

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Navy preps to defend Trump's Iran threat

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — Even before President Donald Trump's vow to "shoot down" Iranian speedboats if they harass American ships in international waters, the U.S. Navy was bolstering its ability to call in AC-130 gunships and Apache attack helicopters to defend its presence in the Persian Gulf.

A practice run for the new tactics on April 15 drew 11 gunboats from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps that crossed the bows and sterns of American vessels at close range. And that prompted Trump's tweet on April 22 saying he'd "instructed the United States Navy to shoot down and destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea."

Going back to the Obama

administration, Revolutionary Guard members in small but agile speedboats have harassed U.S. ships, but the encounters usually have ended with warnings from the Americans to back off. As far back as 2007, the Office of Naval Intelligence estimated Iran had a fleet of 1,000 small boats that was growing. In early January 2017 a U.S. Navy guided-missile naval destroyer fired warning shots at four Iranian rapid-attack craft in the Strait of Hormuz.

While attention has turned on the latest confrontation at sea between Iran and the U.S. — and on Trump's vow to stop such close encounters — there's been little focus on the recent moves by the U.S. Central Command to come better-armed with joint Navy, Air Force and Army systems for spotting targets and transferring data.

The live-fire gunship exercises began in March as a first-time effort at coordination between Navy patrol coastal ships, the service's P-8A Poseidon reconnaissance aircraft and the Air Force's special operations AC-130 gunships, which are capable of nighttime attacks. Armed with a 30 mm Gatling gun and precision-guided munitions, the famed gunships have been used to attack ground targets — but not naval targets — from Vietnam to Grenada, Panama, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Then on April 15, Navy vessels were practicing coordinated operations with Army AH-64E Apache tank-busting attack helicopters when the U.S. says Iranian boats came within 50 yards of the USS Lewis B. Puller and within 10 yards of the bow of the Coast

Guard cutter Maui.

Under the new approach, the Apaches can be stationed on the Puller, the Navy's first specially designed floating sea base. The Puller, a destroyer and other, smaller U.S. vessels were practicing spotting targets for the Apaches and transmitting the information. The exercises continued through April 19.

The Apache exercise shows how the Army "can use naval platforms as lily pads to expand their operational range along with providing security in its region of operation," Cmdr. Rebecca Rebarich, the spokeswoman for the Navy's 5th Fleet, said in an email. "The security acts as a deterrent for any threats against the U.S. and allied watercraft."

Army announces plans for summer troop rotations

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Army is moving forward with plans for summer troop rotations to Europe, Iraq and Afghanistan even as the military grapples with the disruptive effects of the global coronavirus pandemic, the service announced Thursday.

The announcement came days after the Pentagon issued the latest version of a sweeping stop-movement order, aimed at stemming the spread of the coronavirus among troops. The latest order, which is scheduled to last through June 30, allows senior service officials to grant exemptions for service members whose new assignments are deemed essential to the Defense Department's overall mission.

Headed to Iraq are the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., as part of a regular rotation of forces to support the on-

going campaign against Islamic State.

"Our paratroopers are honored to answer our nation's call to deploy and work alongside the international coalition in support of Operation Inherent Resolve," said Col. Jason Curl, commander of the 2nd BCT, in a statement.

The 4th Security Forces Assistance Brigade out of Fort Carson in Colorado will head to Afghanistan to replace the 3rd Security Forces Assistance Brigade.

"The 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade is ready to advise, support, liaise and assess our partnered foreign security forces in the CENTCOM AOR," said Brig. Gen. Mark H. Landes, head of Security Force Assistance Command.

The 4th Infantry Division Combat Aviation Brigade, stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., also is headed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Freedom Sentinel.

And the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, will deploy to Kuwait as part of a

regular rotation focused on maintaining ready forces in the greater Middle East.

Among troops heading to Europe is the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga., which will be part of the Pentagon's Atlantic Resolve campaign, focused on deterring Russian aggression. They will replace the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, currently on rotation in Poland and locations along NATO's eastern flank.

Overseeing the Atlantic Resolve campaign will be the 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters out of Fort Hood, Texas, which will deploy to Poznan, Poland, this summer, the Army said.

"We have trained for many months to prepare to serve in Europe and we are excited to work directly with our allies and partners to deter potential threats," said 1st Cavalry Division commander, Maj. Gen. Jeffery Broadwater, in a statement.

Mystery deepens over N. Korea leader's location

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The mystery over Kim Jong Un's whereabouts deepened this weekend as satellite images showed a train probably belonging to the North Korean leader at his coastal compound amid speculation about his health.

The images, which were released by the monitoring website 38 North, showed that the 820-foot train has been at the compound near the eastern city of Wonsan since April 21.

The website stressed that the train's presence doesn't confirm the 36-year-old leader's location or indicate anything about his health, "but it does lend weight to reports that Kim is staying at an elite area on the country's eastern coast."

The train wasn't at the Leadership railway station, which services the Wonsan compound, April 15, but was there April 21 and April 23, according to the analysis published Saturday by

experts Martyn Williams, Peter Makowsky and Jenny Town.

The report was the latest piece of the puzzle surrounding Kim's prolonged absence from the public eye, heightened by his failure to appear at celebrations marking the April 15 birthday of his late grandfather and the country's founder, Kim Il Sung.

Reuters, citing three people familiar with the situation, also reported this weekend that China has dispatched a team of doctors and officials to advise on Kim, although it provided few details.

South Korean officials have insisted that no unusual signs have been detected to indicate that Kim is seriously ill.

But concern has intensified as thinly sourced media reports and rumors ranging from claims that Kim is in a vegetative state or already dead circulate on social media.

The third-generation leader also was a no-show for Saturday's anniversary of the found-

ing of the nation's military.

Experts have urged caution since it's virtually impossible to confirm information about the North Korean leader's health, which has long been a topic of concern because of his weight, a heavy smoking habit and a family history of heart disease.

Kim Jong Un, who assumed power after his father died, also disappeared once before in 2014, but reappeared with a cane after about six weeks. South Korea's intelligence agency said that he had a cyst removed from his ankle.

"While I am skeptical of reports on Kim Jong Un's death, or incapacitation right now because we have seen this before, it would represent another unprecedented crisis for the president of the United States and the president of South Korea to handle in addition to the coronavirus," said Matthew Schmidt, a security and political science associate professor at the University of New Haven.

Internet firms lower fees at some US bases

BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

Some internet providers at U.S. military bases are slashing overage fees or providing free service to troops in lockdown or quarantine due to the coronavirus.

Americable, which serves bases in Japan, announced April 17 it would reduce overage fees from \$12.50 to \$6.25 for every 50 gigabytes beyond the limits on customers' data plans in April and May.

The announcement followed the surge in internet traffic after students were sent home from school and base workers began teleworking in March and April.

The changes affect Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Yokosuka Naval Base, Naval Air Station Atsugi and Sasebo Naval Base, where peak traffic hours now last an entire day instead of in the evening or on weekends, said James Smith, president of Americable International Inc., in an email Friday to Stars and Stripes.

"In a typical month, between 8-10% of customers exceed the data limits for their subscribed plan," he said. "However, had we not waived the overage fees last month that number would have been much higher."

Boingo, another internet service provider for service members in the United States, Japan and South Korea, is offering broadband service for free to those living in quarantine barracks, said spokeswoman Melody Walker in an emailed statement on Wednesday. This free service covers more than 7,000 beds.

Echoing the requests of base commanders, he implored customers to limit their screen time and to log onto their accounts regularly to monitor their usage to ensure everyone stays within their limits.

F-16 combat jet at Spangdahlem first in Europe to hit 10,000 flight hours

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

An F-16 combat jet at Spangdahlem Air Base achieved a landmark 10,000 flight hours Thursday, nearly 27 years after it rolled off the production line and began flying for the 52nd Fighter Wing.

The aircraft — Tail No. 343 — is the first Block 50 Fighting Falcon in Europe and only the second F-16 in the U.S. Air Force's inventory to reach the historic milestone, something maintainers hailed as a testament to its durability and their

dedicated labor.

An F-16 at Misawa Air Base in northern Japan hit the mark a year ago, but that jet was delivered a year earlier than Spangdahlem's, maintainers said. It also took 26 years and 11 months to reach 10,000 hours — two months longer than No. 343.

Keeping No. 343 airworthy involved about 190,000 hours of work by ground crews, maintainers said. The F-16 on average requires 19 hours of maintenance for every hour of flying time — a figure that includes thorough inspections, re-

fueling and basic maintenance such as changing tires and oil.

The wing's vice commander, Col. Jason Hokaj, took the jet up Thursday afternoon for less than an hour to reach the milestone. Base firefighters hosed down the aircraft as it taxied down the flightline after landing.

"This is such an amazing event to be part of," Hokaj said in a statement. "To think about the amount of hands and minds used to get here, to keep this machine flying, it's a testament to the professionalism of the 52nd Maintenance Group."

Nations mulling different reopening plans

Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — Shrieks of joy rang out in the streets of Spain as children were allowed to go outside and play Sunday for first time in six weeks, while people in Italy and France were eager to hear their leaders' plans for easing some of the world's strictest coronavirus lockdowns.

"This is wonderful! I can't believe it has been six weeks," Susana Sabate, a mother of 3-year-old twin boys, said in Barcelona. "My boys are very active. Today when they saw the front door and we gave them their scooters, they were thrilled."

Wary of igniting new infection flare-ups, nations have been taking divergent paths on how and when to reopen their economies after weeks at a standstill.

The official death toll from

the virus topped 200,000 worldwide, with 2.9 million confirmed infections, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Those figures understate the enormity of the crisis because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and some governments' efforts to underplay their outbreaks.

Two weeks after being released from a London hospital, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson — the only major world leader so far to fall ill with COVID-19 — plans to return to work Monday.

Spain, Italy and France, which have Europe's highest death tolls from the virus, all imposed tough lockdown rules in March. All have reported significant progress in bringing down infection rates and are ready — warily — to start giving citizens more freedom.

"Maximum caution will be our guideline for the rollback,"

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said as he announced that Spaniards will be allowed to leave their homes for short walks and exercise starting May 2. "We must be very prudent, because there is no manual, no road map, to follow."

Until now, adults in Spain were allowed out only for essential shopping or to go to work. Children under 14 were in complete seclusion for 44 days, but as of Sunday they were allowed to take walks with one parent for up to an hour. They must stay within 0.6 miles of their homes, take only one toy out and cannot play with other youngsters.

The sound of children shouting and the rattle of bikes on the pavement soon returned.

In Barcelona, Sabate's sons wore child-size face masks as they went out. "Now we will see how long they stay on!" she said.

The prime minister plans to present a detailed plan Tuesday for the "de-escalation" of Spain's lockdown.

In France, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said that he will unveil a "national deconfinement strategy" on the same day. That follows weeks of work by experts seeking a balance between restarting the eurozone's second-largest economy and preventing a second wave of infections that could overwhelm France's intensive care units.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte is expected to announce more details on easing the lockdown in the coming days for the first European country to see a large-scale coronavirus outbreak. Conte said that priorities include restarting construction projects and export industries. He confirmed that school classes won't resume until September.

WHO warns of catching virus more than once

Bloomberg News

Catching COVID-19 once may not actually protect you from getting it again, according to the World Health Organization, a finding that could jeopardize efforts to allow people to return to work after recovering from the virus.

"There is currently no evidence that people who have recovered from COVID-19 and have antibodies are protected from a second infection," the United Nations agency said in a recent statement.

The WHO guidance came after some governments suggested that people who have antibodies to the coronavirus could be issued an "immunity passport" or "risk-free certificate" that would allow them to travel or return to work, based on the assumption that they were safe from reinfection, according to the statement, issued Friday. People given such a certificate could ignore pub-

lic health guidance, increasing the risk of the disease spreading further.

Chile was the first country to announce plans to issue immunity cards based partly on antibody tests. This has raised concerns because the tests have proven unreliable elsewhere, and some people may get deliberately ill in order to obtain the card. The U.S. and others have nonetheless said that they're looking into the option.

While there's a consensus that the key to ending the pandemic is establishing so-called herd immunity, there are many unknowns. One is whether researchers can develop a safe and effective vaccine. Another is how long people who've recovered have immunity; reinfection after months or years is common with other human coronaviruses. Finally, it's not clear what percentage of people must be immune to protect the "herd." That depends on the contagiousness of the virus.

Students complete Atlantic crossing forced by virus

Associated Press

HARLINGEN, Netherlands — Greeted by relieved parents, pet dogs, flares and a cloud of orange smoke, a group of 25 Dutch high school students with very little sailing experience ended a trans-Atlantic voyage Sunday that was forced on them by coronavirus restrictions.

The children, ages 14 to 17, watched over by 12 experienced crew members and three teachers, were on an educational cruise of the Caribbean when the pandemic quickly forced them to radically change their plans for returning home in March.

That gave one of the young sailors, 17-year-old Floor Hurkmans, one of the biggest lessons of her impromptu adventure.

"Being flexible, because everything is changing all the time," she said as she set foot on dry land again. "The arrival time changed like 100

times. Being flexible is really important."

Instead of flying back from Cuba as originally planned, the crew and students stocked up on supplies and warm clothes, and set sail for the northern Dutch port of Harlingen, a five-week voyage of nearly 4,350 miles, on board the 200-foot top sail schooner *Wylde Swan*.

As they arrived home, the students hung up a self-made banner saying "Bucket List" with ticks in boxes for Atlantic Ocean crossing, mid-ocean swim and surviving the Bermuda triangle.

The teens hugged and chanted each other's names as they walked off the ship and into the arms of their families, who drove their cars alongside the yacht one by one to adhere to social distancing rules imposed to rein in the spread of the virus that forced the students into their long trip home.

Navy hospital ship readies to leave NY as numbers dip

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A Navy hospital ship is offloading patients as it gets ready to set sail from New York City, the state is starting to test health care workers and first responders for coronavirus antibodies and data shows hospitalizations for the disease fell to their lowest level in three weeks.

Details on developments in the coronavirus outbreak in New York:

Shipping off

The Navy hospital ship sent to relieve stress on New York City hospitals at the height of the pandemic was discharging or transferring its last 12 patients over the weekend as it nears the end of its mission, according to Northwell Health, which provides operational assistance to the vessel.

The USNS Comfort, docked at a Manhattan pier since March 30, will soon leave for its homeport in Norfolk, Va., where it will restock and be

readied for another possible assignment, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said. He did not provide a date for the ship's departure.

As of Saturday, the 1,000-bed hospital ship had treated just 182 patients.

A temporary hospital set up at a Manhattan convention center has also seen lower than projected patient volume.

First envisioned as a 2,500-bed field hospital for people without the disease, the Javits Center was soon converted to a coronavirus-only hospital, but only ever topped out at about 500 beds.

Antibody testing

The state is starting to test health care workers for coronavirus antibodies and will do the same next week with transit and law enforcement workers as the state eases away from the worst days of the pandemic, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Saturday.

Doctors, nurses and other

employees at four New York City hospitals that have handled high volumes of coronavirus patients will be the first tested under the new program, Cuomo said.

Antibody testing is a way of determining if a person has been infected by the coronavirus even if they hadn't shown symptoms.

Hospitalizations down

Cuomo's testing announcements came as new data showed hospitalizations for coronavirus in the state falling to their lowest level in three weeks.

A little more than 13,000 people were being hospitalized for the disease Friday, about the same level the state was on April 1.

The state's COVID-19 hospitalization tally peaked at 18,825 on April 12 and has fallen every day since.

"All of the numbers are basically saying the same, that we are in fact on the downside of the mountain," Cuomo said.

USAF veteran a winner in Army contest for ventilators

By J.P. LAWRENCE

Stars and Stripes

A company run by a former Air Force medic is one of two winners of an Army contest to find low-cost, easily manufactured ventilators to help with shortages caused by the coronavirus pandemic, a statement from the service said Friday.

Michael Maguire's company AirMid Critical Care Products, Inc. pitched an idea for a manual, bellow-based ventilator and won a \$100,000 award for further research, Diane Pollard, a spokeswoman with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, told Stars and Stripes.

Spiro Devices, LLC, also received a \$100,000 prize through the xTech COVID-19 Ventilator Challenge, an Army contest beginning in early April that sought pitches for ventilators.

The contest started after reports of widespread ventilator shortages in COVID-19 response efforts, said Matthew Willis, the Army's director for laboratory management.

The contest had two phases, with those getting to the pitch stage winning \$5,000 and selected pitches receiving \$100,000 and an invitation to develop a prototype.

The D.C.-based company's idea adds a control mechanism to manual ventilators, which are hand-pumped and often used by first responders.

A COVID-19 patient with infected lungs, after being picked up by a first responder, will often be placed on a manual air pump until they can get to a mechanical ventilator located at a hospital, Maguire said.

But due to shortages, mechanical ventilators may be far away or unavailable. These ventilators, because they are hand-pumped, risk errors and over-inflation of the lungs, with deadly results, he said.

The solution, Maguire said, is a manual pump that is portable, but has controls on how much air is put into a patient's lungs similar to a hospital's mechanical ventilator.

Retired general, team help Boston beat virus

Boston Herald

Two military all-stars have joined retired four-star Gen. Stanley McChrystal to help Boston Mayor Marty Walsh steer the city and quickly address daily issues popping up during the coronavirus outbreak.

Legendary CIA operative Greg Vogle—who saved Afghan politician and Taliban resistor Hamid Karzai in 2001—and Lt. Gen. John R. Vines have joined the twice-daily phone calls with Walsh's administration as part of the McChrystal Group's two-month, nearly \$500,000 contract. Walsh hired the group in late March.

"This isn't just the A team, this is the A+ team," said U.S.

Rep. Seth Moulton, a Salem Democrat and Iraq War veteran who is a close friend of McChrystal's. "You gotta give credit to Mayor Walsh for humbly asking for their advice and being able to say, 'I don't know everything.' I wish the president was able to do that."

The team talks every morning with Walsh administration officials to identify needs throughout the city and prioritize which ones need fast action, said Walsh spokeswoman Samantha Ormsby.

"Through this work, we seek to solve problems within 24 hours, which allows us to stay as ahead of this virus as much as possible," said Ormsby.

Vogle served as director of

the National Clandestine Service under former President Barack Obama and was the lead paramilitary adviser to Hamid Karzai as he battled the Taliban in 2001. He threw himself on the Afghan politician during a Dec. 5 airstrike, saving his life.

Vines served in the Army for 35 years and was in continuous command for the last six years of his service.

McChrystal created the Virginia-based McChrystal Group to consult and share the leadership methods he learned in the field. He also reviews disaster plans in different agencies across the city and identifies any gaps or overlaps.

Supreme Court will hear cases over phone

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — This is how the Supreme Court embraces technology. Slowly.

It took a worldwide pandemic for the court to agree to hear arguments over the telephone, with audio available live for the first time. C-SPAN plans to carry the arguments.

Just two years ago, case filings were made available online, decades after other courts. Other forays into technology, including posting opinions online, have not always gone smoothly.

Chief Justice John Roberts acknowledged in 2014 that courts will always be cautious when it comes to embracing the “next big thing” in technology.

And even the decision to hold arguments via telephone is “sort of retro,” given much of the country and other courts are doing meetings and arguments using video conferencing, said Clare Cushman, the director of publications at the Supreme Court Historical Society.

But the decision remains a “giant leap forward,” Cushman said, for a court that

has shunned technology in favor of tradition. The court used an obsolete document delivery system, pneumatic tubes, until 1971. It was slow to add computers and late in transitioning from printing opinions in the court’s basement on Linotype machines, which used metal type, to electronic printing in the early 1980s.

Before the coronavirus outbreak, the justices circulated messages and opinion drafts on paper rather than by email.

Still, most of the nine justices — six of them over the age of 65 — seem perfectly comfortable with modern technology in their own lives. Justice Elena Kagan has said she is on Twitter, and Justice Samuel Alito has described reading briefs on an iPad. Justice Sonia Sotomayor wears an electronic sensor that monitors her diabetes. And Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh have teenage and pre-teen children who might be expected to text their fathers.

Even the court’s two oldest justices are somewhat tech-savvy. This month, 81-year-old Justice Stephen Breyer used Zoom to

talk to students at a New York school. His background: a picture of the court.

And 87-year-old Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has said she reads her email on an iPhone and uses an iPad, though not perhaps to its maximum advantage — she told an audience in 2016 that she uses the iPad as a sound machine to help her sleep.

The dramatic change is a product of efforts to slow the spread of the virus, recognize the reality that most of the justices are at risk because of their age and decide significant cases by the court’s traditional summer break.

This year, those cases include President Donald Trump’s effort to shield his tax and other financial records and whether presidential electors must cast their Electoral College ballots for their states’ winners.

The new arrangement might be good for one month only, assuming the justices can return to courtroom arguments when their new term begins in October. But several advocates of greater transparency hope the justices will allow simultaneous broadcasting of arguments even after the pandemic.

Court reinstates California ammunition purchase law

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — An appeals court has reinstated a California law requiring background checks for people buying ammunition, reversing a federal judge’s decision to stop the checks that he said violate the constitutional right to bear arms.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday granted the state attorney general’s request to stay the judge’s order.

“This means that the same restrictions that have been previously in effect regarding ammunition in California are back for the time being,” the National Rifle Association, which hailed the judge’s injunction, said in a news release.

The law, which took effect in July, requires Californians to pass an in-store

background check before buying ammunition, which involves running buyers’ names through a California Department of Justice database that tracks legal purchases of guns.

Gun rights activists complained the law’s red tape and database errors unfairly limited legal purchases of ammunition.

U.S. District Judge Roger T. Benitez in San Diego ruled in their favor, saying the law “defies common sense while unduly and severely burdening the Second Amendment rights of every responsible, gun-owning citizen desiring to lawfully buy ammunition.”

While it is intended to keep ammunition from criminals, it blocked sales to legitimate, law-abiding buyers about 16% of the

time, Benitez wrote. Moreover, he ruled that the state’s ban on importing ammunition from outside California violates federal interstate commerce laws.

Attorney General Xavier Becerra said in a court filing earlier this month that the background checks stopped more than 750 people from buying bullets illegally from July 2019 through January 2020, not including those who didn’t even try because they knew they weren’t eligible.

The law requires buyers who already are in the state’s firearm background check database to pay a \$1 fee each time they buy ammunition, while others can buy longer-term licenses if they do not have certain criminal convictions or mental health commitments.

Man sentenced to 18 months for threatening to kill Trump

Associated Press

DALLAS — A 36-year-old Texas man has been sentenced to 18 months in federal prison for threatening to assassinate President Donald Trump, prosecutors said.

Mickael Gedlu was sentenced Friday, according to a state-

ment from U.S. Attorney Erin Nealy Cox’s office in Dallas. He pleaded guilty in December to making threats against Trump.

According to plea documents, Gedlu admitted he threatened Trump’s life on social media, stating on YouTube: “I am

waiting for Trump to visit Dallas before I attempt to assassinate him.”

During court proceedings, prosecutors said that on May 31, 2018, Gedlu was observed across the street from Dallas’ Adolphus Hotel just 30 minutes before Trump arrived there

for a fundraiser. Dallas police officers noticed Gedlu holding a “Kill Trump” sign and detained him as he screamed, “kill the president.”

Prosecutors said the U.S. Secret Service conducted the investigation with the assistance of the Dallas police.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

City upgraded with 20 focused tornado sirens

TN NASHVILLE — Nashville is adding 20 tornado sirens in a system upgrade that will let the warnings go off in specific areas, instead of throughout all of the city.

The Metro Office of Emergency Management said in a news release that it will begin work on the next phase of a \$1.9 million upgrade to Nashville's tornado warning system alongside Metro Information Technology Services.

Officials expect to finish the project this year. Nashville will then have 113 sirens that will provide more focused alerts based on National Weather Service information.

Woman traps fox in pot used to scald chickens

ME GRAY— A fox that was attacking a Maine woman quickly found that its goose was cooked when she wrestled it into a pot meant for scalding chickens.

Eliza Ruth Watson, 37, of Gray tried to scare the fox away while she was gardening. Instead, the animal ran toward her, the Sun Journal reported.

The fox bit Watson's hand, and she grabbed it by the neck to keep it from biting her again. After a struggle, she found a pot used to scald birds for plucking, shoved the fox in and closed the lid. She then called 911.

Game wardens later trapped the fox, which was taken to Augusta to be tested for rabies.

Bigfoot statue urging social distancing stolen

MA BRIMFIELD — Police in one Massachusetts town are on the hunt for Bigfoot.

A statue of the legendary ape creature was stolen from outside a home in Brimfield, a small town 20 miles east of Springfield.

The Worcester Telegram reported that the roadside Bigfoot-sized statue had lately been outfitted with signs reminding people to observe social distancing guidelines amid the coronavirus outbreak. It even sported a face covering.

Bigfoot's owner has offered a \$200 reward for the statue, which he said has a value of \$2,400.

Mayor reports woman hiding in his cellar

KY BOWLING GREEN — A Kentucky mayor said he found a woman hiding in his cellar.

Bowling Green Mayor Bruce Wilkerson said he found the woman after he heard noises and smelled cigarette smoke outside a home he was renovating, WNKY-TV reported.

Wilkerson saw the woman when he went back to the cellar a second time after the electricity in his house went out, the Bowling Green Daily News reported. He said a young woman with dark hair told him she was "hiding from someone" before she ran away into the street.

The mayor said he doesn't know when the woman started living in his cellar.

Man faces charges for hurling Molotov cocktail

DC WASHINGTON — Federal prosecutors announced charges against a man they say threw a lit Molotov cocktail at a police officer sitting in an unmarked car in the nation's capital.

Ashton Nesmith, 23, was accused of walking up to a police officer who had just entered

the vehicle outside a police station in northeast Washington, lighting flammable liquid in a bottle and throwing it at the officer, according to federal prosecutors.

The Molotov cocktail hit the police car, bounced off and then exploded, officials said. No one was injured.

Police said Nesmith fled from the scene, but officers chased him on foot and took him into custody.

Driver in freeway chase faces multiple charges

AZ PHOENIX — A driver who led authorities on a slow-speed freeway car chase from Gilbert through Phoenix faces multiple charges.

Arizona Department of Public Safety officials said Binh Thien Nguyen, 40, was being held on suspicion of charges of unlawful flight from law enforcement, DUI, possession of drug paraphernalia and criminal damage.

They said Nguyen likely faces more charges from Gilbert police, who say the suspect reportedly was yelling and screaming in a parking lot before getting into a Smart Car and driving away.

Police said they tried multiple times to pull Nguyen over, but he didn't stop.

DPS troopers used spiked sticks to puncture the small car's tires and then used a maneuver to stop the vehicle and make an arrest.

In-line skating bandit robs Dunkin' Donuts

NY HICKSVILLE — A robber wearing in-line skates skated off into the night after sticking up a Dunkin' Donuts on Long Island, police said.

Nassau County police said

the suspect glided into the Hicksville shop, bought a cup of coffee and then demanded cash while making it seem like he had a gun under his clothing.

The man got away with an undetermined amount of money.

Some residents now need to dial 10 digits

SC COLUMBIA — South Carolinians in the 803 area code will now have to dial those three extra digits to make a call.

The 10-digit dialing requirement went into effect April 25 because starting in May, a new 839 area code will be added to the region, news outlets reported.

The 803 area code covers York, Lancaster, Chester, Lexington, Richland, Fairfield and Kershaw counties.

The new area code will only affect brand new phone numbers.

The 839 area code will be the fifth in the state.

City to end horse-drawn carriage rides next year

IL CHICAGO — The Chicago City Council voted to end horse-drawn carriage rides in the city after Dec. 31.

Alderman Brendan Reilly, whose ward includes the city's central business district, said he has tried to persuade carriage operators to "treat their animals in a humane way." When the violations continued, he had no choice but to push to banish them from city streets, Reilly said.

With the vote, Chicago joins cities such as Salt Lake City and Camden, N.J., that have also banned horse-drawn carriages.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Manning out as head coach at Wake Forest

RALEIGH, N.C. — Danny Manning never built a winner at Wake Forest. Now the school is looking for a new coach and direction.

Wake Forest fired Manning on Saturday after losing seasons in five of his six years with one NCAA Tournament appearance. The move came more than six weeks after the Demon Deacons lost to Pittsburgh in the opening game of the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament, ending the season shortly before the coronavirus pandemic led to a shutdown of college and professional sports.

The decision came after what athletic director John Currie called an “overall evaluation” of a program with two winning seasons in the past decade going back to the days of Jeff Bzdelik.

“As time goes by, we’re able to resume things,” Currie said Saturday in a video teleconference. “We never stopped working on this particular program because it is so important to all of us, just like we haven’t stopped with the day-to-day duties. ... But certainly the onset of the pandemic played a role.”

Manning, a former No. 1 overall NBA draft pick, went 78-111 at the school with a 30-80 mark in ACC regular-season games. Those league struggles included a 6-49 mark in league road games and 1-6 in the ACC Tournament.

Official: Manfred had hand in ump’s removal

NEW YORK — A major league official testified he suggested Ángel Hernández be removed from consideration for the 2015 World Series because he did not think Commissioner Rob Manfred would approve the umpire to work baseball’s premier event.

Hernández sued Major League Baseball in 2017, alleging race discrimination and cited his failure to be assigned to the World Series since 2005 and MLB’s failure to promote him to crew chief.

Documents and depositions from pretrial discovery were filed Friday and Saturday.

— Associated Press

Some NBA facilities reopening

Associated Press

MIAMI — NBA players will be allowed to return to team training facilities starting Friday, provided that their local governments do not have a stay-at-home order prohibiting such movement still in place as part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Any workouts that take place would be voluntary and be limited to individual sessions only, according to a person familiar with the league’s decision. The person spoke to The Associated Press on Saturday on the condition of anonymity because the directives from the league were not released publicly.

Group practices would not be allowed yet, and teams will not yet be permitted to organize in-person workouts.

But as certain states and municipalities began loosening restrictions on personal movement, the NBA decided it was time to let players return to their practice courts — if only on a limited basis. Georgia and Oklahoma are among the states that have allowed some businesses to reopen and some cities in Florida are expected to loosen their stay-at-home policies in the coming days, even though health officials are warning that such moves are being made too quickly.

For those teams in cities where stay-at-home orders still make such a return impossible, the NBA said it would work to find “alternative arrangements,” the person with knowledge of the matter said.

This move does not mean that a resumption of games is imminent. Still, the decision to let teams back into facilities is a significant step.

ESPN first reported details of the NBA’s decision.

In the NHL, suspended at about the same point

of the season as the NBA, Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said league officials “haven’t made any decisions yet.” Daly said only the NHL owes players and teams guidance before April 30 and will consider its next steps in that context.

Many NBA players have said they haven’t even had access to a basket since the league ordered teams to close their practice facilities on March 19. All-Star Jimmy Butler sent baskets to his Miami Heat teammates earlier this month, but some other players around the league said they haven’t even touched a basketball during the shutdown.

If they’re so inclined, that can now change. There remains no indicator about when a full-fledged return to organized team workouts will resume, however.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver has said on several occasions that the league does not anticipate being able to decide until sometime in May — at the earliest — if a resumption of the season is possible.

The NBA suspended the season March 11. It ordered teams to shutter their facilities eight days later, saying at the time it was doing so “in light of the rapidly-developing coronavirus situation, and consistent with evolving advice from health experts regarding how to promote individual and public health while minimizing the spread of the virus.”

Johns Hopkins University, which tracks the numbers of those affected or killed by the virus based off official government figures, said the COVID-19 worldwide death toll surpassed 200,000 on Saturday. And the World Health Organization said “there is currently no evidence” that people who have recovered from the virus cannot fall sick again..

UFC 249 to be held May 9 in Florida

Associated Press

The UFC is returning to competition on May 9 for three shows without fans in eight days in Jacksonville, Fla.

The mixed martial arts promotion announced its plans Friday to return to action after postponing and canceling several shows due to the coronavirus pandemic.

UFC 249 will be held May 9 at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena in Jacksonville with no fans in attendance. The pay-per-view show will still be headlined by Tony Ferguson’s interim lightweight title bout against Justin Gaethje.

UFC President Dana White

said he also plans to hold shows on May 13 and May 16 at the same arena in northern Florida. Only “essential personnel” will be in the arena, White said.

“I can’t wait to deliver some great fights for the fans,” White said in a statement. “My team is ready to go and the fighters are excited to get back in there with these back-to-back events.”

The UFC has been out of action since holding a full fight card in an empty arena in Brazil on March 14. But White has been determined to return to action while the rest of the sports world remains shut down.

UFC 249 was almost held on tribal land in central Califor-

nia on April 18, but the show was postponed April 9 at the insistence of ESPN and Disney, the UFC’s broadcast partners. Prominent California state officials were opposed to the UFC’s plan to hold a show there. However, the promotion’s plans have satisfied Florida officials, including the Florida State Boxing Commission, which regulates MMA in the state.

“The UFC organization is a renowned entertainment brand that’s presented a safe and sensible plan to use this Jacksonville location, and we are thrilled to have our city highlighted nationally,” Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry said.

49ers land Williams to replace Staley

Associated Press

The San Francisco 49ers acquired one Pro Bowl left tackle and said goodbye to another.

The defending NFC champion 49ers acquired seven-time Pro Bowl left tackle Trent Williams from the Washington Redskins on Saturday for a pair of draft picks and later announced that six-time Pro Bowler Joe Staley is retiring.

"He's as good as a player and warrior and person as any player I've ever been around," coach Kyle Shanahan said. "I love the guy. It was really hard on us when we realized he wasn't going to play this year."

But it made it easier that the Niners were able to find a replacement. They sent a fifth-round pick in this year's draft and a 2021 third-rounder to acquire Williams, who still must pass a physical for the trade to be finalized.

The 49ers had a big need at left tackle because Staley informed them he planned to retire. He announced it later Saturday, saying a deteriorat-

ing neck injury led to his decision to retire after 13 seasons. Staley also missed nine games last season with injuries to his leg and finger.

"The game of football has been a true passion of mine since I was 8, but my body is telling me it is time," Staley said in a statement. "Football is a physical sport and I have given my all to the game and pushed my limits. Last season was a dream to be a part of, having the opportunity to chase a championship. But, it was by far the most difficult on me and my family."

Staley was a first-round pick in 2007 and played 181 games over 13 seasons. He was selected to the NFL's all-decade team for the 2010s and played a big role in San Francisco's runs to the Super Bowl following the 2012 and '19 seasons.

Staley leaves a big void but the Niners were appreciative that he told them of his plans before the draft so they could make the move for Williams.

Williams sat out the entire

2019 season because of a dispute with Washington's front office. The Redskins weren't able to get the compensation they wanted at last year's trade deadline and kept Williams. He renewed his request for a trade this offseason and was finally dealt.

"Trent Williams is a first-round value, that's what he is," Redskins vice president of player personnel Kyle Smith said. "That's what the tape tells you. That's what everybody knows. His circumstance and everything that has gone into this for two years or whatever it's been, that's what's devalued him."

The deal reunites Williams with Shanahan, who was the offensive coordinator in Washington when Williams was drafted fourth overall in 2010.

"Skill-set wise, Trent is similar to Joe," Shanahan said. "They are two of the most athletic guys I've been around at that position."

Williams made the Pro Bowl every season from 2012-18 and is considered one of the best

left tackles in the league when healthy.

The 49ers made two more trades Saturday, sending away veterans whom they didn't need anymore.

San Francisco dealt running back Matt Breida to Miami for the 153rd pick used on West Virginia offensive lineman Colton McKivitz.

Last year Breida rushed for 623 yards in 13 games but saw little action late in the season.

Breida was available because of a logjam at running back with Raheem Mostert, Tevin Coleman, Jerick McKinnon and Jeff Wilson Jr. all under contract.

The Niners then traded receiver Marquise Goodwin to Philadelphia to move up from No. 210 to 190, where they took Georgia blocking tight end Charlie Woerner.

San Francisco had been looking to unload the speedy Goodwin all offseason. He had 35 catches in 20 games the past two seasons.

Hands off: Pack keeps away from receivers in draft

Associated Press

The Green Bay Packers acquired Aaron Rodgers' potential successor but didn't give their star quarterback any new wide receivers.

In a draft heralded for its receiving depth, the Packers opted against taking a single player at a position that was widely considered a major need.

The Packers traded up four spots in the first round to take Utah State quarterback Jordan Love with the 26th overall pick. By the time they drafted again late in the second round, 13 receivers already had been taken.

"We felt (the receiver class) was really strong at the top," general manager Brian Gutekunst said. "I don't know as we went through the middle and the end, that we felt it was as strong as maybe others did."

"I thought the top was one of the stronger drafts at the wide receiver class that I can remember, but the runs went pretty early, and once we got to a certain spot, with the group that we had coming back, it wasn't like we weren't looking to add to that com-

petition. We just felt there weren't a lot of great candidates that were locks to make our team next year."

Davante Adams is the only Packer who caught as many as 50 passes or accumulated as many as 500 yards receiving last season. The Packers' biggest offseason addition to their receiving corps is Devin Funchess, who played just one game for Indianapolis last season before going on injured reserve with a broken collarbone.

"I do think we have talent and depth at that position," coach Matt LaFleur said.

The lack of receivers was perhaps the biggest surprise of a draft in which the Packers focused on solving potential long-term issues. How much a team that finished a game short of the Super Bowl last season improved its 2020 fortunes is up for debate.

The Packers used their first-round pick on Love, who will likely spend his first couple of seasons backing up Rodgers. They drafted Boston College running back A.J. Dillon in the second round when they already have Aaron Jones, who rushed for 16

touchdowns and 1,084 yards last year.

Green Bay added Cincinnati tight end Josiah Deguara in the third round and Minnesota linebacker Kamal Martin in the fifth round. The Packers selected three offensive linemen in the sixth round by taking Michigan guard/tackle Jon Runyan Jr., Oregon center Jake Hanson and Indiana guard Simon Stepaniak. They chose TCU safety Vernon Scott and Miami defensive end Jonathan Garvin in the seventh round.

The success of this draft likely will depend on whether Love eventually develops into the kind of player who can continue Green Bay's three-decade run of quality quarterback play.

His arrival already has produced plenty of speculation regarding how much longer Rodgers will stay in Green Bay, no matter how much the Packers attempt to downplay that.

Green Bay's draft strategy suggests the Packers may adopt a run-oriented approach, though Gutekunst cautioned against reading too much into that.