

Pentagon moves to codify renaming

BY MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is asking Congress to codify the Department of War name.

A Defense Department legislative proposal sent to Capitol Hill this month estimates the name change to date has cost about \$50 million, and the proposal would make roughly 7,600 conforming changes to federal law. Costs are being collected and will be available after the fiscal year 2026 is completed.

“The revision to the designation of the Department serves as a fundamental reminder of the importance and reverence of our core mission, to fight and win wars,” the proposal reads. “It serves as a strategic objective in

which to measure and prioritize all activities.”

The Congressional Budget Office in January estimated that implementing the renaming of DOD could cost as much as \$125 million or more depending on the scope of the change.

“CBO’s estimate is uncertain because [the Defense Department] has not provided information about how it plans to implement the order,” the budget office wrote in an 11-page letter. “Costs would be at least a few million dollars if [the Defense Department] phased in a minimal implementation, but they could be as large as \$125 million if the name change was implemented broadly and rapidly throughout the department. A statutory renaming could

cost hundreds of millions of dollars depending on how Congress and [the Defense Department] chose to implement the change.”

Codifying the name comes after President Donald Trump in September signed an executive order instructing the Pentagon to begin using the name “Department of War” in official communications and to pursue actions that would permanently rename the Defense Department. The secondary title has not been approved by Congress.

A group of Senate Democrats in September called for a formal cost assessment of the president’s order.

“Given the Trump administration’s repeated emphasis on fiscal restraint ... this symbolic renaming

is both wasteful and hypocritical,” the senators wrote at the time. “It appears to prioritize political theater over responsible governance, while diverting resources from core national security functions.”

Republican lawmakers at the time of Trump’s order — Rep. Greg Steube, of Florida, and Sens. Mike Lee, of Utah, and Rick Scott, of Florida — introduced legislation to redesignate the Defense Department as the Department of War and rename the position of Defense Secretary to Secretary of War.

The department’s website, social media accounts and some signage at the Pentagon have since been changed to reflect the renaming.

Iran war shows vulnerabilities of US bases in Mideast

BY LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

Operation Epic Fury has sunk Iran’s largest naval ships, degraded its air defenses and killed many of its top leaders.

It has also laid bare the vulnerabilities of the American presence in the Middle East.

Iran’s retaliation for the joint U.S.-Israeli strikes saw thousands of drones and missiles fired at U.S. bases and host nations in the Persian Gulf. American radar systems, hangars, warehouses and command centers took heavy fire over the course of six weeks.

The damage to U.S. facilities will take significant resources to repair. But the attacks also raise bigger questions about the future of U.S. military bases and the long-term relationships with host nations, experts say.

Many of the bases had been

cleared of U.S. troops before fighting began, and both sides are now in a holding pattern as diplomatic negotiations start and stall. When — and how — U.S. forces resume normal operations in the theater is still unclear.

“So much depends on how this war with Iran ends, or if it ends,” said Will Todman, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “There are so many questions we don’t have the answers to, and it could go in multiple directions depending on how the other pieces play out.”

Bahrain, a small island nation in the Persian Gulf, sits about 120 miles from the Iranian coast. For about three decades it has hosted the headquarters of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, as well as units from the Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

As of this year, it was home to at least 8,300 American personnel, including service members, civilians and their families.

The naval base has suffered extensive damage since the start of the war, according to news reports and satellite images. Within hours of the first U.S. attacks, military personnel and residents were running for cover as Iranian drones and missiles pummeled the base, sending clouds of fire and black smoke into the sky.

The attacks prompted one of the largest movements of military families in recent history, with the Pentagon rushing to evacuate dependents and non-essential personnel from the island amid closed airspace and ongoing explosions.

Iran has relied on a Chinese spy satellite to monitor U.S. bases, according to the Finan-

cial Times, allowing it to hone in on its targets using high-resolution imagery. Russia is also providing Iran with intelligence about the location and movement of U.S. forces and assets in the Middle East, other reports have said.

Stars and Stripes has already reported that the base suffered extensive damage, including hits to NAVCENT headquarters, as well as multiple warehouses and satellite dishes on base. Damage also extended to the barracks and galley, people familiar with the strikes’ aftermath told Stars and Stripes. Strikes waned as a temporary ceasefire agreement took effect.

Asked to comment on the extent of damage to U.S. bases, a U.S. defense official declined to comment on battle damage assessments.

More details sought on Kuwait base strike

By LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

Four Democratic senators are pressing Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth about whether the Pentagon took proper steps to protect U.S. service members in the Iran war.

Sens. Elizabeth Warren, Kirsten Gillibrand, Richard Blumenthal and Mark Kelly this weekend sent a letter to Hegseth with concerns that the department failed to take “even basic precautions” to protect the lives of Americans after the president initiated the mission dubbed Operation Epic Fury.

They pointed to reports following a March 1 attack that killed six soldiers in Kuwait and injured 20 more. The war began Feb. 28 with joint U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran that

killed a number of top leaders. “The safety and well-being of our service members should be a top priority for DoD leadership,” the legislators wrote. “That requires careful consideration of major operations like Epic Fury and plans to prevent possible harm from foreseeable attacks, like retaliation with drone strikes.”

Pentagon officials declined to comment on the letter, telling Stars and Stripes that they typically respond directly to such congressional correspondence.

The drone strike, which hit a military post at Shuaiba Port, came with no warning or sirens to alert troops of an incoming attack, the letter noted, citing a CNN report.

Afterward, soldiers treated

their injuries with makeshift bandages, braces and tourniquets and commandeered civilian vehicles to drive the wounded to Kuwaiti hospitals, the letter added.

While the post did have steel-reinforced concrete barriers to protect against mortar blasts, rockets and car bombs, there were no defenses at Shuaiba that could be used to bring down incoming drones or other munitions, the senators wrote.

One survivor told CBS News that the degree of fortification for the post against drone attacks fell under the “none category,” while others said the unit was unprepared to defend itself.

After the fatal attack, Hegseth described the Iranian drone that hit the post as “pow-

erful” and suggested that the strike was a one-off that managed to get through fortified defenses.

“We have incredible air defenders. Every once in a while you might have one ... that makes its way through,” Hegseth said in a March 2 press conference. “In that particular case, it happened to hit a tactical operations center that was fortified, but these are powerful weapons.”

The senators wrote to Hegseth that “accounts from survivors and other officials with knowledge of the situation make clear that the risks to service members in the region were known, but leadership at DoD failed to take steps to prevent harm that could come from Iran’s retaliation.”

Soldier pleads not guilty to Maduro raid insider trading

Bloomberg News

NEW YORK — A U.S. Army Special Forces master sergeant pleaded not guilty to charges of trading on classified information about the operation to capture then-Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Gannon Ken Van Dyke, 38, entered the plea Tuesday before U.S. District Judge Margaret Garnett in Manhattan. Prosecutors claim Van Dyke, who was involved in the planning and execution of Maduro’s capture, made \$400,000 from Polymarket bets on whether the Venezuelan leader would be ousted.

Van Dyke, who was represented by lawyers Zach Intrater and Mark Geragos, will be released on a \$250,000 personal recognizance bond co-signed by one financially responsible person, with his travel restricted to parts of North Carolina, New

York and California. Van Dyke is on leave from the military, Intrater said.

Van Dyke is an “American hero” whose actions were “not a crime,” his lawyers said after the arraignment.

Geragos — who has helped defend celebrities including Michael Jackson — said he looks forward to “vindicating” Van Dyke’s rights, and the defense plans to challenge the indictment and the jurisdiction.

Prosecutors say Van Dyke created and funded a Polymarket account around Dec. 26 and began trading on contracts tied to whether Maduro would be out as Venezuela’s leader.

If convicted of wire fraud, the most serious of the four counts against him, Van Dyke faces a maximum of 20 years in prison. He is scheduled to return to court on June 8.

Drones, ‘exquisite’ training ranges on SOCOM wish list

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

Navy Adm. Frank Bradley, the head of U.S. Special Operations Command, told senators Tuesday that an increased budget would allow him to build better, more specialized training ranges for his operators and, of course, more drones.

Special Operations Command has been increasingly asked to do more in recent years — from conducting drone strikes on alleged narcotics boats in the Western Hemisphere to multiple roles in recent operations in the Middle East, including against Iran — without meaningful budget increases, Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee said.

In its fiscal 2027 budget request sent to Congress this

month, the Pentagon is seeking slight funding increases for special operations purposes. The Defense Department requested about \$10.9 billion in operations and maintenance funds for SOCOM, an increase from about \$9.7 billion in fiscal 2026.

Bradley said he would spend funding increases on the greatest needs his special operators currently face — including more unmanned and autonomous systems and on specialized training ranges that would better prepare his troops for both high-end conflict and counterterrorism-like operations.

Training for the modern fight, he said, requires “more exquisite ranges” where they can test special operators against the latest battlefield tech adversary forces are employing.

Former-FBI director Comey indicted again under Trump

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — Former FBI Director James Comey was indicted for a second time since Donald Trump returned to the White House last year, with prosecutors alleging that he threatened the president's life in a social media post.

A federal grand jury in North Carolina returned the indictment on Tuesday. It features two counts, accusing Comey of threatening the president and of transmitting a threat through interstate commerce. The prosecution centers on a photo last May that Comey posted online, in which the numbers 86 and 47 had been formed by seashells. Critics said that could have been a reference to killing Trump, the 47th president.

Comey deleted the post at the time and said that was not his intent. The case marks the latest in-

stance of prosecutors during the Trump administration pursuing criminal investigations against the president's perceived political enemies.

"Threatening the life of the president of the United States will never be tolerated by the Department of Justice," Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said at a press conference in Washington. "His alleged conduct is the same kind of conduct that we will never tolerate and that we will always investigate and regularly prosecute."

The indictment alleges that "a reasonable recipient who is familiar with the circumstances would interpret" Comey's post of the photograph "as a serious expression of an intent to do harm to President Trump."

Both counts are felony offenses carrying sentences up to five years in prison.

Comey appeared at the federal courthouse in Alexandria, Va., the state where he lives, on Wednesday, The Associated Press reported. He did not enter a plea in a case that was charged in the Eastern District of North Carolina, the location of the beach where Comey has said he found the shells.

A federal judge previously dismissed an earlier, unrelated indictment against Comey for allegedly lying to Congress and obstruction related to testimony he gave in 2020. During Trump's first term, he fired Comey from heading the FBI, which was investigating foreign interference in the 2016 election.

Comey, who led the FBI from 2013 to 2017, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A lawyer for Comey also did not immediately respond. The Justice Department did not have an immediate comment.

FCC moves to review ABC's TV licenses

Los Angeles Times

The Federal Communications Commission is considering an early review of the Walt Disney Co.'s broadcast TV licenses amid criticism of ABC late-night host Jimmy Kimmel's provocative jokes ahead of the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

The order could have come as soon as Tuesday, according to Semafor, which first reported the expected review. The licenses were not scheduled for renewal until 2028.

Disney has not commented on the possibility of a review.

The move was likely in the works before the latest kerfuffle over Kimmel, who is under fire for a bit that satirized the annual Washington gala that President Donald Trump attended for the first time. FCC Chairman Brendan Carr, who has targeted the political content on the ABC daytime talk show "The View," told the Los Angeles Times on Saturday that an action related to ABC programming was coming this week.

Carr attended the Saturday dinner at the Washington Hilton, where a Torrance, Calif., man breached security while armed with a shotgun, handgun and several knives. The suspect, Cole Tomas Allen, was arrested and faces three criminal charges, including attempting to assassinate the president.

Right-wing commentators have gone into heavy rotation with the claim that a routine by Kimmel inspired Allen to act.

During the bit that aired Thursday, a tuxedo-clad Kimmel called first lady Melania Trump "beautiful," saying she had "the glow of an expectant widow." The comic explained Monday that the gag was a reference to the age difference between Trump and his wife.

Trump ramps up ballroom push

New York Daily News

President Donald Trump ramped up his push for a new White House ballroom on Tuesday by promoting an unorthodox and sharply worded legal filing after the shooting attack at the White House Correspondents Association Dinner.

Trump posted legal papers filed by his Department of Justice that included his claims that the historic preservation group suing to block the glitzy \$400 million project is "FAKE" and that critics suffer from "Trump Derangement Syndrome."

"Even their name is FAKE because when they add the words 'in the United States' to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, it makes it sound like a Governmental Agency, which it is not," prosecutors wrote in a filing that

Trump shared on his social media site. "They are very bad for our Country."

Prosecutors accused the trust, which convinced a federal district judge to order a temporary pause in construction, of ignoring claims that the project is needed to bolster national security.

"This did not deter them because they suffer from Trump Derangement Syndrome, commonly referred to as TDS," prosecutors wrote, using unusually pointed and intemperate language for a filing in federal court.

It mentioned the weekend attack, in which a gunman ran past security at the Washington Hilton and opened fire before being apprehended, as evidence of the need for the proposed new White House ballroom.

The trust rejected the effort to

invoke the attack.

"What Saturday's awful event does not change is that the Constitution and multiple federal statutes require Congress to authorize construction of a ballroom on White House grounds, and that Congress has not done so," wrote Gregory Craig, a lawyer for the group.

Along with the court fight, his Republican allies in Congress have introduced bills that would retroactively grant approval for the project.

Analysts note that private events like the WHCA dinner would be unlikely to be held at the White House regardless of the outcome of the ballroom dispute. About 2,600 people attended the event on Saturday, while Trump's ballroom is planned to accommodate about 1,000.

On Hill, King Charles lauds US-UK unity

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — King Charles III addressed a joint session of Congress on Tuesday, delivering a carefully worded speech that threaded two of his most deeply held causes — climate action and the defense of Europe — to a roomful of people deeply divided on both.

The king's address to Congress, only the second in history by a British monarch, was intended to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence. But the timing of his remarks carried a subtle, diplomatic urgency as he talked about the need to support European alliances at a time of "great uncertainty."

"I pray with all my heart that our alliance will continue to defend our shared values, with our partners in Europe and the Commonwealth, and across the world, and that we ignore the clarion calls to become ever more inward-looking," the king told the room.

He emphasized that "America's words carry weight and meaning" and that the United States' actions "matter even

more," remarks that drew affirmations from the crowd.

In prepared remarks, the king called on Republican leaders to support Ukraine and to maintain the U.S. commitment to NATO, which President Donald Trump has repeatedly derided and threatened to leave.

"From the depths of the Atlantic to the disastrously melting ice caps of the Arctic, the commitment and expertise of the United States Armed Forces and its allies lie at the heart of NATO, pledged to each others' defense, protecting our citizens and interests, keeping North Americans and Europeans safe from our common adversaries," he said.

The king reminded Congress that NATO came to the assistance of the United States in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and said the same "unyielding resolve" should be extended to Ukraine to be able to "secure a truly just and lasting peace."

Vice President JD Vance, who was seated behind the king, stood up and applauded in response to the call to support Ukraine.

How those comments will play

out in Washington remains to be seen. Trump seemed to take issue with Prince Harry, the king's son, saying that the United States should offer do more to help Ukraine, telling a reporter that the prince "is not speaking for the U.K."

The king did not directly address the tensions between Trump and Prime Minister Keir Starmer over the United States' war with Iran. Trump has clashed with the British government over its refusal to commit its defense forces to the conflict and had mocked the Royal Navy's battleships as "toys."

While Trump's criticism was not addressed directly, the king did speak about his pride in the British defense forces, especially the Royal Navy.

"I served with immense pride in the Royal Navy, following in the naval footsteps of my father, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh; my grandfather, King George VI; my great-uncle, Lord Mountbatten; and my great-grandfather, King George V," he said.

The king also noted that conflicts in Europe and the Middle

East "pose immense challenges for the international community," and stressed the need to work together.

"The challenges we face are too great for any one nation to bear alone," he said.

Trump did not attend the speech due to security concerns, but he hosted the king and Queen Camilla at the White House earlier in the day. During a welcoming ceremony at the South Lawn, Trump emphasized his appreciation for the two nations' "cherished bond" and shared histories.

"Americans have had no closer friends than the British," Trump told those in attendance. "We share the same root. We speak the same language. We hold the same values. And together, our warriors have defended the same extraordinary civilization under twin banners of red, white and blue."

The king made a nod to that sentiment when addressing Congress, calling the United States a "citadel of democracy created to represent the voice of all American people to advance sacred rights and freedoms."

Rubio says Cuba's leaders are keeping reform at bay

Miami Herald

In a blunt assessment, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Tuesday that the profound economic reforms Cuba needs to get out of a severe humanitarian crisis can't happen under the country's current leadership, raising questions about the future of U.S. talks with Havana.

Rubio said on "Fox and Friends" that Cuba is a failed state, "but in order for it to get better, they do need very substantial and serious economic reforms. Those serious economic reforms are impossible with these people in charge; it can't happen."

Rubio also made an argument

about Cuba posing a national security risk to the United States.

"These people in charge aren't just economically incompetent," he said. "They have rolled out the welcome mat to adversaries of the United States to operate within Cuban territory against our national interests with impunity. We are not going to have a foreign military or intelligence or security apparatus operating with impunity 90 miles off the shores of the United States."

Rubio, a Cuban American former U.S. senator from Miami, has been leading negotiations with Raúl Castro's grandson and other Cuban government officials.

Court keeps Va. redistricting election certification on hold

The Virginian-Pilot

The Supreme Court of Virginia on Tuesday denied a request from Virginia Democrats to halt a lower court's order that blocks the state from certifying the results of last week's redistricting election.

That means certification of the April 21 election, scheduled for Friday, remains blocked for now. The court has agreed to hear the case, but other legal challenges against the redistricting referendum are progressing in the meantime.

Virginia voters narrowly approved a new set of congressional maps that are poised to help Virginia Democrats pick up four

additional U.S. House seats in the midterm elections, adding to the six they now hold. Republicans currently hold five. Last week Tazewell County Circuit Judge Jack Hurley ruled in favor of Republicans in a lawsuit against Virginia Department of Elections Commissioner Steven Koski challenging the validity of the election and process used.

Virginia Attorney General Jay Jones later filed a motion to stay, which is a legal request to halt the order, until an appeal can be heard. The Supreme Court's action denies Jones' request, keeping the lower court's block of the election results in place.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Actor sentenced to 37 years for sex assault

NV LAS VEGAS — District Judge Jessica Peterson gave “Dances with Wolves” actor Nathan Chasing Horse a prison sentence of 37 years to life after jurors in January found him guilty of sexually assaulting two women.

Chasing Horse, who played Smiles a Lot in the 1990 movie, promoted himself as a “medicine man” and committed crimes in the U.S. and Canada while running The Circle, a cult with up to 350 followers at its height, according to authorities.

Jurors found Chasing Horse, 49, guilty on 13 counts and not guilty on eight counts.

Multiple victims testified during the trial that Chasing Horse used their spiritual traditions to victimize them. At the sentencing hearing, they stood just feet away from him and spoke of the harm he had caused.

Chasing Horse denied his guilt in a brief statement.

Defense attorney Craig Mueller described the victims as disgruntled. He asked for the minimum sentence, 25 years to life.

Tips sought on deaths of 5 bald eagles

MI DETROIT — Michigan Department of Natural Resources officials are asking the public for help to find what killed five bald eagles in the Upper Peninsula.

The eagles’ carcasses were found between April 3 and April 17 in a single area of Garden Peninsula in Delta County, the department said Monday. The peninsula is bordered by Big

Bay de Noc to the west and Lake Michigan to the east.

“The DNR is requesting tips from the public to help solve this ongoing investigation,” 1st Lt. Mark Zitnik, the department’s Law Enforcement supervisor in Newberry, said in a statement. “We can confirm that the eagles did not die from natural causes, predators, or vehicle collisions.”

He said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Department and local tribes are assisting with the investigation.

Zitnik said tips that lead to the arrest and conviction of anyone responsible for the birds’ deaths may be eligible for a cash reward.

Alleged cocaine kingpin in custody in San Diego

CA SAN DIEGO — The suspected kingpin of an alleged Guatemalan drug-trafficking organization, who was the subject of a \$10 million reward and described by prosecutors as “one of the world’s most notorious and prolific cocaine traffickers,” made his first appearance last week in San Diego federal court, the U.S. Attorney’s Office announced Monday.

Eugenio Darío Molina López, 61, known also as “Don Darío” and “Molis,” is suspected of being the top leader of a drug cartel known as Los Huistas that allegedly dominates the cocaine trade and the broader criminal underworld along the Guatemala-Mexico border, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

A federal grand jury in San Diego indicted Molina in 2019 on two cocaine conspiracy charges, one related to the attempted importation of drugs

and one related to moving the drugs on a boat. In 2022, officials from various federal agencies announced sanctions against Molina and offered a \$10 million reward for information leading to his capture or conviction.

Molina pleaded not guilty to the conspiracy charges Friday during an initial appearance in downtown San Diego federal court.

Man shot by ICE pleads guilty to damaging vans

MD GLEN BURNIE — Tiago Alexandre Sousa-Martins, a Baltimore man who was left with critical injuries after being shot by ICE agents in Glen Burnie in December, pleaded guilty last week to damaging two government-owned vehicles before he was shot.

Judges in the U.S. District Court for Maryland sentenced Sousa-Martins, 30, to about three months in federal prison for destruction of government property, which he has already served.

But Sousa-Martins, a Portuguese citizen who immigrated to the U.S. in 2008, is still in ICE custody for overstaying his visa, and could remain in custody for years, his defense said.

ICE argued that Sousa-Martins had intentionally driven his van into an ICE vehicle when agents approached him in Glen Burnie on Dec. 24. The incident caused a combined \$17,000 of damage to two ICE vehicles.

According to court documents, Sousa-Martins came to the U.S. when he was 13, to visit his father in New Jersey. Sousa-Martins told federal prosecutors that at the end of the trip his

father took his passport and prevented him from returning to Portugal so his father could claim him as a dependent for tax purposes.

Hospitality exec dropped from list to lead parks

DC WASHINGTON — On Monday, the Trump administration withdrew its nomination of Scott Socha — an executive at hospitality concessionaire Delaware North — for director of the National Park Service.

The administration nominated Socha for the role in February, sparking outrage among conservationists and park enthusiasts who decried both his lack of experience in managing public land and his ties to the privatized park concessionaire industry.

On Monday, the White House published a list of nominations and withdrawals to be sent to the Senate, which included the withdrawal of Socha’s nomination for NPS director.

Socha has worked for Delaware North for nearly 30 years, and is currently the company’s president. The concessionaire operates restaurants and hotels at parks, venues and airports across the U.S. and Australia, including several hotels outside of national parks like Yosemite and Yellowstone.

From 2016 to 2019, Delaware North was involved in a lengthy legal battle with the NPS over the trademark rights of various names within Yosemite. The lawsuit was eventually settled for \$12 million, but not before the company attempted to trademark the name “Yosemite National Park.”

— From wire reports

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Boldy breaks tie, lifts Wild to Game 5 win

Associated Press

DALLAS — Matt Boldy scored the tiebreaking power-play goal in the final minute of the second period, after having one taken away late in the first, and the Minnesota Wild beat the Dallas Stars 4-2 on Tuesday night for a 3-2 lead in their first-round Western Conference series.

Kirill Kaprizov scored an empty-net goal with two minutes left and had two assists, while Mats Zuccarello scored in his return from a three-game absence with an upper-body injury for Minnesota. Michael McCarron also had a third-period goal.

“When we play as a tight connected five-man unit, I think we’re usually at our best,” coach John Hynes said. “I thought we were responsible, had strong attention to detail, got some key saves when we needed them.”

The Wild go home for Game 6 on Thursday with a chance to ad-

vance to the second round for the first time since 2015. They have lost their last nine playoff series, including to Dallas in 2016 and 2023.

“We’ve got to just look to control our emotions in Game 6 and in front of our home crowd, a place where we had a good feeling leaving last time,” forward Marcus Foligno said.

Jason Robertson had a goal with 3:21 left — after also scoring goals in each of the first four games — and assisted on Miro Heiskanen’s one-timer on a power play for the Stars, who made the Western Conference final each of the past three seasons.

Robertson’s goal came with an extra skater on the ice for Dallas, which missed all 16 of its shots in five-on-five situations, after going 0 for 40 in Game 4 — and now is 3 of 117 in the series.

“You just have to stick with it,” Stars coach Glen Gulutzan said.

“We did create some opportunities for ourselves, now we’ve got to take the next step and convert on some of them.”

Bruins 2, Sabres 1 (OT): David Pastrnak scored on a breakaway 9:14 into overtime, and visiting Boston avoided elimination with a win over Buffalo in Game 5 of their first-round playoff series.

Catching the Sabres on a line change, Hampus Lindholm fed a pass up the right boards to find Pastrnak in stride just as he crossed the blue line. Driving in alone on net a step ahead of Buffalo’s Mattias Samuelsson, Pastrnak faked cutting across the front and nearly lost his balance before slipping the puck inside the right post.

The series shifts back to TD Garden for Game 6 on Thursday night, with the Sabres still seeking to clinch their first playoff series victory since eliminating the New York Rangers in six

games of a 2007 second-round series. Buffalo is in the playoffs for only the third time since, and after snapping an NHL record 14-season playoff drought this year.

Elias Lindholm also scored for the Bruins, who overcame a 1-0 deficit. Jeremy Swayman stopped 25 shots, including foiling Jason Zucker set up in front 3:30 into the extra period.

Oilers 4, Ducks 1: Leon Draisaitl scored a pair of goals and Evan Bouchard chipped in with three assists as host Edmonton staved off elimination by beating Anaheim.

The Oilers now trail the best-of-seven Western Conference playoff series 3-2 with Game 6 on Thursday night at the Ducks.

Vasily Podkolzin and Zach Hyman also scored for Edmonton, which had previously allowed six separate leads to slip away in the first four games of the series.

Brunson scores 39, Knicks rout Hawks for 3-2 series lead

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jalen Brunson scored 39 points, nearly extending his own franchise record for 40-point playoff games, and the New York Knicks routed the Atlanta Hawks 126-97 on Tuesday night for a 3-2 lead in the first-round playoff series.

With its second straight lopsided victory, New York positioned itself to win the series Thursday night in Atlanta. The Knicks would have another chance at home in Game 7 if they need it — and it’s getting harder to picture why they should.

The Hawks took a 2-1 lead in the series with one-point victories in Games 2 and 3, but a pretty sizable gap between the teams has appeared since. New York led by 24 on its way to a 114-98 win in Game 4 in Atlanta and by 32 on Tuesday, when the lead was never below double digits in the second half.

OG Anunoby added 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Knicks, while Karl-Anthony Towns had 16 points, 14 rebounds and six assists. They need one more victory to reach the second round for the fourth straight season, which would continue their

longest streak since advancing nine straight times from 1991-92 through 1999-2000.

Jalen Johnson had 18 points, 10 rebounds and six assists for the Hawks. Dyson Daniels scored 17, but CJ McCollum, the catalyst of both Atlanta victories, had just six.

76ers 113, Celtics 97: Joel Embiid scored 33 points, Tyrese Maxey had 25 points and 10 rebounds, and visiting Philadelphia avoided elimination, beating Boston in Game 5 of their first-round playoff series.

Paul George had 16 points and nine rebounds for the seventh-seeded 76ers, who lost Games 3 and 4 at home to fall behind 3-1 in the series before returning to TD Garden to keep their season alive.

Game 6 is back in Philadelphia on Thursday night, when the Sixers will try to force the series to a decisive seventh game at the Celtics on Saturday.

In his second game back from an emergency appendectomy, Embiid helped rally Philly from a 13-point, third-quarter deficit. After scoring 13 points in the second quarter, he added 10 in the third and eight more

in the fourth, when the 76ers went on a 12-0 run to turn a three-point lead into a 15-point runaway.

Jayson Tatum had 24 points and 16 rebounds for Boston and Jaylen Brown scored 22.

Spurs 114, Trail Blazers 95: Victor Wembanyama had 17 points, 14 rebounds and six blocks and host San Antonio never trailed in eliminating Portland in Game 5 of their first-round playoff series.

De’Aaron Fox had 21 points, Julian Champagnie added 19 points and Dylan Harper had 17 as the Spurs led by as many as 28 points in winning their third straight game to advance to the second round.

San Antonio advances to the Western Conference semifinals for the first time since 2017, when it beat the Houston Rockets before losing Kawhi Leonard to an ankle injury and then getting swept by Golden State in the conference finals.

The Spurs will face the winner of the series between the Denver Nuggets and Minnesota Timberwolves. Minnesota leads that series 3-2, with Game 6 scheduled for Thursday.

Cardinals hold off Pirates in Central match

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Nolan Gorman homered and drove in three runs and Alec Burleson and Jordan Walker drove in three runs apiece to lead the St. Louis Cardinals to an 11-7 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates on Tuesday night.

JJ Wetherholt and Ivan Herrera, the top two hitters in St. Louis' batting order, scored three runs each. Burleson, Walker and Masyn Winn each finished with two hits.

Gorman opened the scoring with a homer leading off the second, his fourth of the season. Victor Scott II started a two-run second with his first home run of the season before Wetherholt doubled and scored a single by Walker.

The Cardinals extended their lead to 6-0 in the fifth when Burleson doubled in a run and Walker and Gorman followed with consecutive sacrifice fly balls.

The Pirates scored three runs in the sixth on homers by Oneil Cruz and a two-run shot by Ryan O'Hearn, cutting their deficit to 6-3, and another three in the eighth on RBI singles by O'Hearn and Nick Gonzales.

Royals 4, Athletics 1 (10): Bobby Witt Jr. hit a three-run homer in the 10th inning, Salvador Perez had a solo shot and visiting Kansas City beat the Athletics for its fourth straight victory.

Witt drove a 1-0 pitch from Justin Sterner (1-3) to right-center with automatic runner Nick Loftin on second base and Kyle Isbel on first after he beat out a popped-up bunt that failed to advance the runner.

The A's loaded the bases in the bottom of the 10th, but Lucas Erceg retired Darell Hernaiz on a liner to second for his seventh save in nine opportunities.

Braves 5, Tigers 2: Martín Pérez (2-1) threw five scoreless innings and host Atlanta beat Detroit for its 11th win in 13

games as the Tigers lost starter Casey Mize to an injury in the third inning.

Ozzie Albies hit a two-run homer and Ronald Acuña Jr. was 2 for 3 with two doubles, an RBI and a run scored.

Mize (2-2) was removed after straining his groin covering first base on a ground ball to first baseman Spencer Torkelson. He lasted 2½ innings during which he gave up two runs, three hits and a walk while striking out three.

Mariners 7, Twins 1: Julio Rodriguez hit three doubles, scored twice and drove in two runs, and Josh Naylor had a homer and four RBIs as visiting Seattle beat Minnesota.

Four Mariners relievers combined to retire the last 12 Twins hitters. Eduard Bazarzo (2-1) pitched a scoreless sixth inning.

Minnesota starter Joe Ryan (2-3) gave up two runs in six-plus innings. Byron Buxton homered and singled for the Twins, who have lost 10 of 12.

Rays 1, Guardians 0: Nick Martinez (2-1) pitched three-hit ball into the eighth inning, Jonathan Aranda drove in a run for the third straight game and visiting Tampa Bay defeated Cleveland to extend its winning streak to six games.

Cleveland second baseman Travis Bazzana, the top pick in the 2024 amateur draft, went 0 for 2 with two walks in his major league debut.

Phillies 7, Giants 0: Don Mattingly won his first game as Philadelphia's interim manager, as Jesús Luzardo (2-3) threw seven shutout innings to lead the last-place Phillies past visiting San Francisco.

Brandon Marsh hit a sacrifice fly in the fourth off Giants starter Tyler Mahle (1-4) and Philadelphia tacked on four more runs in the sixth. Bryce Harper hit an RBI double and Adolis Garcia ripped a two-run double to right-center in the inning.

Orioles 5, Astros 3: Pete

Alonso homered, Adley Rutschman drove in two runs and host Baltimore defeated Houston.

Shane Baz (1-2) allowed one run in 5½ innings to earn his first victory since the Orioles acquired him from Tampa Bay in December.

Reds 7, Rockies 2: Elly De La Cruz homered and drove in four runs and Chase Burns reached 100 strikeouts faster than any other Cincinnati pitcher as the host Reds beat Colorado.

Burns (3-1) issued a game-opening walk to Edouard Julien and then struck out the side. He struck out TJ Rumfield swinging for the third out and his 100th strikeout in 72½ innings. Burns matched his season high with nine strikeouts, allowing two runs on seven hits and a walk in six innings.

Blue Jays 3, Red Sox 0: Trey Yesavage (1-0) pitched into the sixth inning in a sharp season debut, Kazuma Okamoto drove in two runs and host Toronto beat Boston.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. added an RBI single as the Blue Jays stopped the Red Sox's season-best winning streak at three games and handed Boston interim manager Chad Tracy his first loss since replacing Alex Cora, who was fired Saturday.

Mets 8, Nationals 0: Juan Soto hit a two-run homer that capped a seven-run fourth inning and host New York breezed to a victory over Washington.

Bo Bichette also homered and drove in two runs, and Clay Holmes combined with two relievers on a three-hitter as the banged-up Mets (10-19) won for only the third time in 18 games — perhaps taking a little heat off manager Carlos Mendoza.

Brewers 13, Diamondbacks 2: Sal Frelick hit a solo shot to end Milwaukee's stretch of seven straight games without a homer and Tyler Black went 3 for 5 with three RBIs as the host Brewers trounced Arizona.

The Diamondbacks' Ildemaro Vargas singled in the eighth inning and has hit safely in all 21 games he has played this season. Vargas actually has a 24-game hitting streak if his last three games from 2025 are included.

Yankees 3, Rangers 2: Cam Schlichter struck out eight over six scoreless innings in a duel with Texas ace Jacob deGrom, Aaron Judge homered in his third consecutive game and visiting New York held on for a win over the Rangers.

Judge scored from first base on Cody Bellinger's first-inning double and Austin Wells had a solo homer in the seventh as the Yankees won for the 10th time in 11 games and secured consecutive series victories in Texas by winning the first two against the Rangers after taking two of three in Houston.

White Sox 5, Angels 2: Drew Romo hit the first two home runs of his career — one from each side of the plate — as host Chicago beat Los Angeles.

Colson Montgomery homered in the second off Angels starter José Soriano (5-1), ending his shutout streak at 25½ innings. The right-hander gave up three runs and six hits over five innings, raising his major league-leading ERA from 0.24 to 0.84.

Cubs 8, Padres 3: Pete Crow-Armstrong hit a three-run homer and visiting Chicago beat San Diego to stop its three-game slide.

Dansby Swanson and Nico Hoerner each had a two-run double for the Cubs. Edward Cabrera (3-0) pitched 5½ innings, allowing three runs and six hits while striking out seven.

Marlins 2, Dodgers 1: Janson Junk scattered three hits over six scoreless innings, and visiting Miami edged Los Angeles to snap a three-game skid.

It was the first time since July that Junk (2-2) threw six shutout innings. The right-hander struck out four and walked one.

Jones 1st to plead guilty in gambling sweep

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A hot hand on the hardwood, former NBA player Damon Jones once proclaimed himself “the best shooter in the world.” As an assistant coach, he helped guide the Cleveland Cavaliers to their only championship in 2016.

But after his playing and coaching days ended, Jones betrayed the game he loved.

Jones solemnly admitted in court Tuesday that he exploited his fame and insider access to profit from sports betting and rigged poker games.

Jones, 49, became the first person to plead guilty in a gambling sweep that led to the arrests of more than 30 people, including reputed mobsters and other basketball figures. Sports bettor Marves Fairley is poised to become the second.

During back-to-back hearings in Brooklyn federal court, Jones entered guilty pleas to two counts of conspiracy to commit wire fraud for his role in schemes to defraud major sportsbooks, including DraftKings and FanDuel, and filch millions of dollars from unwinning poker players.

Sitting alongside his lawyer and reading from a prepared statement, Jones acknowledged that he aided the bet-

ting conspiracy with “insider information that I obtained as a result of my relationships as a former player.”

“I would like to sincerely apologize to the court, my family, my peers and also the National Basketball Association,” Jones told Magistrate Judge Joseph Marutollo.

Jones said the sports betting conspiracy, which ran from December 2022 to March 2024, involved using his knowledge of nonpublic information about injuries to NBA stars, including his one-time teammate, LeBron James, to gain an edge in sports bets.

Jones acknowledged that his actions not only broke the law, but that they also violated the NBA’s code of conduct and the sports betting websites’ terms of service.

‘Face card’

At the second of his two hearings, Jones admitted he was paid to act as a “face card” at poker games in Miami and the Hamptons by using his NBA celebrity to “lure high-end bettors” to the table.

“I knew these games were rigged and that players were being cheated,” Jones said as he read from another statement. He apologized again, telling Marutollo: “I’m really

sorry to everyone involved for my actions.”

Jones and his lawyer, Kenneth Montgomery, declined to comment as they left the courtroom. Swarmed outside by reporters, photographers and TV cameras, Jones said only: “To God be the glory.”

He remains free on bail and won’t be sentenced until early next year, Marutollo said.

Jones is scheduled for back-to-back sentencing hearings Jan. 6 — before Judge LaShann DeArcy Hall in the sports betting case and before Judge Ramon Reyes in the poker games case.

In the sports betting case, sentencing guidelines call for a punishment of 21 to 27 months in prison. In the poker games case, Jones would face 63 to 78 months in prison, but prosecutors agreed to subtract 15 months from the sentence in exchange for Jones pleading guilty before April 30. That would put his potential sentence at 48 to 63 months in prison if the judge follows the guidelines.

Jones faces a longer prison sentence in the poker games case in part because it involved more than 10 victims and a loss to them of more than \$9.5 million.

As part of his plea agreements, Jones agreed to give

up a total of \$73,000 and, at sentencing, could be ordered to pay additional sums as restitution.

Waiting on others

None of Jones’ co-defendants have shown a willingness to plead guilty. On Monday, prosecutors said they were seeking more charges against another sports betting defendant, former Miami Heat guard Terry Rozier.

Jones was arrested in October along with Rozier and Chauncey Billups, who was head coach of the Portland Trail Blazers and is a Basketball Hall of Famer.

Others charged include reputed members of the Gambino, Genovese and Bonanno crime families, which benefited from the poker scheme and used violence and threats to ensure the repayment of debts and success of the operation, prosecutors said.

According to prosecutors, Jones sold or attempted to sell nonpublic information to bettors that LeBron James was injured and wouldn’t be playing in a Feb. 9, 2023, game against the Milwaukee Bucks, texting an unnamed co-conspirator: “Get a big bet on Milwaukee tonight before the information is out” and “Bet enough so Djones can eat.”

Source: Pavia to sign with Ravens as undrafted free agent

Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — Heisman Trophy runner-up Diego Pavia of Vanderbilt has agreed to sign with the Baltimore Ravens as an undrafted free agent, a person with knowledge of the decision said Tuesday.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team hasn’t announced the deal.

Baltimore holds its rookie camp later this week. Pavia fin-

ished second to fellow quarterback Fernando Mendoza in last year’s Heisman vote, then ruffled feathers with his reaction afterward. He was not one of the 10 quarterbacks drafted last week.

At 5-foot-10, Pavia’s size likely worked against him in the draft, but his path to college stardom was a remarkable one. He played two years of junior college football at the New Mexico Military Institute, followed by two seasons at New Mexico State.

Then he played two seasons at Vanderbilt and nearly led the often overmatched program to the College Football Playoff. Pavia remains the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit challenging an NCAA rule counting seasons spent at junior colleges against players’ Division I eligibility. The case is slated for trial in February. Pavia won a preliminary injunction that allowed him to play this past season, and although he decided to enter the draft, he continued

the suit to help other junior college players.

After the Heisman ceremony, Pavia reposted an Instagram story of himself and his offensive line captioned “F-ALL THE VOTERS, BUT.....FAMILY FOR LIFE.” He later apologized.

He joins a Ravens team that already has two-time MVP Lamar Jackson at quarterback, and backup Tyler Huntley played well last season.