

# STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Iran's Guard acknowledges US encounter

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard acknowledged Sunday that it had a tense encounter with U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf last week, but alleged without offering evidence that American forces sparked the incident.

The incident Wednesday saw the U.S. Navy release video of small Iranian fast boats coming close to American warships as they operated in the northern Persian Gulf near Kuwait with U.S. Army Apache helicopters.

In the Guard's telling, its

forces were on a drill and faced "the unprofessional and provocative actions of the United States and their indifference to warnings." It said that the Americans later withdrew.

The Guard released no video or evidence to support its allegation. It also accused American forces of blocking Iranian warships on April 6 and 7.

Lt. Pete Pagano, a spokesman for the U.S. Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet, said that the Navy stood by its earlier description of the incident Wednesday.

"Regarding any other in-

teractions with our ships, U.S. forces continue to remain vigilant and are trained to act in a professional manner," Pagano told The Associated Press in reference to the Guard's claims of other recent incidents.

The incident comes amid still-heightened tensions between Iran and the U.S. despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Armed men boarded a Hong Kong-flagged tanker ship Tuesday off the coast of Iran near the crucial Strait of Hormuz, holding the ship for a short time near the Iranian coast before releasing it. Though Iran

has not acknowledged the incident, private security firms said that the Guard was behind the seizure.

In a tweet Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif kept up his criticism of President Donald Trump, claiming that Iran would soon export ventilators despite facing one of the world's worst outbreaks.

"All you need to do is stop interfering in the affairs of other nations; mine especially," Zarif wrote. "And believe me, we do not take advice from ANY American politician."

## Nations continue to feel pressure for virus solutions

Associated Press

BERLIN — Authorities responded with a range of possible dates and solutions — and a few emphatic "not yet's" — Sunday as pressure mounted on governments around the world to ease the economic pain of coronavirus lockdowns.

Shutdowns that began in China in late January and spread to Europe, the United States and elsewhere have disrupted economic, social, cultural and religious life around the globe and plunged the world into its most painful economic slump since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Tens of millions of workers have lost their jobs, and millions more fear that they are next.

With the arc of infection different in every nation, proposals have differed for coping with the virus that has taken more than 160,000 lives over the past four months and for which there is still no vaccine. Countries such as Britain have

said that it's too soon to give definite lockdown easing dates.

But in Germany, which has managed to significantly slow the rate of new infections since mid-March, most small stores can reopen Monday. The head of an association representing German cities said that many people would likely welcome the chance to shop in person again.

"But we're not expecting a huge rush now," Helmut Dedy told Germany's dpa news agency. "The stores that are reopening will be just as accessible a week later."

Spanish authorities said that children, after six weeks of confinement, will be allowed to leave their homes beginning April 27. Spain imposed one of the strictest lockdowns in Europe, helping drive down the daily increase in confirmed infections from more than 20% to 2% for a country whose 20,000 virus deaths are only surpassed by the U.S. and Italy.

Albania plans to let its min-

ing and oil industries reopen Monday, along with hundreds of businesses including small retailers, food and fish factories, farmers and fishing boats.

The death toll in the U.S. is nearing 40,000 with more than 735,000 confirmed infections, and the global case count has passed 2.3 million, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University of national health reports. The actual extent of the pandemic is likely to be significantly higher due to mild infections that are missed, limited testing, problems counting the dead and some nations' desires to underplay their outbreaks.

The International Monetary Fund expects the global economy to contract 3% this year — a far bigger loss than 2009's 0.1% after the global financial crisis.

Still, many governments are resisting pressures to abruptly relax the coronavirus lockdowns.

"We must not let down our guard until the last confirmed patient is recovered," South

Korea's President Moon Jae-in said Sunday.

The country, which was hit early on by the virus, announced that new infections fell Sunday to eight, from a peak of 909 on Feb. 29. But officials have warned that a "quiet spread" of the virus is possible as people relax social distancing.

British officials, who reported 888 new hospital deaths from the virus, said that they're not ready to ease lockdown measures. U.K. minister Michael Gove said that Britain still needs to develop its testing and contact tracing program, beef up the National Health Service and make sure that infection and death rates have fallen.

"It's only when we have all those measures in place that we can be confident about relaxing some of the measures," Gove told the BBC on Sunday, adding that pubs and restaurants "will be among the last" to leave the lockdown, which is now in place until May 7.

# USFK bans US contractor for violating orders

By KIM GAMEL  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — An American contractor who works at Camp Humphreys has been banned from all U.S. bases in South Korea for two years for violating coronavirus quarantine orders by visiting base shopping facilities, the military said Friday.

It was the first such action since USFK commander Gen. Robert Abrams declared a public health emergency in late March that gave him the authority to punish civilians as well as service members who violate measures aimed at preventing the spread of the virus.

Abrams announced Friday that he is extending the public health emergency to May 23, saying it also gives him authority to repurpose facilities on installations and to take other additional measures as needed.

“It’s not really about increased risk. It’s about giving us the appropriate authorities to be able to protect the force,” he said in a community update via Facebook live.

U.S. Forces Korea said the contractor, whose name was not released because of privacy considerations, had been instructed to go into quarantine after having direct contact with a co-worker who had tested positive for the virus.

“The individual chose to non-comply

with the quarantine directive and visited the PX and the commissary,” the command said. “This individual’s disregard for USFK’s public health guidance and health protection conditions jeopardizes the safety of all USFK personnel and families.”

The ban took effect on Tuesday, according to a notice by USFK.

“The contractor has finished his quarantine, was tested and results came back negative,” USFK spokesman Col. Lee Peters said in response to a question about the contractor’s current status.

At least six soldiers also have received nonjudicial punishment under Article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for going to bars off-base or otherwise violating restrictions on nonessential movement off-base, according to the Eighth Army.

Two privates assigned to the 210th Field Artillery Brigade at Camp Casey had to forfeit pay and received extra duty and a written reprimand for traveling to Camp Humphreys without authorization on March 28, violating their unit’s sign-out policy and possessing alcohol while underage.

Two privates first class with the 210 FAB were reduced in rank, forfeited pay and received written reprimands for drinking in a bar on March 14 in Dongducheon, the city that is home to Camp Casey, near the border with North Korea.

A specialist with the same brigade received the same punishment for drinking in a bar on March 20 in Dongducheon.

A sergeant first class with the 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade had to forfeit pay and received a written reprimand for visiting an off-post bar in Songtan, the area outside Osan Air Base, on March 31.

Abrams clamped down on civilians after a contractor who works at Eighth Army headquarters tested positive after he continued to go to restaurants in the local community despite restrictions on nonessential activities off base.

That was followed by a spike in infections with a total of 10 contractors who work on Camp Humphreys testing positive. In all, USFK has reported 25 coronavirus cases, including two soldiers.

USFK promised to routinely publish actions taken to enforce compliance with rules to contain the virus “to ensure our service members, civilians, contract employees, family members and the community understand the adverse actions of not following USFK directives.”

Two civilians also were barred from Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, after security personnel found them in an off-base bar in violation of similar restrictions set by the Navy to fight the coronavirus, officials said earlier this week.

## Marines tighten restrictions as cases rise on Okinawa

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Marine Forces Japan imposed more stringent off-base liberty restrictions Friday as the coronavirus continues to spread throughout the region.

The orders were announced in the evening by the III Marine Expeditionary Force on Okinawa and took effect immediately, a Marine statement said.

Marines in Japan are now barred from using non-military public and mass transportation, including taxis, and are allowed off-base only to patronize essential services, the statement said. Those are limited to medical and veterinary appointments, grocery shopping,

bill paying, purchasing gas at service stations and postal services.

Marines are no longer allowed to take annual leave or visit off-base homes unless they live there, III Marine Expeditionary Force spokesman 1st Lt. Ryan Bruce told Stars and Stripes in an email Friday evening.

Marines are barred from eating in off-base restaurants, getting takeout or drive-thru meals, the Marine statement said. They are also barred from off-base schools and child care facilities.

The guidance also applies to dependents, Defense Department civilian employees and contractors, the statement said. The government of Japan on Okinawa and the prefectural

government have been notified as a courtesy.

The statement came two days after U.S. Forces Japan declared a public health emergency for all U.S. military facilities in the country and a day after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced a nationwide state of emergency.

“These changes are motivated by the continued spread of coronavirus cases throughout the region, USFJ’s declaration of a Japan-wide public health emergency, and the Government of Japan’s expanded state of emergency to encompass all of Japan,” the statement said. “These preventive measures are intended to ensure the protection of the force, our families, and our local communities, both on and off-base.”

The measures will be “continually assessed” to determine if additional measures are needed or if they can be relaxed, it added.

As of Friday, Okinawa had reported 105 confirmed virus cases, the prefectural government website said. These include a girl who tested positive at the airport but was counted in another prefecture’s tally and two U.S. airmen and a family member from Kadena Air Base.

The number of cases had doubled in a week’s time, Gov. Denny Tamaki said at a press conference Friday, according to the Okinawa Times.

Stars and Stripes reporter Aya Ichihashi contributed to this report.



## Some troops' pay boosted by COLA adjustment

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

Some service members in Japan saw a welcome surprise in their paychecks Wednesday after the cost-of-living allowance increased across the region, a U.S. Forces Japan official said during a livestreamed town hall Thursday.

Service members at Camp Zama, Misawa Air Base, Yokota Air Base and Camp Fuji will receive about \$4.50 more per day, an increase of 4 percentage points, USFJ's senior enlisted leader Chief Master Sgt. Rick Winegartner said via USFJ's official Facebook page. That's about \$67.50 more per 15-day pay period.

Personnel stationed at Yokosuka Naval Base, Sasebo Naval Base or installations in Yokohama or on Okinawa received a boost of about \$2.25 per day, Winegartner said in the livestream town hall hosted by American Forces Network Pacific radio. That's about \$33.75 more per paycheck.

Cost-of-living allowance rates reflect how expensive it is to live in an area as compared to the United States. The Defense Department uses a percentage point system to adjust the rate, so an increase of four points means the area's cost of living is an additional 4% higher than it would be back home.

The increase follows a decrease in cost-of-living allowances in November at many installations in Japan. Camp Zama saw a reduction of eight points; Misawa lost six points; Atsugi, Iwakuni, Sasebo and Yokota lost four points; and Okinawa lost two, according to a Defense Travel Agency statement on Nov. 19.

Winegartner did not mention whether COLA changed at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni or Naval Air Station Atsugi.

# Virus claims celebrated vet's life

BY NIKKI WENTLING  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Bennie Adkins, who received the Medal of Honor for fighting off enemies and saving wounded comrades in Vietnam, died Friday from complications from the coronavirus.

Adkins, who was 86, was hospitalized March 26 at the East Alabama Medical Center in his hometown of Opelika, Ala. He was admitted to the intensive care unit and put on a ventilator after experiencing respiratory failure. He died Friday according to a message posted to his foundation's Facebook page.

Adkins is credited with killing 135 to 175 Vietnamese in a nearly four-day battle while being wounded 18 times and helping fellow soldiers to safety. For those acts, former President Barack Obama presented Adkins with the Medal of Honor in 2014.

"I have to be honest, in a battle and daring escape that lasted four days, Bennie per-

formed so many acts of bravery we actually don't have time to talk about all of them," Obama said during the ceremony.

Adkins was born in Waurika, Okla., and drafted into the military at age 22 in 1956. He volunteered for the Army's Special Forces and deployed three times to Vietnam between 1963 and 1971.

He was awarded the Medal of Honor for acts of valor during his second tour in Vietnam in 1966. At the time, he was a sergeant first class serving with detachment A-102, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces. Adkins was an intelligence sergeant, and his unit was responsible for tracking enemy movements.

Early on the morning of March 9, 1966, hundreds of North Vietnamese descended on their camp, Camp A Shau, which was also pounded with mortars and rocket-propelled grenades. Adkins rushed through the intense enemy fire to man a mortar position to repel the attack, his Medal

of Honor citation says. Despite being wounded by shrapnel, Adkins ran through mortar fire to reach wounded soldiers and drag them to safety.

Enemy forces launched their main attack the following day. Within hours, Adkins was the only soldier left firing mortars. When he was out of rounds, he used a recoilless rifle, small arms and hand grenades to fight off intense waves of attacking Viet Cong, the citation says. He ran back and forth from a mortar pit to a bunker through enemy fire through the battle, gathering ammunition.

He and a small group of other soldiers destroyed their signal equipment and classified documents and then escaped by digging through the back of the bunker and fighting their way out of camp. Adkins led the men through the jungle until they were rescued by helicopter March 12.

He exhibited "extraordinary heroism and selflessness," the Medal of Honor citation reads.

## Pence celebrates USAF Academy grads

*Associated Press*

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — In a symbolic nod to normalcy, Vice President Mike Pence delivered a commencement address to the U.S. Air Force Academy's graduating class on Saturday, telling the cadets that by setting off on their mission to defend the nation they "inspire confidence that we will prevail against the invisible enemy in our time as well."

Pence's trip, only his second outside Washington in the last six weeks, was aimed at showing that the country is on course to gradually reopening after weeks of the coronavirus shutdown.

He spoke at a scaled-down ceremony at the academy outside Colorado Springs, where hundreds of graduating cadets in blue and white dress uniforms sat eight feet apart, taking up an area nearly as large as a football field.

"I know we gather at a time of great challenge in the life of our nation," Pence said as he began his remarks. "And while we don't quite look like the usual graduation at the Air Force Academy, let me tell you, this is an awesome sight. And I wouldn't be anywhere else but with the 62nd class of the Air Force Academy, the class of 2020."

This year, the pandemic forced the academy to

close the ceremony to visitors, including friends and family of the nearly 1,000 graduates.

Still, the ceremony featured its signature dramatic flyover by the Air Force Thunderbirds, which thundered overhead as the graduates threw their hats into the air and burst into cheers. But instead of being able to embrace their fellow graduates, the cadets remained several feet apart and then proceeded to tie on white face masks.

"You knew your graduation day would be memorable. But did you imagine that your commencement would take place in mid-April? Or that each of us would have a face mask at the ready? Or that you would march a COVID-compliant eight feet apart to the terrazzo?" asked Barbara Barrett, secretary of the Air Force.

As the ceremony began, graduates lined up outside and silently saluted the vice president's motorcade as he arrived on a near-empty campus. They later filed into a stadium that was absolutely silent but for the drum roll and the rustling of starched pants marching in place.

He later greeted graduates at a distance and met with small groups, including cadets from his home state of Indiana, who had their temperatures taken before meeting with the vice president.

# Test issues cloud Trump's recovery effort

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States is struggling to test enough people to track and control the coronavirus spread, a crucial first step to reopening parts of the economy, which President Donald Trump is pushing to do by May 1.

Trump on Thursday released a plan to ease business restrictions that hinges on a downward trajectory of positive tests.

But more than a month after he declared, "Anybody who wants a test, can get a test," the reality has been different. People report being unable to get tested. Labs and public officials have said that supply shortages have made it impossible to increase testing to the levels experts have said is necessary to keep the virus at bay.

"There are places that have enough test swabs, but not enough workers to administer them. There are places that are limiting

tests because of the CDC criteria on who should get tested," said Dr. Megan Ranney, an emergency physician and associate professor at Brown University.

Trump's plan envisions setting up "sentinel surveillance sites" that would screen people without symptoms in locations that serve older people or minority populations. Experts have said that testing would have to increase as much as threefold to be effective.

The plan pushes responsibility for testing onto states.

"The governors are responsible for testing," Trump told reporters at his daily briefing Friday. He said that the federal government would ship 5.5 million nasal swabs to states in the "next few weeks" to help address shortages.

"Swabs can be done easily by the governors themselves," Trump said. "Mostly it's cotton, it's not a big deal."

But state and local officials, as well as lab managers, have said that they cannot expand testing until there are more supplies.

Governors, physician groups and laboratory directors have called on the Trump administration to address shortages of swabs, protective gear and highly specialized laboratory chemicals needed to analyze the virus' genetic material. Hospitals and state health departments have reported scouring the globe to secure orders, competing against each other and their peers abroad in a system that Gov. Andrew Cuomo, D-N.Y., described as "mayhem."

"The federal government cannot wipe their hands of this and say, 'Oh, the states are responsible for testing,'" Cuomo said Friday as he complained of a shortage of chemicals manufactured in China. "I don't do China relations. I don't do international supply chain."

## Wuhan lab denies virus began there

New York Daily News

A laboratory in the Chinese city of Wuhan, located just miles away from the wet market where officials said that the coronavirus first emerged, has denied accusations the disease originated at the institute before it spread and infected millions worldwide.

Yuan Zhiming, vice director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology, in an interview with Chinese state broadcaster CGTN, dismissed the claims as a "conspiracy theory" designed to "confuse" people. Scientists at the facility do research on coronaviruses that originate in bats, which has prompted speculation regarding the Wuhan lab in recent weeks.

His comments mark the first time anyone from the institute has discussed the global outbreak since it first emerged in China at the end of last year.

"As people who carry out viral study, we clearly know what kind of research is going on in the institute and how the institute manages viruses and

samples," Yuan said. "As we said early on, there is no way this virus came from us."

Yuan, a microbiology and biotechnology expert who trained in France, Denmark and the United States, also noted that a man-made coronavirus resembling the one ripping across the globe is beyond the scope of human intelligence.

The Chinese government has long denied that the lab was to blame and almost immediately pointed to a wet market in the city of Wuhan as the virus source. But there have been several questions raised about that theory since the illness has killed more than 156,000 people worldwide.

In recent weeks, President Donald Trump has placed blame on China and its lack of transparency at the start of the outbreak. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also seemed to acknowledge theories about the lab in Wuhan.

"We know there is the Wuhan Institute of Virology a couple miles away from where the wet market was," Pompeo said.

## Germany's breweries struggle to survive virus

Associated Press

WERNECK, Germany — The Werneck Brewery has survived a lot: world wars, economic crises and decades of declining beer consumption. But after 400 years in existence, it has finally met a challenge it can't overcome: the coronavirus outbreak.

The brewery, which traces its history to 1617 and has been owned by the same family since 1861, is closing for good, taking with it 15 full-time jobs and more part-time positions. Also gone is a chunk of local history and tradition in Werneck, a town of 10,000 people in the brewery-rich southern state of Bavaria.

German brewers fear that its demise is the leading edge of more closures as the virus outbreak threatens the existence of the country's many local producers of the national beverage — community institutions, often family-owned for generations, whose buildings and affiliated taverns are regional landmarks in a country where the hometown brew is often a sentimental favorite de-

spite competition from national brands.

Hardest hit are smaller breweries like the one in Werneck that depend on supplying kegs to local taverns and events such as local festivals.

Retail sales are providing some support as people drink at home. Breweries are trying things like drive-thru sales and even shipping beer and glasses to customers so they can join an online tasting.

According to a survey by the national Brewers Association, about 87% of breweries said that they are putting workers on short hours and taking advantage of a government program that pays up to 60% of net salaries during business interruptions. The program is aimed at getting companies through a crisis, keeping workers from being laid off and supporting consumer spending in the economy. But other programs, such as credits and delays in collecting taxes, are less useful, brewers have said. Credits mean taking on new debt for the future, and the taxes will have to be paid later as well.



# Video tribute honors Okla. bombing victims

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Survivors and loved ones of the 168 people who were killed in the Oklahoma City bombing won't be able to gather Sunday on the grounds of the city's memorial to mark the 25th anniversary of the attack, but that won't stop them from remembering.

Because the annual remembrance ceremony was canceled due to coronavirus restrictions, those who died will instead be honored with a video tribute that includes the reading of

the names of those who died followed by 168 seconds of silence.

Ordinarily, the city would have gathered Sunday at the site of the former Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building that was destroyed by a truck bomb on April 19, 1995.

Kari Watkins, the director of the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum, said this year's social distancing restrictions are necessary but unfortunate, as survivors and victims' family members often only see each other this one

time each year.

"It's just a nice time for them to come and be together," she said. "They'll miss that, but they'll have another time when it's safe to gather and we'll come back together and do something, whenever that day is."

Holt said the 25th anniversary of the attack is particularly notable in that it marks a transition of the event from one of personal experience to historical event.

"The march of time is relentless, and every year that

passes, fewer and fewer people have a direct connection to it," Holt said. "The 25th is another time for us here in Oklahoma City to refocus on what makes the event and the site relevant in the decades to come."

For Holt, that means spreading the message that political violence is never the answer.

"People in Oklahoma City sort of have a special obligation to stand for the idea that we have much more in common than we have different," he said.

## 10 years after BP spill, wells drilled deeper, rules relaxed

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Ten years after an oil rig explosion killed 11 workers and unleashed an environmental nightmare in the Gulf of Mexico, companies are drilling in deeper and deeper waters, where pay-offs can be huge but risks are greater than ever.

Industry leaders and government officials say they're determined to prevent a repeat of BP's Deepwater Horizon disaster, which spilled 134 million gallons of oil that fouled beaches from Louisiana to Florida, killed hundreds of thousands of marine animals, and devastated the tourist economy.

Yet safety rules adopted in the spill's aftermath have been eased as part of President Donald Trump's drive to boost U.S. oil production. And government data reviewed by the Associated Press shows the number of safety inspection visits has declined in recent years, although officials

say checks of electronic records, safety systems and individual oil rig components have increased.

Today, companies are increasingly reliant on production from deeper and inherently more dangerous oil reserves, where drill crews can grapple with ultra-high pressures and oil temperatures that can top 350 degrees.

As wells close to shore run dry, the average drilling depth in deeper waters steadily increased, from about 3,500 feet beneath the surface in 1999 to more than 4,600 feet in 2019, according to AP analysis of data from the U.S. Interior Department's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

Drilling deeper makes well sites harder to reach in a blowout or other accident.

In the past year, the industry began producing crude from ultra-high pressure reserves in the Gulf, where well pressures can top 20,000 pounds per square inch, much more than Deepwater Horizon.

"Higher risk, higher pressure, higher temperatures, more reliance on technology — it's just a tougher environment to operate in," said Lois Epstein, a Wilderness Society civil engineer who served on a government advisory committee formed to improve drilling safety after the spill.

Inspection visits by the government's safety bureau fell from 4,712 in 2013 to 3,717 in 2019, according to data reviewed by AP. The decline coincided with increased focus on higher risk facilities, including those with historical problems.

Industry representatives contend fewer inspections do not automatically mean less effective oversight. Inspectors are less interested now about technical violations and are trying to make sure comprehensive safety systems are in place to handle major accidents, said Erik Milito, president of the National Ocean Industries Association, an oil trade group.

## UN experts: Blacklist 14 ships for violating North Korea sanctions

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — U.N. experts have recommended blacklisting 14 vessels for violating sanctions against North Korea in a report that accuses the country of increasing illegal coal exports, imports of petroleum products and continuing with cyber attacks on financial institutions and cryptocurrency exchanges to gain illicit revenue.

The 267-page report, ob-

tained Saturday by The Associated Press, also accused North Korea of importing luxury vehicles, watches and liquor and other sanctioned items including robotic machinery, and continuing to illegally access international banking channels "mainly by using third party intermediaries."

The U.N. Security Council has imposed increasingly tough sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the country's offi-

cial name, including banning most of its exports and severely limiting its imports, to pressure Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

The full report by the panel of experts monitoring the sanctions provides more details to the summary and some excerpts reported by AP in February. It includes photos of ballistic missile launchers, nuclear sites and vessels recommended for blacklisting.

The panel made 39 recommendations to the Security Council, including on the blacklisting of 14 vessels.

It said one vessel is registered in Sierra Leone and six were previously registered in the West African nation. Two are North Korean, one is Chinese, one Vietnamese, one was formerly registered in Togo, one was formerly registered in St. Kitts and Nevis, and the flag of one is unknown.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Voyeur doctor arrested for hidden camera

**VT** BURLINGTON — Investigators in Vermont said a doctor hid a camera in a staff bathroom, and police found a large amount of videos that constitute voyeurism.

Eike Blohm of South Burlington was arrested on multiple charges of voyeurism, WCAX-TV reported.

Police told WCAX-TV the investigation is still going on.

Blohm is an emergency physician at UVM Medical Center. Blohm is on administrative leave, the center said.

## K-9 officer captures man wanted for murder

**TN** MEMPHIS — A Tennessee man wanted for killing another man and wounding a juvenile outside a convenience store was arrested after being confronted by a K-9 officer, authorities said.

Curdarreion Wilson was captured after escaping from authorities three times for different crimes, a U.S. Marshals press release said.

Memphis police were called to a store on April 6, where they found a man, Raymond Howard, fatally shot as well as a juvenile who was suffering from a gunshot wound.

After Wilson was found more than a week later, he fled, first in a car and then on foot, the release said. Marshals sent K-9 Echo after Wilson, and he was tracked to a crawlspace inside an abandoned home, the release said.

## High school students expelled for racist video

**GA** CARROLLTON — Two high school students in Georgia were expelled

after they posted a racist video on a social media site.

Carrollton City Schools Superintendent Dr. Mark Albertus said in a statement the students' "behavior was unacceptable and is not representative of the district's respect for all people."

A video posted first on TikTok and then shared on Twitter shows two teenagers using racial slurs and making derogatory remarks about black people.

## Man reported missing found in closed mine

**WV** WILLIAMSON — A man reported missing more than a week ago was found alive in a closed West Virginia mine, state officials.

The West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training said the man was found in a Mingo County mine, where he apparently became lost after trespassing.

Timothy Kennedy, 26, was reported missing April 9 by a family member. An investigation led to the Gilbert-area mine, which last produced coal in 2011, the agency said.

Kennedy was located more than a half-mile from the mine entrance and taken to a hospital for evaluation.

## Route 66 visitor center to display historic sign

**NM** ALBUQUERQUE — The weathered old sign that once served as a beacon to travelers along a stretch of Route 66 just outside of New Mexico's largest city was taken down and will be preserved as part of an initiative to build a visitor center dedicated to the historic roadway, officials said.

The Mountain Lodge Motel sign will remain in storage until the new venue is ready. Albuquerque city officials called it a

piece of history, saying its preservation will help provide a greater understanding of Route 66 for future generations.

The Mountain Lodge sign was donated by Owen St. Germain, who was close to having it demolished after he bought the property.

The sign had sat along Route 66 since the 1940s. The motor lodge had been converted into an apartment complex and then was destroyed by fire in 2014.

## Theater closed by virus puts movies online

**SC** — A South Carolina theater that's closed because of the coronavirus is making a switch to showing movies online.

Larry Mann and his wife have owned the Park Plaza Cinema on Hilton Head Island for more than a decade. Like other movie theaters in the U.S., they've had to shut down amid efforts to prevent the new virus from spreading.

The Island Packet reported that the couple revamped the theater's website to stream films not yet available on platforms such as Netflix. Mann says streaming movies on his site will generally cost about \$12.

"If we could figure out how to get everyone popcorn, we would do that, too," Mann said.

## Virgin Orbit conducts last test before launch

**CA** MOJAVE — Virgin Orbit said it has conducted its final major test before an upcoming demonstration of its system in which a rocket slung beneath the wing of a Boeing 747 will be carried aloft and launched.

The jumbo jet took off from Mojave and successfully conducted a simulated drop before

returning to the airport, the company said.

The date of the demonstration launch has not been released.

## More rare whales prompt new protections

**MA** BOSTON — Federal ocean managers asked mariners to slow down east of Boston because of a new sighting of rare whales in the area.

Private citizens found an aggregation of North Atlantic right whales in the area. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said it is asking mariners to go around the area or travel through it at 10 knots or less until April 24.

Right whales number only about 400 and are one of the rarest large ocean animals.

## Plane makes emergency landing on interstate

**OH** CINCINNATI — A small plane made an emergency landing on an interstate highway in Cincinnati, but no injuries were reported, authorities said.

The pilot was the only person aboard the single-engine Beechcraft Bonanza plane that came down in the northbound lanes of Interstate 75 near the Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway. The plane did not hit any vehicles and eventually came to rest against a concrete barrier, police said.

It wasn't immediately clear where the plane had departed from, but officials said the pilot was headed to Lunken Airport in Cincinnati when he reported a loss of engine power. It's not yet known what caused the issue.

From wire reports

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World, National  
and Military News



# Small school standouts can't be ignored by NFL

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Kyle Dugger played most of his college football career in the shadows of higher-profile players and programs.

Appalachian State was less than a two-hour drive north of the Lenoir-Rhyne campus. The Tobacco Road triad of Duke, North Carolina and North Carolina State was about two hours east, and Knoxville, home of the Tennessee Volunteers, was less than three hours to the west.

Dugger isn't taking a back seat to any of them.

Last fall, he forced NFL scouts to add a new stop on their weekend trips, Hickory, N.C., where they unearthed a hidden gem — maybe the best draft prospect football fans don't know.

"It hasn't been the easiest switch going from not having any of that (publicity) to having a lot of it," Dugger said during the league's annual scouting combine in Indianapolis. "But they (school officials) definitely got behind me and they're really excited."

Not so long ago, scouts didn't know much about Dugger, either. He remembers repeatedly answering three questions: What school is that, where is it located, and how did he end up in Division II?

Then again, it's easy for football players to get overlooked in Hickory, a small city full of Southern charm nestled between Interstate 40 and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

But when Dugger started turning heads, thousands showed up at 8,500-seat Moretz Stadium to see the budding star. Scouts followed, and soon Dugger was the feature attraction.

"The competitor in me definitely wanted more, at times," he said. "I'd really dive into the details of what I was doing and see if I'm doing what I'm supposed to do — or was it me getting away with things because of the level of the competition."

NFL executives knew better than to overlook another player from a school that barely registers on college football's highlight shows.

The roll call includes Walter Payton of Jackson State, Jerry Rice of Mississippi Valley State and Carson Wentz of North Dakota State. Joe Flacco and Darrell Green came out of Delaware and Texas A&M-Kingsville, respectively.

Dugger finds himself at the head of another strong class that includes offensive lineman Ben Bartch of St. Johns (Minnesota), running back James Robinson of Illi-

nois State, tight ends Charlie Taumoepeau of Portland State and Adam Trautman of Dayton.

Three of the four, in addition to Dugger, were at the Senior Bowl. All five received combine invites, and most understand the club they're trying to join.

Bartch's story starts like so many others. He was a high school tight end with no Division I offers, opting to play at a Division III school primarily because he liked the area, loved the sport, and the school gave him a chance to extend his career.

Two years later, the coaches asked him to move to left tackle.

Bartch spent the next three months cramming in study sessions between classwork, conditioning and coaching at a local high school. Sometimes, he relied on YouTube videos to learn the position.

To save time, Bartch devised his own breakfast smoothie creation. He describes the "magic shake" as a concoction of seven eggs, a large tub of cottage cheese, quick grits, peanut butter and a banana, topped off with a splash of Gatorade. It helped him go from 250 pounds to 305 as he turned into an NFL prospect.

"I would throw it all in and plug my nose," Bartch said. "I'd gag sometimes, but that's what you have to do."

Now Bartch should become the first St. John's player taken since 1974, (DT Kurt Wachtler to the Vikings in the 15th round). Bartch would be the highest draft pick in school history.

Dugger doesn't have to go back that far to find Lenoir-Rhyne's last selection: DE John Milem, chosen by San Francisco in Round 5 in 2000.

But after an impressive Senior Bowl, the kid who started high school at 5-foot-6, 140 pounds and graduated at 5-11, 170 with only three scholarship offers, showed up in Indy at 6-1, 217 pounds, with the long arms teams crave. He ran the 40 in 4.49 seconds, had the best vertical jump among safeties (42 inches) and the second best broad jump (11 feet, 2 inches).

And if he becomes the highest Division II player selected since the turn of the century, he'll be on a stage where everyone knows his name, school and story.

"It's something I will use as a stepping stone," he said. "But I kind of like being in the underdog role, kind of that dark side, villainous role, and I think it's something I'm going to continue doing."

## Remote draft to get dry run

Associated Press

The NFL will hold a practice remote draft Monday, three days before the real thing is done in the same way.

Detroit Lions general manager Bob Quinn on Friday did not provide details on the proceedings — except what his team has planned.

"We're going to do a couple internal tests and trial runs here," Quinn said in a Zoom meeting to preview the draft. "The league is having a mock draft, mock trial run on Monday that we'll participate in."

Commissioner Roger Goodell ordered all team facilities closed in March, and later required club personnel to conduct the draft from their homes. Because of the reliance on free-flowing communication, the league decided to stage a mock draft to ensure all goes smoothly next Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The draft originally was scheduled for Las Vegas, but the NFL canceled all public events last month as a safeguard against the coronavirus. On April 6, Goodell instructed teams on how they should plan to make selections.

Among the technologies needed for the actual draft are team web meetings and a web hookup with the league itself. There also will be phone lines for communicating with other teams for trades, which must be approved by the NFL central office.

"I'm at my house, I have a home office that I use occasionally during the season and occasionally during the offseason — not very much," Quinn said. "But I'm staring at a TV to my right. I have three monitors to my left, I have two laptops. I have a huge what we would call our 'draft phone,' I have my home phone. I have two cell phones, and I have a printer. So that's kind of my setup that I'm looking at right now."

"We can't obviously replicate our draft board in my office here, so all the draft boards, needs boards, all of those things will be emailed, printed, they'll probably be screen-shared on some platform that we're still evaluating ... to use next week. Then we'll have redundancies on everything."

Security will be paramount, considering the possibility of crossed communication lines that allow one club's personnel to hear discussions of another team's decision makers.

One logistical concern involves the flow of information and ability to communicate when teams are on the clock. There could be complications if a team has settled on a player and is about to make a selection to end a round.

# Shutdown keeps Devils' Fitzgerald in 2 limbos

Associated Press

The suspension of play in the NHL because of the coronavirus pandemic has put Tom Fitzgerald of the New Jersey Devils in a strange situation.

The 51-year-old is waiting to see if the league will finish its season and whether he gets to keep his job.

Fitzgerald is the only interim general manager in the league. He took over Jan. 12, when Ray Shero was fired, and has guided the struggling Devils to a 12-8-5 record.

There are five others in the NHL also in limbo during this time of isolation. They are the league's interim coaches: Geoff Ward of the Calgary Flames, Alain Nasreddine of the Devils, Rick Bowness of the Dallas Stars, Bob Boughner of the San Jose Sharks, and Dean Evason of the Minnesota Wild.

"My job is to lead the hockey ops department until told otherwise," Fitzgerald said Thursday. "And that's all I'm trying to do right now is continue to do the job, not think of the what-

ifs, because I just think I can muddy the waters and distract an individual from thinking again, those whatever's."

Fitzgerald said Nadreddine, who has led the Devils to a 19-16-8 record since replacing John Hynes on Dec. 3, is doing the same thing. He is focusing on his job. Fitzgerald joked that while he has the interim tag, everybody in the NHL is in the same category.

Fitzgerald has weekly discussions with team owners Josh Harris and David Blitzer. His job is to keep everyone on their toes. He has the scouts working on their talent evaluations and the players and coaches prepared to return.

"I've got an opportunity to grow as a manager," Fitzgerald said. "I feel really good about where I'm at and the job that I've done so far with the help of a lot of people in the organization. It takes a village to build success. Whether my future's here or not, the future is here until they tell me otherwise. And if that's the

case of whatever, I'll cross that bridge."

Of all the guys with the interim coaching tags, Ward might be in the best shape. He has led the Flames to a 24-15-3 mark since replacing Bill Peters on Nov. 26. They were in a playoff spot when the season was halted.

Flames general manager Brad Treliving said he has not made a decision on Ward's future.

Sharks general manager Doug Wilson will decide Boughner's future after the season. He wants input from the players and his staff. Boughner was hurt by injuries and suspensions in posting a 14-20-3 record after replacing Peter DeBoer on Dec. 11.

"The things we were looking for, I thought were addressed," Wilson said. "Boughy and I have talked a lot about clarifying how we want to play, and ultimately getting your team to commit to playing the right way for longer periods of time regardless of your talent level."

## ECHL's fans, players get creative in fundraising

Associated Press

More than a month after the ECHL canceled the rest of its season, minor league hockey players are still hoping to get some financial help.

A relief fund set up by the league and Professional Hockey Players Association has raised \$270,000 so far, about a third of the total goal. PHPA executive director Larry Landon estimates \$850,000 is needed to cover paychecks from three lost weeks of the season. He hopes money can be sent to players beginning next week.

With a shortfall and concerns growing about starting next season, players, fans and teams are starting to get creative. One fan has raised \$7,000 by auctioning off memorabilia, and South Carolina goaltender Parker Milner said he hopes a quarantine concert brings awareness to the situation and some extra funds.

Longtime Toledo Walleye fan Dennis Seymour said he hopes to raise a total of \$10,000 for the ECHL-PHPA COVID-19 Relief Fund.

## Spain set to finish soccer season without fans

Associated Press

MADRID — Soccer matches and other sports events in Spain will take place in fan-free venues at least until the end of the summer, the mayor of Madrid said Saturday.

Jose Luis Martinez-Almeida told the Onda Cero radio station that the coronavirus pandemic likely "won't be under control" by then for events with big crowds to resume normally.

"In the spring and summer there won't be any events with crowds in Spain, and possibly not in the fall either," Martinez-Almeida said. "Because

obviously the situation will not be fully under control. We will have to change our habits and behaviors even after being allowed to go back on to the streets."

Spain has been one of the hardest-hit countries with more than 190,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, only behind the United States. More than 20,000 have died in the European nation.

The Spanish league is not expecting to resume at least until the end of May. It is working on several scenarios, including playing without fans through the fall.

"Soccer matches without fans in the summer is a possibility, as long as health and safety conditions are observed," Martinez-Almeida said.

The soccer federation said this week that if the league can't resume, it will use the current standings to decide the four clubs to play in the Champions League, which would mean giving the spots to Barcelona, Real Madrid, Sevilla and Real Sociedad.

The league has said the total losses for not finishing the season because of the pandemic could reach nearly \$1.1 billion. The losses if the league re-

sumes with matches in empty stadiums would be about \$325 million, and if it restarts with fans it would be nearly \$163 million.

Martinez-Almeida also said it was a "mistake" for Atletico Madrid fans to play its Champions League game against Liverpool. Nearly 3,000 Atletico fans attended the game on March 11, just days before the Spanish government declared a state of emergency and established lockdown measures that are expected to remain in place at least until April 26.