Indiana	19	16	.543	3
Washington	16	19	.457	6
Chicago	8	26	.235	13½
Connecticut	7	27	.206	14½

Western Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Minnesota	28	6	.824	—
Phoenix	21	13	.618	7
Las Vegas	22	14	.611	7
Golden State	18	17	.514	10½
Seattle	18	18	.500	11
Los Angeles	16	18	.471	12
Dallas	9	26	.257	19½

x-clinched playoff spot

Monday's games

No games scheduled.

Tuesday's games

New York 85, Minnesota 75
Connecticut 80, Washington 69
Seattle 94, Chicago 88
Phoenix 98, Golden State 91
Las Vegas 74, Atlanta 72

Wednesday's game

Dallas at Los Angeles

Thursday's games

Chicago at New York
Washington at Connecticut
Minnesota at Atlanta
Phoenix at Las Vegas

Friday's games

Minnesota at Indiana
Seattle at Dallas
Golden State at Phoenix

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL preseason

Thursday's games

Pittsburgh at Carolina
New England at N.Y. Giants

Friday's games

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

Saturday's games

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

AP SPORTLIGHT

Aug. 21

1931 — Babe Ruth of New York hits his 600th home run as the Yankees beat the St. Louis Browns 11-7.

1985 — Mary Decker sets the world record in the mile run with a time of 4:16.71 in Zurich.

1990 — Kelly Craig becomes the first female starting pitcher in Little League World Series history, opening for Trail, British Columbia. She fails to retire any of the three batters she faces but the Canadian champions rally for an 8-3 victory over Matamoros, Mexico.

2003 — Paul Hamm puts together a near-perfect routine on the high bar to become the first American man to win the all-around gold medal at World Gymnastics Championships. Needing a 9.712 or better to beat China's Yang Wei, Hamm strings together four straight release moves during his 60-second routine — one of the toughest feats in gymnastics — for a 9.975 and the gold.

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Cincinnati	16	7	4	52	42	34
Philadelphia	15	6	6	51	44	26
Nashville	14	8	5	47	44	31
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
NYC FC	12	8	5	41	36	30
Chicago	11	9	6	39	50	44
New York	11	10	6	39	42	37
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

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
San Diego FC	16	7	4	52	52	33
Minn. United	13	6	8	47	44	30
Vancouver	13	6	7	46	44	29
Seattle	11	7	8	41	43	36
LA FC	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	11	8	32	50	47
Real Salt Lake	9	13	4	31	27	33
FC Dallas	7	11	8	29	38	46
Houston	7	11	8	29	33	42
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

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

Saturday's games

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's games

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

Saturday, Aug. 30

Philadelphia at Cincinnati
Chicago at Miami
Charlotte FC at New England
Columbus at New York
D.C. United at New York City FC
Vancouver at Orlando City
CF Montréal at Toronto FC
San Jose at Austin FC
Colorado at Sporting Kansas City
Portland at Minnesota
Atlanta at Nashville
Houston at St Louis City
FC Dallas at LA Galaxy
Real Salt Lake at Seattle

Sunday, Aug. 31

San Diego FC at Los Angeles FC

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	4	25	24	20
Louisville	6	6	4	22	22	27
Gotham FC	5	6	5	20	20	16
North Carolina	5	6	5	20	20	23
Houston	5	8	3	18	19	26
Bay FC	4	7	5	17	18	22
Angel City	4	7	5	17	21	27
Chicago	1	9	6	9	15	32
Utah Royals FC	1	11	4	7	12	31

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

Monday's game

Chicago 3, Seattle 3, tie

Thursday's game

Orlando at Angel City

Friday's game

North Carolina at Chicago

Saturday's games

Washington at Bay FC
Utah Royals FC at Gotham FC
Kansas City at Portland

Sunday's games

Seattle at Houston
Louisville at San Diego

Friday, Aug. 29

Houston at Louisville
Gotham FC at Orlando
San Diego at Seattle
Utah Royals FC at Portland

Woods leads group looking at Tour's competitive model

By Doug Ferguson
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Tiger Woods is a major player in golf again, this time without clubs. He was appointed Wednesday to chair a new committee charged with taking a fresh look at the competitive model for how the PGA Tour runs its tournaments.

Brian Rolapp, three weeks into his role as the tour's first CEO, announced the nine-member "Future Competition Committee" and said it would have a clean sheet to consider changes that uphold traditions without being tied to them.

"This is about shaping the next era of the PGA Tour," Woods said in a social media post.

Rolapp didn't have details on several issues he faces as he takes over for Commissioner Jay Monahan, including the future of a sport that has been splintered by Saudi money which created the rival LIV Golf League and lured away a number of top players.

The PGA Tour's negotiations with the Public Investment Fund have stalled, and Rolapp did not make that sound as if it were a top priority when asked about the fans' desire to see all the best players together more often.

"I'm going to focus on what I can control," Rolapp said. "I would offer to you that the best collection of golfers in the world are on the PGA Tour. I think there's a bunch of metrics that demonstrate that, from rankings to viewership to whatever you want to pick. I'm going to lean into that and strengthen that.

"I will also say that to the extent we can do anything that's going to further strengthen the PGA Tour, we'll do that," he said. "And I'm interested in exploring whatever strengthens the PGA Tour."

Woods, who has played only 10 times on the PGA Tour since his February 2021 car crash and has been out all of this year with a ruptured Achilles tendon, already serves on the PGA Tour board without a term limit.

Now he will lead five players from the board — Patrick Cantlay, Adam Scott, Camilo Villegas, Maverick McNealy and Keith Mitchell — along with three from the business side. That includes baseball executive Theo Epstein.

Rolapp is not trying to reinvent a sport that held its first championship in 1860. He said among his early observations, after two decades at the NFL, was the strength and momentum of the PGA Tour.



SCOTT HEPPELL/AP

Tiger Woods will chair a new committee that will have a clean sheet to consider changes to how the PGA Tour runs events.

"My key takeaway when you boil all this down is that the strength of the PGA Tour is strong, but there's much more we need to do, much more we need to change for the benefit of fans, players and our partners," he said.

He said the committee would be guided by parity (he conceded golf already has that), scarcity and simplicity.

The tour released a 2026 schedule Tuesday that adds another $20 million signature event, this one to Trump National Doral, as part of a 35-event schedule from January through August. Rolapp said the simplicity was mostly about connecting the regular season to the postseason.

He referred to the committee's work as a "holistic relook of how we compete on the tour" during the regular season, postseason and offseason.

"The goal is not incremental change," he said. "The goal is significant change."

He did not set a timetable for any of it. The Tour Championship ends this week at East Lake for the top 30 players. The tour has eliminated the built-in advantage for top seeds so everyone starts from scratch.

The committee is a smaller version of the PGA Tour Enterprises board and policy board. Joining Epstein from the business side are board chairman Joe Gorder and John Henry of Fenway Sports Group, who leads the Strategic Sports Group that invested $1.5 billion into the tour in a deal announced 18 months ago.

Rolapp said he had a lot of ideas how to the use the money, but none he was ready to share. But he said the involvement of SSG was a big reason he took the job.

MLB

ROUNDUP

Cubs sweep DH against Brewers

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Jameson Taillon pitched six effective innings in his return from a calf injury, and the Chicago Cubs beat the Milwaukee Brewers 4-1 on Tuesday night for a sweep of their doubleheader.

Michael Busch drove in two runs as Chicago improved to 4-2 on an eight-game homestand. Ian Happ had two hits, and Owen Caissie contributed a bloop RBI single.

Coupled with their 6-4 win in the first game, the Cubs moved within seven games of NL Central-leading Milwaukee.

Taillon (8-6) allowed five hits in his first big league start since June 29.

In the opener, Chicago built a 5-0 lead on Caissie's two-run single in the first and Willi Castro's three-run shot off Chad Patrick (3-8) in the third.

But the Brewers quickly started chipping away at the deficit. Christian Yelich opened the fourth with his 26th homer, and Sal Frelick singled home Brandon Lockridge in the fifth. Frelick added another RBI single in a two-run sixth.

Caissie then gave the Cubs a boost with his first major league homer, a 381-foot drive to left-center off Shelby Miller that made it 6-4 in the sixth.

Four Chicago relievers combined for 3⅔ innings of two-hit ball after Matthew Boyd (12-6) departed in the sixth.

Blue Jays 7, Pirates 3: Max Scherzer pitched six strong innings to notch his 220th career win, and George Springer hit an early two-run home run as visiting Toronto defeated Pittsburgh on Tuesday night.

The Blue Jays (74-53) built a 5-0 lead against Mitch Keller in the first two innings.

Springer homered a 423-foot shot to center field in the second inning. Toronto scored three runs in the first when Alejandro Kirk had an RBI single and Nathan Lukes followed with a two-run single.

Kirk added a two-run home run, his 10th, off Colin Holderman in the seventh inning to make 7-1.

Phillies 6, Mariners 4: J.T. Realmuto hit a go-ahead two-run home run in the eighth inning, Kyle Schwarber and Bryson Stott also homered and host Philadelphia defeated Seattle.

Realmuto reached base three times and had three RBIs. He also had an RBI single and reached on a catcher's interference call on Mariners backstop Mitch Garver.

Schwarber opened the scoring in the first inning with his 44th homer, tied with Shohei Ohtani for the NL lead.

David Robertson (1-0) picked up the win in relief in his first appearance at Citizens Bank Park as a member of the Phillies since 2022.

Tigers 1, Astros 0, (10): Gleyber Torres drew a 10th-inning walk to send home Wenceel Pérez and give host Detroit a win over Houston, the Astros' third consecutive shutout loss.

Pérez started the 10th as the automatic runner on second base and took third on Andy Ibáñez's fly to deep right. Kaleb Ort (2-2) intentionally walked Dillon Dingler, then struck out Javier Báez for the second out.

Jahmai Jones walked, loading the bases, and Torres took a 3-2 sweeper low and outside.

Cardinals 7, Marlins 4: Tyler Saggese went 3-for-4 and scored two runs, Iván Herrera had three RBIs and visiting St. Louis beat Miami.

Herrera's RBIs accounted for the first three runs of the game and Pedro Pagés extended his season-high hitting streak to nine games with an RBI single in the fourth to make it 4-0 Cardinals.

The Marlins had their first hit of the game in the fourth inning on an infield single by Xavier Edwards. He scored on Jakob Marsee's triple and Marsee scored on a fielding error by St. Louis starting pitcher Michael McGreevy, who overthrew to third base to make it 4-2.

Royals 5, Rangers 2: Vinnie Pasquantino homered in the first inning and then scored the go-ahead run in the seventh when Jonathan India was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, helping host Kansas City to a win over Texas.

Bobby Witt Jr. added a two-run shot in the eighth, and Mike Yastrzemski went deep for the Royals, who have won five straight and improved to 7-1 on their season-high 10-game homestand.

Kansas City starter Seth Lugo and Rangers counterpart Merrill Kelly had matched each other pitch-for-pitch for most of the night, each giving up two runs over 6⅓ and six innings, respectively.

Yankees 13, Rays 3: Giancarlo Stanton and Cody Bellinger both hit two home runs, Aaron Judge launched his 40th of the season and visiting New York matched a franchise record with nine long-balls in a win over Tampa Bay.



ERIN HOOLEY/AP

The Cubs' Owen Caissie runs the bases after hitting his first major league home run during the sixth inning in the first game of a doubleheader against the Milwaukee Brewers on Tuesday in Chicago.

Judge, Bellinger and Stanton went back-to-back-to-back in the first inning to give the Yankees a 3-0 lead four batters into the game.

Dodgers 11, Rockies 4: Shohei Ohtani hit his 44th home run and Alex Call matched a career high with four hits as visiting Los Angeles beat Colorado.

Call and Ohtani each launched a solo homer in the second inning to help the Dodgers open a 7-0 lead against winless Austin Gomber in the third.

Mets 8, Nationals 1: David Peterson dominated Washington again, Mark Vientos homered for the second consecutive game and visiting New York pounded the Nationals for its third straight victory.

Peterson finally allowed a run when Dylan Crews led off the eighth with a triple and scored on a double-play grounder. Peterson allowed four hits, struck out 10 and walked one.

Orioles 4, Red Sox 3 (11): Samuel Basallo drove in the go-ahead run on a groundout in the 11th inning and visiting Baltimore held on to beat Boston after blowing a two-run lead in the ninth.

The Orioles won their third straight and for the sixth time in their last seven games, sweeping the two-game series at Fenway Park but needing extra innings after Nathaniel Lowe hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the ninth to tie it.

Braves 11, White Sox 10: Drake Baldwin hit a two-run single with two outs in the eighth inning and host Atlanta rallied from a six-run deficit to defeat Chicago.

Michael Harris II and Jurickson Profar each hit two-run homers.

Athletics 6, Twins 3: Shea Langeliers hit his 27th home run, Tyler Soderstrom extended his hitting streak to 17 games and the visiting Athletics beat Minnesota.

Rookie slugger Nick Kurtz went 3-for-3 with two walks, including a leadoff double in the first inning and an RBI double that capped a three-run fourth.

Reds 6, Angels 4: Hunter Greene had 12 strikeouts in 6⅓ innings, Noelvi Marte homered, doubled and drove in two runs, and visiting Cincinnati beat Los Angeles.

Jose Trevino scored on a sacrifice fly by TJ Friedl and Gavin Lux followed with an RBI double off Kenley Jansen (5-3) in the ninth inning to give the Reds a 6-4 lead.

Diamondbacks 6, Guardians 5: Lourdes Gurriel Jr. drove in three runs, Jake McCarthy hit a solo homer and host Arizona beat Cleveland.

McCarthy finished with two hits and Corbin Carroll tripled twice, his fourth game this season with two triples.

Padres 5, Giants 1: Nick Pivetta allowed a leadoff homer by Jung Hoo Lee and then settled down to tie his season high with 10 strikeouts in six innings and lead host San Diego to a victory against San Francisco.

The Padres snapped a four-game losing streak and remained two games behind the Los Angeles Dodgers in the NL West.

Scoreboard

American League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	74	53	.583	—
New York	68	57	.544	5
Boston	68	59	.535	6
Tampa Bay	61	65	.484	12½
Baltimore	59	67	.468	14½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	75	53	.586	—
Kansas City	65	61	.516	9
Cleveland	64	61	.512	9½
Minnesota	58	67	.464	15½
Chicago	45	81	.357	29

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	69	57	.548	—
Seattle	68	59	.535	1½
Texas	62	65	.488	7½
Los Angeles	60	66	.476	9
Athletics	57	70	.449	12½

National League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	73	53	.579	—
New York	67	58	.536	5½
Miami	59	67	.468	14
Atlanta	57	69	.452	16
Washington	50	75	.400	22½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	79	47	.627	—
Chicago	72	54	.571	7
Cincinnati	67	60	.528	12½
St. Louis	63	64	.496	16½
Pittsburgh	53	74	.417	26½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	72	54	.571	—
San Diego	70	56	.556	2
San Francisco	61	65	.484	11
Arizona	61	66	.480	11½
Colorado	36	90	.286	36

Tuesday's games

Chicago Cubs 6-4, Milwaukee 4-1
Toronto 7, Pittsburgh 3
Philadelphia 6, Seattle 4
Detroit 1, Houston 0, 10 innings
St. Louis 7, Miami 4
Kansas City 5, Texas 2
N.Y. Yankees 13, Tampa Bay 3
L.A. Dodgers 11, Colorado 4
N.Y. Mets 8, Washington 1
Baltimore 4, Boston 3, 11 innings
Atlanta 11, Chicago White Sox 10
Athletics 6, Minnesota 3
Cincinnati 6, L.A. Angels 4
Arizona 6, Cleveland 5
San Diego 5, San Francisco 1

Wednesday's games

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

Thursday's games

Athletics (Perkins 2-2) at Minnesota (TBD)
Texas (Corbin 6-9) at Kansas City (Lorenzen 5-8)
Milwaukee (Priester 11-2) at Chicago Cubs (Imanaga 8-5)
L.A. Dodgers (Kershaw 7-2) at Colorado (Dollander 2-9)
N.Y. Mets (Manaea 1-1) at Washington (Gore 5-12)
San Francisco (Verlander 1-9) at San Diego (Cease 5-11)
Boston (Giolito 8-2) at N.Y. Yankees (Gil 1-1)
Houston (Alexander 3-1) at Baltimore (Young 1-6)
St. Louis (Gray 11-6) at Tampa Bay (Boyle 1-2)

Friday's games

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

MLB

Witt joins select company with 100th HR

By Dave Skretta
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Bobby Witt Jr. knew the ball was gone the moment it left his bat.

Only later did the young Kansas City Royals star realize what kind of company it allowed him to join.

The two-run shot in the eighth inning against Texas on Tuesday night merely padded the lead for Kansas City, which went on to a 5-2 victory. It was the fifth straight win for the Royals, who closed to within 2½ games of an AL wild-card berth.

But it was also the 100th career homer for Witt, making him the youngest in franchise history to reach that mark. He made it at the age of 25 years, 66 days, faster than Carlos Beltran when he accomplished it during the 2003 season.

"I want him up there every inning," Kansas City manager Matt Quatraro said. "I mean, you look at the lineup and you're trying to figure out, 'How many times can we get to the plate? How many guys can we keep on base for him when he does come to the plate?'

"I mean, that's an immense amount of pressure on a younger player to understand that's how everybody feels about him," Quatraro said. "But he has the physical ability, the makeup and the mental capacity to handle it."

The latest no-doubt shot, which came off Rangers reliever Cole Winn and landed an estimated 449 feet to dead center field, made Witt only the fourth player with at least 100 homers and 100 stolen bases through his first four big league seasons. The others are Julio Rodríguez, Darryl Strawberry and Bobby Bonds — some pretty select company.



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Bobby Witt Jr. walks off the field after the Royals beat the Texas Rangers on Tuesday in Kansas City, Mo.

Witt also become one of six shortstops in the last 95 years to hit at least 100 homers through his age-25 seasons. That list of luminaries includes Alex Rodriguez, Cal Ripken Jr., Francisco Lindor, Carlos Correa and Hanley Ramirez; of those players, only Rodriguez and Ramirez also had 100 steals by the time they were 25 years old.

"It was special," Witt admitted, "just seeing the kind of names on the list or whatever they showed. But now, it's just kind of on to the next. It was special. We enjoy it. And now it's just onto the next game."

They keep getting more important for the Royals, who have won five straight and seven of their last eight. They went into the third-game of their four-game set against Texas on Wednesday night with a chance to inch closer to a wild-card spot, and they proved last year that they could do some postseason damage if they can only get in.

Witt continues to be the catalyst of their second-half surge, too. He's hitting .291 with 18 homers and 69 RBIs.

"It's special when he goes out there," said Kansas City's Seth Lugo, who allowed just two runs on three hits while pitching into the seventh inning Tuesday night. "I've been saying it for two years: He goes about his business the same way. He doesn't get up or down on himself. He's a master of consistency. That's what he does."

Witt also happens to be a slick fielder with a Gold Glove in his trophy case.

But at the plate is where Witt has become a bona fide star. He led the majors with a .332 average last year, when he hit 32 home runs, stole 31 bases and finished with 109 RBIs. And while he may not quite replicate the average, homer total or RBI numbers in this campaign, he already has 32 stolen bases while getting caught just seven times.

"There's not too many guys that get to 100 (homers)," said Vinnie Pasquantino, who also homered Tuesday night. "And the fourth player in MLB history with 100 stolen bases? It's not a list I'll ever be on. I mean, it's kind of unbelievable.

"He's one of the best players in the league for a reason," Pasquantino said. "A superstar."

Winning: Skenes more concerned with Pirates' victories than his own

FROM PAGE 24

All too often during what has become a frustrating season for a last-place team, so is the result.

When Pittsburgh failed to break a 2-2 tie in the bottom of the sixth, it meant that Skenes was left a no-decision for the 10th time in 26 starts. In nine of those starts, he's allowed two runs or fewer, one of the main reasons he could become the first starting pitcher with a losing record to claim the Cy Young.

That prospect puts him at the forefront of the increasingly charged debate around whether "pitcher wins" are a valuable metric in determining a pitcher's actual worth, something that's not lost on him.

Yet asked if the lack of "Ws" under his name bothers him, he shrugs.

Yes, he cares about winning. More specifically, he cares about the Pirates winning. Whether he gets credit for it on the days he gets the ball is beside the point.

"I mean definitely the fact that we have more runs than (the opponents) do at the end of the game, that's the biggest thing," Skenes said.

Skenes then broke down why reliever Evan Sisk picked up his first big league victory by pitching a scoreless seventh before Pittsburgh took the lead for good in the bottom of the inning when Henry Davis dashed home following a wild pitch.

"I grinded, frankly, to get through six," Skenes said.

He pointed directly at a 24-pitch third inning, when the Blue Jays became the first opponent to score an earned run against Skenes at PNC Park since June 3. If he navigates that part of the game a little more efficiently, maybe he's out there for the seventh. Maybe even the eighth.

"If I do that, there's probably a 'win' next to my name," he said.

Instead, he stood on the top step of the dugout and watched Sisk, Kyle Nicolas and Dennis Santana get the final nine outs as the Pirates won for just the second time in nine games.

Yes, getting the victory would have been cool. But there was joy in having the 28-year-old Sisk get dumped in a basket after picking up his first major-league victory following seven long seasons in the minors.

As Sisk openly wondered what he might do with the ball commemorating the moment, Skenes jokingly suggested from a couple of stalls away that Sisk might not want to play catch with it.

It was a rare and welcome moment of levity for a team that began the year with heightened expectations (internally anyway) before reality set in.

Skenes' win-loss record isn't a reflection of his remarkable performance — going into Wednesday, he leads the majors in ERA (2.16) and is in the top six in innings, strikeouts, WHIP and batting average against — but his team's offensive ineptitude.

Pittsburgh ranks at or near the bottom of the majors in nearly every major statistical category. That part of the equation is out of Skenes' control. So he is trying to focus on what he can, namely the process of navigating the rigors of a 162-game season and everything that comes with it.



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Paul Skenes could end up being the first pitcher in MLB history to win the Cy Young award in a season in which he had a losing record.

He's still trying to figure out how to make sure he gets enough sleep given the erratic schedule. To make sure his diet doesn't slip when the club is on the road. To consistently do all the little things behind the scenes that help him be at his best every fifth day.

"If you aren't taking care of your routine and everything now, it can catch up to you in five, ten years, two years," he said. "So you can't cut corners because at some point, you're going to run out of paper."

NFL

Jones gets Colts starting QB job over Richardson

By Michael Marot
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Daniel Jones chose the Indianapolis Colts because he wanted a chance to prove he could still be a starting NFL quarterback.

The gamble paid off Tuesday when coach Shane Steichen announced Jones would start the Sept. 7 season opener against Miami, beating out Anthony Richardson, who just two years ago was dubbed the franchise's quarterback of the future.

The reason: consistency and accuracy.

"The operation at the line, discernment, checks, the protection, the ball placement, I think all of that played a factor in it," Steichen said. "I think Daniel did a great job doing that."

Steichen hinted a decision was coming soon following Saturday's 23-19 loss to Green Bay in the Colts' only home preseason game.

On Monday, he met with team co-owner Carlie Irsay-Gordon and general manager Chris Ballard before informing the two quarterbacks and the rest of the team Tuesday before he went public.

Ballard and Steichen also know this is a critical season for their futures with the franchise, which has missed the playoffs four straight seasons, and they're not about to put Jones on a short leash.

"He's our starter for the season," Steichen said.

For Jones, the decision caps a harrowing nine-month journey in which he lost the starting job with the New York Giants, then sought and was granted his release. Minnesota signed him five days later, but Jones never took a snap for a team that lost to the Los Angeles Rams in the wild-card round.

Instead of re-signing him, the Vikings allowed Jones to test free agency. He wound up signing a one-year, $14 million contract with Indianapolis because of the opportunity to compete with Richardson, the No. 4 overall pick in the 2023 draft, for the starting job.

"That was obviously a big piece of why I came here — to play and be on the field, to be with this group," Jones said. "It's a strong group of players and a strong group of coaches and I think there's a lot to be excited about."

Jones has thrown for 14,582 yards with 70 TDs and 47 interceptions since being New York's selection at No. 6 overall in 2019. He finished last season with 2,070 yards, eight TDs and seven interceptions in 10 games with the Giants.

For Richardson, it's another setback in a short career that has been defined by injuries, missed games and blown opportunities.

The Colts took Richardson to end the revolving door at quarterback. Indy had a different opening-day starter every year from 2017-23. He ended that streak last year.

But Richardson made only four starts as a rookie before needing season-ending shoulder surgery. Last year, injuries cost him four more starts and he was benched for two games after pulling himself out of a game because he said he needed a breather.

While Richardson has provided glimpses of the strong arm and impressive runs that impressed Colts scouts when he was playing for the Florida Gators, he's only 8-7 as an NFL starter — and has been unable to finish some of those games because of injuries.

In 2024, Richardson completed 47.7% of his throws, the lowest percentage of any regular starter in the league, and had 12 interceptions and eight touchdown passes. That's why Indianapolis wanted the competition.

Richardson worked on his footwork in hopes of improving his accuracy during the offseason, and while many of his teammates thought this was the best he'd looked in his three training camps, it wasn't good enough.

"I guess you could say (I was) somewhat surprised, but at the end of the day we all knew somebody was going to have to be on this end of the stick and, you know, it was me," Richardson said. "I feel like I did improve. My improvement was there, but there are still ways I can improve, still ways I can become a better player, become a starter in the league."

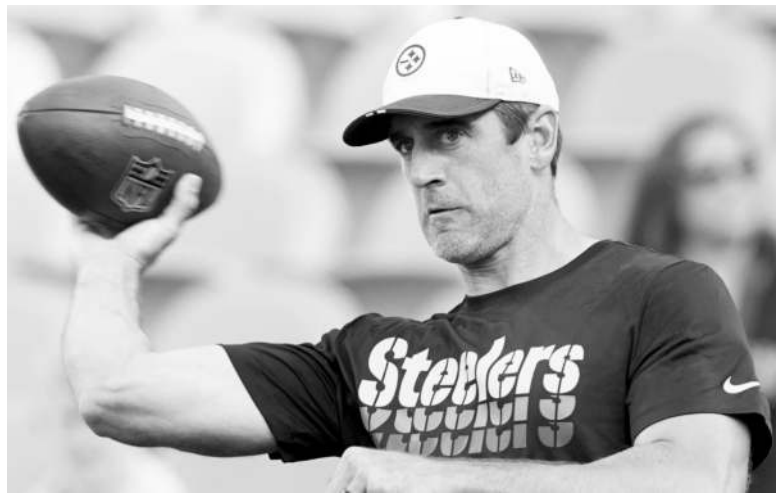
Despite making the decision, Steichen insisted the Colts continue to believe Richardson still has a bright future with them.

"I think Daniel was ahead of him (Richardson) there," Steichen said when asked specifically about Jones' consistency on the field. "I think there's still room for A.R. to grow. He's only 23 years old. He's still learning, still growing and for the first time in his career, this is an opportunity for him to sit at the start of a season and learn in a different role."



Michael Conroy/AP

Indianapolis Colts quaterback Daniel Jones makes a pass in the first half of a preseason game against the Green Bay Packers, Saturday, in Indianapolis. Jones was named the Week 1 starter for the Colts.



Matt Freed/AP

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

Rodgers, other starters set to sit out Steelers' final preseason game

By Will Graves
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Aaron Rodgers' first official snaps with Pittsburgh will have to wait until Week 1.

Coach Mike Tomlin said Tuesday that the four-time MVP, along with All-Pro defensive tackle Cam Heyward, star outside linebacker T.J. Watt and wide receiver DK Metcalf, will not play against the Panthers in the Steelers' preseason finale on Thursday.

Everyone else on the roster that's healthy, including defensive backs Jalen Ramsey and Darius Slay, running back Jaylen Warren and tight end Pat Freiermuth, could see the field in Carolina.

All were part of a sizeable group that watched Pittsburgh's first two exhibitions from the sideline. Yet with more than two weeks to prepare for the opener on the road against the New York Jets, Tomlin sees an opportunity for the majority of his team to knock off some rust before the games start counting.

The 41-year-old Rodgers has said throughout training camp that he'd be more than willing to take the field. Tomlin said he's seen enough progress over the last month that there's no need to put Rodgers in harm's way.

"I'm comfortable with what I'm seeing out here, obviously," Tomlin said. "If I weren't, I'd be playing him."

Asked Tuesday what he wants to see coming out of the Panthers game, Rodgers repeated the word "health" multiple times.

The decision not to have Rodgers take the field for at least a series during the preseason is an unusual step for Tomlin, who is entering his 19th season with the Steelers.

Longtime Pittsburgh quarterback Ben Roethlisberger always saw some level of game action in August, and each of the Week 1 starters since Roethlisberger's January 2022 retirement — Mitch Trubisky, Kenny Pickett and Justin Fields — all made at least a token appearance, if not more, in the preseason.

Like that trio, Rodgers is in his first year with the Steelers. Unlike that trio, Rodgers is the league's oldest active player and still less than 24 months removed from an Achilles tendon injury that cut short his initial season with the Jets in 2023 after just four snaps.

There's a chance Pittsburgh's new-look secondary could play together for the first time against Carolina. The Steelers added cornerbacks Ramsey and Slay — who have a combined 13 Pro Bowl appearances and two Super Bowl rings between them — in the offseason to join a group that includes Joey Porter Jr. and DeShaun Elliott.

The group has been dominant at times during training camp, but save for a joint scrimmage with Tampa Bay last week, has yet to see the field together against an opposing team.

That could change Thursday, though Tomlin indicated plans may change if the Panthers decide to sit quarterback Bryce Young and running back Chuba Hubbard, among others.

"There's a collective component, a communication component, a coordination component to what they do, and if they get the opportunity to get some snaps against some capable people in the stadium, we'd appreciate it," Tomlin said.

While Heyward will not play, he did return to practice Tuesday for the first time in nearly two weeks. The 35-year-old four-time All-Pro has been in attendance but not participating on the field as he seeks a bump in pay following a bounce-back season in which he collected eight sacks following an injury-marred 2023.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Teams going for 2, converting at best rate since 1970s



RICHARD W. RODRIGUEZ/AP

TCU safety Jamel Johnson, left, hits Central Florida running back RJ Harvey, who scored on the two-point conversion in the fourth quarter Sept. 14 in Fort Worth, Texas.

BY CLIFF BRUNT
Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Brent Venables' decision late in the Armed Forces Bowl last December was a sign of the times.

Oklahoma scored a touchdown in the closing seconds against Navy to cut its deficit to 21-20. Rather than kick the extra point and likely force overtime, Venables did what coaches increasingly are doing — he had his team go for two.

Venables said his team had practiced the scenario often, so he had decided that if the game was close enough with fewer than 30 seconds remaining, the Sooners would go for the win. Though Oklahoma had converted just one of four 2-point conversions on the season at that point, he still felt confident.

The Sooners failed, and Navy escaped with the win. Afterwards, Venables said he wouldn't flinch in the future if a similar situation arose.

"I'd go for it again, every situation," he said.

That's in part because analytics have emboldened coaches. Last season, Bowl Subdivision teams converted their highest number of 2-point conversions — 226 — since 1970, according to NCAA statistics. They attempted 493 last season, the most since 1978. Teams made 45.8% of their 2-point tries last season — the best percentage since 1974 and the third-best mark of all time.

"Number one is the analytics and the value of those, and the more educated everyone has become through those analytics," Venables said.

Part of the jump can be attributed to overtime rules. Before 2021, teams would start all overtime possessions at the opponent's 25-yard line, and if they scored a touchdown, starting in the third overtime, they were required to attempt 2-point conversions afterward. Starting in 2021, the first mandatory 2-point conversions were moved up to the second overtime; if a game reached a third overtime, teams would alternate 2-point conversion attempts until a winner was determined — much like a soccer shootout.

"I'm going to guess that across the country, teams are practicing them a lot more because of the overtime rules," Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy said.

The increased emphasis has made coaches more comfortable trying them during regulation.

"I think you see people start the game, and they're trying to create some momentum and get people on their heels early too," Venables said. "You see all different types of strategy when utilizing the two-point conversion."

Two-point conversion tries were relatively common in the 1970s, but as kickers became more accurate, the practice waned. In 2008, there were all-time lows of 181 2-point attempts and 67 makes.

In the Atlantic Coast Conference, there were just 18 2-point attempts as recently as the 2018 season. That total rose to 38 in 2022 and 2023, then to 73 in 2024. Last season saw six teams attempt at least seven tries; by comparison, only one team in the previous decade (Miami in 2020) had attempted at least seven 2-point tries, according to SportRadar.

Pittsburgh is among the teams trying them more often. The Panthers attempted 10 and converted five last season, both good for second nationally. Head coach Pat Narduzzi laid out two scenarios — the first where it wouldn't make sense to try for two.

"In a game, if you're up, let's just say you're up by three, you kick an extra point, well what's an extra point do? It gets you to four," he said.

Narduzzi then offered a scenario that would make sense to go for two.

"You're up by five, what does an extra point get you — to six, and then (a touchdown and) an extra point by the other team gets you beat," he said. "So there's all those analytics of like, why kick an extra point when you can possibly get two — if it's not going to hurt you."

BRIEFS

No. 6 Notre Dame names Carr starting QB over Minchey

Associated Press

Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman named second-year quarterback CJ Carr his starting quarterback Tuesday, ending the preseason competition with Kenny Minchey.

The announcement was made on the official social media account of the Fighting Irish football program.

Carr made one appearance for Notre Dame during last season's run to the national championship game, but has not thrown a college pass. He played in the second half of a historic 66-7 rout at Purdue last season.

He was a three-time all-state quarterback in Michigan and is the son of former Wolverines football player Jason Carr and the grandson of former Michigan coach Lloyd Carr.

Minchey appeared in three games with the Irish in 2023 and completed both of his attempts for 12 yards. He also appeared in last year's Purdue game, completing his only pass of the season for 4 yards and rushing two times for 12 yards. He scored his first TD on a 7-yard run.



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Notre Dame quarterback CJ Carr throws during practice in South Bend, Ind., on July 31. Carr was named the Fighting Irish's starter.

True freshman first ever at BYU to start season at QB

PROVO, Utah — Bear Bachmeier will be the first true freshman to start a season at quarterback in BYU history.

Bachmeier emerged from a three-way competition to replace Jake Retzlaff and the team announced he will be the starter Aug. 30 against Portland State in a social media post on Tuesday.

BYU had an unexpected quarterback competition this fall after Retzlaff opted to transfer to Tulane rather than face a potential seven-game suspension from the school. Retzlaff had a sexual assault lawsuit against him dismissed, but acknowledged having consensual sex in his defense, a violation of the school's honor code asking students to abstain from premarital sex.

That left the Cougars with a competition between Bachmeier, McCae Hillstead and Treyson Bourguet. McCae previously played at Utah State and Bourguet at Western Michigan, but Bachmeier impressed head coach Kalani Sitake and his staff enough to beat out the two more experienced quarterbacks.

Texas QB Manning: NFL plans not taking shape

AUSTIN, Texas — There's so much speculation about Texas quarterback Arch Manning's future, in the media and even within his own family, that it can be hard for him to keep up.

On Tuesday, Manning insisted he's not plotting out how long he'll stay at Texas or when he'll enter the NFL draft, despite his grandfather's recent prediction to Texas Monthly magazine that he'll be with the Longhorns through the 2026 season.

Arch Manning has been careful while talking about his future as he leads the No. 1 Longhorns as the full-time starter after playing behind Quinn Ewers the past two seasons. Manning enters this season as the early favorite for the Heisman Trophy, has endorsement deals worth millions and comes from the most famous quarterbacking family in football. Grandfather Archie played in the NFL and uncles Peyton and Eli combined for four Super Bowl victories.

Add that together and Arch Manning is shouldering the biggest spotlight of any player in the country. Texas opens the season Aug. 30 at No. 3 Ohio State after losing to the Buckeyes in the national playoff semifinals last season.

SPORTS

Back in action

Jones beats out Richardson in Colts' starting QB competition ›› NFL, Page 22

MLB



GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Paul Skenes leads the National League in ERA with a 2.16 mark after his last start Monday, but has only a 7-9 record to show for it so far.

All but a winning season

Pirates ace Skenes dominating everywhere except with his record

BY WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Paul Skenes is a numbers nerd. Well, most of the time anyway.

The Pittsburgh Pirates ace will make it a point to glance up at the ribbon boards that instantaneously spew out the data following each pitch — velocity, drop, horizontal movement — to get a feel for whether the ball is doing what he wants it to do after it leaves his hands.

He considers the practice educational. A way for the former Air Force cadet who once majored in military strategy before transferring to LSU to decipher what's working and what's not during a given start.

Yet there are two numbers the 23-year-old insists he isn't paying much attention to, at least publicly anyway: his personal win-loss record.

Those numbers remained stuck at 7-9 following six occasionally fiery innings in what became a 5-2 victory over American League-leading Toronto on Monday night.

Facing a team that entered the night with the highest batting average and fewest strikeouts in the majors — and with almost certain future Hall of Famer Max Scherzer watching intently from the Blue Jays dugout — Skenes allowed five hits and struck out eight.

When he slowly loped, head down as always, from the mound after fanning Toronto third baseman Ernie Clement to end the top of the sixth, a sizable chunk of the PNC Park crowd rose to its feet.

Standing ovations when Skenes is finishing up a day's work are becoming the norm.

SEE WINNING ON PAGE 21

2-point tries, conversions back on rise ›› College football, Page 23

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