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Military moves barred through June 30

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

A new directive on the movement of military personnel and their families will bar travel through June 30, but create more flexibility to allow for the deployment of troops serving overseas and some priority troops to change duty stations, a Pentagon official said Saturday.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper has yet to issue the order, which aims to curb the spread of the coronavirus by keeping service members and their families in place, according to Matthew Donovan, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readi-

ness. However, Esper is expected to sign it into effect Monday, Donovan said.

The new order will replace the travel restrictions put into place in March that have stopped thousands of military moves and forced some deployed units to remain overseas longer than anticipated.

The new order applies to service members, civilians and their families and comes as the military prepares for summer, its peak moving season. Without revealing many details, Donovan said the new directive is "more liberal" and allows more exemptions and waivers.

"You'll see that it's a little bit looser, be-

cause we know more about [the coronavirus] and can get projections on potential hotspots and more information on nations where [troops] are moving to," he said.

Each move will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, looking at the departure and arrival locations carefully and determining whether local governments for those areas allow for such movement, including the ability to hire movers. Waivers for travel will only be granted for missions deemed essential, humanitarian relief or personal hardship. Personal leave will only be granted for the local area where service members are located now.

Rallies against stay-at-home orders grow across US

The Washington Post

Protesters at state capitols across the country expressed their deep frustration with the stay-at-home orders that are meant to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus, pushing a message that is rapidly coalescing among the nation's conservatives: reopen the country.

Groups rallied in at least six states this week, and protests are planned in four more in coming days. On Friday, President Donald Trump encouraged protesters in Michigan, Minnesota and Virginia, who this week violated stay-at-home orders and social distancing guidelines to march against Democratic governors.

"LIBERATE MICHIGAN!" Trump tweeted. "LIBERATE MINNESOTA," he continued. "LIBERATE VIRGINIA, and save your great 2nd Amendment. It is under siege!"

Trump's tweets come as the right-wing media has amplified the protests and conservative groups have formed plans to jointly press for a reopening of the economy. The groups include several veterans of the

tea party era, activism that was powered by a network of right-wing and corporate financiers interested in reducing taxes and regulations on industry.

Protesters railed against policies that call for nonessential businesses and schools to be closed, restaurants limited to carryout service and people to stay largely in their homes except for emergencies. They argue that the nation has sacrificed the economy, with unemployment at record levels, and people have upended their lives for something many do not see as an existential threat to society.

"I think there's a boiling point that has been reached and exceeded," said Stephen Moore, a conservative economist. Moore is a member of both the White House council to reopen the country and a coalition of conservative leaders and activists seeking to push government officials to relax stay-at-home orders.

Moore described himself as a radical when it comes to getting Americans to work during a 2016 Freedomworks debate

on the minimum wage.

"I'm a radical on this," he said while debating the Center for American Progress' David Madland. "I'd get rid of a lot of these child labor laws. I want people starting to work at 11, 12."

Moore said the protests have been spontaneous and organized at the local level, but he said his group has been offering them advice and legal support should protesters be arrested and prosecuted.

In Michigan, hundreds of people clogged traffic in cars or marched in the snow to protest Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, who last week added additional restrictions to the state's stay-at-home order. Protesters waved American flags, Trump flags and an occasional Confederate flag. Many screamed "Lock her up!" and "We will not comply!"

Some politicians believe Trump's egging on of the protesters is dangerous.

"The president is fomenting domestic rebellion and spreading lies even while his own administration says the virus

is real and is deadly and that we have a long way to go before restrictions can be lifted," Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, a Democrat, said. A protest against his stay-at-home order, which lifts May 5, was scheduled in Olympia this weekend.

Tyler Miller, who organized the Washington state protest, said he is urging attendees to wear personal protective equipment, practice physical distancing and not attend if they are in a high-risk category or feeling sick.

Public health experts have said any premature easing of stay-at-home orders could lead to a second wave of pandemic, erasing the social distancing progress, returning the population to quarantine, deepening the economic turmoil and resulting in more lives lost.

Some said they are protesting mainly because of the severe economic impact caused by the virus. More than 22 million people have filed for unemployment since Trump declared a national emergency last month.

Navy to decide the fate of fired captain

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Navy's top admiral will soon decide the fate of the ship captain who was fired after pleading for commanders to move faster to safeguard his coronavirus-infected crew on the USS Theodore Roosevelt.

In the glare of a public spotlight, Adm. Mike Gilday will decide whether Navy Capt. Brett Crozier stepped out of line when he went around his chain of command and sent an email pushing for action to stem the outbreak.

Gilday's review won't be limited to Crozier. It will also look at the command climate on the ship and higher up within the Pacific-based fleet, to determine if there are broader leadership problems in a region critical to America's national security interests.

Gilday has many options as he reviews what was an extraordinarily rapid investigation by Adm. Robert Burke, the vice chief of naval operations. Burke and his staff finished the review in about a week, conducting interviews almost entirely online and by phone between Washington and Guam.

A look at some of Gilday's options, and their benefits and pitfalls.

■ **Reinstatement:** Gilday could decide that Crozier acted in the best interests of his crew and was unfairly removed. He could reinstate him as captain of the Roosevelt. That could generate a lot of support. But reinstating Crozier has its problems. It would put him back on a ship with Rear Adm. Stuart Baker, commander of the carrier strike group of which the Roosevelt is the lead ship. Officials say they did not have a good relationship and that was among the problems that triggered Crozier's memo.

■ **Forgive and move on:** Rather than return Crozier to

the Roosevelt, Gilday could absolve him of wrongdoing and recommend he move on to another job. Crozier could retain his rank and standing and perhaps command another ship, leaving open the possibility that he could gain promotion and continue his Navy career. This would avoid sending him back into the chain of command that likely felt betrayed by his memo.

■ **Administrative actions:** Gilday could fault Crozier for doing the right thing the wrong way. He could determine that Crozier was unfairly fired, but that he acted rashly and went outside his chain of command and therefore did not exhibit good leadership. He could put a letter in Crozier's personnel file, which usually is a career-ender.

■ **Fire one, fire all:** Gilday could determine that firing Crozier was appropriate. Unless that's overturned in an appeal process, that would end Crozier's Navy career. In most cases, senior officers simply retire after being relieved of command for cause. But Gilday could also decide that the ship's problems extended beyond Crozier.

■ **And then there's the politics:** The backdrop to Gilday's decision is a fraught political environment in Washington that has taken a toll on the Navy. When Gilday reaches a decision, he will relay recommendations to acting Navy Secretary James McPherson. They will also go to Defense Secretary Mark Esper. More importantly, the Navy will alert members of Congress and the White House. Any of those could weigh in on the matter. Or, in Trump's case, reverse it. Trump has expressed seemingly contradictory views on Crozier.

Study to be launched on Roosevelt virus outbreak

The San Diego Union-Tribune

The Navy is coordinating with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in an investigation into the novel coronavirus outbreak on board the San Diego-based aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt, the Navy announced Friday.

The outbreak on the Roosevelt is the single largest in the military, with 660 members of its crew testing positive for the novel coronavirus, seven in the hospital and one sailor who died Monday. The virus has sidelined the carrier in Guam for three weeks, where 4,000 sailors have been quarantined off the ship.

Rear Adm. Bruce Gillingham said Friday that officials hope the study will help the military and the country better understand how the virus behaves.

"The results of this investigation will inform medical professionals to support better public health decisions for the ship. It will also advise the broader COVID-19 surveillance and mitigation strategy for the (Theodore Roosevelt), the fleet and our nation," Gillingham said in a call with reporters.

The investigation will be done by the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center in partnership with the CDC.

They will begin gathering data Monday and spend about a week surveying sailors. The Navy is asking for 1,000 volunteers from the Roosevelt's crew to undergo additional saliva tests and antibody blood tests.

The Roosevelt left San Diego in January for a routine deployment. It was sidelined in March after sailors began testing positive for the virus 15 days after a port visit to Vietnam.

The first two cases of the virus were found among two members of the ship's air wing, a Navy official told the Union-Tribune Friday. However, because the two cases came to light 15 days after the port visit to Vietnam, Gillingham could

not say how the virus got on board.

He said identifying the first case isn't the goal of the investigation.

"The intent of investigation is not to get to the source; it's to better understand the behavior of virus going forward," he said. "The information gained will add to the growing body of public health knowledge about this virus so that we can better understand it and fight it."

Blood samples will be tested at the CDC's laboratory in Atlanta using the agency's new serology test, which can identify antibodies and tell researchers whether a person has been exposed to the virus even if they are showing no symptoms.

About 60% of the 660 Roosevelt sailors who have tested positive so far have shown no COVID-19 symptoms, Pentagon officials said this week. Gillingham said one of the investigation goals is to determine how much the virus spread without sailors showing symptoms.

"Because of the pre-symptomatic transmission, we believe that it probably passed through the ship quite freely and was initially unrecognized," Gillingham said.

The Roosevelt pulled into Guam March 28 as the virus spread out-of-control among its crews.

The ship's commanding officer, Capt. Brett Crozier, was fired seven days later, after a letter he wrote predicting dire consequences for his crew if the Navy did not move them off the ship was leaked to the media and widely publicized.

COVID-19 testing of the Roosevelt's crew is ongoing but has stalled at about 94% tested.

The skeleton crew left behind on board won't be tested until they rotate off to spend 14 days in quarantine, Gillingham said. They have been keeping watch of the ship's two nuclear reactors and disinfecting the ship.

The Navy and CDC expect results from the study in about a month, Gillingham said.

Countries debate easing lockdowns

Associated Press

BERLIN — Facing rising unemployment and with many of their citizens struggling to make ends meet, governments around the world are wrestling with when and how to ease the restrictions designed to control the coronavirus pandemic.

Mandatory lockdowns to stop the spread of the new virus, which has so far infected more than 2.2 million people and for which there is no vaccine, have brought widespread hardship.

In a joint statement Saturday, a group of 13 countries including Canada, Brazil, Italy and Germany called for global cooperation to lessen the economic impact of the pandemic.

“It is vital that we work together to save lives and livelihoods,” they said.

The group, which also includes Britain, France, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, South Korea, Singapore and

Turkey, said it was committed to “work with all countries to coordinate on public health, travel, trade, economic and financial measures in order to minimize disruptions and recover stronger.”

This includes maintaining “air, land and marine transportation links” to ensure the continued flow of goods including medical equipment and aid, and the return home of travelers, they said.

In the United States, the debate has taken on partisan tones ahead of this fall’s presidential elections. Republican President Donald Trump urged supporters to “liberate” three states led by Democratic governors, tweeting the kind of rhetoric some have used to demand an end to stay-at-home orders that have thrown millions out of work.

There have been tentative signs that measures to curb the

outbreak are working, with the rate of new infections slowing across Europe in response to the lockdowns there.

In France and Spain, some field hospitals were starting to be dismantled, while Germany said the number of people infected by each person with COVID-19 fell below one for the first time this week.

Still, most governments and public health officials remain cautious about relaxing the shutdowns, despite the mounting economic toll.

The Italian government’s decree, shutting down nonessential industries and businesses, runs through May 3. Health experts are advising that any easing must be gradual in the country that’s seen the most deaths so far in Europe, with nearly 23,000 fatalities and over 172,000 known cases.

Some Asian nations that until recently appeared to have

the outbreak under control, including Singapore and Japan, reported a fresh surge in cases Saturday.

Japan’s total case number rose above 10,000 on Saturday. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed concern Friday that people were not observing social distancing and announced a \$930 cash handout to each resident as an incentive to stay home.

Iran, hard hit by the virus and international sanctions, allowed some businesses in the capital and nearby towns to reopen Saturday after weeks of lockdown. Gyms, restaurants, shopping malls and Tehran’s grand bazaar will remain closed.

In Africa, one of the world’s poorest regions, the pandemic is only just getting underway. The continent has now recorded more than 1,000 coronavirus deaths.

Schools go online, but many students don’t

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — During the first week that her San Diego public school was shuttered to slow the spread of the coronavirus, not one of Elise Samaniego’s students logged on to her virtual classroom.

Three weeks in, the teacher still hadn’t connected online with roughly two-thirds of the students in her third- and fourth-grade combo class at Paradise Hills Elementary. She fears the pandemic will exact a devastating toll on education in the United States, especially at low-income schools like hers.

“I do have several students below grade level, and this is just going to make it worse,” said Samaniego, who has been emailing and calling families to get her 22 students to participate.

Teachers across the country report their attempts at distance learning are failing

to reach large numbers of students. Hundreds of thousands of students are still without computers or internet access. Those who do log on have countless distractions: They are babysitting siblings, sharing laptops, lying in bed during lessons. Others log on only to walk away.

With schools closed for the rest of the year in at least 23 states, the uneven progress with remote learning is raising concerns that those who already were struggling will be left further behind.

“The pandemic is an educational equity crisis for vulnerable students who were too often underserved by our education system in ‘normal’ times,” said Ian Rosenblum, executive director of The Education Trust-New York.

Not all schools are struggling. Those accustomed to technology transitioned smoothly. Derek Blunt, a math teacher at

Making Community Connections Charter School in Keene, N.H., said students are issued iPads in normal times and regularly use Google Classroom and other platforms. A week after the school closed, nearly all of his 65 students were doing their work.

In contrast, students at Samaniego’s school faced several hurdles before learning could begin. Some only had internet access through their parents’ phones.

“I can’t tell them even where to start,” she said. “Do you have a computer? That’s step 1. Then you have to download Chrome. That’s step 2.”

In New York City, the nation’s largest school district, tens of thousands of tablets and laptops have been lent to students, and the plan is for everyone to have a device by the end of April. Mayor Bill de Blasio said the district was still gathering data, but “there’s clearly an

issue with attendance.”

That is true in many places.

In the Los Angeles Unified School District, the country’s second largest, as many as 40% of elementary school students had not logged on even once as of the first week of April — three weeks after the system closed.

As for those who have made an appearance, superintendent Austin Beutner, cautioned that “merely logging in does not tell us anything more than the student turned on their computer.”

Schools are responding by making accommodations. San Diego Unified School District said this month is for working out the kinks, and instruction officially starts April 27. Some schools are adopting pass or fail systems or “no harm grading,” in which grades will not be lowered during distance learning but can go up.

Calif. tops 1K deaths as economy tumbles

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — California recorded more than 1,000 deaths from the coronavirus Friday as the pandemic pushed the state into recession, despite signs that have emerged of an improving outlook for the virus.

The state topped a number it once hoped to avoid, reaching 1,021 deaths, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The death toll came after California recorded its greatest number of deaths in one day, 95, on Thursday, eclipsing the previous mark of 71.

The state also reported for the first time that 3,500 cases are in nursing homes or adult care facilities, where the most vulnerable people reside and infections have spread quickly. That figure reflects about 12% of more than 27,500 cases the state reported.

Gov. Gavin Newsom also named a task force Friday to help the state recover economically after he begins easing restrictions that have shuttered businesses. The nonpartisan panel of billionaires and corporate leaders that includes all four living former governors — two Democrats, like Newsom, and two Republicans — came after dismal unemployment figures ended a record 10-year economic growth streak.

Illinois

CHICAGO — Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Friday ordered schools throughout the state closed for the rest of the semester because of the lingering threat of the coronavirus.

Pritzker announced the move during his daily briefing in Chicago, extending school closures past the April 30 date he had set earlier. As of Friday, Illinois had recorded 27,575 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 1,134 deaths.

In issuing his latest order, Pritzker acknowledged the disruption it would cause to students and their families.

“But my priority remains unchanged. How do we save

the most lives during this very difficult time?” Pritzker said. “The answer to that question leaves us with only one path forward.”

Louisiana

NEW ORLEANS — Louisiana is working to make more clinic and hospital space available again for elective surgeries and other nonemergency medical care before May 1, Gov. John Bel Edwards said Friday.

Elective surgeries and other procedures were largely put on hold as state hospitals converted space and clinic personnel were diverted to other jobs as Louisiana ramped up to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak. The state has the third-highest rate of cases in the country, Edwards said.

But the number of those requiring hospitalization and ventilators has declined in recent days, raising hopes that an easing of economically devastating stay-at-home orders and business shutdowns may soon be in sight.

Michigan

LANSING — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Friday that she hopes to begin gradually reopening Michigan’s economy on May 1 after weeks of a strict stay-at-home order during the coronavirus crisis that has crippled businesses and caused more than 1 million unemployed people to seek aid.

Meanwhile, the number of new virus cases statewide rose 2%, a much slower pace. In Detroit, where nearly 600 people have died, Mayor Mike Duggan reported upbeat news from hospitals, declaring: “We are beating this thing.”

Missouri

O’FALLON — A lawsuit filed by civil rights groups on Friday seeks to allow all Missourians to vote absentee in upcoming elections to help reduce the risk of catching or spreading the coronavirus.

The lawsuit was filed in Jef-

erson City by the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri and the Missouri Voter Protection Coalition on behalf of the NAACP, the League of Women Voters and several residents. It claims that requiring voters to appear at traditional polling places during the pandemic puts lives at risk.

New Mexico

SANTA FE — New Mexico reported seven new deaths across the state linked to the coronavirus pandemic as the number of people seeking unemployment benefits surged to nearly 80,000.

Health officials said deaths linked to COVID-19 increased to 51, with 1,711 people testing positive.

Two new deaths involving residents of La Vida Llena retirement facility in Albuquerque raised the death toll at the facility to a dozen people. The state attorney general says operators of the facility initially discouraged personnel from wearing personal protective equipment and did not warn medical providers in advance that patients from the retirement community had either tested positive or had been exposed to the virus.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania has managed to avoid the worst of the pandemic and it’s now time to start talking about a gradual reopening of the state’s battered economy, Gov. Tom Wolf said Friday as he offered a set of guiding principles, but few specifics, on how he plans to get legions of unemployed residents out of their homes and back to work.

Cautioning that serious obstacles remain, Wolf said he would rely on an “evidence-based, regional approach” guided by health experts and economists that will help him decide when it’s safe.

Tennessee

NASHVILLE — A federal

judge Friday night ruled that Tennessee has to continue allowing abortions amid a temporary ban on nonessential medical procedures that’s aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19.

U.S. District Judge Bernard Friedman said the defendants didn’t show that any appreciable amount of personal protective equipment, or PPE, would be saved if the ban is applied to abortions.

In a hearing by phone Friday, attorneys representing several state abortion clinics argued that Tennessee women will face immediate harm if the ban on abortions is not lifted.

Utah

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah will aim to reopen restaurants and gyms and resume elective surgeries in early May under a plan unveiled Friday by Gov. Gary Herbert to gradually reopen the economy that has been decimated by the coronavirus pandemic.

Herbert said at a news conference the plan is dependent on continued adherence to hygiene and social distancing rules but said the state has done a good job containing the outbreak of COVID-19 and leaders must help the thousands of people suffering without paychecks.

Virginia

BON AIR — Coronavirus has erupted inside a juvenile detention center in Virginia with 25 kids testing positive, accounting for a quarter of all cases reported at youth facilities nationwide, officials said Friday.

Children’s rights advocates and health experts have warned state officials for weeks that it was just a matter of time before the virus took off inside juvenile facilities. They have called on Gov. Ralph Northam to start releasing as many children as safely possible from centers, including at the newly hit Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center outside Richmond.

US: Naval buildup in Caribbean not to remove Maduro

Associated Press

MIAMI — The top U.S. military commander for Latin America said Friday that the Trump administration isn't looking to use military force to remove Nicolas Maduro even as it expands counternarcotics operations in the Caribbean.

Adm. Craig Faller, head of U.S. Southern Command, said in an interview that the recent decision to double anti-narcotics assets in Latin America was months in the making and not directly tied to Maduro's indictment in New York on charges of leading a narcoterrorist conspiracy that sent 250 metric tons of cocaine a year to the U.S.

Faller said economic and diplomatic pressure — not the use of military force — remains the U.S.' preferred tools for removing Maduro from power.

"This is not a shift in U.S. government policy," said Faller, who nonetheless celebrated that enhanced interdiction efforts would hurt Maduro's finances and staying power. "It's not an indication of some sort of new militarization in the Caribbean."

The deployment announced this month is one of the largest U.S. military operations in

the region since the 1989 invasion of Panama to remove Gen. Manuel Noriega from power and bring him to the U.S. to face drug charges. It involves assets like Navy warships, AWACS surveillance aircraft and on-ground special forces seldom seen before in the region.

Faller said the coronavirus did force some in the Pentagon to rethink the timing of the deployment out of concern for the safety of service members. While controls to protect the workforce have been enhanced, it was determined that over the long term, the U.S. is positioned to take advantage of the disruption in narcotics supply chains caused by the virus as drug cartels scramble to source precursor chemical and other inputs.

"We thrive in uncertainty and are going to try and capitalize on that," said Faller.

He cited two "quick wins" since the start of the deployment — a 1.7 metric ton seizure in the Pacific Ocean near Costa Rica last week and another 2.1-ton interdiction a few days ago.

He said growing instability in Venezuela is leading to an "uptick" in piracy in the Caribbean, although he didn't cite any statistics or evidence to back the assertion.

Air Force changing up Guam bomber rotation

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Just days after showing off a runway parade of airpower on Guam, the Air Force ended its longtime practice of maintaining a continuous bomber presence in the Pacific region through aircraft rotations at the island's Andersen Air Force Base.

The service said it is nixing the six-month rotations in place since 2004 in favor of a less predictable global deployment regimen.

On Thursday, five B-52H bombers flew back to their home station at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., according to Aircraft Spots, an online military aircraft tracker.

Over the past 15 years, bomber patrols from Guam over the East and South China Seas have served as a means of projecting U.S. airpower and resolve to North Korea, China and Russia.

"In line with the National Defense Strategy, the United States has transitioned to an approach that enables strategic bombers to operate forward in the Indo-Pacific region from a broader array of overseas locations, when required, and with greater operational resilience, while these bombers are permanently based in the United States," Maj. Kate Atanasoff, a spokesperson for U.S. Strategic Command, said in a statement.

Strategic bombers will continue to operate in the Indo-Pacific, including Guam, "at the timing and tempo of our choos-

ing," she said.

The Air Force will maximize its opportunities to train with allies and partner nations to "bolster our collective ability to be operationally unpredictable," Atanasoff said.

"We continually reassess our overseas posture and adjust to meet the requirements of the Joint Force and combatant commanders as well as our treaty commitments," she said.

The Air Force's end of continuous bomber support from Guam was first reported by thedrive.com.

In response to a query by Stars and Stripes, Atanasoff said in an email that this "adjustment to our posture was long-planned and completely unrelated to the [coronavirus] pandemic."

She did not have a specific list of alternate locations to which bombers would rotate but added that the Air Force has and will continue to operate globally in multiple areas.

The bomber missions will support the Pentagon's strategy of "operational unpredictability" by using a mix of aircraft that include B-52, B-1 or B-2 bombers from bases throughout the U.S. mainland and Guam, she said.

On Monday, 14 aircraft paraded in an "elephant walk" formation along the runway at Andersen. Aside from the five Stratofortress strategic bombers were six KC-135 Stratotanker aerial refuelers, an MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter and two unmanned surveillance drones.

Smugglers target Trump's border wall in San Diego

The Washington Post

Smugglers sawed into new sections of President Trump's border wall 18 times in the San Diego area during a single one-month span late last year, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection records obtained by The Washington Post via a Freedom of Information Act request.

The breaches and attempted breaches were made between Sept. 27 and Oct. 27,

according to CBP records, with five of the incidents occurring on a single day, Oct. 10. The agency withheld information about the specific locations of the incidents, citing law enforcement sensitivities. The agency said the average cost to repair the damage was \$620 per incident.

The records do not indicate whether the one-month span last year is a representative sample of how frequently people are trying to breach new sections of Trump's

border barrier, which are made of tall steel bollards partially filled with concrete and rebar. The Post reported last November that smuggling crews armed with common battery-operated power tools — including reciprocating saws that retail for as little as \$100 at home improvement stores — can cut through the bollards using inexpensive blades designed for slicing through metal and stone.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Block falls through ice in sign of spring

VT DANVILLE — A cinder block fell through the ice on Joe's Pond in West Danville last week, an official sign of spring in northeastern Vermont.

Each year, people buy tickets to guess when that happens in the Joe's Pond Ice Out Contest.

The block went through the ice disconnecting a clock at 6:07 a.m., Michelle Walker of the Joe's Pond Association said in an email. The winner had not yet been determined. The prize is a little less than \$4,500, she said.

This is the 33rd year of the contest, which was started in the 1980s due to cabin fever.

Police say man teased cops about having gun

NM LAS CRUCES — A New Mexico man faces charges after police said he teased officers about having a gun.

The Las Cruces Sun-News reported Asher Madrid was arrested following a domestic violence call in Las Cruces.

Court documents said Madrid, 37, asked an officer to run his name through central dispatch to check if he had felony warrants.

Documents said Madrid asked the officer what would happen if he had felonies and was also in possession of a gun. The officer then asked Madrid if he had a gun on him. Madrid allegedly responded that he did not this time, but would the next time he had an encounter with police.

Court documents state the officers on the scene searched Madrid to make sure he didn't have any weapons.

Store brawl ends with 2 arrested, bystander shot

NJ HACKENSACK — A dispute between two customers at a northern New Jersey convenience store ended with a bystander being shot and both customers being arrested, authorities said.

The men began arguing in the store and soon one of them pulled out a gun, authorities said.

As the two men wrestled for control of the gun it went off, with the bullet striking the torso of another customer. One of the men then gained control of the weapon and fired a shot at the other combatant as that man ran away, but that shot did not hit anyone, authorities said.

Man apologizes, pays fines for slapping seal

HI HONOLULU — The attorney for a man who slapped a Hawaiian monk seal while visiting Oahu issued an apology on behalf of his client, who paid fines issued by federal and state agencies.

Attorney Blake Long in North Carolina said the man paid the fines following an investigation of a video shared on social media, The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported.

The video showed a man approaching a monk seal from behind and slapping its hindquarters, which is a violation of the Endangered Species Act.

City orders tourist birth motel to shut down

CA ORANGE. — A California city ordered the shutdown of a motel that caters to pregnant Chinese women who travel to the United States to deliver their babies.

The Orange County Register reported that council members

in the city of Orange revoked the JR Motel's conditional use permit.

Officials said the motel doesn't take reservations from the public but rather hosts Chinese women who travel to the country to give birth to babies that automatically have American citizenship.

Man threatened to bomb 'Alice' statue

NY NEW YORK — A New York City man was arrested after he texted several friends that he was going to blow up a statue of Alice in Wonderland in Central Park with a pipe bomb, authorities said.

Kevin Fallon, 30, was arrested after police found what appeared to be three pipe bombs in his apartment, according to court documents. The bombs turned out to be empty. Police also found rifle ammunition and several knives taped together, the court papers said.

According to the criminal complaint, Fallon sent a text to several people threatening to blow up the statue.

Flies that crawl into noses, ears infest state

LA BATON ROUGE — It's that time of year again when flies that bite and crawl into people's bodies infest areas with standing water in Louisiana.

Residents should expect these "annoying" black flies to be around until the weather becomes warmer, East Baton Rouge Parish's Mosquito Abatement and Rodent Control department said in a Facebook post. It said the flies, also known as "buffalo gnats," will try to crawl into people's ears, noses and eyes.

Insect spray, including those used for mosquitoes or other insects, is not effective on them.

Woman arrested for scam 2 years later

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A Minnesota woman wanted in an alleged ginseng scam was arrested after evading capture for more than two years.

Hennepin County prosecutors said Mai Vu Vang, 51, of Brooklyn Center, was arrested in Georgia and extradited to Minnesota.

Vang was charged in 2017 with six counts of theft by swindle for allegedly duping several members of the Hmong community into investing in a nonexistent ginseng farm, the Star Tribune reported.

Prosecutors allege that between 2012 and 2014, Vang persuaded nine Minnesota victims to give her more than \$450,000 for a purported farm near Wausau, Wis.

Police search for man suspected of firebomb

GA BRUNSWICK — Authorities issued an arrest warrant for a suspect accused of hiding a makeshift explosive device underneath a Georgia woman's car and dousing the vehicle in gasoline, police said.

Brunswick police and a Georgia Bureau of Investigation bomb squad were called to a neighborhood when a woman spotted a suspicious package underneath her car and noticed gasoline on the vehicle, Chief Kevin Jones said.

The squad used a robot to retrieve the firebomb, which was made out of a firework that was at least 4 inches in diameter, Jones said. Investigators also found another large firework, a bag of smaller fireworks and a bottle of accelerant beneath the car, according to officials.

From wire reports

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Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Documentary recalls last Bulls title team

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Michael Jordan described his final NBA championship season with the Chicago Bulls as a “trying year.”

“We were all trying to enjoy that year knowing it was coming to an end,” Jordan told Good Morning America on Thursday. Jordan appeared on the show via video conference from his home in Florida to promote the “The Last Dance,” a 10-part documentary series focused on the final year of the ’90s Bulls dynasty that won six NBA titles in eight years.

“The beginning of the season, it started when (general manager) Jerry Krause told (coach) Phil Jackson that he could go 82-0 and he would never get a chance to come back,” Jordan said. “Knowing that I had married myself to him, and if he wasn’t going to be the coach, then obviously I wasn’t going to play. So Phil started off the season saying this was the last dance — and we played it that way.”

The series will debut Sunday night on ESPN in the United

States and on Netflix internationally over five consecutive Sundays through May 17. There will be two hour-long episodes each of those nights.

Jordan said Thursday that after Jackson told the team it was to be the final season together, the Bulls focused on completing the task of a second three-peat.

“Mentally it tugged at you that this had to come to an end, but it also centered our focus to making sure we ended it right,” Jordan said. “As sad as it sounded at the beginning of the year, we tried to rejoice and enjoy the year and finish it off the right way.”

The documentary was originally scheduled to be released in June during the NBA Finals, but ESPN made the decision to accelerate its release due to the lack of live sports programming because of the coronavirus pandemic. The series has been billed to include never-before-seen footage from that season, during which the team chased its sixth championship.

But the documentary covers more than just the final season.

The documentary shows Bulls owner Jerry Reinsdorf and Jordan arguing about a foot injury he suffered during his second NBA season.

Jordan wanted to play through the injury after doctors told the team there was a 90% chance he would recover.

Reinsdorf, however, did not want the star guard to play for fear it might ruin his career.

“I said to Michael, ‘you’re not thinking about the risk-reward ratio,’” Reinsdorf said in the clip aired by GMA. “If you had a terrible headache and I gave you a bottle of pills and nine of the pills would cure you and one of the pills would kill you, would you take a pill?”

Jordan replied that “it depends on how (expletive) bad the headache is.”

Reinsdorf ultimately won out; Jordan sat out 64 games that season before returning for the playoffs.

Jordan also talks about his time at the University of North Carolina where he would write his mother asking for money for postage stamps so he could send her letters and to pay his

phone bill.

“It’s a little different today,” Jordan said. “I had a phone bill in college that was \$60 or less, but I only had \$20 in my account. The thing that people will learn, and my kids will laugh about when they see it, is we used postage stamps back in those days. Looking at the video you will see things that people have forgot, that life was this way.”

“We didn’t have Instagram or Twitter, so you had to live life as it came. ... Spending time with friends and family, it wasn’t the phone. It was in presence — and you wrote letters.”

Jordan discussed his parents during the interview with Good Morning America, saying they were the biggest influence in his life. He said he learned many valuable lessons from them, including the ability to learn from the negatives in life and turn them into positives.

The series will also include extensive profiles of Jackson, and some of Jordan’s key teammates, including Scottie Pippen, Dennis Rodman and Steve Kerr.

Jets, Byfuglien mutually agree to terminate contract

Associated Press

Dustin Byfuglien and the Winnipeg Jets agreed to mutually terminate his contract Friday, potentially marking the end of a playing career for “Big Buff.”

The agreement ended a lengthy dispute between Byfuglien and the organization over his absence this season. Because there was no financial settlement as part of the termination, the defenseman walked away from the \$14 million remaining on his contract with no guarantee he’ll play again.

“This was never our desired outcome or ending with Dustin,” Winnipeg general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff said on a conference call with reporters. “If it were the Jets writing the perfect script, it

would’ve ended with Dustin holding a great, big silver trophy over his head at center ice and flashing that great, big smile of his.”

In reality, it ended seven months after Byfuglien told the Jets he’d lost the desire to play and following surgery in October to repair an ankle injury, which prompted a grievance filed through the NHL Players’ Association and settled Friday.

It wasn’t clear how much Byfuglien wavered about returning to play. Cheveldayoff broached the possibility of trading him on multiple occasions, and came away questioning whether a change of scenery would make a difference for Byfuglien.

Cheveldayoff said, “There’s only one person and one per-

son only who can answer if he’ll ever play again, and that’s Dustin.”

Agent Ben Hankinson told The Associated Press by email that Byfuglien doesn’t have anything to say and “will take some time to decide” on his future.

The 35-year-old Byfuglien patrolled the ice at multiple positions for 14 NHL seasons with a rare blend of size, skill and power. He hasn’t played since Winnipeg’s first-round playoff series last April, and is now an unrestricted free agent. It’s unclear when he would be allowed to sign with any team because the NHL’s season is on hold due to the new coronavirus pandemic.

The league hasn’t decided when it will resume play and whether it will skip the remain-

der of the regular season and open with the playoffs. At the very least, Byfuglien would be ineligible to compete in this year’s playoffs.

A person familiar with the situation told The AP that Byfuglien was healthy enough to return playing, which is why he was no longer eligible to collect on his contract. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because that information was not revealed in the announcement released by the NHL and union.

“Dustin’s choice was to be true to himself and not put himself and maybe the team and everybody in a difficult situation,” Cheveldayoff said. “If he really didn’t have it in him to continue to play, that’s probably the most honest thing that he could say.”

Ionescu selected first in WNBA Draft

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Oregon star Sabrina Ionescu was the No. 1 pick in the WNBA Draft, as expected.

When she'll play for the New York Liberty is unclear.

With sports on hold during the coronavirus pandemic, it was a draft Friday like no other — with players in their own homes instead of a central location. Commissioner Cathy Engelbert announced selections from her home in New Jersey, holding up the jersey of the player being chosen.

"Of course it was different than what I had expected, and just excited to be able to be here with my family and the people closest to me and be able to spend this time," Ionescu said from her home in California. "Making the most out of what's going on in today's society. Just really happy to be able to spend this moment with them and excited to have gone through this

process."

Ionescu set the NCAA record for triple-doubles and was the first college player to have over 2,000 points, 1,000 rebounds and 1,000 assists in her career. Ionescu was one of three first-round picks for New York, which also had Nos. 9 and 12.

"I've been working for this for my entire basketball career and super excited to see that come to fruition," Ionescu said. "I'm very humbled and excited for the opportunity."

Ducks teammate Satou Sabally, one of three juniors to enter the draft, went second to Dallas. It's the third time in the history of the draft that the top two picks were college teammates.

"To go 1-2 with Satou is a really cool feeling and shows all the hard work we went through this year paid off," Ionescu said. "Really proud of her and what we were able to do as teammates and excited to see her future in the pros."

Lauren Cox went third to Indiana, and Chennedy Carter was the fourth pick by Atlanta. Dallas took Bella Alarie with the fifth pick. The Princeton star was only the second Ivy League player to be drafted that high. Harvard star Allison Feaster was also selected fifth in the 1998 draft by the Los Angeles Sparks.

South Carolina players Mikiah Herbert Harrigan and Tyasha Harris went sixth and seventh to Minnesota and Dallas. The Gamecocks finished No. 1 in the AP poll this season.

Chicago chose Ruthy Hebard with the eighth pick — marking the fifth consecutive season and ninth overall that three college teammates were taken in the opening round.

"Really shows what kind of environment we had at Oregon," Sabally said.

New York took UConn's Megan Walker with the ninth pick. Phoenix picked Jocelyn

Willoughby of Virginia 10th. Seattle took former South Florida star Kitija Laksa with the 11th pick, and New York closed out the first round drafting Jazmine Jones from Louisville.

New York, which was the first team ever to have five of the first 15 picks in the draft, selected Jones' Louisville teammate Kylee Shook at 13 and Duke's Leonna Odom at 15.

The Liberty also made two trades after the draft, acquiring Willoughby for Shatori Walker-Kimbrough. New York also traded Erica Ogumike, who they drafted in the third round, to Minnesota for Stephanie Talbot.

The WNBA tried to create a draft-like experience for the players, sending them a care package with hats of all 12 teams, a WNBA sweatshirt, confetti and a few other items.

NBA player salaries to be cut 25% starting May 15

Associated Press

Commissioner Adam Silver said it remains impossible for the NBA to make any decisions about whether to resume this season and that it is unclear when that will change.

But in a clear sign that at least some of the 259 remaining regular-season games that were not played because of the coronavirus pandemic will not be rescheduled, the league announced Friday it will withhold 25% of player pay starting with their May 15 checks.

Silver, speaking after the league's regularly scheduled April board of governors meeting — one that took place through video conferencing and not the usual in-person setting in New York — said all options remain on the table for trying to resume play and eventually crowning a champion.

"I think there is a sense that we can continue to take the leading role as we learn more

in coming up with an appropriate regimen and protocol for returning to business," Silver said. "There's a recognition from (owners) that this is bigger than our business; certainly, bigger than sports."

The salary decision was made in concert with the National Basketball Players Association, the league saying it would "provide players with a more gradual salary reduction schedule" if games are officially canceled or the rest of the season is totally lost.

Players will be paid in full on May 1. The cutback in salary has been expected for some time in response to the NBA's shutdown that started March 11, and has no end in sight.

Silver said the league will weigh several factors as it continues to try to save the season, among them whether the infection rate of COVID-19 comes down nationally, the availability of large-scale testing and

progress on the path toward a vaccine.

In other matters Silver discussed Friday:

More player positives

There were 10 players known to have tested positive for the coronavirus as of late March: four from the Brooklyn Nets including Kevin Durant, two from the Los Angeles Lakers, Christian Wood of the Detroit Pistons, Marcus Smart of the Boston Celtics, and Rudy Gobert and Donovan Mitchell of the Utah Jazz.

More players have tested positive since, Silver said.

"For privacy reasons, we're not reporting" any other positive tests, Silver said.

No deadlines

Silver said there is no cutoff date in mind for a decision to be made about playing some games or calling everything

off.

"All rules are off at this point during the situation we find ourselves in and the country is in," Silver said. "If there is an opportunity to resume play, even if it looks different than what we've done historically, we should be modeling it. ... We don't have a good understanding of exactly sort of what those standards are that we need to meet in order to move forward ... because the experts don't necessarily, either."

Return-to-play sites

The NBA is still listening to ideas from those pitching so-called "bubble" scenarios as a way to resume play. Teams would be brought to a site or sites to finish a season in a way that theoretically could minimize exposure risks.

Sites such as Las Vegas, Los Angeles and the Disney complex near Orlando have been mentioned as possibilities.