

Vietnam vet to receive Medal of Honor

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Larry Taylor will become the newest recipient of the military's highest award for valor in battle when President Joe Biden presents the Vietnam veteran with the Medal of Honor on Tuesday, more than 55 years after his heroic actions in combat.

Taylor, who retired as a captain, was an Army helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War and led a rescue mission in 1968 to save a small group of soldiers trapped in a rice field by enemy troops.

"I was doing my job. I knew that if I did not go down and get them, they would not make it," said Taylor, now 81 and living in Tennessee.

David Hill, now 75, was a sergeant with the Army Rangers serving as part of a four-man reconnaissance unit on June 18, 1968. He said Monday that if it wasn't for Taylor's actions that day, he and the three other men

would not have lived.

"Hell, we were dead," Hill said. "The fortunes of war had turned against us that night."

Hill's unit was on a night mission near a village northeast of Saigon when they were surrounded in a rice paddy by a North Vietnamese force. The unit leader could see using a starlight scope that enemy troops were closing in on three sides. But they thought the Vietnamese troops had not surrounded them yet and they could escape back in the direction that they entered the paddy.

They tried to make it back to a tree line, but Hill said he was tapped on his shoulder and told to get down because they had been cut off from getting out.

Taylor, who was a first lieutenant at the time, got a call on the radio about a four-man unit in trouble. He and another pilot each took a Cobra helicopter and went out looking for the team. Taylor wasn't certain he would be able to find them because it was

such a dark night. But using radio equipment and direction finders, Taylor was able to spot them.

For nearly 30 minutes, the two American helicopters attacked the enemy troops, expending all their rockets and nearly 16,000 machine-gun rounds.

At that point, Taylor directed the other helicopter pilot to fire his remaining machine gun rounds along the eastern flank of the American patrol and then return to base camp. Taylor fired his own remaining rounds along the unit's western flank, using his Cobra's landing lights to draw the enemy's attention while the U.S. soldiers moved southeast toward a nearby extraction point that Taylor had designated.

Taylor said he is proud to receive the Medal of Honor — the "ultimate award." But he also said he is most proud that he followed the military motto that he had requested for his Medal of Honor challenge coins — "leave no man behind."

Army puts new policy on mental health into effect

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Army last week implemented new Congress-mandated mental health rules that allow soldiers to request access to care for any reason, the service announced Friday.

Army Secretary Christine Wormuth issued orders Tuesday adopting the new policy Congress mandated in the 2021 Brandon Act, which sought to allow service members to confidentially and quickly request a mental health evaluation to stem military suicides. The Army's announcement comes over a month after the Pentagon's other military departments adopted the Brandon Act and amid pressure from the parents of the law's namesake, Brandon Caserta, who accused the service of slow walking the

policy and railroading their requests for information on suicides.

The Pentagon in May announced it had adopted the Brandon Act policies, which President Joe Biden signed into law in 2021, and it gave the military departments 45 days to adopt them for active-duty troops. The Department of the Navy, which oversees the Navy and Marine Corps, adopted Brandon Act policies on July 11, and the Air Force Department, which oversees the Air Force and Space Force, adopted the new policies on July 28.

"I call on leaders to continue making it clear that taking care of your mental health and your family is encouraged," Wormuth said in a statement issued Friday on the policy's adoption. "We must constantly look for

additional ways to connect our soldiers with the necessary resources for their well-being, and the Army's new policy to implement the Brandon Act gives soldiers another tool to seek help while honoring the legacy of Petty Officer Caserta."

Caserta was a 21-year-old naval squadron flight electrician who died by suicide at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., in 2018 after years of alleged bullying. His parents, Teri and Patrick Caserta, founded the Brandon Caserta Foundation after his death and have spent years lobbying for improved mental health care in the military, including co-authoring the Brandon Act.

Army officials early last week said the service had been working diligently to implement the

new policies. The Casertas on Friday thanked the Army for adopting the Brandon Act policies.

The new policies allow any active-duty soldier or member of the Army Reserve or National Guard on active-duty for more than 30 days to request a mental health evaluation through their commanders or supervisors in the rank of staff sergeant and above for any reason, according to the service. It mandates those commanders or supervisors to "quickly and confidentially connect soldiers with resources."

"Soldiers will not be required to provide a reason or basis to request and receive a referral," according to the Army. "Mental health providers will conduct the mental health evaluations as soon as possible and will provide necessary clinical care."

US, Indonesia expand scope of military drills

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

The United States and Indonesia are conducting more complicated drills as part of an expanded version of an annual exercise that this year includes forces from Australia, Japan, Singapore, France and the United Kingdom.

Super Garuda Shield, which runs in East Java until Sept. 13, involves 5,000 troops from the seven nations and observers from a dozen other countries, according to New Zealand army Col. Paul Hayward, a deputy commander with the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, which has

provided most of the American soldiers for the exercise.

“This year we are seeing really significant expansion, not only across participating nations ... but, in the breadth and complexity of the training we are conducting across Indonesia,” Hayward said by phone Thursday from Puslatpur Marine Base, East Java.

Last year’s Super Garuda Shield involved 4,000 U.S. and Indonesian troops training mostly on Sumatra. Its organizers called it the largest ever in the exercise’s 16-year history.

It included an amphibious operation near a key gateway to

the South China Sea, where China has territorial claims that Indonesia does not recognize. The two nations have clashed over fishing rights in recent years.

Indonesia’s Natuna Islands, northeast of Singapore, are close to a part of the South China Sea claimed by China. Hayward said, however, that none of this month’s Super Garuda Shield training will take place near that area.

U.S. forces involved in the drills include the amphibious transport dock USS Green Bay from Sasebo Naval Base, Japan; aircraft from Pacific Air Forces; National Guard troops from

Oklahoma, California and Florida; and members of the U.S. Marine Rotational Force — Darwin deployed to Australia’s Northern Territory, Hayward said.

“Super Garuda Shield 2023 builds on last year’s tremendous success,” Gen. Charles Flynn, U.S. Army Pacific’s commander, said in a statement posted Tuesday by the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta. “This joint, multinational training exercise displays our collective commitment and like-minded unity, allowing for a stable, secure and more peaceful, free and open Indo-Pacific.”

F-16 fleet returns to S. Korea base after runway restored

By **DAVID CHOI**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Military flights at Kunsan Air Base resumed Thursday following a five-month reconstruction of the installation’s 9,000-foot runway.

The \$22 million project began in April and required the 8th Fighter Wing’s roughly 30 F-16 Fighting Falcons to temporarily relocate 75 miles north to Osan Air Base in Pyeongtaek city, according to a news release from the wing on Thursday.

Kunsan’s F-16s returned to their home base Wednesday after the flightline was checked for debris the previous day by the wing and the South Korean air force’s 38th Fighter Group.

More than 1,500 concrete slabs were used by the wing and the U.S. Army’s Corps of Engineers - Far East District to replace the deteriorating concrete in the runway makeover, according to a post on the wing’s Facebook page. The U.S. military routinely repairs its runways due to wear and

tear from weather exposure and aircraft use.

Around 4,200 U.S. troops are stationed in Kunsan, about 115 miles south of Seoul on the peninsula’s west coast.

Wing commander Col. Timothy Murphy said the wing’s ability to deter “external threats” and protect “the way of life” in South Korea “will only continue to improve and ultimately strengthen the ironclad [South Korea]- U.S. alliance,” according to the release.

“It’s good to have the Wolf Pack home,” he said.

Flight operations continued throughout the Korean Peninsula as the runway was repaired, wing spokeswoman Capt. Kaylin Hankerson told Stars and Stripes by phone Friday.

“The 8th Fighter Wing viewed the runway closure as an opportunity to practice simultaneously operating from numerous locations, to hone our distributed control and mission command procedures ... from any location, not just Kunsan Air Base,” Hankerson said.

Sailors charged with negligent homicide for overdose death

By **ROSE L. THAYER**
Stars and Stripes

Two recent graduates of the Navy’s basic training have been charged with negligent homicide and each face a court-martial over allegations they provided a lethal dose of fentanyl to a fellow sailor at Naval Station Great Lakes, Ill., and moved the body instead of calling for help, according to court records.

Seaman Brandon R. Ledesma and Seaman Recruit Caleb J. Taper are each charged with negligent homicide, manslaughter, obstruction of justice and distributing and using illegal drugs in connection to the 2021 overdose death at the Navy’s boot camp in Illinois, according to court records.

At the time of the death on Nov. 6, 2021, Ledesma and Taper were assigned to Naval Station Great Lakes and awaiting orders to attend Naval Submarine School in Groton, Conn., according to Katie Hewett, spokeswoman for Navy Region Mid-Atlantic.

The charges come as overdose

deaths in the military from fentanyl have increased steeply in the past five years. The drug was involved in 88% of military overdose deaths in 2021, according to Defense Department data provided to Congress earlier this year.

Fentanyl, an approved pain medication being produced and sold illegally, killed nearly 70,000 Americans in 2021, according to the National Safety Council, a nonprofit safety advocacy group that tracks preventable deaths and injuries.

The Navy saw the number of sailors who died from an illicit drug overdose rise from 11 in 2017 to 17 deaths in 2021, according to the Defense Department, which made the data available in February after members of Congress requested it.

Ledesma and Taper are accused of providing another sailor with fentanyl, according to court documents. The three sailors were all in training together and lived in the same barracks building, Hewett said.

Biden pledges help for Florida in wake of Idalia

Associated Press

LIVE OAK, Fla. — President Joe Biden on Saturday saw from the sky Hurricane Idalia's impact across a swath of Florida before he set out on a walking tour of a city recovering from the storm. Notably absent was Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican presidential candidate who declined to join Biden after he suggested that the Democrat's presence could hinder disaster response efforts.

Biden, when asked about his rival's absence, said he was not disappointed by the turn of events, but welcomed the presence of Rick Scott, one of the state's two Republican U.S. senators.

He pledged the federal gov-

ernment's total support for Floridians.

"I'm here today to deliver a clear message to the people of Florida and throughout the Southeast," Biden said after the walking tour. He spoke outdoors near a church that had parts of its sheet metal roof peeled back by Idalia's powerful winds and a home half crushed by a fallen tree.

"As I've told your governor, if there's anything your state needs, I'm ready to mobilize that support," he continued. "Anything they need related to these storms. Your nation has your back and we'll be with you until the job is done."

Earlier, the mayor of Live Oak, which is about 80 miles

east of Tallahassee, the state capital, thanked Biden and first lady Jill Biden for coming and "showing us that we're important to you."

"Everybody thinks Florida is rich, but this is not one of the richest counties in the state and there are people who are suffering," said Frank Davis, adding he knew of no loss of life or serious injury.

At Suwannee Pineview Elementary School, where the Bidens were briefed on the storm damage, local officials offered praise for early disaster declarations by the White House and the quick flow of federal aid. "What the federal government is doing ... is a big deal," Scott said.

Proud Boys sentenced over attack

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A one-time leader in the Proud Boys far-right extremist group was sentenced Friday to 18 years in prison for his role in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol, tying the record for the longest sentence in the attack.

Ethan Nordean was one of five members convicted of spearheading an attack on the U.S. Capitol to try to prevent the peaceful transfer of power from Donald Trump to Joe Biden after the 2020 presidential election.

"He is the undisputed leader on the ground on Jan 6," said prosecutor Jason McCullough.

The Seattle-area chapter president was one of two Proud Boys sentenced Friday. Dominic Pezzola was convicted of smashing a window at the U.S. Capitol in the building's first breach on Jan. 6, 2021. He defiantly raised a fist and declared "Trump won!" as he walked out of the courtroom after being sentenced to 10 years in prison, also among the longest sentences in the Jan. 6 attack.

The 18-year record for a Jan. 6 sentence was set by Stewart Rhodes, founder of another far-right extremist group the Oath Keepers.

The highest ranking Proud Boy convicted after a months-long trial earlier this year, Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio, is scheduled to be sentenced Tuesday.

Prosecutors said Nordean's words and online posting grew increasingly violent leading up to Jan. 6. On that day, he led a group of nearly 200 men toward the Capitol, then moved to the front of the mob and helped tear down a fence, allowing rioters to pour onto the grounds and confront police, according to court documents. Prosecutors had asked for a 27-year sentence.

Singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffett dies

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffett, who popularized beach bum soft rock with the escapist Caribbean-flavored song "Margaritaville" and turned that celebration of loafing into a billion-dollar empire of restaurants, resorts and frozen concoctions, has died. He was 76.

"Jimmy passed away peacefully on the night of September 1st surrounded by his family, friends, music and dogs," a statement posted to Buffett's official website and social media pages said late Friday.

"He lived his life like a song till the very last breath and will be missed beyond measure by so many."

The statement did not say where Buffett died or give a cause of death. Illness had forced him to reschedule concerts in May and Buffett ac-

knowledged in social media posts that he had been hospitalized, but provided no specifics.

"Margaritaville," released on Feb. 14, 1977, quickly took on a life of its own, becoming a state of mind for those "wastin' away," an excuse for a life of low-key fun and escapism for those "growing older, but not up."

The song is the unhurried portrait of a loafer on his front porch, watching tourists sunbathe while a pot of shrimp is beginning to boil.

The singer has a new tattoo, a likely hangover and regrets over a lost love. Somewhere, irritatingly, there is a misplaced salt shaker.

"What seems like a simple ditty about getting blotto and mending a broken heart turns out to be a profound meditation on the often painful inertia of beach dwelling," Spin magazine

wrote in 2021. "The tourists come and go, one group indistinguishable from the other. Waves crest and break whether somebody is there to witness it or not. Everything that means anything has already happened and you're not even sure when."

The song — from the album "Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes" — spent 22 weeks on the Billboard Hot 100 chart and peaked at No. 8.

The song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2016 for its cultural and historic significance, became a karaoke standard and helped brand Key West, Fla., as a distinct sound of music and a destination known the world over.

"There was no such place as Margaritaville," Buffett told the Arizona Republic in 2021. "It was a made-up place in my mind, basically made up about my experiences in Key West."

N. Korea fires missiles after drills end

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea launched several cruise missiles into the sea Saturday, South Korea's military said, extending its weapons testing activities in response to the U.S.-South Korea summer military drills.

South Korea's military detected the launches early Saturday morning off the North's west coast, the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. The statement said South Korean and U.S. intelligence authorities

were analyzing details of the launches. It said South Korea has boosted its surveillance posture and maintains a firm military readiness in close coordination with the United States.

The launches came two days after the U.S. and South Korean militaries wrapped up their 11-day training exercises that North Korea regards as a rehearsal for invasion. Washington and Seoul officials have maintained their drills are defensive.

A day before the U.S.-South Korean training ended, North

Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea in a launch it said was meant to simulate "scorched earth" nuclear strikes on South Korea. The North said it was separately holding a command post exercise aimed at rehearsing an occupation of South Korea's territory in the event of conflict.

On Aug. 21, the day when the U.S.-South Korean drills began, North Korea's state media said its leader Kim Jong Un observed cruise missile launches.

North Korea's second attempt

to place a military spy satellite in orbit failed Aug. 24, but the country said it will make a third attempt in October.

Since the start of 2022, North Korea has performed over 100 weapons tests — many of them ballistic launches, which are banned by United Nations Security Council resolutions.

North Korea's cruise missile tests aren't prohibited, but they still pose a threat to its rivals because they are designed to fly at a lower altitude to evade radar detection.

Russia attacks Ukrainian port before grain talks begin

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Two people were hospitalized following a 3½-hour Russian drone barrage on a port in Ukraine's Odesa region on Sunday, officials said.

The attack on the Reni seaport came a day before Russian President Vladimir Putin was due to meet with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan to discuss the resumption of food shipments from Ukraine under a Black Sea grain agreement that Moscow broke off from in July.

Russian forces fired 25 Iranian-made Shahed drones along the Danube River in the early hours of Sunday, 22 of which were shot down by air defenses, the Ukrainian air force said on Telegram. Ukrainian Presi-

dent Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, described the assault as part of a Russian drive "to provoke a food crisis and hunger in the world."

Russia's Defense Ministry said in a statement that the attack was aimed at fuel storage facilities used to supply military equipment. Putin and Erdogan's long-awaited meeting is due to take place in Sochi on Russia's southwest coast on Monday.

Turkish officials have confirmed that the pair will discuss renewing the Black Sea grain initiative, which the Kremlin pulled out of six weeks ago.

The deal — brokered by the United Nations and Turkey in July 2022 — had allowed nearly 36 million tons of grain and

other commodities to leave three Ukrainian ports safely despite Russia's war.

Russia broke away from the agreement, however, after claiming that a parallel deal promising to remove obstacles to Russian exports of food and fertilizer hadn't been honored.

Moscow complained that restrictions on shipping and insurance hampered its agricultural trade, even though it has shipped record amounts of wheat since last year.

The Sochi summit follows talks between the Russian and Turkish foreign ministers on Thursday, during which Russia handed over a list of actions the West would have to take in order for Ukraine's Black Sea exports to resume.

Netanyahu: Violent Eritrean migrants should be deported

Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that he wants Eritrean migrants involved in a violent clash in Tel Aviv to be deported immediately and has ordered a plan to remove all of the country's African migrants.

The remarks came a day after bloody protests by rival groups of Eritreans in south Tel Aviv left dozens of people injured. Eritreans, supporters and opponents of Eritrea's government, faced off with construction lumber, pieces of metal and rocks, smashing shop windows and police cars. Israeli police in riot gear shot tear gas, stun grenades and live rounds while officers on

horseback tried to control the protesters.

The violence on Saturday returned to the fore the issue of migrants, which has long divided Israel. Its resurgence comes as Israel is torn over Netanyahu's judicial overhaul plan, and supporters have cited the migrant issue as a reason why the courts should be reined in, saying they have stood in the way of pushing the migrants out.

"We want harsh measures against the rioters, including the immediate deportation of those who took part," Netanyahu said in a special ministerial meeting called to deal with the aftermath of the violence. He requested that the ministers present him with plans "for the removal of all the other illegal

infiltrators," and noted in his remarks that the Supreme Court struck down some measures meant to coerce the migrants to leave.

Under international law, Israel cannot forcibly send migrants back to a country where their life or liberty may be at risk.

Netanyahu said Sunday that he didn't think deporting supporters of the Eritrean government would be a problem.

About 25,000 African migrants live in Israel, mainly from Sudan and Eritrea, who have said they fled conflict or repression. Israel recognizes very few as asylum seekers, seeing them overwhelmingly as economic migrants, and said it has no legal obligation to keep them.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Ex-Proud Boys organizer sentenced to 17 years

DC WASHINGTON — An organizer of the Proud Boys extremist group was sentenced to 17 years in prison for spearheading an attack on the U.S. Capitol to prevent the peaceful transfer of power from Donald Trump to Joe Biden after the 2020 presidential election.

Federal prosecutors had recommended a 33-year prison sentence for Joseph Biggs, who helped lead dozens of Proud Boys members and associates in marching to the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Biggs and other Proud Boys joined the mob that broke through police lines and forced lawmakers to flee, disrupting the session of Congress for certifying Biden's victory.

3 found dead were trying to flee society

CO DENVER — The stepsister of a Colorado woman who was found dead along with her sister and teenage son at a remote Rocky Mountain campsite said the women fled into the wilderness after struggling to cope with societal changes in recent years, but they were unequipped to survive off the grid.

Exposed to several feet of snow, chills below zero and with no food found at their camp, Christine Vance, Rebecca Vance and Rebecca's son likely died of malnutrition and hypothermia, according to the autopsies released. Authorities haven't released the boy's name.

The sisters from Colorado

Springs had been planning to live off the grid since the fall of 2021, Trevala Jara said. They felt that the pandemic and politics brought out the worst in humanity.

5 hospitalized in E. coli outbreak at university

AR FAYETTEVILLE — Health officials are investigating an outbreak of E. coli food poisoning among students at the University of Arkansas, with dozens reporting symptoms and five people needing treatment in the hospital.

About 100 students reported symptoms of E. coli infection, officials with the Arkansas Department of Health said, though it's not clear how many are part of the outbreak. The state confirmed that five people needed to be hospitalized, and officials are analyzing responses from a survey of more than 3,200 people to try to identify the source of the illnesses.

Governor signs order narrowly defining sexes

NE LINCOLN — Nebraska's Republican Gov. Jim Pillen signed an executive order strictly defining a person's sex.

The order notably does not use the term "transgender," although it appears directed at limiting transgender access to certain public spaces. It orders state agencies to define "female" and "male" as a person's sex assigned at birth.

Pillen's order came less than a month after Oklahoma's Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt signed an almost identical order.

The Nebraska and Oklahoma

orders both specifically define a female as a person "whose biological reproductive system is designed to produce ova" and a male as a person whose "biological reproductive system is designed to fertilize the ova of a female."

Ex-cardinal found unfit to stand trial in sex case

MA DEDHAM — The once-powerful Roman Catholic Cardinal Theodore McCarrick will not stand trial on charges he sexually assaulted a teenage boy decades ago, as a Massachusetts judge dismissed the case against the 93-year-old because both prosecutors and defense attorneys agree he is experiencing dementia.

McCarrick, the ex-archbishop of Washington, D.C., was defrocked by Pope Francis in 2019 after an internal Vatican investigation determined he sexually molested adults as well as children. The McCarrick scandal created a crisis of credibility for the church, primarily because there was evidence Vatican and U.S. church leaders knew he slept with seminarians but turned a blind eye as McCarrick rose to the top of the U.S. church as an adept fundraiser who advised three popes.

Journalist set to sue police chief over raid

KS TOPEKA — One of the reporters who works at the small Kansas newspaper that was raided by authorities filed a federal lawsuit against the police chief.

Deb Gruver believes Marion Police Chief Gideon Cody vio-

lated her constitutional rights when he abruptly snatched her personal cellphone out of her hands during a search where officers also seized computers from the Marion County Record's office, according to the lawsuit. That Aug. 11 search and two others have thrust the town into the center of a debate over the press protections in the First Amendment.

In court documents he filed to get the search warrants, he argued that he had probable cause to believe the newspaper and City Council member Ruth Herbel, whose home was also raided, had violated state laws against identity theft or computer crimes.

YouTuber arrested on suspicion of child abuse

UT SALT LAKE CITY — A Utah woman who gave online parenting advice via a popular YouTube channel has been arrested on suspicion of aggravated child abuse, authorities said.

Ruby Franke, whose now defunct channel "8 Passengers" followed her family, was arrested last week in the southern Utah city of Ivins. She was taken into custody at the home of Jodi Hildebrandt, who owns a counseling business. Franke has recently appeared in YouTube videos with Hildebrandt.

Franke's 12-year-old son climbed out of a window in Hildebrandt's residence and ran to a neighbor's house and asked for food and water, according to a police affidavit. The neighbor saw duct tape on the boy's ankles and wrists and called police.

-From wired reports



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Top 25 takeaways: Coach Prime delivers

Associated Press

Believe the hype.

Deion Sanders' debut as Colorado coach was billed as a big deal, but there was plenty of skepticism about just how good the Buffaloes could be after an unprecedented roster makeover in Boulder.

"We told you we were coming. You thought we were joking. We keep receipts," Sanders said after Colorado upset No. 17 TCU on Saturday in a performance that exceeded even the most lofty expectations.

The team with nearly 90 new players beat the team that played for the national championship last season.

Where to begin?

Sanders' son, Shedeur, set a school record with 510 yards passing in his first major college football game after transferring with his father from Jackson State.

Receiver/cornerback Travis Hunter played 129 snaps and had 11 catches for 119 yards, but his best and biggest play was an interception with TCU in the red zone.

"No, I'm not tired, I'm ready to go back in," said Hunter, who

wore a T-shirt with an image of his Hall of Fame coach on it after the game.

Freshman Dylan Edwards, who Coach Prime lured away from Notre Dame, had 159 yards from scrimmage on 11 touches and scored four touchdowns, including the winner late in the fourth quarter.

Colorado snapped a 27-game losing streak against ranked teams on the road.

And when it was over, Sanders called out the doubters.

He asked one reporter: "Do you believe now? I read through that bull junk you wrote. Do you believe?"

It's only one game, but it's hard not to believe that Colorado is going to be fun and relevant and that Sanders did a heck of a job not just reconstructing a roster almost from scratch but getting it ready to play Power Five football.

Pac-12 swan song

What might be the final season of Pac-12 football is off to a great start on the field.

With No. 18 Oregon State still to play Sunday at San Jose State, the Pac-12 is the only un-

beaten league in the country. Every other conference has at least two losses.

Off the field, there are only two schools left committed to the Pac-12 beyond this school year, Oregon State and Washington State.

The rest will be dispersed to other Power Five conferences, including Colorado as one of four Pac-12 teams heading to the Big 12 next year.

Failures in leadership and poor decision-making by those in charge have put the Conference of Champions on life support. Even if it does survive in some patchwork form, it will never be the same.

It's sad and made sadder by just how entertaining and competitive the conference has a chance to be.

The opening weekend provided a taste.

It started Thursday night when Utah roughed up Florida of the SEC in Salt Lake City without its starting quarterback.

On Friday, Stanford won at Hawaii in its first game under coach Troy Taylor.

Saturday brought CU's upset

of TCU; Washington overwhelming Boise State; California romping at North Texas; UCLA unveiling five-star freshman quarterback Dante Moore against Coastal Carolina; and Oregon dropping 80 on an FCS opponent.

Meanwhile, Washington State went to Colorado State of the Mountain West — which could be a future conference trip for the Cougars — and put 50 on the Rams.

New QBs

No. 3 Ohio State's quarterback competition might not be over. No. 4 Alabama seemed to gain clarity at the position.

Kyle McCord and the Buckeyes' offense were uninspiring in a workmanlike victory against Indiana that was also the debut of the Big Ten on CBS.

McCord was 20-for-32 for 239 yards and an interception. Backup Devin Brown, who Ohio State coach Ryan Day insisted was neck-and-neck with McCord most of the offseason, only got a taste of action.

Brown was 1-for-3 and ran once for a total of minus-5 yards.

Larrier, Air Force roll in opener against Robert Morris

Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Zac Larrier ran for two touchdowns and threw for another, leading Air Force to a 42-7 victory over Robert Morris in a season opener on Saturday.

Air Force has won 16 straight season openers, the third-longest active streak in FBS behind Ohio State with 23 and Alabama with 21.

The Falcons led 28-0 at halftime. Larrier only threw three passes, all in the first half, completing two, including an 84-yard score to a wide-open Jared Roznos over the middle. Larrier also had a 26-yard rushing touchdown and added a 4-yard score in the third quarter before giving way to four backups.

Cade Harris and Owen Burk added 3- and 27-yard rushing scores with Jensen

Jones making it 42-0 with a 7-yard rush in the fourth quarter.

Robert Morris got its lone touchdown on a 1-yard pass from Anthony Chiccitt to Chaese Jackson.

Air Force outgained the Colonials 266-53 in the first half and finished with a 469-156 advantage while holding the Colonials to 43 yards rushing.

UL Monroe 17, Army 13: Hunter Smith raced 62 yards for a touchdown, backup quarterback Hunter Herring threw the go-ahead touchdown pass — both late in the fourth quarter — and the host Warhawks defeated the Black Knights in a season opener.

Smith's long touchdown run got ULM within 13-10 with 5:43 remaining, then Carlin Vigers recovered a fumble near mid-field to set up the Warhawks for the go-

ahead score — a 9-yard pass from Herring to Tyrone Howell with 2:48 left.

Army's next possession ended with an interception and, although the Black Knights blocked a ULM field-goal attempt, they were unable to mount a drive in the final 29 seconds.

ULM's Jiya Wright completed only 10 of 21 passes for 70 yards and was intercepted on back-to-back possessions in the first half. Herring came in and completed 4 of 9 for 22 yards, including the go-ahead score. Smith finished with 103 yards on seven carries.

Army built a 13-3 lead through 46 minutes of play on a 44-yard interception return by Bo Nicolas-Paul and two short field goals by Quinn Maretzki.

Bryson Daily passed for 121 yards and ran for 67 more for Army.

Alcaraz inconsistent but still winning

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ever since Carlos Alcaraz was 12 or so — not that long ago considering he’s still just 20 — he made sure variety was a key element of his game.

Back then, he explained, there were so many options at his disposal that he might encounter a bit of trouble figuring out which to employ. And, he acknowledged, that can even be the case to this day.

Alcaraz was by no means perfect during a 6-2, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 victory over the 26th-seeded Dan Evans in the U.S. Open’s third round on Saturday — there was that wayward set, after all — but the defending champion produced enough moments of brilliance to keep himself smiling and his many fans in New York roaring in approval.

To hear the No. 1-seeded Alcaraz explain it, “a lot of different” possibilities enter his mind in the midst of a point — “the drop-shot, big forehand, go to the net, multiple things” — before he selects which stroke to try. It can make things “difficult” on occasion, he said.

“Most of the time, I find the right one,” the Spaniard said, “but sometimes I struggle to hit

good shots because of that.”

His opponent in Arthur Ashe Stadium on Saturday noticed.

“If anything, he probably plays too many shots,” Evans said. “He let me out of jail a few times playing the wrong shot, which was good for me.”

But there also were those “How did he do that?!” highlights that Alcaraz conjures up with frequency.

One in particular helped swing Saturday’s match his way for good. Evans was seemingly in control of what would become a 12-stroke point, sending Alcaraz scrambling to his left for a defensive backhand. On his follow-through, Alcaraz stumbled a bit, nearly tumbling to the blue court. But he gathered himself and quickly switched direction, sprinting to his right with seven lengthy strides before sliding wide of the doubles alley as he flicked a down-the-line forehand.

The ball caught the back of the baseline for a winner that converted a break point for a 4-2 edge in the fourth set. Evans chucked his racket toward the bottom of the net, grimaced and placed his hands on his hips. Alcaraz raised his arms, using his left index finger to make a “No.

1” gesture.

“Took the wind out my sails,” Evans said.

So what’s it like to play Alcaraz?

“I’m not sure you know — well, I definitely didn’t know — what’s, sort of, coming next,” Evans said. “And that, sort of, sets you on the back foot and (makes it) difficult to anticipate.”

Less than 12 hours after the man he’s expected to meet next weekend for the title, Novak Djokovic, needed to overturn a two-set deficit to win in a match that ended just after 1:30 a.m. on Saturday, Alcaraz progressed to the fourth round at Flushing Meadows for the third consecutive year.

“I watched the first two sets, then I had to go to sleep,” said Alcaraz, who won his second Grand Slam title by edging Djokovic in the Wimbledon final in July. “But when I (went) to bed, I was thinking, ‘Novak is going to come back, that’s for sure.’”

Alcaraz improved to 14-1 over his nascent career in New York and is trying to become the first man to win two titles in a row in New York since Roger Federer took five straight from 2004-08.

“I would love to be part of

tournament history with Roger,” Alcaraz said. “That’s my main goal right now.”

Matches Monday that will put the winner in the quarterfinals include No. 3 Daniil Medvedev, who won a second straight late-night match, against No. 13 Alex de Minaur; No. 8 Andrey Rublev against Jack Draper, a 21-year-old left-hander from Britain who has never been this far at a major, and No. 6 Jannik Sinner against No. 12 Alexander Zverev.

The women’s fourth round will feature No. 3 Jessica Pegula against 2017 U.S. Open runner-up Madison Keys in an all-American contest, No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka against No. 13 Daria Kasatkina, No. 5 Ons Jabeur against No. 23 Zheng Qinwen, and No. 9 Marketa Vondrousova against unseeded American Peyton Stearns.

Sabalenka — who won the Australian Open in January and can overtake Iga Swiatek at No. 1 in the WTA rankings depending on their results at the U.S. Open — defeated Clara Burel and has dropped a total of just 12 games through three matches so far.

Alcaraz’s next foe is Matteo Arnaldi, a 22-year-old from Italy who is ranked 61st.

AAC targets Army to replace ACC-bound SMU

Associated Press

The American Athletic Conference has been in contact with Army as it looks for a replacement for Atlantic Coast Conference-bound SMU, two people with direct knowledge of the discussions told The Associated Press on Saturday.

The people spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because the AAC was not making public its internal strategy.

ESPN was first to report the American’s interest in adding Army as a conference member.

AAC Commissioner Mike Aresco has spoken with Army

athletic director Mike Buddie about a football-only membership, and the school has shown interest in joining after almost 20 years as an independent in that sport, the people said.

Army competes primarily in the Patriot League for its other sports.

Army’s rival, Navy, is member of the American Athletic Conference.

Army and Navy play the second week of December annually, a standalone game for major college football the week after conference championship games.

The two people who spoke to the AP said Army-Navy is likely to remain a nonconference game if the Black Knights were to join the AAC.

Aresco has pitched AAC membership to Army before, but the school has been reluctant to give up the scheduling flexibility that comes with football independence. Army competed in Conference USA from 1998-2004 and never won more than three football games in a season.

The AAC has undergone a major membership makeover in the last year, with six new

schools from Conference USA joining to replace Cincinnati, Houston and Central Florida, which all left for the Big 12.

The ACC announced Friday that it was adding SMU, along with Stanford and California, to the league in 2024, leaving the AAC with 13 members for next season.

The American explored the possibility of trying to add Pac-12 schools Oregon State and Washington State, but Aresco announced Friday that the conference would no longer pursue western expansion.

Bucs top Cardinals, win fifth straight

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Josh Palacios hit a pinch-hit home run off Drew VerHagen in the top of the ninth inning to help the Pittsburgh Pirates beat the St. Louis Cardinals 7-6 for their fifth straight win.

“As soon as he came in, I was like, all right, it’s time to get going because he’s going to do something here,” Pirates closer David Bednar said. “He just has that feel, man. It’s unbelievable.”

VerHagen (4-1) entered the game with one out in the ninth inning and hit Andrew McCutchen before Palacios, pinch-hitting for Connor Joe, hit a 3-1 pitch into the right-field seats for his seventh home run of the season.

“I probably put that top five,” Palacios said about where the moment ranks in his big league career. “That was a fun one. Any homer in the ninth is going to be is going to be up there in the top five, especially after watching Bednar come and shut it down to get the win. That was amazing.”

Jordan Walker, Lars Nootbaar and Tyler O’Neill all homered for the Cardinals.

Cody Bolton (1-0) pitched a perfect eighth inning for his first major league win, and Bednar surrendered a single to Tommy Edman and hit Walker with a pitch before retiring Masyn Winn, Nootbaar and Paul Goldschmidt for his 31st save.

“It’s like watching greatness,” Palacios said about Bednar. “Those are the ones that you really like to see because he’s grinding, he’s fighting for it, he wants to win it. You know those guys, they’ve been doing a good job late in the game, but I mean Bednar’s amazing. Watching him ev-

ery single pitch locking in and how many pitches he had to execute within those at-bats. It’s absolutely ridiculous. It’s why he’s an All-Star — in my opinion the best closer in the game.”

Athletics 2, Angels 1: Brent Rooker hit his team-leading 23rd home run, Paul Blackburn pitched five innings for his second victory in six starts and last-place Oakland beat Shohei Ohtani and visiting Los Angeles.

Yankees 5, Astros 4: Aaron Judge homered for the second consecutive game and visiting New York got a big effort from its bullpen.

Guardians 7, Rays 6 (11): Steven Kwan hit a sacrifice fly to bring home Bo Naylor with the winning run after Jose Tena tied the score with a single in the 11th inning to lift host Cleveland.

Reds 2, Cubs 1: Elly De La Cruz hit a tying single and newcomer Hunter Renfroe beat out a double-play ball to drive in the winner as host Cincinnati rallied past Chicago with two runs in the bottom of the ninth inning for the second straight night.

Mariners 8, Mets 7: J.P. Crawford led off the ninth inning with a tiebreaking homer and visiting Seattle beat New York to extend its slim lead in the AL West.

Braves 4, Dodgers 2 (10): Ronald Acuña Jr. homered for the third straight night at Dodger Stadium and Orlando Arcia hit a three-run shot in the 10th inning that sent streaking Atlanta to a victory over Los Angeles.

Rockies 8, Blue Jays 7: Brenton Doyle hit a three-run triple in a four-run fifth inning, Charlie Blackmon had three hits and

three RBIs on his bobblehead night, and host Colorado beat Toronto.

Brewers 7, Phillies 5: Carlos Santana had a two-run homer, Mark Canha doubled twice and host Milwaukee withstood a late comeback attempt to beat Philadelphia.

Twins 9, Rangers 7 (10): Carlos Correa and Max Kepler had RBI singles in the 10th inning, leadoff hitter Donovan Solano matched a career high with four hits, and AL Central-leading Minnesota beat host Texas.

Orioles 7, Diamondbacks 3: Cedric Mullins started a six-run fourth inning with a three-run blast, Kyle Bradish (10-6) threw six solid innings and visiting Baltimore beat Arizona to end a two-game skid.

Red Sox 9, Royals 5: Triston Casas hit a two-run homer and Alex Verdugo finished a homer short of hitting for the cycle as visiting Boston beat Kansas City.

Padres 6, Giants 1: Blake Snell (12-9) lowered his major league-leading ERA from 2.60 to 2.50 and struck out eight in six scoreless innings, and Juan Soto, Xander Bogaerts, Gary Sanchez and Garrett Cooper homered to carry host San Diego.

Marlins 11, Nationals 5: Jake Burger hit two of his team’s four home runs, Johnny Cueto struck out four in his return from a viral infection and visiting Miami won its third straight.

Tigers 10, White Sox 0: Andre Lipcius’ first hit in the major leagues was a two-run homer in a four-run first inning, Miguel Cabrera had four hits and three RBIs, and rookie Reese Olson (3-6) pitched seven scoreless innings as visiting Detroit routed Chicago.

US loses to Lithuania, but still earns Olympic berth

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The U.S. is going to the Paris Olympics next summer. Lithuania made sure that was the only good development for the Americans on Sunday night, when it pulled off a Basketball World Cup stunner.

Vaidas Kariniauskas scored 15 points, Mindaugas Kuzminskas added 14 and Lithuania beat the U.S. 110-104 in a second-round game at the World Cup.

The loss — the first for the U.S. in 10 games this summer, counting five exhibitions on the way to the World Cup — came on a night when the Americans officially clinched a berth in the Paris Games.

And the loss won’t necessarily hurt them in the World Cup medal chase, either. The U.S. will play a quarterfinal game on Tuesday, when the knockout stage for the final eight teams begins. Win Tuesday, win Thursday and win

next Sunday, and the Americans are gold medalists.

But it was a still a shocker, especially for a U.S. team that was the overwhelming favorite to win the gold. Anthony Edwards led the U.S. with 35 points, his high of the summer, while Jalen Brunson and Mikal Bridges each added 14.

For Lithuania (5-0), it became another night to remember against USA Basketball. And the nation once famous for the tie-dyed T-shirts —

some of them were worn by fans in the building Sunday night — sent a clear message to the Americans and anyone else still in the World Cup.

Lithuania made its first nine three-point attempts and built an early 21-point lead, and the U.S. became Paris-bound in the third quarter when Serbia’s win over the Dominican Republic went final in an outcome that clinched an Olympic berth for the Americans.