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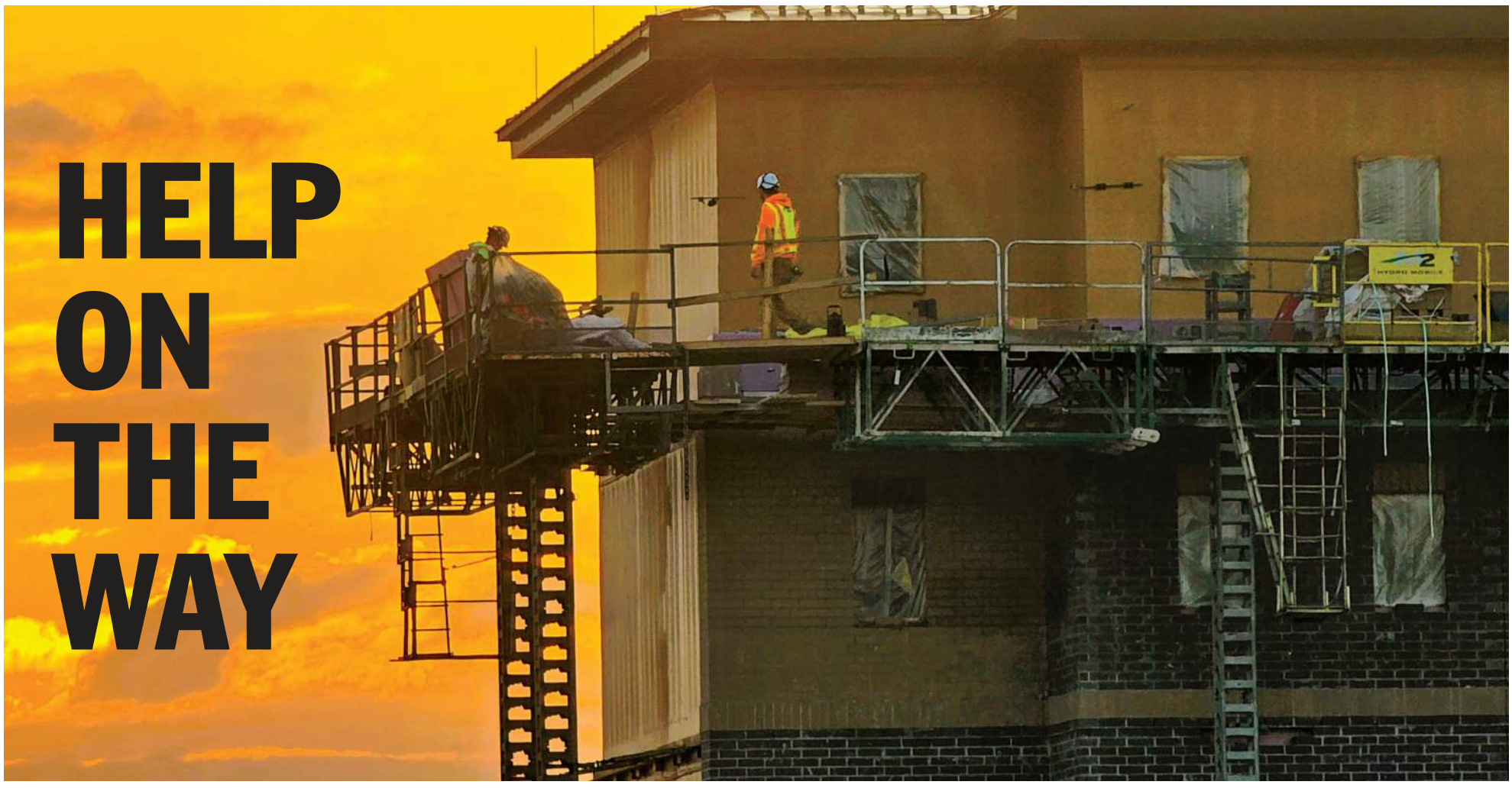
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STARS AND STRIPES®

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SCOTT STURKOL/U.S. Army

Contractors work on a new $27.3 million transient training troops barracks project, known as the Fort McCoy East Barracks Project, on Sept. 11 at Fort McCoy, Wis. The building will be able to house up to 400 people and will be more than 60,000 square feet.

Army secretary pledges barracks improvements, better internet, but more money is needed

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Army has a long history of doing too little, too late to make barracks life better for its junior soldiers at installations across the globe, Army Secretary Dan Driscoll told a room full of soldiers at Fort Drum, N.Y., on Monday.

"We've gone to bases all over the world [during the last year, and found] there are many, many, many things where we are failing you — where there is mold, where there is not high-speed internet, where there are very basic things [missing] for modern living," Driscoll said during a town-hall event aired Tuesday alongside Gen. Randy George, the Army's top general; and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer, the service's top enlisted soldier. "We have got to get it for you much faster."

Army — and other military — barracks have long been plagued with myriad health and comfort issues for the young troops that live in them, and for decades the Army has been accused of doing too little to solve those problems while senior leaders have pledged to make improvements.

Driscoll promised action over talk. But the top Army leaders pro-

SEE BARRACKS ON PAGE 8

Some personnel at key US base in Qatar advised to evacuate amid tensions in region

BY KONSTANTIN TOROPIN AND FARNOUSH AMIRI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Some personnel at a key U.S. military base in Qatar were advised to evacuate by Wednesday evening, according to a U.S. official and the Gulf country, as President Donald Trump warns of possible action after a deadly crackdown on protesters in Iran.

The decision came as a senior official in Tehran brought up the country's retaliatory attack in June at Al Udeid Air Base outside Doha, Qatar.

The U.S. official, who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive plans, described the move at the base as a precautionary measures and that other steps were being taken across the region. The official, citing the need for operational security, would not go into further detail, including whether the evacuation was optional or mandatory, whether it affected troops or civilian personnel or how may were advised to leave.

The anti-government demonstrations in nearby Iran began in late December, and Trump has said he is willing to conduct military operations against Iran if the Tehran government continues to kill and arrest protesters.

SEE TENSIONS ON PAGE 9

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Luxury retailer Saks Global files for bankruptcy

Associated Press

Luxury retailer Saks Global has filed for bankruptcy, preparing to reposition itself in the increasingly competitive upscale market after obtaining about $1.75 billion in financing commitments.

The New York-based private company that owns retailers Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus said in a release Wednesday that it had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in Texas.

The company's top executive, Marc Metrick, stepped down earlier this month as the firm struggled with debt it took on for its $2.65 billion acquisition of Neiman Marcus in 2024. He was succeeded as CEO by executive chairman Richard Baker, who quit both roles earlier this week and was replaced as chief execute by Geoffroy van Raemdonck.

The company is also facing increasing competition as it tries to winnow down its heavy debt load, while its customers have balked against extravagant price hikes.

Saks said it did not expect its operations to be disrupted and it would continue to honor its customer programs and pay its suppliers and employees.

It said it has financing commitments of $1.5 billion from some creditors and another $240 million in "incremental liquidity."

Hudson's Bay Co., the Canadian owner of Saks Fifth Avenue, split off the luxury retailer's e-commerce business, Saks.com, in 2021. After acquiring Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue changed its name to Saks Global.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro costs (Jan. 15)	0.84
British pound (Jan. 15)	$1.31
Japanese yen (Jan. 15)	154.00
South Korean won (Jan. 15)	1440.00

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3745
Britain (Pound)	1.3456
Canada (Dollar)	1.3872
China (Yuan)	6.9775
Denmark (Krone)	6.4099
Egypt (Pound)	47.2945
Euro	0.8578
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7968
Hungary (Forint)	331.533
Israel (Shekel)	3.1605
Japan (Yen)	158.214
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3072
Norway (Krone)	10.0454
Philippines (Peso)	59.477
Poland (Zloty)	3.6078
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7461
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2866
South Korea (Won)	1464.49
Switzerland (Franc)	0.7996
Thailand (Baht)	31.45
Turkey (NewLira)	43.18

(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

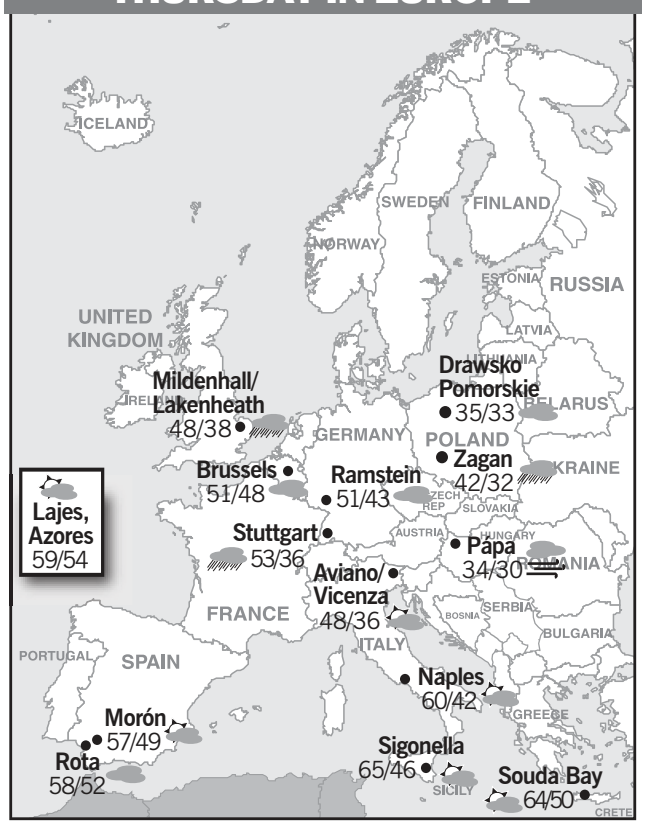
Prime rate	6.75
Interest Rates Discount rate	3.75
Federal funds market rate	3.62
3-month bill	3.65
30-year bond	4.84

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



This weather is compiled from weather.com reports.

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MILITARY

Trump wants NATO to back push for Greenland

By John Vandiver
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — President Donald Trump on Wednesday said anything less than full American control of Greenland would be unacceptable, and he urged NATO to back his bid to wrest the huge island territory from fellow ally Denmark.

Greenland "becomes far more formidable and effective" against adversaries such as Russia and China by being in U.S. hands, Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform, adding that the alliance "should be leading the way for us to get it."

He also linked control of Greenland to the future development of the American air defense system dubbed the Golden Dome.

Trump's comments came hours before a high-stakes meeting Wednesday between Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Greenlandic and Danish officials.

The U.S. has long maintained a military presence in Greenland and currently has about 200 troops in the country who are involved with an early-warning ballistic missile defense mission.

Danish officials have said they are open to having more U.S. forces in Greenland but have balked at Trump's takeover bid.

Trump's post Wednesday, though, said "anything less than (full control) is unacceptable."

The escalating crisis over the status of Greenland has dominated security talks on both sides of the Atlantic in recent days.



North American Aerospace Defense Command

Royal Canadian Air Force CF-18s arrive at Thule AB, Greenland, during a 2021 North American Aerospace Defense Command Arctic air defense exercise.

NATO's top official this week downplayed the prospect of coming to blows with the United States over Greenland, saying efforts are underway to address Trump's concerns over security in the Arctic.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte on Tuesday was peppered with questions during a European Parliament forum in Brussels, where growing tensions over Trump's push to take control of another ally's territory dominated the conversation.

When asked whether any ally would support the United States if it were to take the autonomous Danish territory of Greenland by force, Rutte deflected, saying members of the bloc, including the United States, were working to "make sure that the Arctic is safe."

Rutte also told the group that he wouldn't publicly address a dispute between NATO allies, saying such matters would be dealt with behind closed doors.

Greenland Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen said Tuesday that the island in the far northern Atlantic Ocean faces a "geopolitical crisis" and that if forced to pick sides, it would keep the status quo.

"We choose NATO. We choose the Kingdom of Denmark. We choose the EU," Nielsen said.

When asked by reporters about Nielsen's comments, Trump doubled down.

"That's going to be a big problem for him," he said.

Rutte's meeting Tuesday with European parliamentarians highlights the delicate position he finds himself in. Even when asked whether it would be acceptable in principle for one ally to threaten to use force to take another's territory, Rutte demurred.

In recent days, Trump has said the United States is prepared to control Greenland "the easy way or the hard way."

Key NATO members in Europe appear to have gotten the message. Officials from France, the United Kingdom and Germany have indicated that their countries are prepared to increase their military presence in Greenland and elsewhere in the Arctic.

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul on Monday told reporters that Berlin is ready to do more.

"If the American president is looking at what threats might come from Russian or Chinese ships or submarines in the region, we can of course find answers to that together," Wadephul said.

Rutte also said Tuesday that in the coming weeks, NATO will take up the issue of enhancing its position in the High North.

As sea ice melts in the Arctic, new shipping lanes are opening potential access to important natural resources. Greenland itself also is home to large reserves of rare-earth minerals.

It's unclear whether a larger presence of European military in Greenland would satisfy Trump's concerns or dissuade him from his push.

Unspecified U.S. action related to the Arctic island could come within "weeks or months," according to Trump's Arctic commissioner, Thomas Dans.

In an interview with USA Today on Tuesday, Dans said the aim was "to get the people of Greenland on board" with American control of the island.

However, recent polling showed single-digit public support for that among the roughly 57,000 residents of the territory.

Lawmakers seek to bar use of federal funds to take over Greenland

By Svetlana Shkolnikova
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A bipartisan group of lawmakers in the House is hoping to stymie President Donald Trump's designs on Greenland with a new bill that prohibits the use of federal funds for the invasion of NATO allies and territories.

The legislation does not name specific countries but appears aimed at preventing Trump from carrying out his threat to seize Greenland, a semiautonomous territory of Denmark that Trump has said he wants to acquire the "easy way" or the "hard way."

Rep. Bill Keating, D-Mass., is leading the legislation alongside fellow Democrats Steny Hoyer, of Maryland, and Brendan Boyle, of Pennsylvania. Rep. Don Bacon, of Nebraska, a former Air Force officer who is not running for reelection this year, is the only Republican co-sponsor of the bill.

"This should be unnecessary, but I've sponsored this bill because the Administration keeps threatening Greenland & Denmark," Bacon wrote on X on Tuesday. "I served in NATO and served with many Europeans in Iraq & Afghanistan. The Admin is wrong to treat our Allies so poorly & foolishly."

The White House has said it is considering a range of options to take control of the island, including military force.

On Tuesday, however, House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., dismissed the possibility of a military takeover of Greenland, describing it as a "media narrative."

Trump has said he would like to make a deal to acquire Greenland, arguing its strategic location in the Arctic and abundance of critical minerals is vital to national security. But Stephen Miller, a top aide to Trump, has suggested the U.S. could take the island by force.

Such rhetoric has raised alarm in Europe and among U.S. lawmakers in the aftermath of the American military raid on Venezuela that captured Nicolás Maduro.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen warned last week that an American takeover of Greenland would mark the end of NATO, a mutual-defense military alliance, as well as the post-World War II security order.

Keating on Monday called NATO the foundation for peace between the U.S. and Europe for nearly 80 years and said he appreciated growing lawmaker support for his legislation — the bill had 26 co-sponsors as of Tuesday.

Another measure was also introduced Monday by Rep. Jimmy Gomez, D-Calif., to bar the use of federal funding to acquire Greenland in any way.

The legislation also prohibits increases to the U.S. military's presence on the island, now numbering about 150 personnel, without congressional authorization.

"Greenland is not for sale, not for conquest, and not a bargaining chip," Gomez said in a statement on Tuesday. "This bill draws a clear line: Congress will not fund Donald Trump's imperial fantasies."

Some lawmakers have voiced support for Trump's ambitions, pointing to growing military and commercial competition in the Arctic with Russia and China. Rep. Randy Fine, R-Fla., introduced legislation on Monday to annex or acquire Greenland and take steps to make it the 51st state.

"Whoever controls Greenland controls key Arctic shipping lines and the security architecture protecting the United States," Fine said in a statement. "America cannot leave that future in the hands of regimes that despise our values and seek to undermine our security."

Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio are expected to meet with the foreign ministers of Denmark and Greenland on Wednesday to discuss Trump's interest in Greenland. Meanwhile, a congressional delegation of mostly Democrats will travel to Denmark later this week to show support for the U.S.-Denmark relationship.

"At a time of increasing international instability, we need to draw closer to our allies, not drive them away," said Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., who is leading the trip. "This delegation will send a clear message that Congress is committed to NATO and our network of alliances."

Correction

A story about Okinawa Marines in Wednesday's edition of Stars and Stripes suggested the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade includes 14,500 members. An expeditionary battalion may be that large but the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade now counts 90 personnel.

MILITARY

New method to measure troops' body fat coming

BY MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is shifting from height and weight tables and replacing them with a waist-to-height ratio methodology, according to a memo.

The new body-fat standards are between 18% and 26% for men and between 26% and 36% for women, according to a Dec. 18 memo from undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness Anthony J. Tata that the Pentagon released on Monday.

Troops in every military branch will get two measurements each year, according to the memo.

"The upper limit for allowable [waist-to-height ratio] for military service body-composition policies shall be less than 0.55," the memo says. The ratio is determined by dividing waist measurement by height.

Under the policy, service members with a waist-to-height ratio of 0.55 or above will be further tested and, if found to exceed body-fat standards, will be placed in their service's remedial programs and referred to medical authorities for an evaluation.

"Failure to meet established standards may result in the withholding of favorable personnel actions, including promotions," the memo says. "Continued failure or those not demonstrating adequate progress will be subject to administrative measures to include processing for administrative separation."

During a speech to generals on Sept. 30, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced 10 initiatives would arrive in their inboxes — including for height and weight requirements. In a memo, the secretary wrote the military would adopt the methodology "to promote consistency and fairness," and all service members would be evaluated twice per year.

Since Tata's memo on Dec. 18, the Navy has implemented waist-to-height standards as part of its physical readiness program, according to the service's body-composition assessment published last month.

The Air and Space Forces this month updated fitness standards which included the waist-to-height requirements as part of its process. The Marine Corps and Army are in the process of announcing how they will implement the waist-to-height ratio, service officials said.



U.S. Air Force

Stephen Ramirez takes the measurements of Airman Ciaran O'Neill during an assessment aboard USS Tripoli in August.



PHOTOS BY JOHN SIMPSON/U.S. Marine Corps

Lance Cpls. Aaron Duran, left, and Juan Hilario fire on simulated forces Dec. 17 during the Korea Viper exercise at the Rodriguez Live Fire Complex in Pocheon, South Korea.

Marines ski, shoot, learn during monthlong mission in S. Korea

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY AND YOOJIN LEE
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Marines on a six-month deployment to Okinawa spent more than a month in South Korea rehearsing urban warfare, working with drones and skiing in the dark with their South Korean counterparts.

More than 200 members of 1st Battalion, 6th Marines trained in infantry tactics, communications and intelligence gathering on the peninsula between Nov. 29 and Saturday as part of the Unit Deployment Program, Marine Corps Forces Korea spokesman 1st Lt. Benjamin Gillman said by email Thursday.

The Marines experienced "challenging climates, realistic training scenarios, and opportunities to train alongside the [South Korean marines], a highly professional and lethal force," Gillman said.

The battalion Marines, from Camp Lejeune, N.C., have been deployed with the 4th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, since August. They trained on Okinawa and Guam before arriving in South Korea, according to a Marine Corps Forces Korea news release on Sunday.



Sgt. Estevan Diaz checks his radio while conducting platoon attacks during Korea Viper.

Since 1977, the deployment program has rotated U.S.-based infantry battalions to Okinawa for jungle training, exercises with Japanese and South Korean allies, and other activities that support the III Marine Expeditionary Force in the Indo-Pacific.

"The exchanges between our units have given young leaders the opportunity to teach and demonstrate tactical skills, lifesaving care, camouflage methods, and mobility techniques," Capt. Michael Downing, a company commander with the battalion, said in the release.

Last month, Marines with Charlie Company took part in Korea Viper, rehearsing military operations in urban settings at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex near the North Korean border, Gillman said.

The exercise included live-firing rifles on the range, training on small unmanned aircraft systems and clearing buildings, according to photos accompanying the release.

This month, the same Marines trained on skis in cold weather with South Korean marines at the Mountain Warfare Training Center in Pyeongchang, Gillman said. The troops practiced downhill and cross-country skiing using night vision goggles, according to the release.

Battalion Marines also worked with communications Marines based at Camp Humphreys to inventory, program and configure communication assets, Gillman said.

"Reoccurring Marine Corps exercises like Korea Viper and Korea Marine Exchange Program not only create more lethal units and Marines, they showcase our role as an essential fixture in the security architecture on the Korean Peninsula," Gillman said.

Sailor gets suspended sentence for injuring pedestrian in crosswalk

BY ALEX WILSON AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA, Japan — A U.S. Navy sailor received a suspended sentence Tuesday following a traffic incident that injured an elderly Japanese man last year near the home of the U.S. 7th Fleet.

Master Chief Petty Officer Charlie Sison Julio, 45, assigned to Naval Education Training Command at Yokosuka Naval Base, was sentenced by the Yokohama District Court's Yokosuka branch to 10 months in prison.

However, Judge Yasushi Katada suspended the sentence for three years, meaning Julio won't serve time unless he commits another offense during that period.

Julio on Dec. 3 pleaded no contest to negligent driving resulting in injury for a Feb. 11 collision with an 87-year-old man in a crosswalk that day around 11:10 a.m.

Morikazu Hosoe, now 88, was hospitalized for 106 days for a fracture due to the accident, according to the court.

"It goes without saying that the injuries inflicted by the defendant on the victim were serious. It is also unacceptable that the elderly victim has been hindered in his daily life and has been left feeling anxious about his future," Katada said at the sentencing.

Katada acknowledged that factors including a wall that blocked Julio's view and poor visibility due to direct sunlight contributed to the incident but said the sailor should have driven more carefully under those conditions.

The judge said he also considered factors in Julio's favor, including his decision not to dispute the charge, his apologies to the victim and insurance coverage.

"Despite this, the defendant failed to notice the victim and collided with him," he said. "The defendant's negligence is significant."

MILITARY

Plane used in boat strike said to be disguised

By Lisa Mascaro and Konstantin Toropin
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The plane used by the U.S. military to strike a boat accused of smuggling drugs off the coast of Venezuela last fall was painted to look like a civilian aircraft, a move that appears to be at odds with the Pentagon's manual on the laws of war.

The plane, part of a secret U.S. fleet used in surveillance operations, also was carrying munitions in the fuselage, rather than beneath the aircraft, raising questions about the extent to which the operation was disguised in ways that run contrary to military protocol.

Details of the plane's appearance, first reported Monday by The New York Times, were confirmed by two people familiar with the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

Pentagon press secretary Kingsley Wilson said in a statement that "the U.S. military utilizes a wide array of standard and nonstandard aircraft depending on mission requirements."

The new details come after the Trump administration's pressure campaign on Venezuela — which began with it massing military resources in Latin America and attacking a series of alleged drug-smuggling boats, killing at least 115 people — culminated this month in a stunning raid that captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. He and his wife were spirited to the United States to face federal drug trafficking charges.

However, U.S. military guidelines on the laws of war prohibit troops from pretending to be civilians while engaging in combat. The practice is legally known as "perfidy."

The Defense Department manual, which runs over 1,000 pages, specifically notes that "feigning civilian status and then attacking" is an example of the practice. An Air Force manual says the practice was prohibited because it means the enemy "neglects to take precautions which are otherwise necessary."

The Navy's manual explains that "attacking enemy forces while posing as a civilian puts all civilians at hazard," and sailors must use offensive force "within the bounds of military honor, particularly without resort to perfidy."

Wilson said each aircraft goes through a "rigorous procurement process to ensure compliance with domestic law, department policies and regulations, and applicable international standards, including the law of armed conflict."

The plane that was painted as a civilian aircraft was used in a Sept. 2 strike, the first in what would become a monthslong campaign of U.S. deadly military strikes on suspected drug boats with political and policy ramifications for the Trump administration.



Katelynn Jackson/U.S. Air Force

A U.S. Air Force crew chief guides in a F-35A Lightning II following military actions in Venezuela in support of Operation Absolute Resolve, on Jan. 3.

Senate readies war powers vote as Trump pressures defectors

By Stephen Groves
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans are facing intense pressure from President Donald Trump to vote down a war powers resolution Wednesday that is aimed at limiting the president's ability to carry out further military action against Venezuela.

Five GOP senators joined with Democrats to advance the resolution last week, but Trump has lashed out at the defectors as he tries to head off passage of the bill. Democrats are forcing the vote after U.S. troops captured Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro in a surprise nighttime raid earlier this month.

"Here we have one of the most successful attacks ever and they find a way to be against it. It's pretty amazing. And it's a shame," Trump said at a speech in Michigan on Tuesday. He also hurled insults at several of the Republicans who advanced the legislation.

Trump's latest comments followed earlier phone calls with the senators, which they described as terse. The fury being directed their way from the president underscored how the war powers vote has taken on new political significance as Trump expands his foreign policy ambitions in the Western Hemisphere.

The legislation, even if passed by the Senate, has virtually no chance of becoming law because it would eventually need to be signed by Trump himself. But it represented both a test of GOP loyalty to the president and a marker for how much leeway the Republican-controlled Senate is willing to give Trump to use the military abroad.

Trump has used a series of legal rationales for his campaign against Maduro. As he built up a naval force in the Caribbean and destroyed vessels that were allegedly carrying drugs from Venezuela, the Trump administration tapped wartime powers under the global war on terror by designating drug cartels as terrorist organizations. The administration also has claimed the capture of Maduro himself was actually a law enforcement operation, essentially to extradite the Venezuelan president to stand trial for charges in the U.S. that were filed in 2020.

Army smart armor-piercing weapon fast-tracked after testing in Germany

By Matthew M. Burke
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — A smart anti-tank munition that helps soldiers hold their own against tracked vehicles is being hurried to the force after successful testing in Bavaria.

The Army's XM204 interim "top-attack" munition was approved for urgent materiel release, a procurement term that means speeding a weapons system into the field to meet an immediate operational requirement, an Army statement Monday said.

The test of the briefcase-sized munition was done in early December by soldiers of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment at the sprawling Grafenwoehr Training Area in Bavaria.

Eight trainers from the Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels also attended a "train-the-trainer" course so they can teach other soldiers how to effectively use the weapon, the statement said.

After being placed and armed by hand, the XM204 detects oncoming vehicles and autonomously fires submunitions into the air. It can be used alone, in multiples, or in tandem with other systems, according to an Army fact sheet.

After launch, the submunitions scan the area, verify a target, then fire an armor-piercing slug. The system has a 160-foot attack radius and can fire a total of four munitions, according to the manufacturer, Textron.

The device is called a terrain-shaping munition because it is designed to block, disrupt, fix and turn an enemy force, the service said in a previous statement. It allows a small force to repel or slow enemy armor until reinforcements arrive.

Having it in the arsenal helps slow an adversary's movements and protect U.S. forces, Maj. Gen. John Reim, joint program executive officer for armaments and ammunition at Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., said in a September statement.

"This system gives our warfighters a decisive edge as we train and operate alongside NATO allies," Reim said.



U.S. Army

An XM204 anti-vehicle mine is seen ahead of testing in this undated photo. The mine is being fast-tracked for use across the Army after recent successful testing at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany.

The 2nd Cavalry Regiment, based at Rose Barracks in Vilseck, is the first unit to field the XM204, the earlier statement said. The regiment tested the munition for performance, reliability and safety.

Textron was awarded a five-year, $353 million contract in 2022.

MILITARY

‘Blood doesn’t make a family’

Adoption has forged bonds that span borders, generations for some families

By Alex Wilson and Yoojin Lee
Stars and Stripes

Fifty years ago, U.S. Navy Cmdr. Dixie Dunham set out to adopt a child while stationed at what is now North Dock in Yokohama, Japan.

Months later, after rounds of interviews, piles of paperwork and two trips to South Korea, she returned not with one child, but three. Laurie, 10, Mija, 8, and Christin, 4, came to live with her in November 1975.

Dunham was 46 at the time, single and keenly aware of social changes taking place around her. “In today’s world I can have a career and a family, too — the best of both lives,” she told Stars and Stripes in February 1976.

One of her daughters, Christin Dunham, is now 54 and works as a librarian at Osan Middle High School on Osan Air Base, south of Seoul.

“I always tell people, you know, blood doesn’t make a family. You could have biological family members you can’t stand,” she told Stars and Stripes in November. “I say love makes a family.”

While adoption within American military families is not unusual, service members pursue it less frequently than the overall U.S. population.

Between 2016 and 2020, just 2,174 military families fostered or sought to adopt children, according to a 2021 Government Accountability Office report. That figure represents less than 1% of the approximately 1.3 million military members serving during that period.

By comparison, an estimated 2% to 4% of American families have adopted children, and as many as 33% have considered it, according to the Adoption Network.

Still, for those who do adopt, military life — particularly overseas — can shape family experiences in distinctive ways, from international adoptions decades ago to raising children in diverse base communities and, in some cases, reconnecting adoptees with their countries of origin.

Susie Paul, 56, and Michael Paul, 71, a teacher at Osan, adopted their son, Benaiah, 11, when he was 2. The family said the military community has played an important role in his upbringing.

“One of the really good things about being here, I think in Korea, especially, is there are so many different cultures represented on the base,” Susie Paul, a stay-at-home mother, said.

“He absolutely fits right in; he’s accepted,” she said. “There are so many mixed families and that sort of thing — people coming and going — I think it’s been a great environment to raise him.”

The couple, who also have four biological children, adopted Benaiah from a family friend after fostering him unofficially for several years.



Susie Paul

Susie and Michael Paul pose with their four biological children and their adopted son, Benaiah, in Applegate, Ore., in 2020.

“We really wanted a big family — we love kids — and so we wanted to explore adoption,” Paul said. “We felt like if God wants us to do that, then he’s going to place a child in our lives, and he did.”

Paul emphasized that adoption can be deeply rewarding but comes with challenges.

“I will never go down without saying that … but I think overall it’s a really good thing,” she said.

Military service has also influenced some adoptees’ efforts to search for their biological families.

At 18, Scott Gleason decided he wanted to reconnect with his Korean birth parents, but his attempts were unsuccessful until he joined the U.S. Army, he said.

Gleason — now 32 and a lieutenant assigned to U.S. Army Japan — completed a year-long tour in South Korea beginning in 2023. During that time, he searched for information about his birth family.

“I found out I have a biological mother who’s still alive — they don’t know anything about my father,” he said. “And then she has a sister, my aunt, who’s still alive, but when the adoption [agency] reached out to them, they weren’t interested in connecting.”



Stars and Stripes

U.S. Navy Cmdr. Dixie Dunham sits with her newly adopted children, from left Christin, Laurie and Mija, in this undated photo from a 1976 article in Stars and Stripes Pacific.

Although the outcome was disappointing, Gleason said he made peace with it.

“I went and tried,” he said. “I lived out there for a year. I was traveling out there on the weekends. I feel like I’ve extinguished every option, and I’m satisfied. You know, I think I gave it an honest effort.”

USO honors volunteer airman in Japan, soldier in Missouri

By Marc Castaneda
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Airman 1st Class Austin Wylie has a reputation at this airlift hub in western Tokyo for being the person who shows up, not for recognition, but for the chance to give someone else a better day.

“I want to see what it does for them,” Wylie said Tuesday during his volunteer shift at Yokota’s USO. “Because then they walk away with a memory or a smile. Either way, it’s a win for me.”

That attitude earned Wylie, a broadcast producer for American Forces Network, the title of overseas USO volunteer of the year for 2025, the nonprofit announced Friday in a news release.

Wylie shares the honor with the stateside USO volunteer of the year, Army Sgt. 1st Class Loretta Streichert of Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. She is an operations sergeant and instructor at the Army Military Police School.



Streichert

The USO has more than 21,000 volunteers who support service members and their families by staffing centers and assisting with programs and activities across the globe.

“Austin reshaped the center’s training and volunteer development process and personally recruited and trained 37 new volunteers,” the USO said. “His operational support has improved center readiness and efficiency, decreasing event setup and teardown times through better coordination and pre-event planning.”



Wylie

Streichert earned accolades for recruiting 22 new volunteers and engaging in USO programs promoting emotional resiliency and others, including Families of the Fallen and Backyard Break for the Brave.

She “actively engages in community outreach with her USO Canine partner, Zara,” the USO said.

Wylie told Stars and Stripes he grew up hearing about the USO from his grandparents but had no personal experience with it until he enlisted.

At the San Antonio airport before basic training, volunteers welcomed him “with open arms,” a support system Wylie said stayed with him through the early stages of his career.

“It gave me a chance to hang out with people that had like-minded personalities and interests,” he said. “A chance to feel comfortable and to feel good about what they’re about to do.”

By the time he reached his first duty station, Wylie said he already knew he wanted to be part of that environment for others.

“I knew right away that I needed to become a part of this,” he said.

USO Yokota staff described Wylie as a steady presence in the center, especially during busy stretches.

“It feels like we have a fourth staff member,” Josie Grenier, the local USO center’s operations manager, told Stars and Stripes at the center on Tuesday. “We know that things aren’t going to slip under the rug or fall through the cracks when Austin is around.”

That sense of connection is something Wylie said he hopes other service members, especially those feeling isolated overseas, can experience, too.

“If I’m given time on this planet to do something, and I don’t get to take back any of that time, what right do I have to not share that time with other people?” he said.

MILITARY

Cutter returns to Western Pacific

By Alex Wilson
Stars and Stripes

The Coast Guard's fleet of Guam-based buoy tenders is at its full complement for the first time in nearly a decade with Wednesday's arrival of the cutter Hickory.

The Hickory arrived at Apra Harbor after a 71-day, 13,000-mile voyage from the U.S. Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore, where it underwent two years of major upgrades and repairs, Coast Guard Sector Guam spokeswoman Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sara Muir told Stars and Stripes by email Wednesday.

The ship joins two other buoy tenders in the Coast Guard's Oceania District — the Juniper and the Hollyhock, both homeported in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Without the Hickory, the region was short at least one tender since 2017, Muir said.

The cutters primarily deploy, maintain and repair navigation aids such as buoys and beacons but also support Coast Guard activities like search and rescue, maritime law enforcement and homeland security, Muir said.

"In the Indo-Pacific, they play a key role in enabling secure sea lanes for commercial shipping, which handles billions in trade annually," she wrote.

The buoy tenders operate across more than 12.2 million square miles of ocean and maintain 90 navigational aids.

They also lend support to the U.S. military "amid regional geopolitical dynamics," Muir wrote.



Sara Muir/U.S. Coast Guard

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Hickory moors Wednesday at its new homeport on Guam following a journey from Baltimore.

The Hickory was scheduled to leave Baltimore in April 2024 but was delayed by the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge earlier that year. The bridge was destroyed in March 2024 when the container ship MV Dali collided with it.

Maintenance issues that cropped up en route further delayed the tender's arrival, Muir said in a follow-up text message. She did not provide specifics.

In Baltimore, the Hickory's hull was reinforced and its propulsion and electrical systems improved, along with its navigation and communication equipment.

"These improvements restore full mission readiness, improve fuel efficiency, and reduce future maintenance costs, allowing the cutter to operate more effectively in the challenging Pacific environment," Muir said.

Families separated up to two years by the extended maintenance period and routine crew rotations were reunited with the Hickory's arrival, Muir said.

Coast Guard drug busts fall amid focus on migrants

By Lara Korte
Stars and Stripes

The Coast Guard's increased focus on capturing migrants at sea in recent years led to a drop-off in drug seizures and hampered its ability to conduct its other missions, according to a new government watchdog agency report.

Between August 2022 and September 2024, the service redirected a significant number of its ships and aircraft to target illegal migration at sea, the Government Accountability Office said in a report published Tuesday.

The Coast Guard first began surging assets to the Caribbean in August 2022 in response to historically high levels of maritime migration from Cuba and Haiti.

As of November 2025, that surge was still ongoing, the GAO said.

The shift had a negative impact on the service's ability to conduct its other missions, the GAO said, with drug interceptions taking the biggest hit.

As part of a mission dubbed Operation Vigilant Sentry, the Coast Guard deployed 80 cutters to an area that includes South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and Puerto Rico. Only 13 of the vessels had been regularly scheduled for migrant interdiction.

Of those vessels, 38 had been redirected from other missions, and 29 were meant to be doing a mix of both migrant work and other missions.

Over the two-year span, operational hours for aircraft and vessels conducting migrant missions increased by 66%, while hours for drug interdictions fell by 62%, according to the report.

The Coast Guard plays a major role in disrupting the flow of illicit drugs into the United States, covering a 6 million-square-mile area of smuggling routes that include the eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

The service works primarily with Joint Interagency Task Force-South, which is under U.S. Southern Command, to interdict illicit drug shipments at sea.

But those operations appeared to take a backseat to migrant operations, according to the report.

Both the number of seizures and the amount of drugs the service seized annually decreased sharply during the migrant surge, the GAO wrote.

In 2021, the service made 218 narcotics seizures, compared with 112 in 2023.

The Coast Guard's cocaine removal rate has consistently fallen below target levels, and the service did not meet its annual interdiction goal for that drug in any year between 2015 and 2024, according to the report.

During the same time period, the service met its migrant interdiction goals in four out of 10 years, including 2022 and 2023, during the start of Operation Vigilant Sentry.

Fort Hood soldier acquitted in shooting death of sergeant

By Rose L. Thayer
Stars and Stripes

FORT HOOD, Texas — A soldier was acquitted Tuesday of charges that he shot and killed his sergeant in 2023 following a night of heavy drinking and then lied about it to investigators to cover his actions.

Spc. Nicholas Lowery, 24, sat unmoving as a warrant officer on the seven-man jury read the verdict aloud just after 2:30 p.m. in the 1st Cavalry Division's courthouse at Fort Hood. His family members in the gallery held each other and cried.

Across the aisle, the family of the deceased soldier, Sgt. Alfredo Martinez, 30, also wept in their seats, even after the judge had closed the proceedings.

The verdict clearing Lowery of unpremeditated murder and obstruction of justice came on the eighth day of the court-martial and after jurors deliberated for about four hours. An eighth member of the jury panel had been excused earlier in the trial.

Jurors also had the option to consider voluntary and involuntary manslaughter.

Lowery was accused of shooting Martinez in the head on Aug. 27, 2023, in Lowery's on-post home and then providing a false statement to Army Criminal Investigation Division agents, as well as tampering with evidence in his living room.

Lowery, Martinez and Spc. Rene Heber, 26, were all in the living room at about 8 a.m. when the shooting occurred. The three had been drinking heavily, roughhousing and playing with firearms throughout the night. Lowery's wife, Victoria Harris, was also in the home that night and testified during the trial that she had unloaded the handgun and left it in the living room before she went to bed at about 5 a.m.

Heber called 911 at about 8:03 a.m., telling operators that Martinez had shot himself in the head and was still breathing. He was transported to Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center, where he died at about 9:30 a.m.

In the days following the shooting, initial evidence led investigators to question Lowery's and Heber's stories. Both were called in for questioning Sept. 6, 2023. During that questioning, Lowery confessed to shooting Martinez.

"I did shoot him out of anger," Lowery said during an 11-hour CID interrogation, which was played for jurors. Evidence discussed in court never showed why Lowery would be angry with Martinez.

"Everything I said is true," Lowery later said during the interrogation.

That confession was coerced, Jonathan Crisp, an attorney for Lowery, argued in court. Lowery did not even know during the interview that he was a suspect, he said.

"He is naive, trusting and suggestable," Crisp said in his closing argument Tuesday morning. "He doesn't even know it's about him. That is how naive and stupid he is, and it's heartbreaking to watch."

Investigators created the story they wanted to believe, lied to Lowery during the interrogation and then forced evidence to fit the narrative, Crisp said.

"The government rushed to judgment and wanted to find an answer," he said. "They wouldn't consider anything else."

Capt. Eric Fenton, prosecutor from the 1st Cavalry Division, used closing arguments to emphasize that the angle at which Martinez was shot — downward on the left side of the head — would be difficult for someone to do themselves. He also argued that there was a lack of evidence to show he shot himself — no blood on his hands or the gun, no sear from the handgun and no abrasions from a spray of gunpowder.

Heber is charged with accessory to manslaughter and obstructing justice in Martinez's death. It was not immediately clear if his April court-martial under prosecution of the Office of Special Trial Counsel will move forward given Lowery's acquittal.

MILITARY

Navy, Marines hit decade-high mishap deaths

BY GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

The Navy and Marine Corps recorded 122 major mishaps during Fiscal Year 2025, with 98 service members killed in incidents ranging from a jet crash on Mount Rainier in Washington, to off-duty motorcycle accidents, to physical training incidents, the Department of the Navy reported this week.

The "close-out" totals covered "Class A" mishaps, which include incidents involving fatalities, permanent injuries, aircraft crashes or property damage exceeding $2.5 million. The statistics do not cover suicides, drug use or illnesses. The 2025 fiscal year ran from Oct. 1, 2024, to Sept. 30, 2025.

The totals were released without any explanation of causes of rising or falling totals across categories.

Off-duty motorcycle crashes accounted for the largest number of fatalities, with the Navy recording 30 fatalities and the Marine Corps 15.

The Navy motorcycle fatality total was the highest in the past decade, despite a Department of the Navy rider safety program and increased regulations and limits on motorcycle use on base.

Off-duty automobile and light truck crashes were the second-highest reason for fatalities; the Navy posted 13 fatalities in four-wheel vehicles, and the Marines had 10 deaths.

One Marine and three sailors were killed when struck by motor vehicles while walking.

The 46 Navy deaths from vehicle mishaps were the highest in the past decade and nearly twice the low of 24 fatalities recorded in 2015 and 2020.

The Marines reported two on-duty vehicle mishaps, resulting in three deaths. No Navy personnel were injured in on-duty vehicle incidents.

The Navy reported 14 aviation mishaps: 12 in the air and 2 on the ground — the highest annual count in the past decade. The crash of an EA-18 Growler on Mount Rainier in Washington on Oct. 15, 2024, killed both crew members. All the other crashes resulted in either minor or no injuries.

Though the Navy statistics did not include extensive information on each incident, the Navy total included a Dec. 22, 2024, incident of "friendly fire" in which the crew of an F/A-18F Hornet had to eject. News reports placed the incident in the Middle East.

The Marines reported six helicopter mishaps, three occurring in the air and three on the ground. No fatalities were reported.

The Navy reported eight "shore mishaps," which included three training fatalities involving equipment, and three deaths during physical training. The Marines reported three fatal "ground mishaps," all involving deaths during physical training or command-directed hikes.

Seven sailors and five Marines died in off-duty recreational incidents. The Navy incidents included a sailor who died from what officials believe was "over-consumption of alcohol," ocean drownings in Maui and Guam and crashes of an ATV and an electric bicycle. Marine recreational incidents included fatal drownings in the Philippines and Texas and a fall on Mount Furano in Japan.

The Navy reported five "afloat mishaps" — including a multi-compartment fire that caused minor injuries to two sailors, a collision with no injuries and two undisclosed equipment mishaps.

All of the at-sea incidents were officially classified as "location withheld," because of operational security.



SCOTT STURKOL/U.S. Army

Contractors complete work Jan. 5 for the fiscal year 2024-funded $55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy, Wis.

Barracks: Mold, infestations persist

FROM PAGE 1

vided few specifics.

The problems stem, he said, from a lack of funding to build new barracks or renovate existing barracks and a lack of urgency at times from leaders to fix the existing problems. The Army's top civilian, who was a cavalry scout platoon leader with Fort Drum's 10th Mountain Division in the late 2000s, promised soldiers improvements are coming, especially once a Defense Department-wide study of barracks problems is completed next month.

At Fort Stewart, in humid southeast Georgia, Driscoll said the Army has installed some 900 dehumidifiers in its barracks to try to solve mold problems. Elsewhere, across the entire Army, the service is working toward adding high-speed internet access to "as many barracks as we possibly can," he said.

Army leaders have said for years they need more money from Congress to improve barracks life for soldiers. Last year, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth promised a $1.2 billion influx of funding to fix barracks across the U.S. military — some $400 million for immediate needs and another $800 million for critical renovation projects — as part of his barracks task force set to finalize recommendations next month. Those funds come from last year's massive supplemental federal spending package signed into law in July.

Weimer, who is serving on Hegseth's barracks task force, said he has encouraged Public Works officials across the Army to tackle barracks maintenance issues more quickly when soldiers report them.

"We're trying to speed up how quickly we can take care of maintenance calls," he said. "… You put in a work order, we take care of it, so it stops continuing to get worse. Because, in truth ... because you deserve it: There's not enough money right now for us to solve all of those type of problems in the next year or two."

The sergeant major of the Army said he believes barracks privatization might help solve some of the problems. The Army's first privatized barracks program is set to open in 2028 at Fort Irwin, Calif., to house soldiers assigned to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. The project — dubbed a resort-style barracks facility — broke ground in September and is being overseen by The Michaels Organization, which also manages on-post family residences on Fort Irwin.

If that project is successful, Weimer said it could be replicated elsewhere across the service.

"We're going to learn a lot from this project, and then we will hope to scale it where it could work for us in the Army," he said.

Privatizing barracks has received pushback from some lawmakers, who worry it could face similar issues to on-post privatized family housing for soldiers, which has been plagued with issues such as mold, slow repair times and infestations since they were established about 30 years ago.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., wrote to Hegseth last year that she was "alarmed" that the Defense Department would consider privatizing barracks "given the significant challenges that privatization has imposed on military family housing for decades, directly resulting from the substantial failures of private housing providers."

Driscoll said during the town hall that soldiers can expect to see some kind of improvements in the coming months, but he expected troops would complain for decades to come about conditions in barracks even if they are improved.

"This is one of those problems that has existed — I even talked to my dad, he's turning 80, and he recalled talking about barracks [problems] 60 years ago," Driscoll said. "And so, the honest answer here is, for 60 years people have complained about barracks. It will likely be that for the next 60 years people will complain about barracks.

"And much of that is because we deserve those complaints."

Pentagon to invest $1 billion in L3Harris missile unit

Bloomberg News

The Department of Defense is set to invest in L3Harris Technologies Inc.'s missile unit with a $1 billion convertible preferred security, tightening the direct links between the government and a major defense contractor.

Calling it a "first-of-its-kind proposed partnership," L3 said the move will "significantly" increase capacity to build solid rocket motors for U.S. missiles. The preferred security would automatically convert into common equity upon the unit's planned IPO in the second half of the year, according to a statement on Tuesday.

L3Harris said it will keep a controlling interest in the Missile Solutions business. The company's shares rose as much as 6.1% in morning trading.

The Trump administration has accumulated governance and equity stakes in several U.S. businesses in the last year.

Directly investing in defense companies echoes China's civil-military fusion, said Kelly Grieco, a senior fellow at the Stimson Center.

L3Harris will remain the majority shareholder, and the Defense Department will not serve on the board of governors or be involved in managing the company or the investment, Chief Executive Officer Chris Kubasik said during a Tuesday media briefing.

"We have no interest in exercising control over the company," said Michael Duffey, the Pentagon's undersecretary for acquisition and sustainment, although he added that the Defense Department is done "writing checks" to expand the industrial base "with no promise of return."

MIDEAST



AP

Protesters are seen dancing and cheering around a bonfire Friday as they take to the streets despite an intensifying crackdown in Tehran, Iran.

Iran's judiciary head signals fast trials, executions for protesters

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran's judiciary head signaled Wednesday there would be fast trials and executions ahead for suspects detained in nationwide protests despite a warning from U.S. President Donald Trump.

The comments by Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei came as activists had warned hangings of those detained could come soon. The security force crackdown on the demonstrations has killed at least 2,586, the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency reported. The current death toll exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades and recalls the chaos surrounding the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Trump has repeatedly warned that the U.S. may take military action over the killing of peaceful protesters, just months after it bombed Iranian nuclear sites during a 12-day war launched by Israel against the Islamic Republic in June.

Iran meanwhile has threatened it could make a preemptive strike after alleging without offering evidence that Israel and the United States orchestrated the protests.

A mass funeral also was held Wednesday for some 100 security force members killed in the demonstrations. Tens of thousands of mourners attended, holding Iranian flags and photos of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The caskets, covered in Iranian flags, stood stacked at least three high. Red and white roses and framed photographs of people who were killed covered them.

People elsewhere remained fearful in the streets. Plainclothes security forces still milled around some neighborhoods, though anti-riot police and members of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's all-volunteer Basij force appeared to have been sent back to their barracks.

"We are very frightened because of these sounds (of gunfire) and protests," said a mother of two shopping for fruits and vegetables, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. "We have heard many are killed and many are injured. Now peace has been restored but schools are closed and I'm scared to send my children to school again."

Ahmadreza Tavakoli, 36, told The Associated Press he witnessed one demonstration in Tehran and was shocked by the use of firearms by authorities.

"People were out to express themselves and protest, but quickly it turned into a war zone," Tavakoli said. "The people do not have guns. Only the security forces have guns."

Mohseni-Ejei's comments about rapid trials and executions were made in a video shared by Iranian state television online.

"If we want to do a job, we should do it now. If we want to do something, we have to do it quickly," he said. "If it becomes late, two months, three months later, it doesn't have the same effect. If we want to do something, we have to do that fast."

The comments stand as a direct challenge to Trump, who warned Iran about executions an interview with CBS aired Tuesday.

"We will take very strong action," Trump said. "If they do such a thing, we will take very strong action."

Trump hints at decision on Iran

BY ISAAC ARNSDORF, WARREN P. STROBEL AND TARA COPP
The Washington Post

President Donald Trump signaled he would assist anti-government protesters in Iran as the White House convened top officials on Tuesday to weigh military options.

The president indicated that the time for negotiations with Tehran had passed, saying in a social media post Tuesday morning that he had "canceled all meetings" with Iranian officials. But some political allies are warning against the dangers of entanglement in another overseas conflict and the domestic costs of abandoning the "America First" foreign policy Trump campaigned on.

The arguments against a strike include the danger of an accident or failure as the U.S. military and spy services attempt more high-risk operations, as well as the possibility that the fall of the Iranian government could lead to a more militant regime or another failed state in the Middle East, according to former officials and people close to the White House who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe sensitive private conversations.

At the same time, the people said, skeptics of a strike are hoping to avoid the open acrimony leading up to the U.S. bombing of Iran's nuclear sites in June, which stoked divisions in Trump's base over the wisdom of intervention in a Middle Eastern conflict and the meaning of his "America First" slogan.

The National Security Council met Tuesday without Trump to prepare options for the president, a person familiar with the meeting said. Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and other officials are presenting options to Trump without preference, the person said.

The president has repeatedly threatened that the United States could use military force if the government in Tehran keeps killing demonstrators. Other options could include increased economic pressure on the government, cyberattacks and stepped-up support for the protest movement.

Reports from activists and opposition news sites covering Iran, which have been hampered by the government's total shutdown of internet and communications, estimate upward of 2,000 deaths from the protests — now in their third week.

"HELP IS ON ITS WAY," Trump wrote online, adding an acronym for "Make Iran Great Again" and echoing an earlier post from Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who has been encouraging Trump to intervene. Asked to clarify during an appearance in Michigan, Trump said, "You're going to have to figure that one out." He later repeated the message in an early-afternoon speech to the Detroit Economic Club.

"The President has made his position clear, and he has demonstrated with Operation Midnight Hammer and Operation Absolute Resolve that he means what he says," White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said, using the code names for the bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities and the recent capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

On Monday evening, Trump announced 25% tariffs on countries doing business with Iran. The administration has not elaborated on how that would be enforced.

Despite the public saber-rattling, Trump has sounded less certain in private, according to the people close to the White House. Some described him as less enthusiastic than before the bombings in June. Another called it "a coin flip."

"We don't care about making Iran great again," Stephen K. Bannon, a longtime Trump adviser who has been one of the few Republican voices publicly advocating against a strike, said on his online talk show Monday. "Israel and the United States in there, you're just going to prolong the problem."

Tensions: Base in Qatar was previously targeted by Iran in June

FROM PAGE 1

Qatar said the measures at Al Udeid were being "undertaken in response to the current regional tensions."

"The State of Qatar continues to implement all necessary measures to safeguard the security and safety of its citizens and residents as a top priority, including actions related to the protection of critical infrastructure and military facilities," Qatar's international media office said on the social platform X.

The base, which hosts thousands of American service members, was targeted by Iran in June in retaliation for U.S. strikes on its nuclear facilities.

Ali Shamkhani, an adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, wrote on X that "the #US President, who repeatedly talks about the futile aggression against #Iran's nuclear facilities, would do well to also mention the destruction of the US base in #Al-Udeid by Iranian missiles."

"It would certainly help create a real understanding of Iran's will and ability to respond to any aggression," he added.

The U.S. military maintains a variety of troops in the region, including at Al Udeid, but the Trump administration shifted some resources from the Middle East to the Caribbean Sea as part of a pressure campaign on former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

The world's largest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford, was ordered in October to sail from the Mediterranean Sea to the Caribbean along with several destroyers. The carrier USS Nimitz, which helped conduct the June strikes on Iran's nuclear program, also departed the region in October.

The Navy had five small ships — two destroyers and three littoral combat ships — in the waters off Iran as of Tuesday.

Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, had a phone call Tuesday with Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Qatar's prime minister. In a statement on X, Al Thani said he "reaffirmed the State of Qatar's backing of all de-escalation efforts, as well as peaceful solutions to enhance security and stability in the region."

MILITARY

Pa. and Ivory Coast pair up in Guard program

State's long-term agreement with Lithuania remains

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

The Pennsylvania National Guard is adding an African country to its portfolio under a Pentagon arrangement that matches U.S. states with militaries around the world.

Ivory Coast joins Lithuania in being paired with Pennsylvania under the State Partnership Program, the National Guard Bureau said Tuesday in a statement.

A formal signing ceremony with Ivory Coast is expected later this year, the statement said. Pennsylvania was added to a growing list of states that have more than one State Partnership Program relationship.

Created in the early 1990s in the aftermath of the Cold War, the program aims to build mutually beneficial relationships through exchanges, training and other activities.

With nearly 18,000 soldiers and airmen, the Pennsylvania National Guard is one of the largest in the country. Its pairing with Lithuania dates to 1993.

The tandem of Pennsylvania and Ivory Coast represents the 107th partnership established under the program, according to the National Guard Bureau.

"Together, we will enhance our capabilities, strengthen regional stability and create enduring bonds of friendship and cooperation," Maj. Gen. John Pippy, adjutant general of the Pennsylvania National Guard, said in the statement.



DU-MARC MILLS/U.S. Army

Pennsylvania Army National Guard soldiers stand in formation during a ceremony at Fort Mifflin, Pa., on Nov. 22. The Pennsylvania National Guard will be paired with Ivory Coast, a West African country, through the National Guard Bureau's state partnership program.

U.S. and allied military access has narrowed in northern and western Africa following a wave of coups. American forces withdrew from Niger in 2024, and French forces have departed from several countries in the Sahel, a region along the Sahara Desert that stretches across North Africa.

A West African country of about 32 million people, Ivory Coast has emerged as one of the region's more stable partners on the continent.

Pennsylvania's new pairing was announced the day after the Illinois National Guard and European ally Portugal formally established a new State Partnership Program relationship.

Army Maj. Gen. Rodney Boyd, the adjutant general of the Illinois National Guard, said the partnership comes at a critical time for NATO.

"The threats to our NATO allies and partners are increasingly complex, combining conventional and unconventional tactics, terrorism, cyberattacks and information warfare designed to destabilize alliances," Boyd said in a statement.

Planned areas of cooperation between Illinois and Portugal include cybersecurity, defense industry engagement, aircraft and technology modernization, academic partnerships, public safety and disaster response, according to the National Guard.

Unlike short-term exercises or deployments, State Partnership Program relationships are designed to span decades and emphasize sustained engagement.

The program relies heavily on National Guard soldiers and airmen, whose dual state-federal role allows them to share both military expertise and civilian skills such as emergency management, engineering, cyberdefense and medical response.

Guided by State Department foreign policy goals, the program is a key element of U.S. military engagement abroad, particularly in regions where Washington seeks to maintain influence without large, permanent troop deployments, according to the National Guard Bureau.

Warrant officer gets 6 months in child sex abuse material case

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — An American soldier serving in Germany was sentenced Tuesday to six months' confinement and a dishonorable discharge for viewing child sexual abuse images including one of an infant.

Warrant Officer 1 Zachary B. Lawson pleaded guilty in a general court-martial at Kleber Kaserne to one count under Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.



Lawson

Known as the general article, it covers conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline or conduct that brings discredit upon the armed forces.

Prosecutors said Lawson had viewed four sexually explicit images on his phone that showed six children. He initially faced the possibility of up to a 10-year prison sentence.

The crimes occurred between 2023 and 2025 while he was assigned to the 102nd Strategic Signal Battalion in Wiesbaden.

Lawson said people he communicated with in various online forums sent him child sexual abuse material involving children.

"Each image the defendant consumed was an echo of a real child suffering, a commercial transaction in a marketplace of abuse," prosecutor Capt. Stella McBride said. "They are grotesque violations of the innocence of children who are among the most vulnerable in our society."

Under the terms of a plea agreement, Lawson's sentence was capped at between three and six months. Lt. Col. Jordan Stapley, the military judge, imposed the maximum.

Two related charges were dismissed without prejudice as part of the agreement. As a warrant officer, Lawson could not be reduced in rank.

Lawson previously worked on the communications team for the commanding general of U.S. Army Europe and Africa as part of the 102nd Strategic Signal Battalion.

The unit provides and protects strategic networking and communications services for U.S. Army Europe and Africa and allied forces.

The position typically is filled by "our best soldiers by character and technical expertise," battalion commander Lt. Col. Matthew Britnell said in court.

"I believe that he was one person at work, and then he had an addiction that people at work didn't see," Britnell said.

1 killed in security incident near Camp Lejeune elementary school

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

One person was killed Tuesday afternoon during a "security incident" on the Marine Corps' Camp Lejeune that forced the lockdown of on-base schools and day cares, officials at the North Carolina base said.

The person was killed by "law enforcement actions" during the incident before 2:30 p.m. EST near Tarawa Terrace Elementary School, according to a Camp Lejeune news release. Base officials declined to provide specific details about the incident, citing an ongoing investigation.

Tarawa Terrace, a Department of Defense Education Activity school on northern Camp Lejeune, and other on-base schools and child development centers were locked down during the law enforcement response to the incident "out of an abundance of caution," according to the release. Schools and day cares, including Tarawa Terrace, resumed normal activities after 3 p.m. Tuesday, officials said.

No students, children or school staff members were harmed in the incident, according to the release.

It was not clear Wednesday what led to the law enforcement response. Camp Lejeune officials did not immediately respond to a request for further details, including whether any Marines or other service members were involved in the incident.

Officials said the deceased individual's name would be released after next-of-kin notification.

NATION

Minn. tensions still boiling after shooting

By Mark Vancleave and Tim Sullivan
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Federal officers dropped tear gas and sprayed eye irritant at activists Tuesday during another day of confrontations in Minneapolis, while students miles away walked out of a suburban school to protest the Trump administration's bold immigration sweeps.

Meanwhile, the fallout from the fatal shooting of a Minneapolis woman by an immigration agent reached the local U.S. Attorney's Office: At least five prosecutors have resigned amid controversy over how the U.S. Justice Department is handling the investigation, according to people familiar with the matter.

Separately, a Justice Department official said Wednesday there's no basis for a criminal civil rights investigation. An FBI probe of Renee Good's death is ongoing.

Strife between federal agents and the public continues to boil, six days since Good was shot in the head while driving off in her Honda Pilot. At one scene, gas clouds filled a Minneapolis street near where she died. A man scrubbed his eyes with snow and screamed for help after agents in a Jeep sprayed an orange irritant and drove off.

It's common for people to boo, taunt and blow orange whistles when they spot heavily armed immigration agents passing through in unmarked vehicles or walking the streets, all part of a grassroots effort to warn the neighborhood and remind the government that they're watching.



ADAM GRAY/AP

A protester is detained by federal agents near the scene where Renee Good was fatally shot by an ICE officer last week on Tuesday in Minneapolis.

"Who doesn't have a whistle?" a man with a bag of them yelled.

Brita Anderson, who lives nearby and came to support neighborhood friends, said she was "incensed" to see agents in tactical gear and gas masks, and wondered about their purpose.

"It felt like the only reason they'd come here is to harass people," Anderson said.

In Brooklyn Park, Minn., students protesting the immigration enforcement operation walked out of school, as students in other communities have done this week.

Later, a large crowd gathered outside a hotel in Minneapolis banging drums and blowing whistles as officers wearing helmets and carrying batons stood guard just inside. Meanwhile, confrontations erupted between protesters and officers guarding the federal building being used as a base for the Twin Cities crackdown.

The departures in the U.S. Attorney's Office include First Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Thompson, who had been leading the sprawling prosecution of public fraud schemes in the state, according to people who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters.

With the Department of Homeland Security pledging to send more than 2,000 immigration officers into Minnesota, the state, joined by Minneapolis and St. Paul, sued President Donald Trump's administration Monday to halt or limit the surge.

The lawsuit says Homeland Security is violating the First Amendment and other constitutional protections by focusing on a progressive state that favors Democrats and welcomes immigrants.

"What we are seeing is thousands — plural — thousands of federal agents coming into our city. And, yeah, they're having a tremendous impact on day-to-day life," Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said.

A judge set a status conference for Wednesday.

Homeland Security says it has made more than 2,000 arrests in the state since early December and is vowing to not back down. Spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin, responding to the lawsuit, accused Minnesota officials of ignoring public safety.

A proposed billionaires' tax in California rattles Silicon Valley

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A proposed billionaires' tax in California has ignited a political uproar in Silicon Valley, with tech titans threatening to leave the state while Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom maneuvers to defeat a levy that he fears will lead to an exodus of wealth.

A technology mecca, California has more billionaires than any other state — a few hundred, by some estimates. Nearly half its personal income tax revenue, a financial backbone in the nearly $350 billion budget, comes from the top 1% of earners.

A large health care union is attempting to place a proposal before voters in November that would impose a one-time 5% tax on the assets of billionaires — including stocks, art, businesses, collectibles and intellectual property — to backfill federal funding cuts to health services for lower-income people that were signed by President Donald Trump last year.

In a state with a vast gap between rich and poor, the plan has resulted in a tangle of competing interests at a time when both Democrats and Republicans are struggling to respond to economic anxiety driven by rising costs ahead of this year's midterm elections.



Newsom

An online war of words has tech leaders pondering a hollowing out of Silicon Valley, and millions of dollars are flowing to political committees engaged in the fight. That includes $3 million from billionaire Peter Thiel, a founder of PayPal, to a committee tied to a business group opposing the tax.

However it's not clear if the proposal will make the ballot, with more than 870,000 petition signatures required for it to qualify.

Although the tax would affect only a minuscule slice of California's roughly 39 million residents, it would siphon money from an immense pool of wealth. It would apply retroactively to billionaires living in the state as of Jan. 1.

At least 25 billionaires listed among Forbes magazine's 2025 rankings of the world's 500 wealthiest people either lived in California or had some significant ties to the state, based on a review by The Associated Press. But determining whether they were full-time residents or just frequent visitors could turn into a matter of dispute, since many of them own property elsewhere.

"You are really playing with fire with this one," said Aaron Levie, CEO of the publicly traded Silicon Valley company Box. He fears that the proposed tax would drive entrepreneurs to look elsewhere to run their companies and launch startups.

Even liberal-leaning tech pioneers would "find it absurd just on pure economic and structural grounds, even if they might agree that the cause itself is very worthy," said Levie, who is not a billionaire.

Oglala Sioux Tribe says 3 members in ICE detention

Associated Press

The president of Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota on Tuesday called for the immediate release of tribal members who were detained at a homeless encampment by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in Minnesota last week.

Three of the four Oglala Sioux Tribe members who were arrested in Minneapolis on Friday have been transferred to an ICE facility at Fort Snelling, President Frank Star Comes Out said in a statement released with a memorandum sent to federal immigration authorities.

"The Oglala Sioux Tribe's memorandum makes clear that 'tribal citizens are not aliens' and are 'categorically outside immigration jurisdiction,'" Star Comes Out said. "Enrolled tribal members are citizens of the United States by statute and citizens of the Oglala Sioux Nation by treaty."

Details about the circumstances that led to their detention were unclear.

In the memorandum sent to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, Star Comes Out said when the tribal nation reached out to the agency it was provided with only the first names of the men. Homeland Security refused to release more information, unless the tribe "entered into an immigration agreement with ICE."

DHS did not immediately respond to a request for comment Tuesday evening.

Star Comes Out said the tribe has no plans to enter an agreement with ICE.

In a post on his Facebook page, Star Comes Out said that the four detained tribal members are homeless and living under a bridge in Minneapolis. One of the members was released from detention.

In the press release, he demanded information on the status of the three men in detention, the release of all tribal citizens in ICE custody and a meeting between the tribe and the government.

NATION



CALVIN WOODWARD/AP

A display in the "Great Debate" section of a democracy exhibit at the National Museum of American History, seen in August in Washington, reflects some of the issues the nation grapples with.

Smithsonian hands over more exhibit plans to White House

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Smithsonian Institution gave the White House new documents on its planned exhibits Tuesday in response to a demand to share precise details of what its museums and other programs are doing for America's 250th birthday.

For months, President Donald Trump has been pressing the Smithsonian to back off "divisive narratives" and tell an upbeat story on the country's history and culture, with the threat of holding back federal money if it doesn't. The institution is a cornerstone of American culture, operating 21 museums and a zoo that are among the most popular tourist destinations in Washington.

By Tuesday, the Smithsonian was supposed to provide lists of all displays, objects, wall text and other material dedicated to this year's anniversary and other purposes. Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch III told staff, in an email obtained by The New York Times and The Washington Post, that "we transmitted more information in response to that request."

The White House did not respond to a request for comment, leaving it unclear whether it was satisfied with the material it received. Bunch indicated there was more to come, saying the institution will continue to engage in providing "relevant and appropriate materials."

The Trump administration's intent is to ensure Americans get a positive accounting of the country's history, not one weighted by complexities or shameful episodes of the past.

The ultimatum was laid out in a Dec. 18 letter to Bunch from the White House budget director, Russell Vought, and the domestic policy director, Vince Haley.

"We wish to be assured that none of the leadership of the Smithsonian museums is confused about the fact that the United States has been among the greatest forces for good in the history of the world," the letter said.

Americans "will have no patience for any museum that is diffident about America's founding or otherwise uncomfortable conveying a positive view of American history, one which is justifiably proud of our country's accomplishments and record."

The Smithsonian is not a federal entity but receives a majority of its money from Congress.

The White House initially asked for all relevant materials in September but said documents turned over by the Smithsonian fell far short of what it requested.

In his March executive order, Trump claimed there had been a "concerted and widespread" effort over the past decade to rewrite American history by replacing "objective facts" with a "distorted narrative driven by ideology rather than truth."

As part of that, Trump tasked Vice President JD Vance with overseeing efforts to "remove improper ideology" from all areas of the institution. Like other vice presidents, Vance serves on the Smithsonian's board.

The Smithsonian and the White House did not respond to requests for comment Tuesday afternoon.

The prospect of polishing the historical record to satisfy a president is concerning to many who study the past.

"History is about evidence," said Matthew Delmont, a history professor at Dartmouth College. "It's about welcoming complexity and nuance. It's not about crafting a single story that needs to make everyone feel happy."

Jim McSweeney, a retired archivist from the National Archives, said: "Here's our history. Here's our shared experience. We have to learn from it and never go back and try to whitewash or change anything based upon your political leanings."

In the months leading up to Trump's order in August for an official review of all Smithsonian exhibits, Trump fired the head archivist of the National Archives and said he was firing the National Portrait Gallery's director, Kim Sajet, who maintained the backing of the Smithsonian's governing board, but ultimately resigned.

Administration officials have couched the accounting as work needed before the nation celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, which the letter calls "a singular opportunity to justify confidence in the operations of America's leading cultural institutions."

The Smithsonian review is just one part of Trump's broadside against a culture he deems too liberal.

At the White House, Trump designed a partisan and subjective "Presidential Walk of Fame" featuring gilded photographs of himself and predecessors, with plaques on what they did. He excludes Democrat Joe Biden, who is represented instead by an autopen to symbolize what Trump has described as a presidency in absentia.

At the time, the White House said Trump was a primary author of the plaques, which praised him as a historically successful figure and described Biden as the worst president in history and one who brought the U.S. to "the brink of destruction."

Slotkin is being probed for Dems' video to troops

BY JOEY CAPPELLETTI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin has been notified that the Trump administration is investigating her after she organized and appeared in a video with other Democrats urging military service members to resist "illegal orders."

Slotkin, a former CIA analyst, first disclosed to The New York Times that prosecutors were investigating her. A person with knowledge of the situation who was not authorized to speak about it publicly confirmed the matter to The Associated Press.

Slotkin, who organized the 90-second video and first posted it on her X account in November, learned this month of the inquiry from the office of U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro, the Justice Department's chief prosecutor in the nation's capital. Pirro's office did not immediately respond Wednesday to messages seeking comment.

The inquiry marks another escalation in President Donald Trump's reaction to a video that he and his aides have labeled as "seditious" — an offense Trump said on his social media account was "punishable by death." Slotkin and the other Democratic lawmakers who participated in the video said in November that the FBI has contacted them to begin scheduling interviews. Pirro's involvement represents an elevation of the matter for Slotkin.

It is not clear what laws could have been violated in the video message. In it, the lawmakers, all of whom have military and national security experience, tell troops to follow established military protocols by not following commands that violate the law.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has censured Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly, a former Navy pilot and astronaut, for participating. Hegseth is attempting to retroactively demote Kelly from his retired rank of captain. The senator is suing Hegseth to block those proceedings, calling them an unconstitutional act of retribution.



Slotkin

Reps. Jason Crow of Colorado, Chris Deluzio of Pennsylvania, Maggie Goodlander of New Hampshire and Chrissy Houlahan of Pennsylvania also appeared in the video. It was not clear whether any other participants are being targeted by Pirro's office or other arms of the Justice Department beyond the FBI questioning.

Slotkin was among the Democrats' bright spots in the 2024 election, winning an open Senate seat despite Trump carrying Michigan in the presidential election. She delivered the Democratic response to his congressional address in 2025.

NY offshore wind farm seeks relief from Trump's order

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge is considering whether to set aside a Trump administration order pausing construction on a major offshore wind farm for New York, which the developer says could mean the death of a project that's 60% complete.

The Empire Wind project is designed to power more than 500,000 homes. Norwegian company Equinor said the project was in jeopardy due to the limited availability of specialized vessels, as well as heavy financial losses. It's one of five big offshore wind projects on the East Coast that the administration froze days before Christmas, citing national security concerns. Developers and states have sued seeking to block the order.

The case was heard Wednesday by District Judge Carl J. Nichols, an appointee of President Donald Trump. Nichols ended the hearing without ruling, saying he needed to think about it but would decide very quickly. Nichols had a lengthy discussion with the Empire Wind attorney about the possibility of issuing an order that would allow construction to continue, while he considered in-depth arguments over the merits of the case.

Nichols sharply questioned the government for not responding to key points in Empire Wind's court filings, like the accusation the Trump administration didn't follow the right procedures and acted arbitrarily.

"Your brief doesn't even include the word arbitrary," the judge said.

WORLD

Dozens dead after crane falls on train in Thailand

Associated Press

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, Thailand — A construction crane fell onto a moving passenger train, causing a fiery derailment Wednesday that killed at least 30 people and injured scores in northeastern Thailand.

The derailment occurred on part of a planned high-speed rail project that will eventually connect China with much of Southeast Asia.

Anuphong Suksomnit, the governor of Nakhon Ratchasima province, where the accident took place, said four passengers among the 171 believed to have been on board the train were still missing. Searchers were still looking through the wreckage about eight hours after the morning crash.

The crane, which was being used to build an elevated part of the railway, fell as the train was traveling from Bangkok to Ubon Ratchathani province, authorities said.

Photos published in Thai media showed plumes of white then dark smoke above the scene, and construction equipment hanging down from girders between two concrete support pillars.

Rescue workers stood on top of overturned railway carriages, some of them with gaping holes torn on their sides, video from public broadcaster ThaiPBS showed. What appeared to be sections of the crane were scattered along the track.



SAKCHAI LALIT/AP

Rescuers work amid the wreckage after a construction crane fell into a passenger train Wednesday, in Nakhon Ratchasima province, Thailand.

Transport Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said he has ordered an investigation.

The elevated segment that collapsed is a part of a Thai-Chinese high-speed railway project linking the national capital Bangkok to the northeastern province of Nong Khai, bordering Laos. The two-stage rail project has a total investment cost of more than $16.8 billion and is associated with an ambitious plan to connect China with Southeast Asia under Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative.

Anan Phonimdaeng, acting governor of the State Railway of Thailand, said the project's contractor is Italian-Thai Development, with a Chinese company responsible for design and construction supervision.

He said authorities will examine the responsibilities of both parties, and the Railway Department plans to take legal action against the contractor as a first step.

A statement posted on the company's website expressed condolences to the victims and said the company would take responsibility for paying compensation to the families of the dead and hospitalization expenses for the injured.

EU to provide most of loan program for Ukraine's military

BY LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union will dedicate most of a massive new loan program to Ukraine's military needs over the next two years while also injecting billions into its war-ravaged economy, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Wednesday.

EU leaders agreed last month to loan Ukraine 90 billion euros ($105 billion) to help cover its needs in 2026 and 2027. Kyiv would only have to pay the money back once Russia ends its war and pays reparations for the damage it has inflicted over the years.

The International Monetary Fund estimates that Ukraine will need 137 billion euros ($160 billion) over the two years. The government in Kyiv is on the verge of bankruptcy and desperately needs the money by spring.

The bloc hopes that other countries like Britain, Canada, Japan and Norway will help make up the difference. The IMF is preparing a new multi-billion dollar Ukraine loan and is expected to endorse it next month.

"We all want peace for Ukraine, and for that Ukraine must be in a position of strength," von der Leyen said as she explained the commission's spending plans. She said 60 billion euros ($70 billion) would be for military support, and 30 billion euros ($35 billion) for budget aid.

"With the military assistance, Ukraine can stand strong against Russia, and at the same time it can integrate more closely into Europe's defense industrial base," von der Leyen told reporters.

The commission wants the loan money to start flowing in by April, but EU member countries and the European Parliament must endorse the spending plan before it can enter force.

The military tranche would be used to buy equipment from Ukraine, EU countries and others in Europe's economic area, like Norway. "It might also occasionally be possible to acquire the equipment outside," if it's more effective to do so, von der Leyen said.

In some circumstances, some of the money could be used under a NATO scheme for European allies and Canada to buy arms and equipment from the United States and donate them to Ukraine, officials said.

Von der Leyen insisted that Ukraine must undertake pro-democracy reforms to secure the loans, including in the rule of law and the fight against corruption. "These conditions are non-negotiable for any financial support," she said.

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	GERMANY	UNITED KINGDOM	U.S.A
Phone:	+49-(0)6134-2592730	+44-(0)1638-515714	+1-972-602-1670 Ext. 1701
Toll-free:	0800-CARSHIP (Germany only)		+1-800-264-8167 (US only)
E-Mail:	info@transglobal-logistics.de	enquiries@carshipuk.co.uk	info@tgal.us
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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Settlement reached in fatal train crossing crash

NY VALHALLA — A more than $182 million settlement has been reached with victims of a deadly 2015 collision between a train and an SUV at a suburban New York crossing.

The majority of the settlement with Metro-North Railroad goes to the families of five passengers killed when an SUV got stuck on the tracks in Valhalla, about 20 miles north of New York City, the Journal News reported.

The Journal News reviewed the settlement last week before it was sealed by a judge and no longer made available to the public.

A jury in 2024 found that Metro-North bore 71% of the liability for the five passengers' deaths and the injuries of others, and 63% for the death of the SUV driver whose car was on the tracks. The jury specifically faulted the train engineer and the railroad's oversight of the line's electrified third rail.

The Feb. 3, 2015, crash occurred during the evening rush hour as the SUV drove onto the tracks while navigating in backed-up traffic. The crossing gate arm came down onto the vehicle and the driver ended up driving further onto the tracks.



DON CAMPBELL, THE (ST. JOSEPH, MICH.) HERALD-PALLADIUM/AP

High above the whitecaps

Waves kick up along the Lake Michigan shoreline on Monday, as a man flies a kite at Jean Klock Park in Benton Harbor, Mich.

Doctor charged in killings waives right to hearing

OH COLUMBUS — The ex-husband of an Ohio woman, charged last weekend in the killings of her and her husband, waived his right to an extradition hearing Monday in Illinois.

Michael David McKee, 39, a doctor from Chicago, has been charged with premeditated aggravated murder in the shooting deaths of 39-year-old Monique Tepe, whom he divorced in 2017, and dentist Dr. Spencer Tepe, 37, in their Columbus home on Dec. 30.

McKee appeared in court in Winnebago County, where he has been jailed since his arrest on Saturday. Judge Donald Shriver scheduled a hearing for Jan. 19 to confirm the status of the transfer.

No obvious signs of forced entry were found at the Tepes' home. Police also said no weapon was found there, and murder-suicide was not suspected. Further, nothing was stolen, and the couple's two young children and their dog were left unharmed in the home.

Mamdani, wife move into NYC mayoral mansion

NY NEW YORK — New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani and his wife, Rama Duwaji, began moving into the official mayoral residence on Monday, leaving behind their leaky, one-bedroom apartment in Queens for a fully staffed mansion in Manhattan.

As workers unloaded cardboard boxes stuffed with houseplants and rolled up carpets, Mamdani marked the latest inaugural rite of passage with a press conference on his new riverfront lawn.

"Today, Rama and I feel lucky to participate in a ritual that so many New Yorkers have experienced at various meaningful moments in their lives: Beginning a new chapter, by moving to a different part of the city that we call home," Mamdani said.

Nearly all of the city's mayors have slept — at least sometimes — in the stately, custard-colored 18th century home, known as Gracie Mansion, since its 1942 designation as the official mayoral residence.

Mamdani spent most of his childhood on the other side of Central Park, in a Manhattan apartment subsidized by Columbia University, where his father works as a professor.

Cal enrolls more new international students

CA BERKELEY — University of California, Berkeley's ability to draw international students appears little affected by the national political scene.

New international student enrollment grew by 29% at UC Berkeley this school year to 2,363, according to University of California data released last week, despite a federal immigration crackdown that has deterred some foreign students from studying in the U.S. Enrollment of undergraduates from California also increased, as the university welcomed 46,151 students, its largest-ever student body, up from 45,882 last year.

The growth in new international students stands in sharp contrast to a 17% decrease among that group at campuses nationwide, according to a November report from the Institute of International Education. UC-wide, the number of new international students grew by about 5%.

"If you go back to the beginning of the summer, there was a real worry about whether international students would get visas, and whether they would want to come," said Jesse Rothstein, director of UC Berkeley's Center for Studies in Higher Education. "And those worries didn't materialize."

Overall international student enrollment held steady at Cal, at about 6,000, with China sending by far the most, followed by India, South Korea and Canada. New U.S. students from outside California increased by 29%, with total nonresident domestic enrollment up by about 6%, to 4,732.

Whale beloved in Cape Cod found dead on shore

DE BETHANY BEACH — A young humpback whale whose high-spirited antics charmed watchers off Massachusetts in the summer has been found dead on a beach in Delaware, whale specialists said.

A whale-watching group in Massachusetts described the death as "most likely a tragic accident" involving a ship and said the whale was recognizable as one that drew admirers off Cape Cod.

The humpback, 32-feet long and estimated to weigh at least 10 tons, washed up last Thursday in a Bethany Beach community, said the Marine Education Research and Rehabilitation Institute, a Delaware nonprofit.

After it was towed to shore with heavy equipment, a necropsy team from the institute examined the whale Friday, determining it suffered a blunt force injury consistent with being hit by a ship.

The whale was buried on the beach, the institute said, adding that large whales cannot be towed safely out to sea.

The humpback was recognized by an organization on Cape Cod that offers whale-watching cruises. Hyannis Whale Watcher described it as "a whale we came to know and love."

"We affectionately nicknamed him 'Oil Change' for a large, solid white spot on his fluke," the group said.

'Dances with Wolves' actor standing trial

NV LAS VEGAS — Jury selection began Tuesday in the trial for Nathan Chasing Horse, the former "Dances with Wolves" actor accused of sexually abusing Indigenous women and girls.

Prosecutors allege he used his reputation as a spiritual leader and healer to take advantage of his victims over two decades. Chasing Horse has pleaded not guilty to 21 charges, including sexual assault, sexual assault with a minor, first degree kidnapping of a minor and the use of a minor in producing pornography.

The case sent shock waves across Indian Country when he was arrested and indicted in early 2023. There were many setbacks and delays, but the case finally proceeded to trial after prosecutors added allegations that he filmed himself sexually abusing a girl younger than 14.

Best known for portraying the character Smiles A Lot in the 1990 movie "Dances with Wolves," Chasing Horse was born on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, which is home to the Sicangu Sioux, one of the seven tribes of the Lakota nation. After starring in the Oscar-winning film, according to prosecutors, Chasing Horse proclaimed himself to be a Lakota medicine man while traveling around North America to perform healing ceremonies.

Prosecutors claim Chasing Horse led a cult called The Circle. His victims went to him for medical help, according to a court transcript from a grand jury hearing.

From wire reports

FACES

BTS announces new world tour

The Washington Post

BTS, the K-pop boy band that helped supercharge the genre's global ascent, released dates Tuesday for a world tour after a roughly four-year hiatus.

The seven-member group, South Korea's bestselling music act of all time according to the Guinness Book of World Records, is expected to tour for 11 months starting in April across five continents. The 79-show tour will kick off in South Korea before heading to Japan and other parts of Asia, the United States, Mexico, Europe, Latin America and Australia. Tour dates for the Middle East will be announced later.

The group went on hiatus in June 2022, on the ninth anniversary of its debut.

Its members had said they were taking a break to focus on solo projects, which were eagerly received by the millions of fans who call themselves the "BTS Army." All seven members also took the time to complete their South Korean military service, which is compulsory for able-bodied men in a certain age range, barring exemptions.

The group also has an album, currently untitled, coming out March 20.



AP

Members of Korean pop band BTS, shown in 2019, have completed their military service requirements.

BTS world tour dates

2026

April 9, 11-12 — Goyang, South Korea
April 17-18 — Tokyo
April 25-26 — Tampa, Fla.
May 2-3 — El Paso, Texas
May 7, 9-10 — Mexico City
May 16-17 — Stanford, Calif.
May 23-24, 27 — Las Vegas
June 12-13 — Busan, South Korea
June 26-27 — Madrid
July 1-2 — Brussels
July 6-7 — London
July 11-12 — Munich
July 17-18 — Paris
Aug. 1-2 — East Rutherford, N.J.
Aug. 5 -6 — Foxborough, Mass.
Aug. 10-11 — Baltimore
Aug. 15-16 — Arlington, Texas
Aug. 22-23 — Toronto
Aug. 27-28 — Chicago
Sept. 1-2, 5-6 — Los Angeles
Oct. 2-3 — Bogotá, Colombia
Oct. 9-10 — Lima, Peru
Oct. 16-17 — Santiago, Chile
Oct. 23-24 — Buenos Aires, Argentina
Oct. 28, 30-31 — São Paulo
Nov. 19, 21-22 — Kaohsiung, Taiwan
Dec. 3, 5-6 — Bangkok
Dec. 12-13 — Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Dec. 17, 19-20, 22 — Singapore
Dec. 26-27 — Jakarta

2027

Feb. 12-13 — Melbourne, Australia
Feb. 20-21 — Sydney
March 4, 6-7 — Hong Kong
March 13-14 — Manila, Philippines



AP

Grammy host Trevor Noah is also nominated for an award.

Noah to host Grammys for sixth and final time

Trevor Noah will be hosting the Grammy Awards for the sixth consecutive year, but this time, it's being billed as a farewell gig.

The Recording Academy announced Tuesday that the South African comedian is returning "one final time" for the Feb. 1 show, for which he will also serve as an executive producer. Only singer Andy Williams, who hosted the Grammys seven times in the 1970s, has hosted more often.

Noah himself is a four-time Grammy nominee, and is up this year in the best audio book, narration, and storytelling recording category for "Into The Uncut Grass," a children's story.

Kendrick Lamar, Lady Gaga and Jack Antonoff are among the leading nominees for the Grammys, which will stream live on Paramount+ from Los Angeles.

From The Associated Press

'Dilbert' creator Scott Adams dies

By Harrison Smith
The Washington Post

Scott Adams, who became a hero to millions of cubicle-dwelling office workers as the creator of the satirical comic strip "Dilbert," only to rebrand himself as a digital provocateur — at home in the Trump era's right-wing mediasphere — with inflammatory comments about race, politics and identity, died Tuesday. He was 68.

His former wife Shelly Miles Adams announced his death in a livestream Tuesday morning, reading a statement she said Adams had prepared before his death. "I had an amazing life," the statement said in part. "I gave it everything I had."

Adams announced in May 2025 that he had metastatic prostate cancer, with only months to live. In a YouTube livestream, he said he had tried to avoid discussing his diagnosis ("once you go public, you're just the dying cancer guy"), but decided to speak up after President Joe Biden revealed he had the same illness.

Adams was working as an engineer for the Pacific Bell telephone company when he began doodling on his cubicle whiteboard in the 1980s, dreaming of a new, more creatively fulfilling career as a cartoonist. Before long, he was amusing colleagues with his drawings of a mouthless, potato-shaped office worker.

His doodles evolved into "Dilbert," a syndicated comic strip that debuted in 1989 and eventually appeared in more than 2,000 newspapers around the world, rivaling "Peanuts" and "Garfield" in popularity.

Years before the film comedy "Office Space" and TV series "The Office" satirized the workplace on screen, "Dilbert" poked fun at corporate jargon, managerial ineptitude and the indignities of cubicle life.

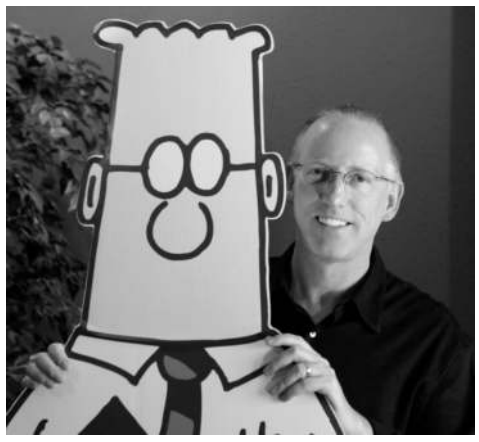
In one strip, the title character is awarded a promotion "with no extra pay, just more responsibility," because "it's how we recognize our best people." In another, he's presented with an "employee location device" — a dog collar.

Adams proved adept at growing his audience during the tech boom of the 1990s, creating a "Dilbert" website long before most other cartoonists took to the internet. He also became the first major syndicated cartoonist to include his email address in his comic strip, an innovation that allowed readers to contact him directly with ideas. Their feedback convinced him to focus the cartoon entirely on the workplace, after some of the strip's early installments explored Dilbert's home life.

Interviewed by the Wall Street Journal in 1994, Adams observed that "the universal thread" in his strip "is powerlessness. Dilbert has no power over anything."

In interviews, Adams was often self-deprecating, declaring that his comic strip was "poorly drawn" and noting that long before he made "Dilbert" he "failed at many things," including computer games he attempted to program and sell.

Adams made headlines with his prediction that Donald Trump, whom he considered a master of persuasion, would win the 2016 presidential election. He was later invited to the White House after publishing the 2017 nonfiction book "Win Bigly: Persuasion in a World Where Facts Don't Matter."



AP

Scott Adams, creator of the comic strip "Dilbert," poses in 2006 with the Dilbert character. Adams died Tuesday at age 68.

Amid a national reckoning on race in the 2020s, Adams sparked a backlash for his criticisms of diversity, equity and inclusion programs, and for social media posts in which he joked that he was "going to self-identify as a Black woman" after President Biden vowed to nominate an African American woman to the Supreme Court. In 2022, he introduced "Dilbert's" first Black character, who announces to colleagues that he identifies "as white," ruining management's plan to "add some diversity to the engineering team."

The following year, "Dilbert" was dropped by hundreds of newspapers after Adams delivered a rant that included a declaration that African Americans were "a hate group."

Adams defended his comments, saying he had meant the remarks as hyperbole, and found support from conservative political activists.

Music streams hit 5.1 trillion in 2025

Associated Press

The global music industry hit 5.1 trillion streams in 2025. It's a new single-year record, up 9.6% from 2024, which held the previous record.

That's according to a 2025 Year-End Report from Luminate, an industry data and analytics company.

In the U.S., on-demand audio streams hit 1.4 trillion, a 4.6% increase from last year.

But attention is on older music. Less than half all U.S. on-demand audio streams — 43% — were from tracks released in the past five years (2021-2025).

Two exceptions: Taylor Swift's "The Life of a Showgirl" and Morgan Wallen's "I'm the Problem," both of which surpassed 5 million album equivalent units in a single year. That's a combination of sales and streaming combined.

Luminate's 2025 Mid-Year Report revealed that though streams of new music — music released in the last 18 months — were slightly down from the same time last year in the U.S., new Christian/gospel music defied the trend, said Jaime Marconette, Luminate's vice president of music insights and industry relations, led by acts like Forrest Frank, Brandon Lake and Elevation Worship. In the year-end report, Christian/gospel music was up 18.5% in on-demand audio volume change compared to 2024.

Other trending genres included rock, which grew 6.4%, and Latin (5.2%), led by Puerto Rican artist Bad Bunny. His on-demand audio streams totaled 5.3 billion — 4.38% of Latin on-demand audio streams.

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EDITORIAL

Erik Slavin, Editor in Chief
slavin.erik@stripes.com

Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.com

Ann Pinson, Digital Managing Editor
pinson.ann@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast
+49(0)631.3615.9324; DSN (314)583.9324

Pacific
Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stripes.com
+81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

Washington
Joe Fleming and Sean Moores,
Washington Bureau Chiefs (acting)
fleming.joe@stripes.com
moores.sean@stripes.com

Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast
David Schultz, District Manager
schultz.david@stripes.com
xsscirculation@stripes.com
+49(0)152.5672.5036; DSN (314)583-9111

Europe
Carlo Aquino, Circulation Manager
aquino.carlo@stripes.com
memberservices@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583.9136

Pacific
Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
+81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)229.3171

CONTACT US

Washington
tel: (+1)202.886.0003
633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

Reader letters
letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts
stripes.com/contactus

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OPINION

What the medical emergency in space saga reveals

By Clayton Anderson
Special to The Washington Post

Human spaceflight is cool again, but still very, very hard. America just makes it look easy.

Last week, for the first time in the International Space Station's 25-year history, NASA decided to bring a crew home early, citing a serious but "stable" medical emergency involving an astronaut. NASA did not describe the health problem or identify the astronaut. The four-person Crew-11, which launched in August, has been directed to return no earlier than Thursday. The need to treat the astronaut with medical equipment on Earth may have driven the decision.

As an astronaut, I believe our current technology may not have solutions for critical situations we are bound to face moving away from low Earth orbit, and this incident illustrates exactly that. NASA needs to address some urgent and sometimes uncomfortable questions. For example, should a doctor always be on the crew? Should a spaceship heading to Mars have high-tech medical capabilities and facilities — not just a "med kit?" A kit consisting of only medications, saline solution, a defibrillator and a few basic instruments places a crew at a serious disadvantage if things really go south.

What if an IV, which the ISS currently has, was required for the Crew-11 astronaut? How would the spacesuit be put on? Would they come home not wearing their suit? To mitigate risks faster, we need to bring the best minds to bear on these questions so that when emergencies such as a stroke, heart attack or appendicitis happen, NASA and its astronauts know what to do. Human spaceflight demands expeditious advancement in space medicine.

NASA has always said its top priorities are crew safety, vehicle safety and mission success. This prudent focus should reassure the public that NASA is addressing the right priorities. Yet, even as the fascination grows with advancements in robotics and artificial intelligence — I know thousands have already asked Grok how to solve this problem — this Crew-11 episode shows we will only succeed with better medical safeguards for deep-space goals.

The Artemis II moon mission planned for this year is poised to take center stage and prefaces what many Earthlings feel we're also ready for: a visit to the glamour destination of Mars. A 6- to 9-month trip to the Red Planet puts this medical situation in a different light. We simply couldn't "bring them home." Health factors experienced thus far in space have been rectified (consider my very personal ISS battle with diarrhea), but the need to develop solutions for advanced medical challenges is paramount.

The effects of microgravity are numerous — bone and muscle loss, fluid shifts causing vision issues and radiation exposure. The problem, however, is the lack of capabilities to confront these risks.

NASA is developing medical technologies for Mars, focusing on diagnostics, telemedicine, wearable biosensors, portable imaging, 3D bio-printing and integrated health monitoring systems. But is there appropriate urgency? Can we deal with the implications of lunar stays or Mars trips where evacuation isn't possible unless you're Mark Watney?

Reduction in communication will be a huge obstacle. Calling Houston for medical issues and psychological crises will be limited. Survival will depend not only on crew abilities to recognize, evaluate and fix situations but on the technological level of their environment. Systems need to be significantly more autonomous, and diagnostic abilities must increase, perhaps even to levels utilizing AI (watch out for HAL!). Procedures need to be so clear that there is no question about what the crew must do. We cannot, during critical medical situations, simply rely on a steely-eyed astronaut having the right stuff. They need the tools to pull it off.

Physical and mental tolls on crew members, constantly balancing workload with simply staying alive, will be magnified by a tremendous sense of isolation and no real-time coordination with mission control. Help will come from a crew's ability to troubleshoot a range of problems.

The United States has accomplished marvelous things. Its space history is nothing short of amazing, but we have much more to do.

We must welcome all ideas, suppressing the "not invented here" syndrome. Funding new research, advanced monitoring, AI diagnostics, radiation countermeasures and perhaps even genetic modification testing on astronauts should all be on the table, buoyed by full transparency to increase public trust in America's deep-space plans. We must treat medical resilience with the same urgency as rocket reusability.

Space exploration is dangerous. It's difficult and expensive. NASA's cautious ISS evacuation decision should spark urgency, so we don't get caught flying blind.

NASA's catchphrase of "we are going" — to the moon and Mars — is inspiring and ambitious, but it's only meaningful if, in arriving, we ensure humans can survive the journey.

Clayton Anderson is a retired NASA astronaut, author and adjunct professor at Iowa State University.

Credit card caps are just price controls by another name

By Allison Schrager
Bloomberg Opinion

Ever since college, I have subscribed to the Enlightenment view of the world, which is based on the belief that knowledge mostly moves forward. Experimentation and scholarship produce facts and evidence, which expand the realm of human understanding, which helps us unravel such mysteries as the origins of economic growth or why croissants are so much better in France.

This view has been sorely challenged in the last few weeks. Democratic and Republican politicians, going against an economic consensus that stretches back decades if not centuries, appear to have decided that price controls are good. Price controls, they say, will help Americans struggling with affordability.

They could not be more wrong. When a government (or a cartel) dictates a price that is different from what the market would produce, the result is invariably shortages, lower-quality products or a rise in the price of non-regulated substitutable goods.

In some ways the current infatuation with price controls is understandable — it seems like the obvious answer to the affordability problem. The last time price controls were in vogue was in 1971, when President Richard Nixon enacted them on goods and wages throughout the economy following an inflation spike in 1970. Even some prominent economists signed on. Yet these price controls were a disaster, resulting in widespread shortages.

Undeterred, President Donald Trump has proposed a one-year cap on credit-card interest rates at 10%. It may seem like a way to help consumers, as credit-card debt has reached $1.23 trillion, with nearly 10% of cardholders delinquent on their payments. Intuitively at least, lower interest rates would boost demand and help lower-income Americans struggling to pay their bills.

But like any price control, it will only make the problem worse. Capping rates will mean less credit for more marginal (and higher-risk) borrowers, as banks rein in lending and some borrowers are forced to more expensive options such as payday loans. Trump's annoyance with the chair of the Federal Reserve for not lowering rates is another attempt to impose price controls, because the idea is to make credit artificially cheaper. But this risks both higher prices and a higher rate of inflation.

Meanwhile, in the Democratic Party, there is a long history of skepticism of market prices. So there is a distinct possibility, if not likelihood, that more price controls could be put into policy. New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani ran on a promise to freeze rent for four years. Washington state, which is controlled by Democrats, adopted rent control last year. In New Jersey, Gov. Mikie Sherrill ran on a platform that promised to cap prices on energy. California has tried to cap the cost of home insurance.

All these policies have a long history of failure. Rent control produces more vacant or poorly maintained housing, as well as higher rates on market-rate units. Energy price caps result in shortages.

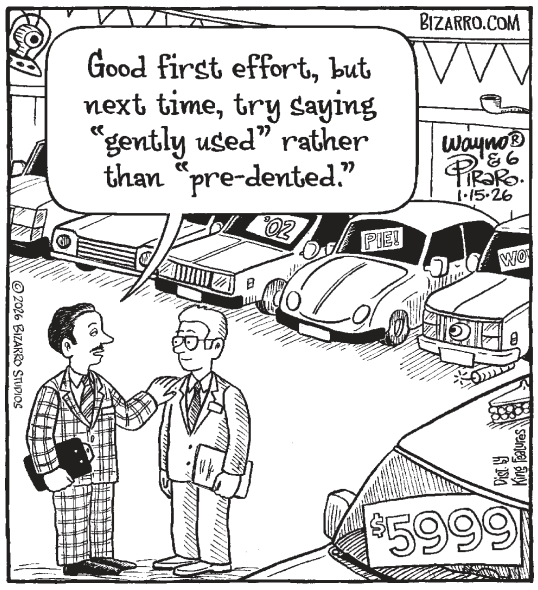
As an economist, I find it astonishing, and a little depressing, that no one is swayed by the overwhelming evidence that price controls only make affordability worse. I was laboring under the mistaken (and naive) belief that the long period of low and stable inflation that the U.S. enjoyed until 2022 coincided with a period of better economic understanding.

As it turns out, evidence is no match for the populist impulses that always seem to arise when prices go up. Inflation is disruptive, even if wages eventually catch up. Mandating lower prices can seem like the most obvious solution, even if decades of evidence — or a few minutes of thinking through the consequences — say otherwise.

There is one thing I am pretty sure about: The 2026 midterms are shaping up to be a contest over which candidates have the more compelling solutions to the affordability problem. And I am almost as sure that the answer will include more price controls, and a painful relearning of history.

Allison Schrager is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering economics. A senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, she is author of "An Economist Walks Into a Brothel: And Other Unexpected Places to Understand Risk." This column reflects the personal views of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Bizarro



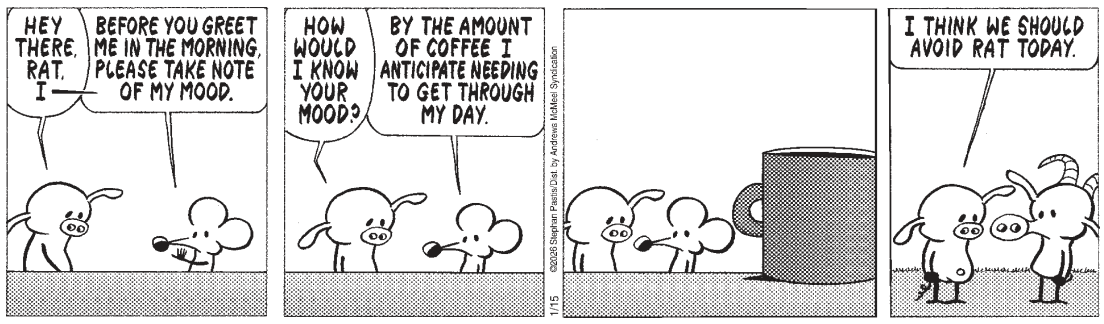
Loose Parts



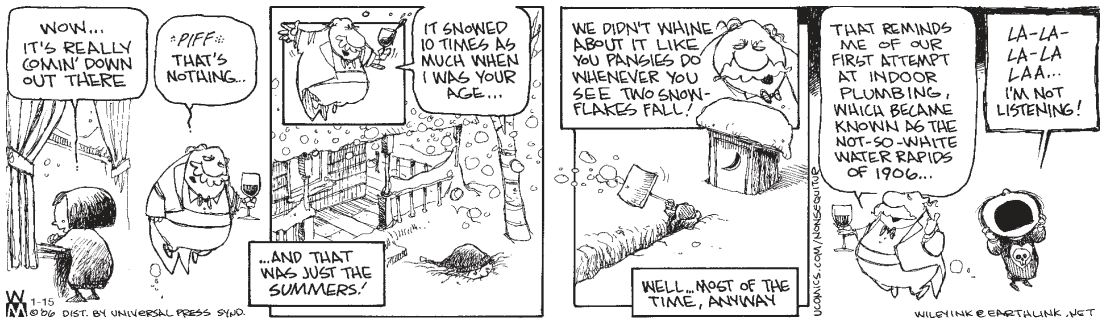
Frazz



Pearls Before Swine



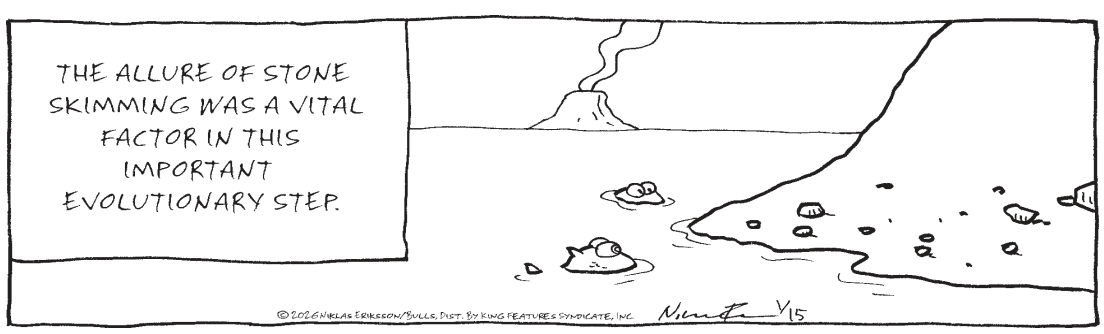
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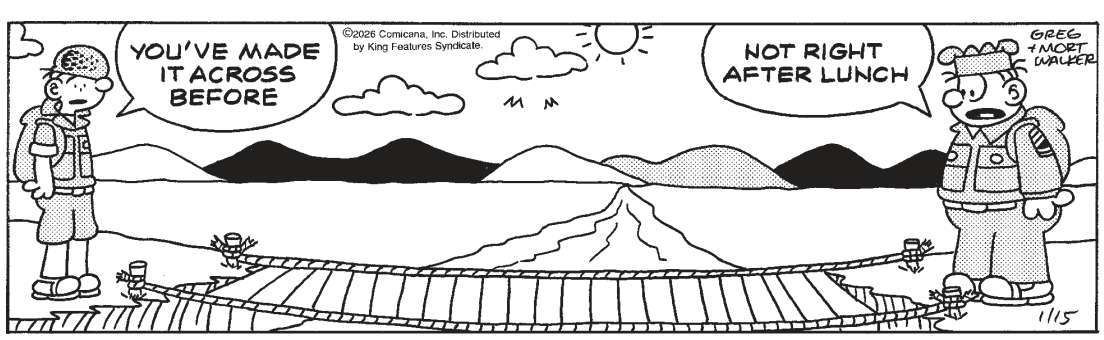
Wumo



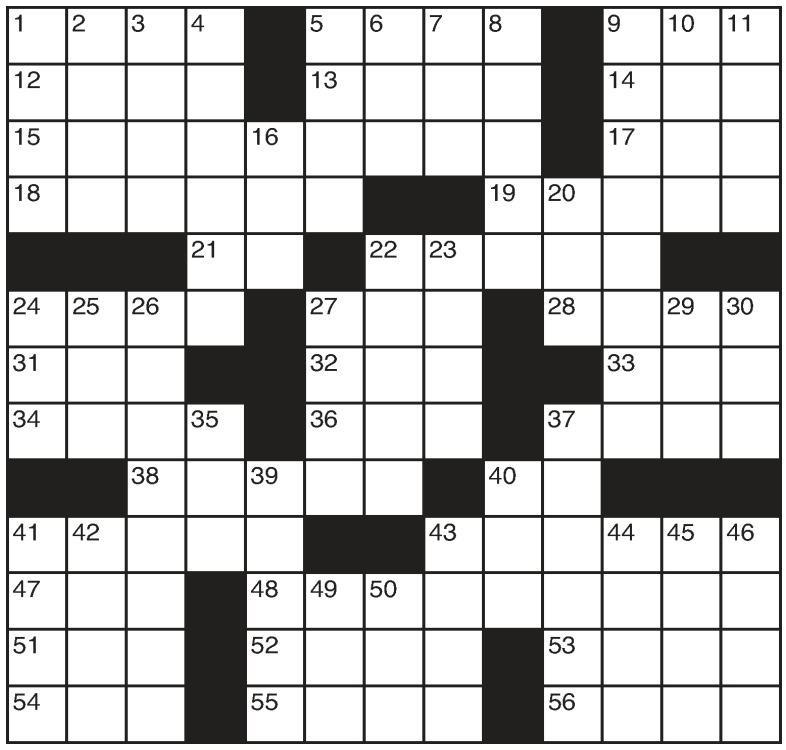
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

1 River blockers
5 Part of speech
9 Request
12 Departure notice?
13 Actor El-Masry
14 Born as
15 Legendary 49ers receiver
17 Snooze
18 "Shark Tank" shark Kevin
19 Warning
21 "Love — Blind" (Netflix series)
22 More broad
24 Salamander
27 Carnival city
28 13, to Cato
31 Swiss canton
32 Suitable
33 Sylvester, for one
34 Towering
36 Mauna —
37 Corrals
38 Delaware capital
40 Rainey or Barker
41 Welsh pooch
43 Doohickey
47 Parisian pal
48 Whole grain dish
51 GOP org.
52 Green land
53 Black, in verse
54 Conk out
55 Ollie's pal
56 Transmit

DOWN

1 Karate school
2 Cain's brother
3 Bog
4 Narrow waterway
5 Differ
6 U.K. recording label
7 Documentarian Burns
8 The staff of life
9 Vampire novelist
10 Burn somewhat
11 Fulfilled, as a promise
16 Decade parts (Abbr.)
20 Superman foe Luthor
22 Windshield cleaner
23 Teeny bit
24 Fanatic
25 Mound stat
26 State grain of Minnesota
27 Croupier's tool
29 Author Fleming
30 TGIF part
35 Lumber unit
37 San Diego team
39 Feelings, informally
40 Chess piece
41 Hallmark offering
42 Hotel chain
43 "Hollaback Girl" singer Stefani
44 Taunt
45 Nobel Prize subj.
46 Look after
49 Dye brand
50 British singer Rita

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

1-15

CRYPTOQUIP

ZALS YUEAS FBYDBCD TLJJ L FMNO SALS'F LJZLXF TBYMJLUCUCE LCO TQBSTADSX? L EQBNTA MBSLSB.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A PIANIST KEEPS BANGING THE SIDE OF HIS HEAD ON THE KEYS, HE'S PROBABLY PLAYING BY EAR.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals C

SCOREBOARD/MLB

TENNIS

WTA Adelaide International 1

Wednesday
At Memorial Drive Tennis Centre
Adelaide, Australia
Purse: $1,206,446
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Women's Singles
Round of 16

Kimberly Birrell, Australia, def. Marketa Vondrousova, Czechia, walkover
Jaqueline Cristian, Romania, def. Daria Kasatkina, Russia, 6-4, 6-0
Madison Keys (2), United States, def. Tereza Valentova, Czechia, 6-4, 6-1
Diana Shnaider, Russia, def. Katerina Siniakova, Czechia, 6-1, 2-6, 7-5
Emma Navarro (6), United States, def. Yulia Putintseva, Kazakhstan, 6-1, 6-4
Maya Joint, Australia, def. Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, 0-2, ret.

Women's Doubles
Quarterfinals

Aleksandra Krunic, Serbia, and Anna Danilina (4), Kazakhstan, def. Luisa Stefani, Brazil, and Marie Bouzkova, Czechia, walkover
Zhang Shuai, China, and Katerina Siniakova (2), Czechia, def. Timea Babos, Hungary, and Leylah Annie Fernandez, Canada, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (6), 10-6
Demi Schuurs, Netherlands, and Ellen Perez, Australia, def. Asia Muhammad, United States, and Erin Routliffe (3), New Zealand, 3-6, 6-4, 10-3

ATP Adelaide International 1

Wednesday
At Memorial Drive Tennis Centre
Adelaide, Australia
Purse: $700,045
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Men's Singles
Round of 16

Valentin Vacherot (5), Monaco, def. Thanasi Kokkinakis, Australia, walkover
Jaume Munar, Spain, def. Francisco Cerundolo (3), Argentina, 3-6, 7-5, 6-4
Ugo Humbert, France, def. Tallon Griekspoor (4), Netherlands, 6-4, 6-1
Tomas Machac (8), Czechia, def. Quentin Halys, France, 6-4, 6-2
Tommy Paul (2), United States, def. Reilly Opelka, United States, 6-4, 6-4
Alexander Shevchenko, Russia, def. Marton Fucsovics, Hungary, 6-3, 7-6 (6)
Aleksandar Vukic, Australia, def. Andrea Vavassori, Italy, 6-2, 7-6 (5)
Alejandro Davidovich Fokina (1), Spain, def. Rinky Hijikata, Australia, 6-3, 6-2

Men's Doubles
Round of 16

Harri Heliovaara, Finland, and Henry Patten (2), Britain, def. Jakob Schnaitter and Mark Wallner, Germany, 6-4, 2-6, 10-6
Christian Harrison, United States, and Neal Skupski (5), Britain, def. Rafael Matos and Orlando Luz, Brazil, 7-6 (5), 6-4
Matthew Christopher Romios, Australia, and Ryan Seggerman, United States, def. Lloyd Glasspool and Julian Cash (1), Britain, 6-4, 6-7 (2), 11-9
Kevin Krawietz and Tim Putz (4), Germany, def. Evan King, United States, and John Peers, Australia, 7-6 (2), 6-3
Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni, Argentina, def. Guido Andreozzi, Argentina, and Manuel Guinard (8), France, 6-3, 6-2
Mate Pavic, Croatia, and Marcelo Arevalo (3), El Salvador, def. Hendrik Jebens, Germany, and Ray Ho, Taiwan, 6-2, 6-4
Edouard Roger-Vasselin, France, and Hugo Nys (7), Monaco, def. Matej Vocel and Tomas Machac, Czechia, 2-6, 7-6 (5), 13-11
Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori (6), Italy, def. Luke Johnson, Britain, and Jan Zielinski, Poland, 7-6 (2), 6-2

WTA Hobart International

Wednesday
At Hobart International Tennis Centre
Hobart, Australia
Purse: $283,347
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Women's Singles
Round of 32

Magda Linette (8), Poland, def. Oksana Selekhmeteva, Russia, 6-3, 1-6, 6-1

Round of 16

Elisabetta Cocciaretto, Italy, def. Ann Li (4), United States, 1-6, 7-5, 7-5
Taylah Preston, Australia, def. Rebecca Sramkova, Slovakia, 6-4, 6-1
Iva Jovic (3), United States, def. Renata Zarazua, Mexico, 6-1, 6-2
Anna Bondar, Hungary, def. Tatjana Maria (6), Germany, 7-6 (7), 7-5
Antonia Ruzic, Croatia, def. Solana Sierra, Argentina, 7-5, 6-4
Magda Linette (8), Poland, def. Wang Xinyu, China, 6-1, 7-5
Olga Danilovic, Serbia, def. Peyton Stearns, United States, 7-6 (2), 6-1

Women's Doubles
Quarterfinals

Eri Hozumi, Japan, and Fang-Hsien Wu (3), Taiwan, def. Aldila Sutjiadi, Indonesia, and Giuliana Olmos, Mexico, 6-1, 6-3
Katarzyna Piter, Poland, and Janice Tjen, Indonesia, def. Nadiia Kichenok, Ukraine, and Makoto Ninomiya, Japan, 6-3, 5-7, 10-7
Magali Kempen, Belgium, and Anna Siskova, Czechia, def. Talia Gibson and Taylah Preston, Australia, 7-5, 7-5

ATP ASB Classic

Wednesday
At ASB Tennis Arena
Auckland, New Zealand
Purse: $700,045
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Men's Singles
Round of 16

Marcos Giron, United States, def. Alex Michelsen (6), United States, 6-4, 6-4
Ben Shelton (1), United States, def. Francisco Comesana, Argentina, 7-5, 6-4
Sebastian Baez (7), Argentina, def. Jenson Brooksby, United States, 7-5, 6-0
Luciano Darderi (4), Italy, def. Alejandro Tabilo, Chile, 1-6, 7-5, 6-3
Eliot Spizzirri, United States, def. Nuno Borges (8), Portugal, 7-6 (6), 6-4
Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard, France, def. Cameron Norrie (5), Britain, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (4)
Fabian Marozsan, Hungary, def. Casper Ruud (2), Norway, 6-4, 6-4
Jakub Mensik (3), Czechia, def. Hamad Medjedovic, Serbia, 6-1, 3-6, 6-3

Men's Doubles
Quarterfinals

Yuki Bhambri, India, and Andre Goransson (1), Sweden, def. Patrik Rikl and Petr Nouza, Czechia, 6-3, 6-7 (3), 10-6

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Tuesday's men's scores

EAST

Dayton 71, Duquesne 65
Kent State 87, Buffalo 81
St. John's 92, Marquette 68
Syracuse 94, Florida State 86
UConn 69, Seton Hall 64
Villanova 88, Providence 82

SOUTH

Alabama 97, Mississippi State 82
Belmont 78, Valparaiso 74
Clemson 74, Boston College 50
Tennessee 87, Texas A&M 82, 2OT
Virginia 79, Louisville 70

MIDWEST

Akron 87, Ball State 77
Bradley 94, Evansville 90, OT
Creighton 86, Georgetown 83, OT
Eastern Illinois 57, Western Illinois 55
Eastern Michigan 77, Northern Illinois 59
George Mason 82, Loyola Chicago 74
Kansas 84, Iowa State 63
Miami (FL) 81, Notre Dame 69
Miami (OH) 100, Central Michigan 61
Michigan State 81, Indiana 60
Nebraska 90, Oregon 55
Toledo 101, Ohio 85
UIC 69, Northern Iowa 61
UMass 85, Western Michigan 82
Wisconsin 78, Minnesota 75

SOUTHWEST

Baylor 94, Oklahoma State 79
Florida 96, Oklahoma 79
Houston 77, West Virginia 48

FAR WEST

Fresno State 79, Colorado State 69
New Mexico 87, Grand Canyon 64
Saint Mary's 82, San Francisco 68
San Jose State 70, Air Force 62
UNLV 89, Boise State 85, OT
USC 88, Maryland 71

Tuesday's women's scores

EAST

Cornell 106, SUNY-Delhi 27
Georgetown 59, St. John's 34
Tulane 71, Temple 58

SOUTH

East Carolina 79, Tulsa 48
Florida Atlantic 88, Wichita State 64
South Florida 70, UTSA 53

MIDWEST

Western Illinois 74, Eastern Illinois 61
Xavier 71, DePaul 61

SOUTHWEST

North Texas 75, Memphis 64
Texas Tech 71, Houston 59

DEALS

Tuesday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Agreed to terms with 3B Carter Kieboom on a minor league contract.
NEW YORK YANKEES — Acquired LHP Ryan Weathers from Miami in exchange for OFs Dillon Lewis and Brendan Jones and INFs Dylan Jasso and Juan Matheus

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Acquired 3B Nolan Arenado and cash considerations from St. Louis in exchange for RHP Jack Martinez.
CHICAGO CUBS — Claimed OF Justin Dean off waivers from San Francisco.
CINCINNATI REDS — Agreed to terms on minor league contracts with RHPs Tejay Antone, Hagen Danner, Lyon Richardson and Carson Spiers, C Will Banfield, INFs Michael Chavis, Garrett Hampson and Michael Toglia and LHP Joel Valdez.
COLORADO ROCKIES — Named Doug Bernier first base coach.
LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Agreed to terms with INF Andy Ibáñez on a one-year contract. Designated INF/OF Ryan Fitzgerald for assignment.
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Acquired RHP Chase Shugart from Pittsburgh in exchange for INF Francisco Loreto.
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Traded 3B Nolan Arenado and cash considerations to Arizona in exchange for RHP Jack Martinez. Agreed to terms with RHP Ryne Stanek on a one-year contract.
SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — OF Justin Dean claimed off waivers by the Chicago Cubs.

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association

LOS ANGELES LAKERS — Signed G Kobe Bufkin to a 10-day contract.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

ATLANTA FALCONS — Named Matt Ryan president of football.
BUFFALO BILLS — Placed WR Gabe Davis on injured reserve. Signed WR Kristian Wilkerson to the practice squad. Signed OL Nick Broeker to a reserve/futures contract. Designated DT Ed Oliver and WR Curtis Samuel to return from injured reserve.
CHICAGO BEARS — Reinstated T Braxton Jones from injured reserve. Signed LB Jalen Reeves-Maybin to the active roster. Placed LBs T.J. Edwards and Ozzy Trapilo on injured reserve. Signed LB Nephi Sewell to the practice squad.
DENVER BRONCOS — Designated TE Lucas Krull to return from injured reserve.
GREEN BAY PACKERS — Signed WR Isaiah Neyor to a reserve/futures contract.
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Signed LB Devin Veresuk to a reserve/futures contract.
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS — Fired offensive coordinator Greg Roman and offensive line coach Mike Devlin. Signed LS Peter Bowden, WRs Dalevon Campbell, Luke Grimm and JaQuae Jackson, DL TeRah Edwards, RB Amar Johnson, LB Emany Johnson, C Josh Kaltenberger, TEs Tanner McLachlan and Thomas Yassmin, OLB Garmon Randolph, G Branson Taylor, QB DJ Uiagalelei and CB Isas Waxter to reserve/futures contracts.
LOS ANGELES RAMS — Promoted OLB Nick Hampton from the practice squad to the active roster. Signed DB Alex Johnson to the practice squad. Placed CB Ahkello Witherspoon on injured reserve.
MIAMI DOLPHINS — Signed S Omar Brown to a reserve/futures contract.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed CB Miles Battle, RB D'Ernest Johnson, T Lorenz Metz and WR Trent Sherfield Sr. to the practice squad. Released DL Fabien Lovett and WR Brandon Smith from the practice squad.
NEW YORK GIANTS — Signed DT Marlon Tuipulotu to a reserve/futures contract.
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Released offensive coordinator Kevin Patullo.
PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Announced the resignation of head coach Mike Tomlin.
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Designated LB Fred Warner to return from injured reserve.
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Designated LB Chazz Surratt to return from injured reserve.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League

CALGARY FLAMES — Placed F Blake Coleman on injured reserve. Placed F Martin Pospisil on long-term injured reserve and assigned him to Calgary (AHL).
COLORADO AVALANCHE — Reassigned F Zakhar Bardakov to Colorado (AHL).
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Recalled F Dysin Mayo from Cleveland (AHL).
EDMONTON OILERS — Placed C Adam Henrique on long-term injured reserve. Reinstated Ds Jake Walman and Tristan Jarry from long-term injured reserve.
NASHVILLE PREDATORS — Placed F Jonathan Marchessault on injured reserve.
PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Loaned D Adam Ginning to Lehigh Valley (AHL).
PITTSBURGH PENGUINS — Placed D Erik Karlsson on injured reserve. Promoted Fs Tristan Broz and Ryan Graves from Wilkes-Barre/Scranton (AHL). Reassigned F Rafael Harvey-Pinard to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton.
SEATTLE KRAKEN — Reassigned F Oscar Fisker Molgaard to Coachella Valley (AHL). Reinstated C Chandler Stephenson from the non-roster list.
ST. LOUIS BLUES — Reinstated C Nick Bjugstad from injured reserve. Placed F Mathieu Joseph on injured reserve.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer

COLUMBUS CREW — Signed MF Sean Zawadzki to a four-year contract extension.
D.C. UNITED — Acquired $50,000 in 2027 general allocation money from FC Cincinnati in exchange for the right of first refusal for F Kristian Fletcher.
FC CINCINNATI — Signed F Kristian Fletcher to a one-year contract.
MINNESOTA UNITED — Named Josh Wolff first-team assistant coach.
PHILADELPHIA UNION — Acquired D Japhet Sery Larsen in a permanent transfer from SK Brann to a contract.
SEATTLE SOUNDERS FC — Signed F Yu Tsukanome to a one-year contract and MF Sebastian Gomez to a four-year contract.

National Women's Soccer League

WASHINGTON SPIRIT — Signed D Élisabeth Tsé to a three-year contract.



ERIN HOOLEY/AP

The Arizona Diamondbacks traded for third baseman Nolan Arenado, sending minor league pitcher Jack Martinez to the St. Louis Cardinals.

D-backs get 8-time All-Star 3B Arenado

BY DAVID BRANDT
Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Arizona Diamondbacks acquired eight-time All-Star third baseman Nolan Arenado in a trade Tuesday with the St. Louis Cardinals, adding an accomplished veteran to a team trying to return to the playoffs for the first time since a surprise World Series run in 2023.

St. Louis received minor league pitcher Jack Martinez in the deal. The rebuilding Cardinals will be sending $31 million to Arizona to offset the $42 million Arenado is owed over the next two seasons.

A 10-time Gold Glove winner, Arenado has played for St. Louis the past five seasons and was shopped extensively after the 2024 season and this offseason. The 34-year-old isn't the offensive force he used to be, but will still provide experience at the position after the Diamondbacks dealt slugger Eugenio Suárez at last season's trade deadline.

"We've always liked the way he's played the game and the impact he can have when he's not playing," Arizona general manager Mike Hazen said. "I think he's a good fit. I know how much winning means to him and is important to him — and it's important to us."

Arenado batted .237 with 12 homers and 52 RBIs last season and has two years and $42 million remaining on a contract paying him $275 million for nine years. He is owed $27 million this year and $15 million in 2027.

St. Louis agreed to send Arizona $22 million to offset this season's salary.

Arenado waived a no-trade provision to accept the deal.

"One of the best that's ever done what he does in the field and at the plate," Cardinals president of baseball operations Chaim Bloom said. "He's someone who really appreciates this town as a baseball town at its best. He's a relentless competitor and someone who really wants to win."

Bloom it wasn't fun to trade someone the caliber of Arenado, whom he thinks will be voted to baseball's Hall of Fame.

"That's baseball royalty right there," Bloom said. "We're mindful of that, but at the same time, a lot of what comes with this chair is not letting emotion, sentiment and nostalgia override executing what's best for this team and being fully committed on where we need to go."

Arenado was one of the few veteran pieces that remained with St. Louis, which is building for the future with a young lineup that includes Masyn Winn, Brendan Donovan and Alec Burleson.

For the D-backs, the move is reminiscent of 2023, when Hazen signed third baseman Evan Longoria to a $4 million, one-year deal. Longoria was at the end of a long and successful career, providing 11 homers and solid defense in a part-time role as Arizona made it all the way to the Fall Classic before losing to the Texas Rangers.

Arenado projects as Arizona's starting third baseman with young players like Blaze Alexander and Jordan Lawlar as other options.

Both Alexander and Lawlar can play other positions, including second base, shortstop and the outfield.

"We look for him to be a solid offensive contributor in our lineup," Hazen said of Arenado. "With the firepower we have at the top of our lineup, we're not looking for him to carry the offense. We don't need him to carry the offense. We need him to solidify and stabilize our defense — that's a huge component to this."

Arenado is a career .282 hitter and has 353 homers in 13 seasons with the Cardinals and Colorado Rockies.

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	45	29	13	3	61	160	116
Detroit	48	28	16	4	60	149	148
Montreal	47	26	14	7	59	159	154
Boston	47	26	19	2	54	155	146
Toronto	46	23	16	7	53	153	149
Buffalo	44	24	16	4	52	143	138
Florida	45	24	18	3	51	139	145
Ottawa	45	21	19	5	47	143	149

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	47	28	15	4	60	158	142
N.Y. Islanders	46	25	16	5	55	138	130
Washington	47	24	17	6	54	153	135
Philadelphia	44	22	14	8	52	133	132
Pittsburgh	45	21	14	10	52	141	137
New Jersey	46	23	21	2	48	123	143
Columbus	46	20	19	7	47	140	156
N.Y. Rangers	47	20	21	6	46	122	139

Western Conference

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	45	33	4	8	74	182	103
Dallas	47	27	11	9	63	161	133
Minnesota	47	26	12	9	61	148	130
Utah	47	23	20	4	50	145	131
Nashville	46	22	20	4	48	129	151
Chicago	46	19	20	7	45	130	146
St. Louis	47	18	21	8	44	117	161
Winnipeg	45	18	22	5	41	135	142

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	44	21	11	12	54	144	136
Edmonton	47	23	16	8	54	159	157
Seattle	44	21	15	8	50	123	128
San Jose	45	23	19	3	49	143	162
Los Angeles	45	19	16	10	48	120	128
Anaheim	46	22	21	3	47	153	169
Calgary	46	19	23	4	42	119	140
Vancouver	46	16	25	5	37	125	166

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

Monday's games

Seattle 4, N.Y. Rangers 2
Florida 4, Buffalo 3
Tampa Bay 5, Philadelphia 1
Montreal 6, Vancouver 3
Detroit 4, Carolina 3, OT
New Jersey 5, Minnesota 2
Edmonton 4, Chicago 1
Dallas 3, Los Angeles 1
Toronto 4, Colorado 3, OT

Tuesday's games

Ottawa 2, Vancouver 1
Washington 3, Montreal 2, OT
Columbus 5, Calgary 3
Tampa Bay 2, Pittsburgh 1, SO
Boston 3, Detroit 0
St. Louis 3, Carolina 0
Nashville 4, Edmonton 3, OT
Winnipeg 5, N.Y. Islanders 4
Utah 6, Toronto 1
Anaheim 3, Dallas 1

Wednesday's games

Seattle at New Jersey
Ottawa at N.Y. Rangers
Philadelphia at Buffalo
Vegas at Los Angeles

Thursday's games

Montreal at Buffalo
Philadelphia at Pittsburgh
San Jose at Washington
Vancouver at Columbus
Seattle at Boston
Winnipeg at Minnesota
Calgary at Chicago
Dallas at Utah
N.Y. Islanders at Edmonton
Toronto at Vegas

Friday's games

Florida at Carolina
San Jose at Detroit
Tampa Bay at St. Louis
Nashville at Colorado
Anaheim at Los Angeles

Scoring leaders

Through Wednesday

	GP	G	A	PTS
Connor McDavid, EDM	47	30	52	82
Nathan MacKinnon, COL	45	36	45	81
Macklin Celebrini, SJ	45	24	46	70
Nikita Kucherov, TB	41	23	44	67
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	47	25	42	67
Mikko Rantanen, DAL	46	18	44	62
Martin Necas, COL	45	21	36	57
David Pastrnak, BOS	42	19	37	56
Jason Robertson, DAL	47	27	28	55
Mark Scheifele, WPG	45	22	32	54

ROUNDUP

Lightning top Pens, streak now 11

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Nikita Kucherov scored the deciding goal in the shootout and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the Pittsburgh Penguins 2-1 on Tuesday night for their 11th straight win.

J.J. Moser scored in regulation and Andrei Vasilevskiy had 26 saves for the Lightning, who have not lost a 2-1 defeat at home against Los Angeles on Dec. 18. Three of their wins during the streak have come after regulation.

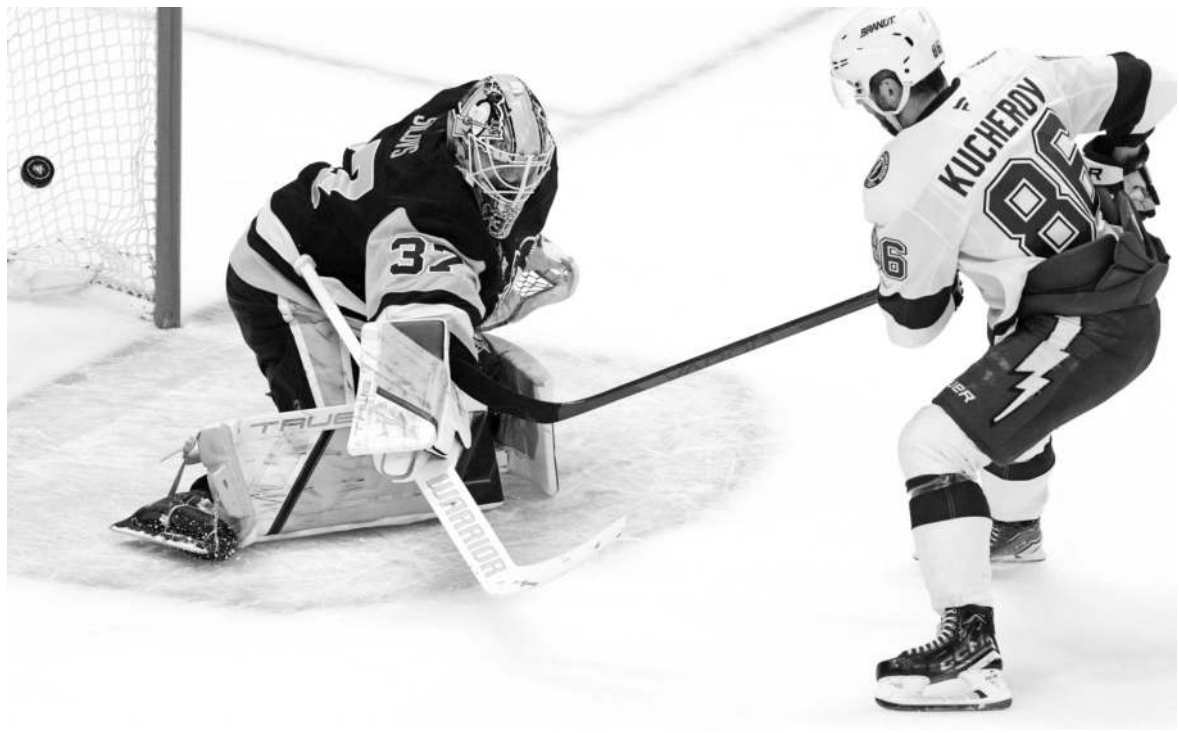
The Lightning moved into first place in the Atlantic Division, one point ahead of the Detroit Red Wings, who lost 3-0 at Boston.

Evgeni Malkin scored for the Penguins and Arturs Silovs had 30 saves. Pittsburgh lost its third straight (0-2-1) since a six-game win streak.

Gage Goncalves scored for Tampa Bay in the second round of the tiebreaker, and Egor Chinakov tied it for Pittsburgh on their attempt in the third round. Kucherov then won it for the Lightning.

Moser gave the Lightning a 1-0 lead with 5:47 remaining in the third period. Yanni Gourde brought the puck up the right side and put a shot at Silovs that the goalie caught against his pad. However, the puck rolled out and lay in front and Moser skated up and knocked it in.

Malkin tied it with 2:16 left as he fired it past Vasilevskiy from the inside edge of the right circle for his 10th of the season.



GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

Tampa Bay Lightning's Nikita Kucherov, right, gets the game-winning shootout goal past Pittsburgh Penguins goaltender Arturs Silovs in Pittsburgh on Tuesday.

Capitals 3, Canadiens 2 (OT): Connor McMichael scored with 37.6 seconds remaining in overtime to lift Washington to a home victory over Montreal.

Washington trailed 2-0 entering the third period before tying it on a pair of goals by Ethen Frank. After the Capitals failed to score on an overtime power play, Canadiens goalie Samuel Montembeault left a rebound on Dylan Strome's shot and McMichael was able to stuff it home.

Josh Anderson and Brendan Gallagher scored for Montreal.

Senators 2, Canucks 1: Artem Zub and Jordan Spence's first-period goals, scored 15 seconds apart, were enough to lead Ottawa to a home win over struggling Vancouver.

Leevi Merilainen had a solid outing making 18 saves for the Senators, who snapped a four-game losing streak.

Vancouver has now lost eight straight (0-6-2) and is in the midst of its longest road trip of the season, a six-game stretch that wraps up Thursday in Columbus. They're currently 0-5.

Elias Pettersson scored goal for the Canucks, while Kevin Lankinen stopped 38 shots.

Blue Jackets 5, Flames 3: Boone Jenner scored with 1:34 remaining, Charlie Coyle had two goals and an assist, and Rick Bowness won his debut as Columbus' coach in a victory over visisitng Calgary.

Jenner, Columbus' captain, ripped a snap shot from the left faceoff circle and past the glove of Calgary goaltender Dustin Wolf for his eighth goal of the season. Jenner also had an assist and got into a fight in the second period, giving him the Gordie Howe hat trick.

Zach Werenski had a goal and an assist, giving him a point in 16 straight home games, the second-longest streak in franchise history.

Mikael Backlund and Morgan Frost each had a goal and an assist for Calgary. Rasmus Anderson also scored, while Connor Zary and Yegor Sharangovich had two assists apiece. Wolf had 38 saves.

Blues 3, Hurricanes 0: Joel Hofer made 33 saves as host St. Louis snapped a three-game losing streak by shutting out Carolina.

Nick Bjugstad, Dalibor Dvorsky and Jimmy Snuggerud scored for the Blues. Hofer notched his fourth shutout of the season.

Brandon Bussi made 28 saves for the Hurricanes. It was only the third regulation loss for Bussi in 20 career games (16-3-1).

Carolina was shutout for the first time this season and had its five-game points streak come to an end.

Bruins 3, Red Wings 0: Jeremy Swayman stopped 24 shots for his first shutout of the season, and host Boston beat Detroit.

Mark Kastelic scored for the Bruins, who have won four straight and six of their last seven games. Kastelic sealed the win with an empty-netter with 3:59 to go.

Cam Talbot finished with a season high-tying 38 saves for the Red Wings, who snapped a four-game win streak and lost in regulation for just the third time in 13 games (9-3-1). Detroit also dropped into second place in the Atlantic Division — one point behind Tampa Bay.

Predators 4, Oilers 3 (OT): Roman Josi scored his second goal of the game at 3:43 of overtime, and host Nashville beat Edmonton.

Stamkos gave the Predators a 1-0 lead 2:45 into the game, and Hyman tied it on the man advantage with 2:54 remaining in the first. McDavid's assist on the play extended his point streak to 20 games. He has 19 goals and 27 assists over that span.

Nashville regained the lead at 3:03 of the second when Haula collected a rebound in front and beat Jarry with a backhand just underneath the crossbar.

The Oilers are 3-0-2 in their last five.

Jets 5, Islanders 4: Adam Lowry and Kyle Connor each had a goal and an assist, and host Winnipeg beat New York.

Kyle MacLean, Emil Heineman, Anthony Duclair and Matthew Schaefer scored for the Islanders, who fell to 6-3-1 in their last 10 games. Ilya Sorokin finished with 17 saves.

DeMelo gave the Jets a 4-3 lead with 7:37 remaining in the second period as he scored on a screened shot from the blue line.

Lowry made it a two-goal lead with 20 seconds to go in the middle period as he deflected Neal Pionk's point shot past Sorokin.

Mammoth 6, Maple Leafs 1: Dylan Guenther had two goals and an assist, Jack McBain added a goal and two assists, and host Utah beat Toronto.

Daniil But, JJ Peterka and Michael Carcone each had a goal and an assist, Ian Cole each had two assists, and Barrett Hayon added an assist for Utah, which extended its point streak to 4-0-1. Karel Vejmelka had 19 saves while getting his NHL-leading 21st win.

Calle Jarnkrok scored as Toronto snapped a four game win streak and a 10-game point streak. Dennis Hildeby finished with 34 saves.

Peterka made it a four-goal lead with 4½ minutes remaining in the second before Jarnkrok spoiled Vejmelka's shutout bid 3:30 into the third.

Ducks 3, Stars 1: Chris Kreider and Beckett Sennecke scored goals, Lukas Dostal survived a barrage of shots in the final minutes, and host Anaheim beat Dallas to snap a nine-game skid.

Jacob Trouba also scored for Anaheim, and Dostal stopped 24 shots — many of them from point-blank range after Dallas pulled the goalie twice in the final minutes. The Ducks were 0-8-1 since a 4-1 win against Columbus on Dec. 20.

Roope Hintz scored for Dallas and Casey DeSmith had 22 saves. The Stars lost for the fourth time in six games (2-2-2).

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Kansas guard Darryn Peterson looks to pass over Iowa State guard Killyan Toure while Kansas head coach Bill Self watches during the second half Tuesday in Lawrence, Kan.

Kansas shows off potential in handing Iowa St. 1st loss

By Dave Skretta
Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Kansas finally showed what it could do with a healthy Darryn Peterson and a regular rotation Tuesday night.

The timing couldn't have been worse for second-ranked Iowa State.

After falling from the AP Top 25 following a second loss in their first three Big 12 games, the Jayhawks roared away from the stunned Cyclones the moment the ball was thrown up. Tre White hit four early 3-pointers and went on to score 19 points, Peterson contributed 16 before more cramping issues, and Kansas coasted to an 84-63 victory over previously unbeaten Iowa State.

"This is more what I envisioned," Jayhawks coach Bill Self said. "We've got an elite player — we got an elite scorer — and even tonight, when (Peterson) went to get his own, he can do some things other guys can't do. But the thing is the other guys are good players. We don't need to defer to him. I don't know that we've found that balance yet. But tonight was the closest thing to it."

Melvin Council Jr. added 15 points and Flory Bidunga had 10 for Kansas (12-5, 2-2 Big 12), which led by 26 in the first half, had that advantage trimmed to 11 midway through the second, then answered with a 10-0 run to put the game away.

It was the kind of performance that college basketball fans have become accustomed to seeing from the Jayhawks over the years. Much more familiar than recent losses to unranked UCF and West Virginia.

"They were extremely well-prepared, well-coached, like we knew they would be," Iowa State coach T.J. Otzelberger said. "Extremely urgent (for Kansas) to come out and play with a tremendous spirit, which they did, so credit to them.

"That was an absolute beatdown," Otzelberger added, "in their favor, unfortunately."

There are a multitude of reasons for a stumbling start to the season, which had the Jayhawks in danger of their first 1-3 start to league play since the 1987-88 season. But the biggest may have been the cramping problems that had kept Peterson off the court for long stretches and kept Kansas from getting into a rhythm even when he was available.

He was still massaging his calf on the bench Tuesday night, and at one point, Peterson grabbed it after going high for a dunk. But Self said the issue wasn't as serious as earlier in the year: "It was more of, 'I'm not quite whole right now.'"

"Feeling better. It's coming back slowly to me," Peterson said. "I was out for a while but every game is getting better. This was a great win, especially coming off the loss to West Virginia. We knew we had to come out and get a win."

The Jayhawks clearly felt a sense of urgency. They even had a players-only meeting — Self insisted he knew nothing about it — during which they talked about their goals for the season and what it would take to get back on track.

"Just kind of reiterating the key things that we want to identify ourselves as this year," White said, "and just internal conversations that made us more focused on what we want to do. It definitely made us more connected."

It was evident from the opening minutes, when Kansas opened with an 11-3 run to get the crowd into the game.

By the 7-minute mark, the lead had grown to 31-14, and Otzelberger had wasted two timeouts trying to get things under control.

The Jayhawks pushed the lead to 26 points before Iowa State mounted its only real comeback, stringing together some stops and getting some buckets to go on each side of halftime. But Kansas eventually found its stride again, and it quickly pushed the lead back over 20 points before emptying the bench in the final minutes.

What made the performance particularly impressive was the opposition: The Cyclones were 16-0, including a 23-point road win over then-No. 1 Purdue, and they were one of two teams receiving No. 1 votes in the AP poll this week.

"We looked a little spooked and panicked, and the moment got to us," Otzelberger said. "We know how well prepared they were going to be. We know how competitive they're going to be. We know how much confidence they have, especially in this building. You can tell they've been on the practice court working, and getting ready, and they did a tremendous job."

TOP 25 ROUNDUP

Thomas scores 19 as No. 16 Virginia edges out No. 20 Louisville

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Malik Thomas made six 3-pointers and scored 19 points, Johann Grunloh added 16 points and No. 16 Virginia shot 55% in the second half to beat No. 20 Louisville 79-70 on Tuesday night.

Thomas went 6-for-8 from beyond the arc and 6-for-9 overall for the Cavaliers (15-2, 4-1 Atlantic Coast Conference). Virginia shot just 40% from the field but led throughout and made 7 of 13 3-pointers after halftime in its first meeting with a ranked foe this season.

Isaac McKneely, who spent the previous three seasons with the Cavs, scored a season-high 23 points for the Cardinals (12-5, 2-3), who shot 36% and have dropped three of four.

No. 3 UConn 69, No. 25 Seton Hall 64: Tarris Reed Jr. scored 21 points and Silas Demary Jr. made four free throws in the last 29 seconds as the visiting Huskies extended their winning streak to 13 games with a win over the Pirates.

UConn nearly squandered an 18-point lead — 42-24 — with 17:20 left to play. Seton Hall battled back and closed within a point at 65-64 on a 3-pointer by Mike Williams III with 48 seconds left.

No. 7 Houston 77, West Virginia 48: Milos Uzan scored 17 points, Emanuel Sharp added 13 points and the host Cougars beat the Mountaineers for their 10th straight win.

Uzan was 5-for- 9 on 3-pointers for his first double-figure scoring game since he had 18 points at Cincinnati on Jan. 3.

No. 8 Nebraska 90, Oregon 55: Pryce Sandfort scored 28 points, Braden Frager had 23 and each made a career-high seven 3-pointers to lead the host Cornhuskers over the Ducks, extending Nebraska's win streak to 21 games.

The Cornhuskers (17-0, 6-0) posted their most lopsided victory over a Big Ten opponent since they joined the conference in 2011-12. Nebraska has won its first six conference games for the first time since the 1965-66 team was 7-0 in the old Big Eight.

No. 12 Michigan State 81, Indiana 60: Jeremy Fears scored 19 of his career-high 23 points in the first half and Jaxon Kohler finished with 16 points, leading the host Spartans over the Hoosiers.

Michigan State (15-2, 5-1 Big Ten) trailed by seven midway through the first half when Fears was its only scorer and led 39-32 at halftime after some of his teammates contributed offensively.

No 18 Alabama 97, Mississippi State 82: Labaron Philon Jr. scored a career-high 32 points, Aiden Sherrell also set a career-best with 22 points and the visiting Crimson Tide used a big run spanning halftime to beat the Bulldogs.

No. 19 Florida 96, Oklahoma 79: Thomas Haugh scored 21 points, Rueben Chinyelu had 19 points and 12 rebounds for his ninth double-double of the season, and the visiting Gators beat the Sooners.

No. 22 Clemson 74, Boston College 50: Nick Davidson scored 21 straight points in the first half and finished with a season-high 25 as the host Tigers beat the Eagles to remain undefeated in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

No. 24 Tennessee 87, Texas A&M 82 (2OT): Nate Ament scored 23 points, 10 of which came in the two overtime periods, as the host Volunteers beat the Aggies.



TIMOTHY D. EASLEY/AP

Virginia guard Malik Thomas attempts a shot over Louisville forward Sananda Fru during the first half in Louisville, Ky., on Tuesday.

NBA

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	25	14	.641	—
Boston	24	15	.615	1
Toronto	24	17	.585	2
Philadelphia	22	16	.579	2½
Brooklyn	11	26	.297	13

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	22	18	.550	—
Miami	21	19	.525	1
Atlanta	20	22	.476	3
Charlotte	14	26	.350	8
Washington	10	28	.263	11

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	28	10	.737	—
Cleveland	22	19	.537	7½
Chicago	18	21	.462	10½
Milwaukee	17	23	.425	12
Indiana	9	31	.225	20

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	27	13	.675	—
Houston	23	14	.622	2½
Memphis	17	22	.436	9½
Dallas	15	25	.375	12
New Orleans	9	33	.214	19

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	34	7	.829	—
Denver	27	13	.675	6½
Minnesota	27	14	.659	7
Portland	19	22	.463	15
Utah	14	25	.359	19

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	24	14	.632	—
Phoenix	24	16	.600	1
Golden State	22	19	.537	3½
L.A. Clippers	16	23	.410	8½
Sacramento	10	30	.250	15

Monday's games

Utah 123, Cleveland 112
Indiana 98, Boston 96
Philadelphia 115, Toronto 102
Dallas 113, Brooklyn 105
Sacramento 124, L.A. Lakers 112
L.A. Clippers 117, Charlotte 109

Tuesday's games

Minnesota 139, Milwaukee 106
Miami 127, Phoenix 121
Houston 119, Chicago 113
Denver 122, New Orleans 116
Oklahoma City 119, San Antonio 98
L.A. Lakers 141, Atlanta 116
Golden State 119, Portland 97

Wednesday's games

Cleveland at Philadelphia
Toronto at Indiana
Brooklyn at New Orleans
Utah at Chicago
Denver at Dallas
New York at Sacramento
Washington at L.A. Clippers

Thursday's games

Memphis at Orlando
Phoenix at Detroit
Boston at Miami
Oklahoma City at Houston
Milwaukee at San Antonio
Utah at Dallas
Atlanta at Portland
New York at Golden State
Charlotte at L.A. Lakers

Friday's games

Cleveland at Philadelphia
New Orleans at Indiana
Chicago at Brooklyn
L.A. Clippers at Toronto
Minnesota at Houston
Washington at Sacramento

Scoring leaders

Through Tuesday

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Doncic, LAL	31	322	289	1036	33.4
Gil.-Alex., OKC	39	424	320	1245	31.9
Maxey, PHI	36	387	205	1114	30.9
Jokic, DEN	32	339	203	948	29.6
Mitchell, CLE	37	381	187	1092	29.5
Brown, BOS	36	391	201	1062	29.5
Brunson, NY	36	370	190	1041	28.9
Edwards, MIN	33	329	185	953	28.9
Curry, GS	31	285	158	871	28.1
Leonard, LAC	29	283	168	814	28.1

Giannis returns Bucks fans' boos

After lopsided loss to Timberwolves, Milwaukee star responds to crowd's jeers

BY STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo couldn't remember hearing boos from his home crowd during his brilliant 13-year career in Milwaukee.

It happened Tuesday midway through the Bucks' 139-106 loss to a Minnesota Timberwolves team that was playing without Anthony Edwards and Rudy Gobert.

The two-time MVP responded the same way he has whenever he's been booed on the road. After making a driving layup and drawing a foul in the opening minute of the third quarter, Antetokounmpo offered a thumbs-down gesture and booed back.

"When I get booed, I boo back," Antetokounmpo said. "I've been doing it all season."

Those boos poured down after Milwaukee trailed 76-45 at the break. Never before in franchise history had Minnesota built such a big halftime lead in a road game.

Antetokounmpo acknowledged the Bucks' effort was low Tuesday. He also expanded on why the boos bothered him.

"Everybody has their opinion to do what they want to do. I'm not going to tell them what to do and how they should act when we don't play hard or win, or we lose games or we're not where we're supposed to be. And I don't think anybody has the right to tell me how I should act on the basketball court after I've been here 13 years and I'm basically the all-time leader in everything." said Antetokounmpo.



MORRY GASH/AP

The Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo attempts a shot against the Minnesota Timberwolves during the second half Tuesday in Milwaukee.

Milwaukee's latest loss came as it approaches the midway point of a season that hasn't met its expectations.

The Bucks (17-23) are 11th in the Eastern Conference standings, meaning they would have to rally in the second half just to reach the play-in round of the postseason. That's a precipitous fall for a team that has made nine straight playoff appearances and won the NBA title in 2021.

Milwaukee's precarious position means it can't afford to have performances like the one it delivered against a short-handed Timberwolves team Tuesday. Bucks coach Doc Rivers blamed it on "dead legs" after the game, noting they had just returned from a four-game trip and are about to go back on the road for their next two contests.

Antetokounmpo noted that the improvement must start with him, though he delivered 25 points, eight rebounds and five assists Tuesday. He was asked how Milwaukee could step up in the second half to put itself back in playoff position.

"Playing hard," Antetokounmpo said. "Playing the right way. Playing selfless basketball, which we don't. I don't know. I really don't know. Those three things are important. I know that they're important for you to win. Right now there's so many things that we can do better. Let's just start by, 'Can we just play harder? Can we just play the right way? Can we create advantages for the next player? Can we just play for our teammate, play for the team, play for ourselves?' Let's start with that, and I think everything will follow."

In the meantime, Antetokounmpo said he will keep responding to boos the same way, no matter who's doing the jeering.

ROUNDUP

Gilgeous-Alexander, Thunder hold off Spurs

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 34 points, and the defending NBA champion Oklahoma City Thunder beat San Antonio 119-98 on Tuesday night to earn their first win in four tries against the Spurs this season.

Jalen Williams added 20 points and Chet Holmgren chipped in eight points, 10 rebounds and three blocks for Oklahoma City. The Thunder improved to a league-best 34-7 at the midway point of the season — on pace to match last season's 68-14 regular-season finish.

Stephon Castle scored 20 points and Victor Wembanyama added 17 points and seven rebounds for San Antonio.

The Spurs started the night in second place behind OKC in the Western Conference standings. San Antonio announced its presence as a title contender with the three wins over the Thunder in a two-week span last month, but now it has lost six of 10.

Oklahoma City started this season with a 24-1 record, then hit a lull that included the three losses to the Spurs. The Thunder have recovered to win four straight.

OKC won without two starters — top rebounder Isaiah Hartenstein and defensive stopper Lu Dort. The Thunder still held San Antonio to 40% shooting from the floor.

Heat 127, Suns 121: Bam Adebayo scored 29 points, including three long jumpers in the final minutes, and Norman Powell added 27 as host Miami squandered a 20-point lead before recovering to beat Phoenix.

Brooks and Grayson Allen each scored 25 for the Suns, who had won three straight.

Rockets 119, Bulls 113: Kevin Durant had 28 points and Alperen Sengun added 23 with 11 assists to lead host Houston over Chicago.

Smith scored 10 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter to help the Rockets snap a three-game skid.

Nuggets 122, Pelicans 116: Jamal Murray had 35 points and nine assists, Peyton Watson made the tiebreaking jumper with 39 seconds left and visiting Denver beat New Orleans.



NATE BILLINGS/AP

Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander looks to get past San Antonio Spurs guard Stephon Castle during the first half Tuesday in Oklahoma City. The Thunder beat the Spurs 119-98.

Trey Murphy III scored 31 points for the Pelicans, who lost for the 11th time in 12 games.

Lakers 141, Hawks 116: LeBron James had 31 points. 10 assists and nine rebounds, and host Los Angeles emphatically snapped its three-game skid with a victory over Atlanta.

Nickeil Alexander-Walker scored 26 points and CJ McCollum had 25 for the Hawks, who had won on the first two stops of their West Coast road trip.

Warriors 119, Trail Blazers 97: Jimmy Butler scored 16 points, capitalizing on Stephen Curry's sharp passing night that featured 11 assists, and host Golden State ran away from short-handed Portland.

Shaedon Sharpe scored 19 points and Caleb Love 17 and seven assists for the Trail Blazers.

NFL

Ravens owner discusses Harbaugh, coach search

By Noah Trister
Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — The next coach of the Baltimore Ravens will have a couple of tough acts to follow, given how quickly the previous two won a Super Bowl.

"It took (Brian) Billick two years, John (Harbaugh) five," owner Steve Bisciotti said. "Maybe I'll give this guy six."

Bisciotti might have been joking, but it was clear Tuesday that he has high hopes for the team's next hire. The owner held a rare news conference, speaking for about an hour. Bisciotti discussed a variety of topics, but the lively session was largely centered on his decision to fire Harbaugh last week after 18 seasons.

"I got to the point that I didn't believe that I would feel regret after I made that decision," Bisciotti said. "That's what instinct is. When you finally get to the point that you're pretty damn sure that you are not going to regret the decision a day or a week later, then that's the time to make the decision."

Whoever follows Harbaugh has a chance to inherit two-time MVP Lamar Jackson at quarterback. Although Baltimore missed the playoffs this season, the Ravens reached the AFC title game a couple of years ago and have won the AFC North four times in Jackson's eight pro seasons.

"When Tony Dungy said this is a bad decision and good luck finding someone better than John, I literally wanted to call Tony and say, 'Do you remember John 18 years ago?'" Bisciotti said. "How can you take our success and use it against me while we're out trying to find the next John Harbaugh?"

Bisciotti was not shy about speaking his mind. He gave a clear vote of confidence to general manager Eric DeCosta, who was seated next to him and fielded some questions of his own, but Bisciotti took responsibility for firing Harbaugh.

"I tried to take my love and respect of John out of it, and it's (DeCosta's) best friend, so I don't know that he could, and I admire him for it, but I had to look at them and say, 'You're pretty close to me. You're not there. I'm going to push you over the edge. I'm going to make the decision,'" Bisciotti said. "I made the decision by myself, and they understood. We had already talked about why I was there, and I didn't need them to come to my side of the fence for me to make this tough decision."

Bisciotti acknowledged firing Harbaugh over the phone, saying he was at home and Harbaugh was in the car heading home.

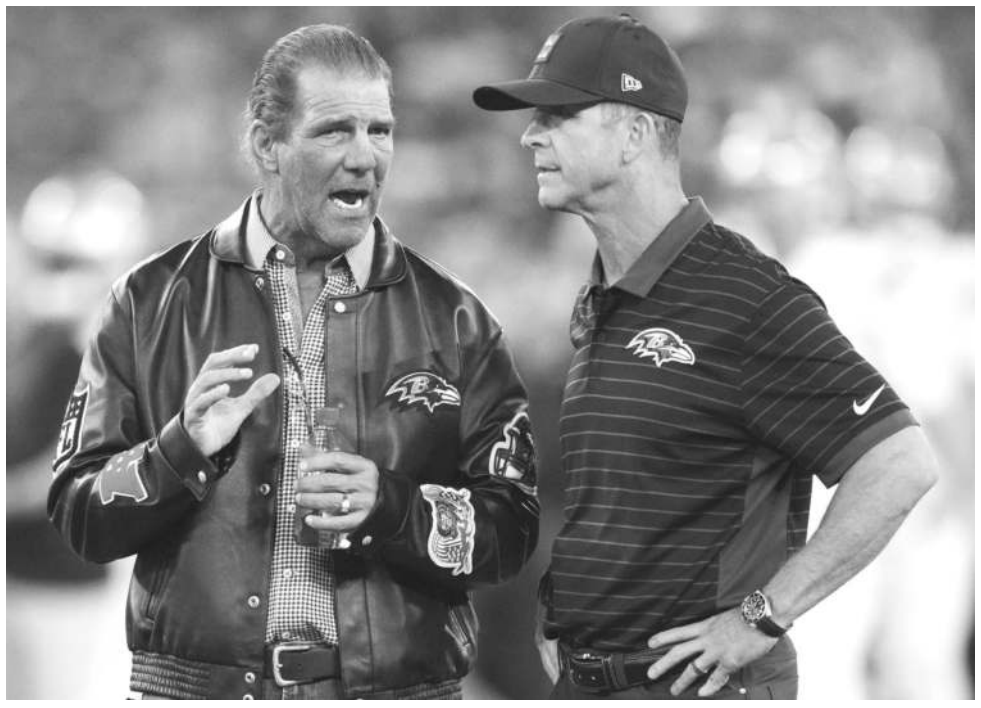
"I thought it would kind of be a jerk move to call him up and say, 'Hey coach, meet me at the office in an hour,'" Bisciotti said.

The news conference began shortly after Baltimore announced that it had completed an interview with Minnesota defensive coordinator Brian Flores for the coaching vacancy. The Ravens have also talked to Miami defensive coordinator Anthony Weaver, outgoing Washington offensive coordinator Kliff Kingsbury, Kansas City offensive coordinator Matt Nagy, Denver defensive coordinator Vance Joseph and passing game coordinator Davis Webb, Seattle offensive coordinator Klint Kubiak and outgoing Cleveland coach Kevin Stefanski.

All of those candidates except Webb, Weaver and Kubiak have at least some head coaching experience in the NFL. Bisciotti made a point of saying that struggles in a previous head coaching position wouldn't deter Baltimore from hiring a candidate.

"It'd be very easy for me to try and avoid those ex-head coaches because they have losing records, but I'm telling you, we are keen to their circumstances," Bisciotti said. "We won't let their first shot at a job influence us negatively for this one."

Bisciotti also said Jackson has an open invitation to come with the owner to interviews later in the process.



Nick Wass/AP

Ravens team owner Steve Bisciotti, left, talks with former head coach John Harbaugh prior to a game against the Detroit Lions on Sept. 22 in Baltimore.

Era: Tomlin's consistency was strength early, flaw in recent years

FROM PAGE 24

"It is hard for me to put into words the level of respect and appreciation I have for Coach Tomlin," Rooney said in a statement. "He guided the franchise to our sixth Super Bowl championship and made the playoffs 13 times during his tenure, including winning the AFC North eight times in his career. His track record of never having a losing season in 19 years will likely never be duplicated."

Tomlin's early success, however, leveled off into a pattern of solid if not always spectacular play, followed by a playoff cameo that ended with the Steelers looking outclassed at every turn.

The 53-year-old Tomlin won 193 regular-season games in Pittsburgh, tied with Hall of Famer Chuck Noll for the most victories in franchise history. But their resumes diverged when it comes to the playoffs. While Noll won four Super Bowls in the 1970s, Tomlin went 8-12 in the postseason, losing each of his last seven playoff games, all by double-digit margins.

The final came Monday night, when the AFC North champions squandered some early momentum before getting drilled 30-6 by the Houston Texans, the most lopsided home playoff loss in team history.

There were chants of "Fire Tomlin!" as the clock kicked toward zero, though they weren't nearly as impassioned as they were in November while the Steelers were getting pushed around by the Buffalo Bills in a loss that dropped their record to 6-6.

Tomlin did his best to tune out the noise and his team responded, the way it seemingly always did during his tenure. Pittsburgh won four of its final five games, including a sweep of the Baltimore Ravens that gave the club its first AFC North title since 2020.

The optimism, however, dimmed once the Texans asserted themselves. The NFL's top-ranked defense suffocated Aaron Rodgers and the Steelers' offense while the league's highest-paid defense wilted late.

It was a familiar and frustrating pattern for a place where, as Tomlin noted not long after his introduction, "the standard is the standard."

And while that remains the case for a team whose members walk by six Lombardi Trophies every day on the way to work, the results had plateaued. Pittsburgh finished with 9 or 10 wins in each of Tomlin's final five seasons, often doing just enough to squeak into the playoffs before being exposed by a more talented opponent.

Tomlin had two years left on the contract extension he signed in 2024, with the club holding the option for 2027. Should Tomlin want to return to coaching in the NFL before his contract with the Steelers expired, the club could seek compensation.

Either way, his departure leaves Pittsburgh looking for a head coach for just the third time since it hired Noll in 1969.

The Steelers likely won't lack for attractive candidates. The club's stability combined with its ability to remain competitive even without a franchise quarterback for the last half-decade means whoever gets the job will be given substantial leeway to get the team back to the top.

The announcement came as somewhat of a shock. In the final question he fielded as head coach, Tomlin painted an upbeat picture about the team's future.

"I'm always feel optimistic about what we're capable of doing in terms of putting together a group, certainly," he said Monday night.

And with that, he stepped off the dais and into a future that will not lack for options. Long one of the most confident and imminently quotable people in football — his weekly news conferences were peppered with what became known as "Tomlin-isms" — he could step into television if he wants, as Cowher did after retiring.

Yet it seems just as likely that he will have his choice of jobs if or when he wants to coach again. Players defended Tomlin — almost uniformly popular within the locker room — to the end.

Tight end Pat Freiermuth called Tomlin "one of the best coaches I'll ever play for, probably the best. In my opinion his message hasn't got stale. I believe in him."

Freiermuth added that his belief extended to general manager Omar Khan, who will be in charge of finding the right person for one of the most attractive coaching gigs in any league.

Tomlin's two predecessors are in the Hall of Fame. He could very well find himself getting fitted for a gold jacket of his own. Yet rather than try to come back next year and break Noll's record for regular-season wins, he opted to, as Noll once famously put it, "get on with his life's work."

And Pittsburgh will try to find the right person to help it return to the standard the franchise lives by, one it clutched at but never quite grasped during Tomlin's final years.



Ian Walton/AP

From left, Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin, quarterback Aaron Rodgers and defensive tackle Cameron Heyward celebrate a win over the Minnesota Vikings at Croke Park stadium in Dublin on Sept. 28.

NFL

49ers opening window for Warner to return, eyeing NFC title game

By Josh Dubow
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The San Francisco 49ers are opening the practice window for star linebacker Fred Warner with the hope that he could return if the team reaches the NFC title game.

Warner has been out since breaking and dislocating his right ankle in a loss at Tampa Bay on Oct. 12, with coach Kyle Shanahan initially describing it as a season-ending injury.

But Warner has been rehabbing since then and even was able to run on a side field last week during practice. Now he will be back officially at practice as the 49ers prepare to play Seattle in the divisional round on Saturday night and could return if San Francisco wins.

"We're not doing much so he'll walk through out there with us today and things like that, but hoping he can be ready for next week," Shanahan said Tuesday.

Warner's presence on the practice field even for a walkthrough provided an emotional lift for the 49ers.

"For someone who really set the standard here, I would do anything to play with him again this year," defensive tackle Kalia Davis said. "We want him back out there."

Eric Kendricks is currently manning Warner's spot at middle linebacker after backup Tatum Bethune got hurt but wasn't ready to talk about what Warner's possible return would do for the team.

"We're aren't going to talk about next week, right? We've got Seattle," Kendricks said. "We've got to beat Seattle. Let's pump our brakes. We have to beat Seattle this week. .. This is what meaningful football is all about."

The 49ers have made it this far despite losing their top two defensive players to injuries early in the season, with defensive end Nick Bosa going down with a season-ending knee injury in Week 3 and Warner getting hurt in Week 6.

Warner has been pushing to make a return and if he can, that would provide a needed boost. But Shanahan said the final decision will be in the hands of the team doctors.

"If he feels good and tells me he's good, I'm probably going to think he is and trust him to get out there," Shanahan said. "But you can't always think with your heart and emotionally. So you ask doctors where he's at, all the things that these guys have to pass, just protocols that we have in with just sprinting and jumping and things like that. He's got to hit all those before we feel it's safe."

But Shanahan added that as soon as the doctors clear Warner, "obviously it'll be zero decision on my part."

Warner had been a first-team All-Pro three straight seasons from 2022-24 and made the squad in 2020.

His 947 career tackles are the second most for the team, behind Patrick Willis' 950, as far as records go back to 2000.

Warner had missed only one game in his eight-year career before this injury, sitting out in 2021 with a hamstring injury. He played most of last season with a broken bone in his ankle and still earned All-Pro honors.

Warner signed a three-year extension worth $63 million in the offseason, keeping him under contract with the team through the 2029 season.



PETER JONELEIT/AP

San Francisco 49ers middle linebacker Fred Warner seeks to return from a dislocated ankle in time for the NFC title game.



BART YOUNG/AP

Broncos linebacker Dre Greenlaw (57) tackles Green Bay Packers wide receiver Jayden Reed on Dec. 14 in Denver. Greenlaw has returned to practice after recovering from a hamstring injury.

Greenlaw back as Broncos prepare to host Allen, Bills

By Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — The Denver Broncos began preparations for their first home playoff game in a decade with a spirited practice Tuesday that included the return of inside linebacker Dre Greenlaw, who pulled his right hamstring in a game against the Jacksonville Jaguars on Dec. 21.

"It's good to have a healthy Dre Greenlaw back in the game," coach Sean Payton said.

To help the top-seeded Broncos (14-3) on Saturday when they host Josh Allen and the sixth-seeded Buffalo Bills (13-5) at Empower Field.

Payton said Allen does many things well. "When you see him, the first time I really met him was out at some golf course and you realize how big he is and physical he is. So, he's hard to bring down. ... He was the difference in that game that was close last weekend (in Jacksonville).

"He's one of the stars of our league and you see in year in and year out," he said.

The Broncos lost 31-7 at Buffalo in the divisional round a year ago when the Bills rushed for 210 yards, including 120 by James Cook, this season's NFL rushing champ. That debacle led Denver to sign free agents Greenlaw and safety Talanoa Hufanga in the offseason.

"We were looking to improve our team, and man, we knew we were playing a real good team a year ago. So, there were a lot of things that we felt coming away from a game like that, hey, we're not there yet. But we need to improve," Payton said. "Certainly, those are players that help us in that regard."

Hufanga earned second-team All-Pro honors, but Greenlaw had a trying season as he dealt with a quadriceps injury to start the season and the pulled hamstring to end it as he missed Denver's final two regular-season games.

Payton said that he figured during the Broncos' 31-7 loss at Buffalo last year that "we need to figure out a way to get these games at home."

They get that chance now that they earned the AFC's No. 1 overall seed and the conference's sole first-round bye.

"It was the same way I felt in that first year in '06 in New Orleans when we lost in Chicago in the championship game," Payton said. "How do we get this game (at home). Now, there's some myths relative to the playoffs. Home field's important relative to the crowd noise. But just look at the weekend we just had."

Four of the six home teams lost on wild-card weekend with the Patriots and Bears the only teams that won at their stadium.

"So I know our crowd will be fantastic," Payton said. "We've got to be ready to play our best game."

Broncos QB Bo Nix said he's glad he won't have to rely on silent counts in the rematch.

"I think it's a lot better. I think everybody would say they'd rather be at home in this situation," Nix said. "You know, last year was a tough environment, tough road experience, good for a young person like me to go gain that experience first year. But it's obviously nice to be home.

"It's nice for that challenge to be on the other side and being able to use verbal cadence, being able to talk, being able to communicate is going to be better for us at home."

Tight end Lucas Krull (foot) also returned to practice. Asked if S Brandon Jones (torn pectoral) had a chance of returning during the playoffs, Payton said, "I don't think so."

Scoreboard

Wild-card Round

Saturday's games

L.A. Rams 34, Carolina 31
Chicago 31, Green Bay 27

Sunday's games

Buffalo 27, Jacksonville 24
San Francisco 23, Philadelphia 19
New England 16, L.A. Chargers 3

Monday's game

Houston 30, Pittsburgh 6

Divisional Round

Saturday, Jan. 17

Buffalo at Denver
San Francisco at Seattle

Sunday, Jan. 18

Houston at New England
L.A. Rams at Chicago

Conference Championships

Sunday, Jan. 25
AFC

At highest remaining seed

NFC

At highest remaining seed

SPORTS



Giving it back

Bucks blown out by Wolves as Giannis returns crowd's boos ›› NBA, Page 21

NFL



MATT FREED/AP

Mike Tomlin ends his Pittsburgh Steelers career with a 193-114-2 record, tied for the most regular-season wins in franchise history, and a Super Bowl title in 2009.

Tomlin era ends

Steelers coach resigns after 19 seasons, latest playoff loss

BY WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Mike Tomlin was an unknown when the Pittsburgh Steelers plucked him from obscurity in 2007 and handed the young and charismatic Minnesota Vikings defensive coordinator one of the most stable jobs in sports.

Over the next 19 seasons, Tomlin wrote his own chapter with one of the NFL's marquee franchises, winning a Super Bowl and going to another while becoming one of the most respected voices — if idiosyncratic — voices in the game.

Asked repeatedly what separated Tomlin from his peers, his players pointed to his consistency. He was the same coach day after day, season after season.

That consistency, far too often of late, also bled into the results. And after yet another quick playoff exit, Tomlin used his voice one last time to tell team president Art Rooney II that it was time to try something else.

The longest-tenured head coach in major American professional sports stepped down from his job leading Pittsburgh on Tuesday, a seismic shift that will have ripple effects throughout the league.

"I am deeply grateful to Art Rooney II and the late Ambassador (Dan) Rooney for their trust and support," Tomlin said in a statement released by the team. "I am also thankful to the players who gave everything they had every day, and to the coaches and staff whose commitment and dedication made this journey so meaningful."

Rooney, who took over for his Hall of Fame father as team president in 2003, lauded Tomlin for his dedication to the franchise and ability to churn out competitive teams year after year in an era when parity is the norm.

SEE ERA ON PAGE 22

D-backs acquire 3B Arenado from Cardinals ›› MLB, Page 18

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