

STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, April 30, 2020

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

DOD: Increase in reports of sexual assault, harassment

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Rates of sexual assault and harassment reports in the military have increased since last year, according to a Pentagon report released Thursday.

The Defense Department's fiscal year 2019 report on sexual assault in the military said there were 7,825 sexual assault reports involving service members as victims or subjects, a 3% increase compared to 2018. The increase in reports can't be characterized as an increase in assaults, according to the Pentagon, because a separate survey on prevalence is only conducted every other year.

The military received 1,021 formal sexual harassment complaints, a 10% increase from 2018.

This year's report focused on four areas related to the "strengths and challenges" that the military services have in their sexual assault response and prevention programs, including "unit climate."

Most military sexual assaults happen between service members who work or live nearby, and "when unit climates are tolerant of other forms of misconduct, risk of sexual assault increases," the report states. For active duty women, those who experience sexual harassment had a three times greater risk of sexual assault than those who did not, according to the report.

This year's report reflects feedback from 61 focus groups at eight installations in the United States with over 490 service members and first responders who work with survivors.

On unit climate, focus group participants said that service members find it hard to fully define sexual harassment and that male and female service members define it differently.

Participants said that when it occurs, it is not always confronted or addressed, and service members believed that was because people don't want to jeopardize the career of a high-ranking or better performing service member.

Overall military culture is slowly heading in the right direction and senior leaders are actively making changes, according to the report.

The military is working to provide more training and tools to those at the junior leadership ranks of E-4 to E-6 to address sexual assault and harassment because personnel in these ranks work closer with younger enlisted service members, according to Nate Galbreath, the acting director of the DOD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. Last year's reporting found that the increase in sexual assault were mostly among female service members between 17 to 24 and junior enlisted women.

Former acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan issued a memo after last year's DOD report and recommendations from the Sexual Assault Accountability and Investigation Task Force Report, laying out actions to address sexual assault and harassment. This year's report includes some progress that has been made.

One of the actions listed by Shanahan was to establish the Catch a Serial Offender program, which allows survivors who make a restricted report to anonymously submit information to help identify repeat sexual offenders. The program allows the survivors another avenue to consider changing restricted reports to unrestricted and begin participating in the military justice system.

Since the program launched in August, there have been 239 reports submitted and five matches.

Downturn seen deepening in US

30M have sought jobless aid since virus hit

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More than 3.8 million laid-off workers applied for unemployment benefits last week as the U.S. economy slid further into a crisis that is becoming the most devastating since the 1930s.

Roughly 30.3 million people have filed for jobless aid in the six weeks since the coronavirus outbreak began forcing millions of employers to close their doors and slash their workforces. That is more people than live in the New York and Chicago metropolitan areas combined, and it's by far the worst string of layoffs on record. It adds up to more than one in six American workers.

With more employers cutting payrolls to save money, economists have forecast that the unemployment rate for April could go as high as 20%. That would be the highest rate since it reached 25% during the Great Depression.

This week, the government estimated that the economy shrank at a 4.8% annual rate in this year's first three months, the sharpest quarterly drop since the 2008 financial crisis. Yet the picture is likely to grow far worse: The economy is expected to contract in the April-June quarter by as much as 40% at an annual rate. No previous quarter has been anywhere near as weak since the government began keeping records after World War II.

As businesses across the country have shut down and laid off tens of millions of work-

ers, the economy has sunk into a near-paralysis in just a few weeks. Factories, hotels, restaurants, department stores, movie theaters and many small businesses are shuttered. Home sales are falling. Households are slashing spending. Consumer confidence is sinking.

With some signs that the viral outbreak may have plateaued at least in certain areas of the country, a few governors have taken tentative steps to begin reopening their economies. But surveys show that a large majority of Americans remain wary of returning to shopping, traveling and other normal economic activity. That suggests that many industries will struggle with diminished revenue for weeks or months to come and might be unable to rehire laid-off workers.

The Economic Policy Institute has calculated that about 70% of people who have filed for unemployment benefits since the virus struck have been approved. Applications from the rest may still be pending, or they might have been turned down. Some applicants may not have earned enough money in their previous jobs to qualify for unemployment benefits.

Thursday's figures also showed that states have approved the benefit applications of nearly 18 million people. This figure is much lower than the total number of people who have sought aid since the virus struck, in part because it lags behind by one week. And not everyone who applies for benefits manages to receive them.

RIMPAC exercise will go on in summer

By **SETH ROBSON**

Stars and Stripes

The world's largest international naval exercise will go ahead in waters off Hawaii this summer, but participating forces will stay at sea during the drills due to concerns about the coronavirus, the Navy announced Wednesday.

The Rim of the Pacific exercise will run from Aug. 27-31, according to a Navy statement on the U.S. Pacific Fleet website.

"This biennial maritime exercise will be an at-sea-only event in light of COVID-19 concerns," the statement said.

Conducting the exercise only at sea is intended to ensure the safety of participating forces

by minimizing shore-based contingents, according to the statement.

"Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet crafted the modified RIMPAC plan as a way to conduct a meaningful exercise with maximum training value and minimum risk to the force, allies, partners and the people of Hawaii," the statement said.

This year's exercise will include multinational anti-submarine warfare, maritime intercept operations and live-fire training. Planners will remain flexible as Navy leaders monitor and assess evolving circumstances.

To limit the spread of the coronavirus there are no scheduled social events ashore, the

statement said.

"Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam will be accessible for logistics support, with a minimal footprint of staff ashore for command and control, logistics and other support functions," the officials said in the statement.

The Navy did not announce participating nations.

"In these challenging times, it is more important than ever that our maritime forces work together to protect vital shipping lanes and ensure freedom of navigation through international waters," Adm. John Aquilino, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, said in the statement. "And we will operate safely, using prudent mitigation

measures."

The exercise is designed to foster and sustain cooperative relationships critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region, according to the Navy statement.

"We remain committed to and capable of safeguarding allies and partners throughout the Indo-Pacific region," Aquilino said. "The flexible approach to RIMPAC 2020 strikes the right balance between combating future adversaries and the COVID-19 threat."

RIMPAC 2020 will be led by U.S. 3rd Fleet commander Vice Adm. Scott Conn., according to the statement.

Court unseals documents in 3M faulty earplug suit

By **ROSE L. THAYER**

Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Hundreds of pages of court documents were unsealed last week in a lawsuit against 3M regarding allegedly faulty earplugs it sold the military for use by service members in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

The documents, made public April 20 by a federal judge in Pensacola, Fla., include emails, depositions, memos and receipts related to the Defense Department's mass purchase of earplugs from the company between 2003 and 2015. They provide a glimpse into the case that now includes claims from more than 140,000 veterans.

The "combat arms earplug, version 2" featured a dual-protection design. With the yellow end inserted into the ear, the wearer could still hear low-level sound, while inserting the olive-green end would offer the protection of a traditional earplug.

The lawsuit against 3M claims that the St. Paul, Minn.-based company knew from testing that the earplugs were too short to properly fit into an ear canal and could loosen in a way that was imperceptible to the wearer. It also claims that some of the testing results shown to the military before the purchase were done with a modification to the earplug that the military was not told was required to achieve optimal protection.

Many veterans who wore the earplugs suffer from hearing loss and tinnitus, or ringing in the ears, according to the lawsuit.

In its defense in court records, 3M said that the earplugs were made to the government's specifications, and that all test results, good and bad, were shared with the military.

In a statement regarding the unsealing of the court documents, 3M denied that the product was defectively designed and caused injuries.

Navy conducts back-to-back patrols in South China Sea

By **CAITLIN DOORNBOS**

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill steamed near the disputed Spratly Islands on Wednesday, marking the second time the U.S. has sent a warship on a freedom-of-navigation operation in the South China Sea this week, according to the Navy.

The mission challenged restrictions by China, Vietnam and Taiwan, which dispute sovereignty over the Spratly Islands, 7th Fleet spokeswoman Cmdr. Reann Mommsen said in a statement to Stars and Stripes on Thursday. The Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei also lay claim to portions of the islands.

"China, Vietnam and Taiwan purport to require either permission or advance notification before a military vessel or warship engages in 'innocent passage' through the territorial sea," Mommsen said. "The unilateral imposition of

any authorization or advance-notification requirement for innocent passage is not permitted by international law, so the United States challenged those requirements."

The U.S. does not recognize any country's claim over either island chain.

"Unlawful and sweeping maritime claims in the South China Sea pose a serious threat to the freedom of the seas," she said.

Li Huamin, spokesman for the Chinese southern theatre command, criticized the Barry's presence on the command's WeChat social media account, according to a Tuesday report by the South China Morning Post.

"These provocative acts by the U.S. side ... have seriously violated China's sovereignty and security interests, deliberately increased regional security risks and could easily trigger an unexpected incident," Li said.

Testing reveals several cases at Marine base in San Diego

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Nearly 50 recruits and staffers have tested positive for the coronavirus at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, the second outbreak to hit a Marines basic training base.

The cases at the Marines' West Coast training base are among recruits in one unit — Bravo Company — and some of the company's drill instructors and staff, according to Capt. Martin Harris, a spokesman for Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

Last month, the Marines' East Coast basic training base at Parris Island, S.C., also had a few dozen cases among new recruits, causing them to temporarily stop new recruits from traveling to the base for training.

Harris on Wednesday would

only confirm about four dozen people tested positive for the virus at the San Diego base. He would not give an exact number.

The recruits in Bravo Company arrived at the depot at the end of March just as more restrictions were established in response to the coronavirus, according to Harris. The company is one of nine recruit companies at the depot.

The recruits' movement was restricted for about a week after they arrived at the depot, staying near their living quarters and using one classroom to limit their exposure to the other training companies before their own official training started.

Commanders at both recruit depots are developing their own restriction of movement protocols for recruits based on their facilities and capacity, according to Gunnery Sgt. Jus-

tin Kronenberg, a spokesman for Marine Corps Recruiting Command.

The Citadel announced Monday that Marine recruits traveling to Parris Island will first report to the college campus for two weeks of observation for the coronavirus before they go to the base.

In San Diego, the first case was identified in one of Bravo Company's six platoons in early April after training had started. When more cases in the unit were identified, the entire company was put into a 14-day quarantine.

When the quarantine concluded last week, the recruits in the platoon with the first case were all tested for the coronavirus because the depot had "an increased capability of testing," Harris said. The testing found almost 50 positive results among asymptomatic recruits, he said.

European death toll tops 130K

Associated Press

NEW YORK — As the number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits climbed Thursday, bleak news also arrived in Europe, where over 130,000 people with the new coronavirus have died.

Figures from the 19 countries that use the euro showed that the European economy shrank a record 3.8% in the first quarter as lockdowns turned cities into ghost towns and plunged nations into recession. The drop was the biggest since eurozone statistics began in 1995.

France's economy shrank an eye-popping 5.8%, the biggest quarterly drop since 1949. In Spain, the contraction was 5.2%. Germany is projecting that its economy, the eurozone's biggest, will shrink 6.3% this year.

In Europe, big job-protection programs are temporarily keeping millions on payrolls, sparing them the record-setting flood of layoffs that is battering the U.S.

No continent is being spared. The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported a 37% surge in coronavirus cases in the past week — to more than 36,000 confirmed infections and over 1,500 deaths.

In Latin America, Brazil's virtually uncontrolled surge of coronavirus cases is igniting fears that construction workers, truck drivers and tourists will spread COVID-19 to neighboring countries that are doing a far better job of controlling the virus.

The pain of coronavirus lockdowns has piled pressure on governments to ease them.

The World Health Organization said nearly half of the 44 countries in Europe that restricted people's movements have started easing them and 11 more will do so soon.

Hospital ship leaving NYC for home

Associated Press

NEW YORK — After arriving to great fanfare, the USNS Comfort treated just 182 people as a surge in cases in hard-hit New York City fell short of the worst-case projections. The last dozen patients on the hospital ship were discharged or transferred to other hospitals over the weekend.

Eleven people that were treated on the ship died from coronavirus, the Defense Department said. Several ship personnel came down with coronavirus while deployed to New York.

A Pentagon spokesman called the ship's departure "a sure sign of modest progress in mitigating the virus in the nation's hardest hit city and is a welcome sign."

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said last week that he and President Donald Trump agreed the Comfort was no longer needed in New York City.

"I believe Comfort not only brought comfort but also saved lives," Cuomo said.

The Comfort and its 620 doctors, nurses and other crew members will return to the homeport in Norfolk, Va., where the ship will be restocked and be readied for another possible assignment. It's due to depart New York around noon

Thursday.

Trump said he asked Cuomo if "we could bring the Comfort back to its base in Virginia so that we could have it in other locations."

The president sent the Comfort to his home state last month as projections showed it would need to double hospital capacity to 110,000 beds by the end of April. Disease-related hospitalizations peaked far below that — at 18,825 on April 12 — and have ticked down considerably since then. The number of new hospital admissions is holding at around 950 people a day.

More than 18,000 people in the state have died from coronavirus, most of them in New York City. That total doesn't include more than 5,300 deaths in the city that were attributed to the virus on death certificates but weren't confirmed by a lab test.

The Defense Department said it did not have information on how much the Comfort's mission to New York cost.

The Comfort has a capacity of up to 1,000 hospital beds, but according to New York City's Office of Emergency Management, it had 427 set up for the coronavirus crisis — and all of those weren't needed.

Unemployment is emptying state funds

Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — A surge in unemployment stemming from the coronavirus shutdown of large parts of the U.S. economy is starting to push some state jobless funds toward insolvency.

At least six states have already notified the federal government that they could need to borrow billions of dollars to pay unemployment benefits because their own trust funds are running out of money.

While the shortfalls won't prevent unemployed workers from getting government aid, the federal loans could lead to higher taxes for businesses in future years to repay the debt.

U.S. Treasury data shows that California, Connecticut and Illinois all expect to borrow soon from the federal government to prop up their unemployment funds. Officials in Massachusetts, New York and Texas confirmed to The Associated Press that they have also notified the federal government of their anticipated need for loans.

California

SACRAMENTO — A memo sent to California police chiefs says that Gov. Gavin Newsom will order all beaches and state parks closed starting Friday to curb spread of the coronavirus.

The California Police Chiefs Association sent the bulletin to its members Wednesday evening. Eric Nunez, president of the association, said that it was sent to give chiefs time to plan ahead of Newsom's expected announcement Thursday.

Most state parks are already closed, and many communities have already shut their beaches. But some of those open in Ventura and Orange counties attracted large crowds last weekend, drawing Newsom's ire. He said Monday that the crowds were an example of "what not to do" if the state wants to continue its progress fighting the virus.

In Newport Beach, some 80,000 visitors hit the beach

over the weekend, although lifeguards said that most people exercised social distancing. With criticism swirling, the Newport Beach City Council met Tuesday and rejected a proposal to close the beaches for the next three weekends.

Colorado

DENVER — Colorado's biggest prison has become the site of the state's largest coronavirus outbreak, with 252 people testing positive as of Wednesday at the Sterling Correctional Facility.

Data updated weekly by the state health department shows that 241 inmates and 11 staff members have been confirmed to have COVID-19 at the prison with about 2,500 inmates on the state's northeastern plains.

Four of the inmates have been hospitalized, Colorado Department of Corrections spokeswoman Annie Skinner said.

The prison tested 472 inmates last week in order to isolate those who had the disease and minimize its spread.

North Dakota

BISMARCK — North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum said Wednesday that he'll allow movie theaters to reopen with precautions, but will keep other large-scale venues and K-12 schools closed until further notice.

Burgum said this week that he intends to lift restrictions on most businesses beginning Friday, saying that the state has made significant progress in its effort to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The plan to ease restrictions includes limiting bars and restaurants to half-capacity, requiring barbers and cosmetologists to wear face masks and prohibiting some high-intensity fitness classes.

Burgum added movie theaters to the list of businesses that may reopen if they limit seating to 20% of capacity, stagger start times and "allow for proper spacing."

But Burgum said that he was not ready to allow such things as sports arenas and large concert venues to open.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — COVID-19 has killed hundreds more Pennsylvania nursing home residents than was previously known, state health officials reported Wednesday, underscoring the threat at long-term care facilities that have struggled for weeks to contain the coronavirus.

The Department of Health reported 479 new COVID-19 deaths — 339 at nursing and personal care homes — raising Pennsylvania's death toll to more than 2,100. Nursing homes now account for 65% of the total.

Nursing homes cite shortages of personal protective equipment and have said that they haven't been able to do enough diagnostic testing to quickly identify and isolate patients and staff who have the virus.

South Carolina

COLUMBIA — Three of the most conservative members of the South Carolina House sent a letter Wednesday to the House speaker, asking him to call lawmakers back to the Statehouse and end the governor's emergency orders over the coronavirus.

The goal of the Republicans would be to let businesses reopen quicker than Gov. Henry McMaster's plan, which he said is based on the advice of health officials.

House Speaker Jay Lucas, also a Republican, refused to talk about the letter Wednesday through a spokeswoman. He has not set a date for the House to return.

Virginia

RICHMOND — Virginians will soon be able to have elective surgeries and dental checkups again, as Gov. Ralph Northam announced that nonessential medical procedures could re-

sume Friday. The governor said that pet owners could also resume taking their animals to the vet for nonemergencies.

The governor imposed a ban on nonemergency procedures last month in an effort to reserve capacity in the state's health care system for coronavirus patients and personal protective equipment, such as face masks, for providers treating those patients.

Northam said at a news conference Wednesday that the state has avoided a surge in hospitalized patients like in Italy and New York, and is in a much better spot in terms of having enough supplies and capacity than it was a few weeks ago.

The state's hospitals have pushed Northam to allow them to reopen for elective procedures as they grappled with lost revenues. Hospitals across the state announced layoffs, furloughs and other measures to cut costs. The Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association estimated that about 15,000 nonurgent inpatient and outpatient medical procedures have been canceled each week during the ban.

Washington

SEATTLE — A hospital industry group said that patients in Washington are being hurt because they don't have access to elective medical procedures which are currently restricted due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Washington State Hospital Association, saying that facilities have plenty of capacity amid a decline in virus patients, is urging Gov. Jay Inslee to let elective procedures resume.

The group sent a letter to Inslee on April 10 asking him to ease the restrictions which were put in place over worries that COVID-19 patients would overwhelm the system. The Seattle Times reported that Cassie Sauer, the chief executive officer of the WSHA, said that the organization renewed its request in a Tuesday phone call with Inslee.

Tweets raise speculation about Flynn pardon

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday tweeted his support for his former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, raising speculation that a pardon may be coming as Flynn's lawyers released internal FBI documents to bolster their claim the FBI was trying to entrap him.

Trump has long said he is considering pardoning Flynn, who pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI in 2017. The president spent Wednesday night and

Thursday morning retweeting supportive statements and a video Flynn tweeted of an American flag flapping in the wind.

"What happened to General Michael Flynn, a war hero, should never be allowed to happen to a citizen of the United States again!" Trump wrote Thursday morning as his counselor, Kellyanne Conway, was on Fox News Channel responding to the case.

Conway said it would be up to Trump to make any announce-

ment, but called Flynn's treatment a "disgrace."

Trump "has made very clear that he feels people around him are treated very unfairly, and in this case worse," she said.

Lawyers for Flynn released internal FBI emails and handwritten notes on Wednesday documenting internal correspondence among FBI officials before Flynn's interview with the bureau. They contend the documents bolster their allegations that Flynn was set up to lie when he was questioned at

the White House three years ago. The notes show the officials grappling with how best to approach Flynn, how much information to provide him during an interview and what to do if he made a false statement.

Flynn seeks to withdraw his guilty plea to lying to the FBI and makes broad assertions of law enforcement misconduct. U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan has rejected many of the defense arguments but has yet to rule on whether Flynn can take back his guilty plea.

Biden faces challenge over sexual assault allegation

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A sexual assault allegation is raising Joe Biden's first big challenge as the Democrats' presidential nominee, fueling Republican attacks and leaving many in his own party in an uncomfortable bind.

Biden's campaign has denied the allegation from his former Senate staffer Tara Reade, who has said Biden assaulted her in the basement of a Capitol Hill office building in the 1990s. But the story garnered fresh attention this week after two of Reade's associates said she previously told them about elements of her allegations.

Republicans who are worried about President Donald Trump's increasingly precarious political standing are seizing on the allegation to portray Democrats as hypocrites who only defend women who allege wrongdoing against conservatives. They are digging in despite the fact that it could renew attention on the multiple sexual assault allegations lodged against Trump.

Democrats, meanwhile, are in an awkward position of vigorously validating women who come forward with their stories while defending the man who will be their standard-bearer in what many in the party consider the most important election

of their lifetimes.

The tension is heightened because Biden himself is saying nothing about the allegation.

Like many Americans, he has spent the past several weeks at home to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. He hasn't held a press briefing since April 2, before multiple news organizations reported Reade's story. The public appearances he has made, such as fundraisers or events alongside prominent Democrats, have been controlled.

Some Democrats say that approach isn't working and are urging a more forceful response.

Trump erupts at political advisers over poll numbers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump erupted at his top political advisers last week when they presented him with worrisome polling data that showed his support eroding in a series of battleground states as his response to the coronavirus comes under criticism.

As the virus takes its deadly toll and much of the nation's economy remains shuttered, new surveys by the Republican National Committee and Trump's campaign pointed to a harrowing picture for the president as he faces reelection.

While Trump saw some of the best approval ratings of his presidency during the early weeks of the crisis, aides highlighted the growing political cost of the crisis and the unforced errors by Trump in his free-wheeling press briefings.

Trump reacted with defiance, incredulous that he could be losing to someone he viewed as a weak candidate.

"I am not f-ing losing to Joe Biden," he repeated in a series of heated conference calls with his top campaign officials, according to five people with knowledge of the conversations. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about private discussions.

The message to the president was sobering: Trump was trailing the former Democratic vice president in many key battleground states, he was told, and would have lost the Electoral College if the election had been held in April.

On the line from the White House, Trump snapped at the state of his polling during a series of calls with campaign manager

Brad Parscale, who called in from Florida; RNC chair Ronna McDaniel, on the line from her home in Michigan; senior adviser Jared Kushner; and other aides.

Echoing a number of White House aides and outside advisers, the political team urged Trump to curtail his daily coronavirus briefings, arguing that the combative sessions were costing him in the polls, particularly among seniors. Trump initially pushed back, pointing to high television ratings. But, at least temporarily, he agreed to scale back the briefings after drawing sharp criticism for raising the idea that Americans might get virus protection by injecting disinfectants.

Trump aides encouraged the president to stay out of medical issues and direct his focus toward more familiar and politically important ground: the economy.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Officials: Woman shot after dispute over \$250

FL MELBOURNE — Deputies in Florida say a dispute over \$250 provoked a drive-by shooting that put one woman in a hospital and the other in jail.

An arrest report says Aquayja Osbourne, 20, argued with the victim over the money and then left the scene, saying she would be “right back.” Osbourne then returned in the passenger seat of a car and allegedly fired six shots at her, Florida Today reported.

The Brevard Sheriff’s Office said the victim was shot in the feet and hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries. Osbourne was charged with attempted murder and violating probation.

No joke: Tupac needs unemployment benefits

KY FRANKFORT — It’s no joke — Tupac Shakur lives in Kentucky and needs unemployment benefits to pay his bills.

The Lexington man’s name was brought up by Gov. Andy Beshear on Monday night as he spoke about how the state is trying to process all unemployment claims filed in March amid the coronavirus pandemic by the end of April.

According to Beshear, a few “bad apples” including a person who filed an unemployment claim under the name of rapper Tupac Shakur — who was killed in a 1996 shooting — are responsible for slowing down the state’s unemployment processing. He blamed people who “think they’re funny” for making “thousands of other people wait” for their unemployment payments.

But the Lexington Herald-Leader reported that Tupac

Malik Shakur, 46, who goes by Malik, lives in Lexington and worked as a cook before restrictions to stop the spread of the coronavirus shut down restaurants.

He filed for unemployment March 13 and has been waiting to receive his first check.

Beshear called Shakur personally on Tuesday to apologize and Shakur said he appreciated the gesture and forgave Beshear.

“I understand, he’s dealing with a lot,” Shakur said. “Mistakes happen.”

Family was attacked by man with machete

NM LAS CRUCES — A New Mexico man is facing charges after authorities say he attacked a woman and her family with a machete.

The Las Cruces Sun-News reported Zachary Tanner Cadena was arrested last Friday in Las Cruces following a fight with the woman and her family.

According to Dona Ana County Sheriff’s deputies, Cadena went to the woman’s home because he believed they had some of his belongings.

Deputies say an argument started and the woman used a 27-inch machete against Cadena, who took it away. Authorities say Cadena then used it against her and her family.

Woman dies after officers use stun gun

MT BUTTE — A Montana woman has died after a law enforcement officer shocked her with a stun gun in response to her threatening officers with a knife, Butte-Silver Bow County Sheriff Ed Lester said Tuesday.

Officers responded to a report of an agitated woman who was yelling and damaging an apartment Sunday night. The

woman threatened to hurt officers with the knife, but later put it down.

As an officer attempted to enter the apartment, she picked the knife up and came toward the officer, who used his stun gun, Lester told The Montana Standard.

The woman was taken to the hospital, still in an agitated state, but she later lost consciousness and efforts to revive her were unsuccessful, Lester said.

2 swim for safety after ditching small plane

TX NEW BRAUNFELS — A pilot and his passenger swam to safety Tuesday after the two men made an emergency landing in their small plane in a Central Texas lake.

The ditching happened about 10 a.m. in Canyon Lake, about 35 miles northeast of San Antonio.

Witness Ed Sanford said he was showing his girlfriend his old lakefront neighborhood when he heard a sputtering engine as they saw the single-engine Cessna flying low. The plane disappeared below the tree line, then Sanford heard the plane hit the water.

“I’m no pilot, but he did well. It looked like he was trying to avoid going into the neighborhood,” Sanford told the New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung.

One of the men suffered non-life-threatening injuries. The other was uninjured. Robert Mike, Canyon Lake’s assistant fire chief, said the aircraft sank into 15 feet to 18 feet of water.

‘RIP Big Fella’: Black bear killed by truck

MI WALKER — A black bear nicknamed Yogi was struck and killed Tuesday on a highway ramp in the Grand

Rapids area, police said.

The bear, an adult male weighing roughly 250 pounds, had been spotted for a few years in Walker. He was hit by a large truck on a ramp leading to westbound Interstate 96.

“There were no injuries to the occupants of the vehicle. ... RIP Big Fella,” Walker police said on Facebook.

The Department of Natural Resources set traps in two locations last year but couldn’t catch and relocate Yogi.

“They’re smart,” said state wildlife biologist John Niewoonder.

He said the bear probably spent the winter in the Grand Rapids area and “just woke up again.”

Man wins \$1M jackpot twice on same day

CO PUEBLO — With a little bit of luck and persistence, a Colorado man has hit the jackpot twice after playing the same numbers for 30 years.

Colorado Lottery officials identified “Joe B.” as the winner of two \$1 million Powerball jackpots on March 25. He claimed the winnings last Friday, KUSA-TV reported.

The winning tickets were sold on Lake Avenue in Pueblo at two different stores, about a mile apart, officials said.

“Joe B.” bought one ticket in the morning and the other in the evening, communications director Meghan Dougherty said.

The Colorado Lottery received approval earlier this month to process winning tickets worth \$10,000 or more at a touch-free, drive-thru claims office amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Winners must make an appointment to claim their prize, or do so through the mail.

From wire reports

On a mission to provide objective reporting to America’s military, wherever they serve.
Read us online at www.stripes.com.

STARS AND STRIPES®

Cincinnati clears way for Burrow

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — The Bengals cleared the way for Joe Burrow to lead the team by releasing quarterback Andy Dalton, who holds several of the franchise's passing records but couldn't lead Cincinnati deep into the playoffs.

The move Thursday gives Dalton, who had a year left on his deal, a chance to compete for a job with another team.

It also clears the way for Burrow to start fresh on a team that hasn't won a playoff game since the 1990 season, the fifth-longest stretch of futility in NFL history.

Dalton led Cincinnati to its best stretch of playoff appearances — five straight from 2011-15 — but couldn't get that elusive win. As the offensive line deteriorated and top receiver A.J. Green sustained a series of injuries, Dalton's results suffered, too.

Dalton was a second-round pick in 2011 when quarterback Carson Palmer demanded a trade and threatened to retire rather than continue playing for the Bengals. Dalton and Green, Cincinnati's first-round pick that year, led Cincinnati to its best stretch of playoff appearances.

Dalton was one of the NFL's most efficient passers when given a solid supporting cast. He led the AFC with a 106.3 passer rating in 2015.

When Cincinnati drafted Burrow first overall last week, the question was whether the Bengals would keep Dalton for the final year on his contract and use him to mentor the rookie, or let him try to win a starting job with another team.

Dalton, 32, holds Bengals career records for touchdown passes (204) and completions (2,757), surpassing Ken Anderson — another No. 14 — for both marks. He also holds club marks for career passer rating (87.5) and games with 300 yards passing. His 24 game-winning drives also are the most by a Bengals quarterback.

Former Navy QB Perry excited for opportunity to help Miami

The Capital

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Former Navy football standout Malcolm Perry conducted a Zoom conference call with members of the media covering the Miami Dolphins on Saturday night.

Miami selected Perry in the seventh round of the NFL Draft using a pick previously acquired from the Kansas City Chiefs. The versatile quarterback was selected with the 246th overall pick in the draft after a record-setting career at Navy.

It was down to the wire for Perry as there were only nine remaining picks, all of which were compensatory. Had the American Athletic Conference 2019 Offensive Player of the Year not been drafted, he would have been quickly signed as a priority free agent as several teams had already reached out about going that route.

Half a dozen reporters participated in the conference call with Perry that was organized by the Miami media relations department. The 5-foot-9, 190-pound speedster was initially asked if the Dolphins had mentioned what position he will be asked to play.

"I haven't heard much. I'm just going in with an open mind, positive attitude and ready to play wherever they choose to put me," said Perry, who spoke briefly with Miami general manager Chris Grier and head coach Brian Flores after being chosen just before 7 p.m. on Saturday.

Perry practiced at wide receiver during the East-West Shrine Bowl week and worked out with that position group at the NFL Combine. However, most NFL executives envision the versatile prospect as a multi-positional type of player, capable of lining up in the backfield in certain packages and possibly at quarterback in a Wildcat formation.

"I played wide receiver at the combine. That's the posi-

tion I've been training for the whole time, the position I've been projected to play at the next level," Perry said. "I have a willingness and ability to play other positions as well."

Perry noted he's always "felt pretty natural at running back" and has put considerable effort into learning how to become a slot receiver because "I just wanted to be as good as I could at my weakest position transition."

Perry played slotback and quarterback at Navy, excelling at both while amassing 4,359 career rushing yards. That total ranks second in program history behind Keenan Reynolds (4,559), a quarterback who went on to play slot receiver in the NFL and XFL.

As a senior, Perry set the Football Bowl Subdivision record with 2,017 rushing yards and also scored 21 touchdowns. He was asked during the conference call about that playmaking ability as a ballcarrier.

"Getting some yards and, hopefully, scoring touchdowns. That's the goal every time I touch the ball," Perry said. "I have to keep the same attitude of working hard and doing whatever I can to help the team. I'm ready to get the ball rolling."

Perry was asked about his ability to play special teams and responded that he returned kickoffs in games and practiced fielding punts while at Navy. In fact, Perry averaged 24.6 yards on 20 kickoff returns as a sophomore and junior.

"I feel like that's definitely going to be a big role for me, somewhere I'll have to shine in order to get into this league," Perry said. "It's definitely something I've been practicing; I still need to get better at playing special teams."

Perry will be allowed to pursue an NFL career immediately after graduation thanks to a policy change initiated by President Donald Trump. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper

formally issued the new guidelines in November, signing an order that allowed service academy graduates to apply for a waiver delaying their military commitment in order to play pro sports.

Esper's order requires athletes under contract to a professional franchise to gain approval from the defense secretary. Individuals approved for the policy would not be commissioned as officers until their playing careers concluded.

Athletes allowed to pursue pro sports must eventually fulfill their five-year military obligation or repay the government the cost of their college education.

A Dolphins beat reporter asked Perry about the policy change and being able to defer his active duty commitment.

"I know a lot of guys I played with in the past who didn't get this opportunity who definitely had the talent," he said. "It means a lot to be in this position. I'm very fortunate and grateful."

Perry explained to the Dolphins media contingent that he will eventually be commissioned as a Marine Corps officer. He selected Marine Corps Ground and would be sent to the Basic School in Quantico, Va., if the NFL does not work out.

Perry acknowledged he did not hear from the Dolphins during the months leading up to the NFL Draft. However, he had a supporter within the organization as former Navy fullbacks coach Mike Judge is entering his fourth season as a quality control coach for the Dolphins.

Judge and Miami wide receivers coach Josh Grizzard were part of the staff for the East-West Shrine Bowl, during which Perry ripped off a 52-yard touchdown run after taking a shotgun snap and faking an option pitch to the tailback.

Hall induction delayed until 2021

Associated Press

Derek Jeter, Larry Walker and the rest of this year's Baseball Hall of Fame class will have to wait another year for their big moment at Cooperstown.

The Hall of Fame announced Wednesday that it has canceled the July 26 induction ceremony because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Instead, the class will be included at next year's induction festivities — along with any additional new choices — on July 25, 2021.

A record crowd of more than 70,000 had been expected this summer at the small town in upstate New York to honor Jeter, the former New York Yankees captain who came within one vote of unanimous election by the Baseball Writers' Association of America in January.

Jeter and Walker were to be inducted with catcher Ted Simmons and the late Marvin Miller, the pioneering players' union head who negotiated free agency and transformed the sport.

"Induction Weekend is a celebration of our national pastime and its greatest legends, and while we are disappointed to cancel this incredibly special event, the Board of Directors' overriding concern is the health and well-being of our new inductees, our Hall of Fame members, our

wonderful fans and the hundreds of staff," Hall Chairman Jane Forbes Clark said in a statement.

"In heeding the advice of government officials as well as federal, state and local medical and scientific experts, we chose to act with extraordinary caution in making this decision," she said.

This will be the first year without an induction ceremony since 1960. The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum closed on March 15 due to the virus outbreak.

Record attendance for an induction ceremony was set in 2007, exceeding 70,000 when Cal Ripken Jr. and the late Tony Gwynn were enshrined. Cooperstown is within easy driving distance of the New York metro area, and loads of Yankees fans had already made their plans to see Jeter on the Hall stage.

Jeter, now the CEO of the Miami Marlins, and Walker were elected by members of the BBWAA. Simmons and Miller were chosen in December by the Hall's Modern Era Committee.

Jeter, a key to five World Series titles, was on 396 of 397 ballots in voting announced Jan. 21. The only player with a higher percentage was former Yankees teammate Mariano Rivera, who became the first unanimous pick in 2019. Walker, making his 10th ballot appearance, got 304

votes — six over the threshold.

Next year's first-time eligible players have no odds-on favorites: Torii Hunter and Mark Buehrle will be on the BBWAA ballot for the first time.

Holdovers include Curt Schilling, who fell 20 votes short this year, and steroids-tainted stars Roger Clemens (56 shy) and Barry Bonds (57). All three will be on the ballot for the ninth time, one shy of the limit.

If anyone new is elected, it would be the first ceremony since 1949 to combine multiple classes.

The first four Hall classes were inducted jointly in 1939 on the day the Hall of Fame opened. The classes of 1946 and '47 were inducted together, as were the classes of 1948 and '49.

Rogers Hornsby was elected in 1942, but there was no induction ceremony because of travel restrictions during World War II.

There was no balloting in 1940, '41 and '43. No ceremony was held in 1950, '58 and '60 after no one was elected.

Since Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson, Christy Mathewson, Babe Ruth and Honus Wagner became the original Hall of Fame class in 1936, the only previous years with no inductions were 1940, '41, '43, '50, '52, '58 and '60.

Leading plan for NHL return means empty rinks

Associated Press

Get used to the concept of pods and pucks if the NHL is going to have any chance of completing its season, with the most likely scenarios calling for games in empty, air-conditioned arenas during the dog days of summer.

What is emerging as the leading plan involves bringing teams back in a few empty NHL buildings to complete some, if not all, of the remaining regular-season games before opening the playoffs and awarding the Stanley Cup for the 125th time in the past 127 years.

The most aggressive timetable would have players returning to their home rinks as early as May 15, followed by a training camp and possible exhibition games in June, a person familiar with discussions told

The Associated Press.

The regular season would then resume in July, with the Cup awarded in September, the person said Tuesday, speaking on the condition of anonymity because plans haven't been finalized.

Commissioner Gary Bettman emphasized no decisions have been made and noted that government and medical officials will ultimately make the call on when sports can return. Still, the league and NHL Players' Association have formed a joint committee to determine a path forward that could get games back on the ice sometime in July without fans in attendance.

The joint committee released a statement Wednesday night echoing Bettman, saying they "have not made any decisions

or set a timeline for possible return to play scenarios." However, they added they believed there was a possibility to return to small group activities at team facilities in mid- to late May.

"When we feel that players are safe and we have enough testing and we have enough ways to get back on the ice for us, it's probably going to be contained at playing at like four or five neutral sites," Florida Panthers president Matthew Caldwell said. "My guess is that we would start with either limited fans or empty arenas, so just the teams and their associated staffs."

One scenario calls for teams playing each other at four NHL rinks around North America. Each would play about a dozen regular-season games to even

out the standings and determine playoff seedings. Play was postponed with 189 total games remaining for the 31 teams.

Edmonton captain Connor McDavid, who is on the NHL/NHLPA committee that meets weekly, believes "the fairest season is a full season" but that might not be possible. Players must approve any plan to return.

"Guys are preparing to possibly having to play in the summer," McDavid said, "and guys just want to play."

That likely means playing in empty NHL buildings. The minimum league requirements call for arenas having at least four NHL-caliber locker rooms, a nearby practice facility and hotel infrastructure. They also cannot be located in a COVID-19 hot spot.