

STARS AND STRIPES®

Sunday, August 23, 2020

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

US military plagued by alcohol abuse

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY

Stars and Stripes

More than 101,000 active-duty troops ended up in the hospital between 2009 and 2018 because of a problem related to excessive drinking, a new study has found.

About half of them had potentially deadly alcohol poisoning — caused by drinking too much in a short period of time — 35% sought care for alcohol dependence disorders, 17% for alcohol-related injuries and over 10% for alcohol-induced psychosis, according to the study in the Defense Health Agency's monthly publication.

Broken down by service, soldiers had the highest rate of alcohol-related trips to the hospital, followed by Marines and sailors. Airmen had the lowest rate — about half of soldiers.

Soldiers also comprised more than half of those who went to

the hospital more than once for a drinking-related problem, the study said.

The high rate among soldiers for repeat visits to the hospital is “likely related to the higher rate of alcohol-related encounters attributable to the Army in general,” the study said.

“However, it may also suggest higher tolerance of these episodes and stronger efforts to rehabilitate soldiers and salvage careers than in the other service branches.”

Problems caused by excessive drinking that required hospital care were most common in combat-specific and motor transport occupations, with pilots and air crew the least likely to be affected, the study found.

While the incidence rate of alcohol-related medical encounters declined 14% over the 10-year period, there was an increase in 2011 and 2012

— a period that corresponded with a surge in troop levels in Afghanistan, the study said. Once the surge ended, the rate of alcohol-related encounters declined, it said.

Active duty service members are known to have a higher prevalence of alcohol use, heavy drinking and binge drinking than the general population, the study said.

That could be due in part because those who drink in high school are more likely to join the military, but also because “binge and heavy drinking are an accepted part of military culture,” the study said.

Around 30% of service members who took part in the 2015 Department of Defense Health Related Behaviors Survey said they had binge-drunk the previous year, compared to 24.7% of U.S. adults over the age of 18. And a 2002 study comparing

military drinking rates with that of civilians in the same age group found that around 32% of military men drank heavily, compared with 17.8% of civilian men, according to a paper for the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Excessive drinking “contributes to significant harms among military service members and substantial costs to the U.S. Armed Forces,” the study warned.

“A study of TRICARE expenditures noted alcohol-related medical care to cost around \$425 million a year in 2006, which would be over \$500 million in 2018 after adjusting for inflation,” it said.

Still, the rate of alcohol-related ER visits and hospitalizations among service members “is substantially lower than those reported in the civilian sector.”

Commitment to service extended for Army pilots

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

Soldiers who want to fly Army helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft will be required to serve at least a decade, the same active-duty service commitment expected of Air Force fighter pilots and four more years than the current policy.

The 10-year service obligation kicks in after graduation from flight training and does not apply to personnel currently in training, Army officials said last week.

The policy takes effect in October and also applies to part-time Army Reserve and National Guard personnel, Chief Warrant Officer 5 William S. Kearns, aviation and officer policy integrator for the Army's personnel office, said in a statement.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy announced the new policy in June and the Army issued guidance this month, saying

the longer service obligation will give pilots the time they need to “become a technical and tactical expert.”

The increase “will also allow the Army to benefit from the expertise and retain the talent required for the operational force,” a service memo published Aug. 12 said.

The new policy comes amid a pilot shortage among all branches in the military. Last year, the Army's pilot attrition rate grew to a record 10% of its force, due largely to aging aviators and competition from commercial airlines.

The Army in January said it would pay up to \$1,000 a month in aviation incentives, the first increases it had offered in two decades.

But the global coronavirus pandemic has dried up some commercial opportunities as lower air travel demand has forced airlines to cut flights and lay off pilots.

The Army said the policy comes as the costs and requirements for flight hours,

maintenance and training have risen.

“In the end, it's the Army getting a good return on the investments,” Kearns said.

Some people, however, questioned whether the new policy turns away prospective pilots who don't want to commit a decade to the Army after at least a year of flight training.

“I thought there was an aviation shortage? The trick is to coax people with longer service commitments? Interesting,” said one post on the U.S. Army Human Resources Command Facebook page this week, which posted a story about the policy change.

The Army is touting its benefits, particularly for warrant officers, who comprise about 70% of the service's aviators.

“It's a great time to apply to become a pilot,” Kearns said. “We want as many people as we can get to apply and [soldiers] can get in with a high school degree.”

USAF chief aims to 'accelerate' change

The Washington Post

As protests erupted across the country after the police killing of George Floyd, the man who would soon become the first Black officer to lead a branch of the U.S. military took a call from his son.

Air Force Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. and his wife, Sharene, listened as Ross, 24, poured out his frustrations.

"He was having a really hard time," the general said during an interview at the Pentagon, his voice catching. "We had a pretty emotional conversation."

"I just remember feeling so emotional over the shared experiences that we've had," said Ross, who was a college student in St. Louis in 2014 when the police killing of Michael Brown Jr. in nearby Ferguson, Mo., triggered weeks of unrest.

The general, then commander of Pacific Air Forces, said he wasn't sure how he should respond to the killing of another Black man by police. Not yet confirmed as chief, he did not want to get in the way of anything the Air Force's top leaders had planned, he said.

But then his son asked, "Dad, what is PACAF saying?" Brown recalled. "Which is code for, 'Dad, what are you going to say?'"

Over the next day or two, Brown wrote a

script about his experiences and recorded it in front of a dark backdrop. He recalled being the only African American in his squadron, the only African American in meetings of senior leaders and having a colleague question whether he was a pilot.

He spoke about the Constitution, which "I've sworn my adult life to support and defend," and about his sons, Ross and Sean, 27. He and Sharene prepared them "to live in two worlds," he said.

The video, which went viral after it was published on social media June 5, addressed another issue: the "immense expectations," Brown said, that come with his historic promotion, "particularly through the lens of current events plaguing our nation."

Brown, who goes by "CQ," was confirmed by the Senate with a 98-to-0 vote four days later. He took over the Air Force on Aug. 6 in a ceremony at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland in which he recognized Black pioneers in U.S. military history. While Army Gen. Colin Powell served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1989 to 1993, no Black officer had ever led a branch of service.

Brown, 58, will lead the Air Force through a period of transition that includes preparations for the rise of China, the establishment of the Space Force from Air

Force personnel, new realities created by the coronavirus pandemic and longstanding racial equality issues within the service.

Among the issues the service is expected to address this year is racial equality.

In June, Air Force officials directed an inspector general review of racial disparities in military justice, including statistics which show that Black airmen have historically faced court-martial more frequently than their white counterparts.

Brown said that he wants to address the issue through the development of young leaders, who handle many disciplinary issues.

He is also considering introducing cultural awareness training at home, citing instruction that service members receive before deploying overseas. All airmen have some common values, he said, but they grew up in different parts of the country and see the world differently.

Brown said he's already talking to other senior Air Force officials about making changes.

"It's not just me doing this. I think it's the senior leadership of the Air Force, and we've got to be in this together," Brown said. "Most of the senior parts of the Air Force are not African American, and so they've also got to buy into this as well."

USAA donates \$30M to help troops, vets

BY JAMES BOLINGER

Stars and Stripes

USAA, an insurance and banking company with military roots, is donating \$30 million to its military Family Relief Initiative to assist people struggling during the coronavirus pandemic.

This is the largest one-time donation in USAA's 100-year history, the firm announced Thursday in a press release. The donation follows nearly \$11 million the company has gifted to coronavirus relief programs since the pandemic started.

USAA services more than 13 million military members, veterans and their families.

"This gift honors the resolve and sacrifice of our military community as well as the challenges they face by making sure they and their families have the support they need," USAA President and CEO Wayne Peacock said in the release. Military families have experienced new challenges unique to the community, including interrupted moves with associated expenses and extended deployments, according to the release.

Two dozen organizations affiliated with the U.S. military or veterans will receive a portion of the \$30 million commitment, according to USAA.

Italy's ban on dancing in public applies to troops

Stars and Stripes

U.S. military bases in Italy ordered service members to comply with a ban on dancing in public after the country instituted the restriction following a spike in confirmed cases of the coronavirus.

The Italian decree also requires masks to be worn from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. in public outdoor areas where gatherings could occur, including parks, public squares, waterfront areas and streets.

Previously issued directives said face masks were only necessary outside when it wasn't possible to maintain proper social distancing. People are still required to wear masks

indoors throughout the day at public places and while using public transport. The new rules will remain in effect through at least Sept. 7, the decree said.

On Thursday, the U.S. Navy base in Naples reiterated that the restrictions do apply to its personnel, stating that dancing both indoors and outside is prohibited "in discos, ballrooms, beaches, hotels or other public areas," in a Facebook post signed by installation commander Capt. Jim Stewart.

Aviano Air Base's website posted similar information on the Italian decree, while U.S. Army Garrison Italy has generally followed country guidance since the pandemic began.

US soldiers need only a test before travel to S. Korea

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — U.S. soldiers will need a negative coronavirus test but no restriction of movement before traveling to South Korea starting next week since the military already requires a two-week quarantine upon arrival, the Army said Sunday.

The announcement came as South Korea battled a new outbreak, with 397 new confirmed cases reported Sunday, the largest number in 10 days of triple-digit daily increases.

City officials in Seoul, meanwhile, said everybody will be required to wear masks in public except when eating or drinking starting Monday, tightening rules that already mandated face coverings on public transportation in the densely packed urban area. Local governments in the surrounding Gyeonggi province and the southern city of Daegu have done the same.

U.S. Forces Korea, which commands some 28,500 troops on the divided peninsula, already required that all members of the military community wear masks in local communities off-base and on-base when social distancing isn't possible.

Health authorities warned the country was facing a second wave of infections, urging people to stay indoors as much as possible and to maintain a safe distance from others to slow the spread of the respiratory virus that causes COVID-19.

"We don't see the current state as the peak," Korean Centers for Disease Control director Jeong Eun-kyeong said during a daily briefing. "We believe that infections could further increase."

The new order said all soldiers, family members and

Army civilians will need "a negative COVID-19 test or medical clearance before departing their home station" starting next week.

It said the test must be completed "as close as possible to departure from the home station," but didn't give a specific timeframe or more details about what a medical clearance would entail, according to Nicholson.

USFK has reported 160 coronavirus cases since late February — all but 24 in troops and other personnel who traveled to the country from abroad.

The command insists the patients pose no risk to the general population because of a strict entry process that includes a two-week quarantine with mandatory tests on both ends without exception.

More than two months after travel restrictions were lifted, South Korea also has been placed back on the list of "red locations" that require special permission such as an exception to policy letter for any moves.

USFK also has tightened restrictions on off-base activities after raising its health alert level Aug. 17 to "Charlie," which indicates an area is experiencing sustained community transmission.

The resurgence in South Korea was being closely watched since the Asian economic powerhouse had been an early epicenter of the pandemic but successfully contained the spread with aggressive testing and tracing methods.

Authorities have avoided strict lockdowns because of economic concerns but warned they may need to rethink that decision.

Worldwide death toll climbs above 800,000

New York Daily News

The number of people killed by coronavirus worldwide climbed past 800,000 on Saturday, according to a tally from Johns Hopkins University.

The grim milestone comes less than 24 hours after officials with the World Health Organization said they believe the virus will be under control within two years.

The United States has so far reported more COVID-19 deaths than anywhere else in the world. According to the most recent data, 5.6 million Americans have been infected with coronavirus, including more than 175,000 who have succumbed to the disease. Of those, more than 32,000 victims lived in New York, 16,000 in New Jersey and nearly 12,000 in California.

California, Texas and Florida

have also seen their number of infections and deaths climb in recent weeks. On Saturday, the Sunshine State inched closer to 600,000 cases.

Officials believe the true numbers are actually far higher because of a lack of testing and reporting. In the U.S. health officials believe there may be 10 times more cases.

Still, schools and businesses nationwide have slowly begun to reopen, sparking concern and debate among citizens. Despite restrictions and social distancing measures, some students and teachers have already become infected amid their return.

The U.S. is followed in number of coronavirus case by Brazil, where more than 113,000 people have died from the fast-spreading disease.

Midwest infection rates are trending upward

The Washington Post

Coronavirus infections are trending upward across the Midwest, raising concerns that those states are struggling to contain their outbreaks even as the nation's total daily caseload continues to decline.

Seven-day averages for new cases rose over the past week in the Dakotas, Illinois, Minnesota, Kansas and Iowa, according to tracking by The Washington Post. North and South Dakota experienced the biggest jumps, with average daily caseloads up 23 percent and 34 percent, respectively.

Other states reported progress against the virus, though it appeared to be marginal in some places. Daily case averages declined by about 6 percent over the previous week in Wisconsin and fell by 10 to 20 percent in several other Midwestern states, according to The Post's tracking.

Spikes in cases across the Midwest come as other regions of the country have reported gains against the virus after seeing infections surge over the summer. Nationwide, the seven-day average for new cases has steadily trended downward after peaking in late July.

Several cases in South Dakota have been linked to a motorcycle rally that drew hundreds of thousands of people to the city of Sturgis this month. Health officials there said Thursday that they were aware of fewer than 25 infections among attendees, but acknowledged that they could not identify every case that exists because of the event.

Three neighboring states have also announced infections among rally attendees, according to local news outlets: seven cases in Nebraska, 15 in Minnesota and "a few" in Wyoming.

2 tropical storms may converge on Louisiana

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Marco became a hurricane over the Gulf of Mexico on Sunday on a path toward the Louisiana coast. Tropical Storm Laura battered the Dominican Republic and Haiti and headed to the same part of the U.S. coast, also as a potential hurricane.

It would be the first time two hurricanes form in the Gulf of Mexico simultaneously, according to records dating to at least 1900, said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.

The National Hurricane Center said Marco was about 300 miles south of the mouth of the Mississippi River and heading north-northwest at 14 miles per hour, packing winds of 75 mph. The center warned of life-threatening storm surges and hurricane-force winds along the Gulf Coast.

Haitian civil protection officials said they had received reports that a 10-year-old girl had died when a tree fell on a home in the southern coastal town of Anse-a-Pitres, on the border with the Dominican Republic. It was the first reported death from the storm. Hundreds of thousands were without power in the Dominican Republic, as both countries on the island of Hispaniola suffered heavy flooding.

Laura was centered about 95 miles off the eastern tip of Cuba Sunday morning, with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph. It was moving west-northwest at 21 mph.

The storm left more than 100,000 people without water in the Dominican Republic on Saturday night, while earlier it snapped trees and knocked out power to more than 200,000 customers in neighboring Puerto Rico.

It was forecast to move over Cuba on Sunday night or Monday.

GOP convention to 'honor the great American story'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans will aim to recast the story of Donald Trump's presidency when they hold their national convention, featuring speakers drawn from everyday life as well as cable news and the White House while drawing a stark contrast with Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden.

Trump is looking to shift his campaign away from being a referendum on a presidency ravaged by a pandemic and economic collapse and toward a choice between vastly different visions of America's future. Reshaping the national conversation around the race has taken on greater urgency for Trump, who trails in public and private surveys as the corona-

virus continues to ravage the nation's economy.

The four-day event is themed "Honoring the Great American Story," according to four Trump campaign officials involved with the planning process but not authorized to discuss it by name. The convention will feature prominently a number of well-known Trump supporters, including members of the Trump family, but also those whom the GOP say are members of the "silent majority" of Americans who have been aided by Trump's policies. Some have been "silenced" by a "cancel culture" pushed by Democrats, the campaign officials said.

Trump himself was expected to appear each night in the key 10 p.m. Eastern hour, planners

said.

Where Democrats highlighted Republicans who crossed party lines to back Biden as an indictment of Trump's leadership, the GOP lineup will primarily feature figures on the conservative media circuit with the hope that they can deliver red meat for the president's loyal supporters — though planners say they will feature some people who did not vote for Trump in 2016.

Planners insist they will put forward a more "positive" convention than Democrats' roasting of Trump. Yet the president also appears intent on trying to seize on the nation's cultural divides, particularly around issues of racial injustice and policing, drawing on grievances to motivate his base.

Bill OK'd to reverse mail delay changes

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With heated debate over mail delays, the House approved legislation in a rare Saturday session that would reverse recent changes in U.S. Postal Service operations and send \$25 billion to shore up the agency ahead of the November election.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi recalled lawmakers to Washington over objections from Republicans dismissing the action as a stunt. President Donald Trump urged a no vote, including in a Saturday tweet, railing against mail-in ballots expected to surge in the COVID-19 crisis. He has said he wants to block extra funds to the Postal Service.

"Don't pay any attention to what the president is saying, because it is all designed to suppress the vote," Pelosi said at the Capitol.

Pelosi called the Postal Service the nation's "beautiful thread" connecting Americans and said voters should "ignore" the president's threats.

The daylong session came as an uproar over mail disruptions puts the Postal Service at the center of the nation's tumultuous election year, with Americans rallying around one of the nation's oldest and more popular institutions. Millions of people are expected to opt for mail-in ballots to avoid polling places during the corona-

virus pandemic.

Ahead of voting the president tweeted, "This is all another HOAX."

More than two dozen Republicans broke with the president and backed the bill, which passed 257-150. Democrats led approval, but the legislation is certain to stall in the GOP-held Senate. The White House said the president would veto it.

Facing a backlash over operational changes, new Postmaster General Louis DeJoy testified Friday in the Senate that his "No. 1 priority" is to ensure election mail arrives on time.

But the new postal leader, a Trump ally, said he would not restore the cuts to mailboxes and sorting equipment that have already been made. He could not provide senators with a plan for handling the ballot crush for the election. DeJoy is set to return Monday to testify before the House Oversight Committee.

"The American people don't want anyone messing with the post office," said Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., the chair of the Oversight Committee and author of the bill. "They just want their mail."

But Republicans countered that complaints about mail delivery disruptions are overblown, and no emergency funding is needed right now.

"It's a silly, silly bill," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Trooper finds military tank abandoned on road

NE OVERTON — It wasn't a typical abandoned vehicle call for the Nebraska State Patrol.

A patrol trooper was alerted that a large military vehicle was sitting on a parked trailer at the Interstate 80 on-ramp near Overton, patrol spokesman Cody Thomas said.

The trooper determined the tank belonged to the South Dakota National Guard 211th Engineer Company, the Lincoln Journal-Star reported.

The patrol discovered the tank was being returned to South Dakota from a training mission in California when it was abandoned by the driver for a trucking company contracted to move it, Thomas said.

Man breaks leg logging, frees self with chainsaw

ME SABATTUS — A Maine man broke his leg in a logging accident, managed to cut his leg free from where it was caught between two logs and drive more than a mile down a road to where rescuers found him, the police said.

Philip Nickey, 59, of Sabattus was using a device to gather trees to drag behind a piece of heavy machinery when one of the logs broke free and pinned his leg to another tree, the Lewiston Sun Journal reported.

His leg broke below the knee but he was able to reach a chainsaw and cut through the log to free himself, the Sabattus police department said.

Nickey managed to reach the vehicle he drove with into the logging site and called 911 from his cellphone, police said.

He drove to the surface road more than a mile away where rescuers found him, the newspaper said.

8 indicted in death of man at wedding party

GA DOUGLAS — Eight men were indicted for involvement in the choking and beating death of a man at a south Georgia wedding reception on New Year's Day.

WALB-TV reported the men were indicted in Coffee County in the death of Warren Van Brown, 39, during a fight.

Justin Joe Anderson and Jeffery Harper were charged with malice murder and felony murder. Anderson is also charged with aggravated assault and evidence tampering, with police saying he tried to hide a baton that was used to beat Brown at the reception in Ambrose.

Matthew Lewis was also indicted for evidence tampering for allegedly hiding the baton.

Five other men were indicted for reckless conduct

Group donates washing machines to firefighters

MA BOSTON — The California-based foundation of actor Gary Sinise donated over \$380,000 to a Boston nonprofit to install industrial washer and dryer equipment in Boston fire departments to clean the firefighters' gear.

The donation from the Gary Sinise Foundation will cover the cost of purchasing and installing 10 washing machines and 32 drying cabinets in fire houses around Boston, the Boston Globe reported.

Currently, an outside cleaning company picks up and cleans the suits, but it can take days for a suit to be returned.

With the new equipment, multiple suits can be washed and dried on site within hours, Phillip Skrabut, a firefighter and treasurer of the Boston Firefighters Burn Foundation, told the newspaper.

Bomb squad recovers device at hospital

WA SPOKANE — The Spokane Police Department Bomb Squad safely recovered a small homemade device that was discovered outside Providence Sacred Heart hospital.

The Spokesman-Review reported a concerned citizen found the device in the area and brought it to Sacred Heart security near the emergency room, according to a Spokane Police Department statement.

The bomb squad was able to render the device safe, an SPD statement said.

Police said the device appeared to be a small pipe bomb that was not large enough to damage the hospital structure.

Police: Candidate for mayor faked attack

SC SUMTER — A woman running for mayor in a South Carolina city faked her own kidnapping and beating in a Facebook video in an attempt to pin the attack on an opponent, police said.

Sabrina Belcher, 29, was arrested and charged with filing a false police report of a felony and conspiracy after she went to the police department to report the attack, Sumter Police said.

Belcher hired Christopher James Eaddy to hit her and break the windows in her car while recording the attack on Facebook Live, according to arrest warrants.

During the recording, Belcher blamed one of her five opponents for the attack, police spokeswoman Tonyia McGirt told The Sumter Item.

McGirt didn't say who Belcher blamed for the attack, but said Belcher had plans to try and smear all of them.

Man charged in motorcycle chase

MN ST. PAUL — Prosecutors charged a St. Paul man with leading a state trooper on a high-speed chase earlier this month.

The St. Paul Pioneer Press reported that Daivonn Antonio Thomas Martinez, 25, faces one count of fleeing a peace officer in a motor vehicle, a felony.

According to the charge, a state trooper spotted Martinez weaving through traffic on a motorcycle at 115 mph on Interstate 35E on Aug. 13. The trooper gave chase, reaching a speed of 100 mph at one point.

The chase ended when Martinez drove into a ditch, hit a sign and was thrown from the motorcycle.

He was taken to a hospital but left wearing only a hospital gown and had not been taken back into custody.

Gaming machines seized in illegal gambling raid

PA READING — Pennsylvania State Police along with Berks County law enforcement officers seized nearly 60 electronic gaming machines during a raid on a business, authorities said.

Berks County District Attorney John Adams announced the operation during a news conference, saying almost \$68,000 had been confiscated along with the machines from the 777 Casino in Kenhorst, operated by Windfall Amusements.

Adams noted that the business that advertised itself on Facebook as a casino, was not licensed to be a casino. The machines were not monitored like those operated at licensed casino facilities.

Adams said the investigation is ongoing and charges may follow.

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®

Stars top Avalanche in Game 1

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta—The top line for the Dallas Stars finally came to life, stepping up after a quick turnaround for an impressive start in round two of the Western Conference playoffs.

Stars captain Jamie Benn, Alexander Radulov and Tyler Seguin set the tone early, and piled on after that, in a 5-3 victory over the Colorado Avalanche on Saturday night.

"They definitely led the way for us tonight. I felt like the rest of the group followed," said Blake Comeau, who had the goal that put Dallas ahead to stay. "Great game for them ... that's what we expect."

Seguin opened the scoring with his first goal of this postseason, taking Benn's pass from behind the net only four minutes into the game.

Two nights after the top trio had no points when the Stars scored seven goals in the finale of their opening series against Calgary, Radulov had two goals and an assist, Benn had three assists and Seguin added a helper to his opening goal.

"When that line scores an early goal like that, that's huge.

And then you've just got to let them go," Stars interim head coach Rick Bowness said. "We're not going anywhere without our top players."

Game 2 of the best-of-seven series is Monday night.

Hart Trophy finalist Nathan MacKinnon had two goals and an assist for the Avalanche, who lost top goalie Philipp Grubauer to an injury early in the second period.

"Obviously, he's in a position there where he tweaked something and he's unable to continue," Avs coach Jared Bednar said. "So that's already bad news. Time will tell how long he's going to be out. I have no idea at this point. ... It's going to be Francouz's net here."

Grubauer went face down on the ice after pushing away a shot with his right skate in the second period. He was replaced by Pavel Francouz, who had 27 saves in a 4-0 shutout over the Stars in round-robin play 2½ weeks earlier in Edmonton.

Colorado defenseman Erik Johnson was severely limited after his right leg appeared to awkwardly turn midway through the first period, though he returned for the start of the

second before leaving the bench again late in the period. He played less than eight minutes.

Comeau, a former Avalanche player, and Roope Hintz also had their first goals of the postseason for the Stars. Comeau made it 2-1 midway through the first on a 57-foot shot deflected by an Avs player, and the shot by Hintz provided a cushion midway through the third period.

The Stars led 3-1 late in the first period after Benn got control of a bouncing puck for an odd-man rush. He made a cross-ice pass to Radulov, who scored on a backhand through Grubauer's legs.

After Colorado captain Gabriel Landeskog got his first goal of the postseason, a nifty poke around the post after going past the net to get within 3-2 five minutes into the second period, Radulov got his second goal to restore the Stars' two-goal lead right after coming back on the ice.

Radulov was behind the coverage and got in an odd-man rush with Seguin, whose hard shot ricocheted off Francouz. Radulov scored on the rebound for his fourth playoff goal.

Sports briefs

Capitals fire coach after postseason letdowns

Associated Press

The Washington Capitals have fired coach Todd Reirden after a second consecutive first-round exit in the playoffs.

General manager Brian MacLellan announced the move Sunday, three days after the Capitals lost to former coach Barry Trotz's New York Islanders in a five-game series.

Washington opted to promote Reirden from the top assistant job and let Trotz leave rather than give him a raise after winning the Stanley Cup in 2018. Reirden likely would have left to seek a head coaching position elsewhere.

Trotz's Islanders reached the second round of the postseason for a second consecutive season.

The Capitals failed to advance past the first in back-to-back years for the first time since 2013 and 2014.

"We have higher expectations for our team, and we felt a fresh approach in leadership was necessary," MacLellan said. "Todd has been a big part of our team for more than half a decade, including our Stanley Cup run in 2018, and we wish him and his family all the best moving forward."

Raptors' Nurse named head coach of year

Nick Nurse, the head coach of the reigning champion Toronto Raptors, was selected the NBA's coach of the year, the league announced Saturday.

Nurse led the Raptors, who lost star Kawhi Leonard in free agency, to the second-best record in the NBA, surpassing preseason expectations for Toronto. Nurse, who was named the developmental league coach of the year in 2011, is the first person to win the award in both leagues.

NBA roundup

Thunder dominate OT, take down Rockets

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Dennis Schroder scored 29 points, Chris Paul added 26 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder dominated in overtime to beat the Houston Rockets 119-107 on Saturday night and cut their deficit in the first-round series to 2-1.

"We just wanted to fight," Paul said. "We know how tough it is coming back down 3-0. We wanted to fight tonight, and I think that's what we did."

James Harden scored 38 points for Houston, but fouled out 53 seconds into overtime — the first time he's fouled out

this season.

Lakers 116, Trail Blazers 108: LeBron James had 38 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists, Anthony Davis scored 12 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter, and Los Angeles beat Portland for a 2-1 lead in the Western Conference first-round series.

The Lakers shut down the high-scoring Blazers for the second straight game after the No. 1 seed was knocked off in Game 1.

Bucks 121, Magic 107: Giannis Antetokounmpo had 35 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists and Milwaukee beat Orlando for a 2-1 lead in the East-

ern Conference playoff series.

Antetokounmpo was 12-for-14 from the field and the top-seeded Bucks shot 56.1% from the floor. Khris Middleton had 17 points, eight rebounds and six assists.

Heat 124, Pacers 115: Jimmy Butler scored 27 points and Miami held off Indiana's comeback attempt to take a 3-0 lead in the Eastern Conference playoff series.

Goran Dragic added 24 points, Bam Adebayo had 22 points and 11 rebounds, and Tyler Herro scored 20 points for the Heat. They can sweep the series Monday.

Slam Diego: Padres rough up Astros

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Trent Grisham hit three home runs and rookie Jake Cronenworth launched a grand slam in a wild nine-run second inning Saturday night, making the San Diego Padres the first team in major league history to hit five slams in six games as they cruised to a 13-2 rout of the Houston Astros.

Earlier in the week, the Padres became the first club to hit a grand slam in four straight games.

Grisham had his first three-homer game and drove in a career-high six runs. Zach Davies (4-2), who came over from Milwaukee with Grisham in an offseason deal, pitched eight brilliant innings to give the beat-up bullpen a much-needed rest and help the Padres win their sixth consecutive game.

Cronenworth drove a 3-1 pitch from Humberto Castellanos into the home run

deck in right field to give San Diego an 11-1 lead. It was San Diego's third homer of the inning and fifth of the game. The home run deck now has a number of mannequins wearing Padres gear, and the ball landed near one wearing a Slam Diego No. 4 jersey.

Cronenworth, obtained along with outfielder Tommy Pham in an offseason trade with Tampa Bay, became the 20th Padres rookie to hit a grand slam. It was his third homer of the year and he had his first three-hit game.

Earlier in the week, the Padres hit grand slams in four straight games during a sweep of the Texas Rangers in a home-and-home series.

That onslaught started with Fernando Tatis Jr.'s slam Monday night on a 3-0 count with a seven-run lead, reigniting a debate about etiquette and baseball's so-called "unwritten rules." Wil Myers hit a slam on

Tuesday, Manny Machado had a walk-off grand slam in the 10th inning Wednesday night and Eric Hosmer capped the run with a historic shot on Thursday night.

Hosmer batted with the bases loaded Friday night but grounded out.

On Saturday night, Myers opened the second inning with a homer and Grisham hit a three-run shot with one out, with Cronenworth aboard on a single. Tatis was hit by a pitch from rookie Brandon Bielak (3-1), who made way for Castellanos. Both teams were warned by the umpires, and Houston's Martin Maldonado was ejected from the dugout.

Grisham also hit a leadoff shot and Machado had a solo shot with one out in the first.

Davies held the Astros to two runs and four hits while striking out seven and walking two in going eight innings.

MLB roundup

McKenzie strikes out 10 in his MLB debut

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Triston McKenzie struck out 10 in his major league debut and Domingo Santana delivered a bases-clearing double in the sixth to lift the Cleveland Indians to a 6-1 defeat of the Detroit Tigers on Saturday.

McKenzie (1-0) went six innings, allowing two hits on a Willi Castro homer and a Jeimer Candelario double. The 23-year-old right-hander notched his first strikeout on three pitches to Miguel Cabrera in the first.

Santana's two-out double came off reliever John Schreiber and gave Cleveland a 3-1 lead and Roberto Perez followed with an RBI single. Carlos Santana had a sacrifice fly in the seventh and Cesar Hernandez singled in the Indians' final run in the eighth.

Angels 4, Athletics 3: Mike Trout drove in three early runs, then made a key catch late as Los Angeles snapped Oakland's nine-game home winning streak.

The three-time MVP made a diving catch on Matt Olson's sinking liner to center field to start the eighth inning, which had Angels reliever Ty Buttrey clapping his glove in gratitude. Buttrey got six outs for his second save.

Dodgers 4, Rockies 3: Cody Bellinger's home run leading off the ninth inning gave host Los Angeles a win over slumping Colorado.

Bellinger drove a slider from Daniel Bard (1-2) just over the glove of Rockies right fielder Sam Hilliard for his seventh home run of the season and the second walk-off shot of his career. Chris Taylor also homered for the Dodgers, who have won 10 of 11.

White Sox 7, Cubs 4: Jose Abreu hit three home runs a day after going deep twice, and the White Sox again powered past the Cubs for their seventh straight win.

Abreu connected in the sixth, eighth and ninth innings at Wrigley Field for the first three-homer game of the All-

Star's career. He went 4-for-4 with a walk and four RBIs.

Giants 5, Diamondbacks 1: Tyler Anderson pitched a three-hitter for his first career complete game, overshadowing a record-tying night for Zac Gallen as streaking San Francisco beat visiting Arizona.

Mike Yastrzemski and Alex Dickerson drew consecutive walks with the bases loaded against reliever Junior Guerra in the seventh inning to break open a tight game.

Rays 2, Blue Jays 1 (10): Pinch hitter Kevin Kiermaier singled in the 10th inning, and host Tampa Bay ended Toronto's six-game winning streak.

Twins 7, Royals 2: Eddie Rosario and Miguel Sano homered, leading Minnesota to the road win.

Pirates 12, Brewers 5: Adam Frazier and Jacob Stallings homered and drove in three runs apiece, powering host Pittsburgh to the victory. The Pirates collected 14 hits for the second straight day, good enough for their first win

streak since last September.

Nationals 5-3, Marlins 4-5: Sixto Sanchez allowed six hits over five innings to win his major league debut, and Miami earned a split of a doubleheader at Washington.

Cardinals 3, Reds 0: Kwang Hyun Kim pitched six sharp innings and earned his first major league win to lead host St. Louis.

Braves 6, Phillies 5: Adam Duvall and host Atlanta spoiled Brandon Workman's debut with Philadelphia.

Orioles 5, Red Sox 4 (10): Pedro Severino singled in the winning run in the 10th inning to punctuate a poor performance by Boston's revamped bullpen, and host Baltimore snapped a six-game losing streak.

Mariners 10, Rangers 1: Mariners rookie Evan White doubled and homered in his first two at-bats and finished with a career-high six RBIs, Kyle Lewis added three more hits to his AL-leading total and host Seattle beat Texas.

Racing roundup

Hamlin holds off Truex for 1st Dover win

Associated Press

DOVER, Del — Denny Hamlin crossed Dover off the meager list of tracks where he had yet to win and turned his ambitions toward one more goal he'd like to scratch off the docket.

Pushing 40, Hamlin's first career Cup championship is within his grasp — and he might never be better.

"I'm in the prime of my career right now and I've got things rolling," Hamlin said.

Hamlin tamed the concrete mile oval that gave him fits for 15 years and zipped past Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Martin Truex Jr. with eight laps left to win the NASCAR Cup Series race Saturday at Dover International Speedway.

Hamlin was 0-for-28 at Dover, the kind of losing streak that had him studying the runs of his more successful JGR

teammates in Truex and Kyle Busch to pick up tips on how best to win at the track.

He learned from his teammates — then beat them in the No. 11 Toyota, though Truex's runner-up finish and Busch's third gave JGR a 1-2-3 finish in the first of two races this weekend at Dover.

"People always ask what your least favorite track is and I say Dover just because I'm not that good," Hamlin said. "I love the track, I just haven't been very good here."

Hamlin matched Kevin Harvick for the season victory lead with six, matching his total from last season and closing within two of his career high set in 2010. He opened this season with a Daytona 500 win, and added wins at Homestead, Pocono and Kansas to catapult toward the kind of sensational run he's never had in an other-

wise stellar career.

"There's been no year where it's been like this," Hamlin said. "Every week. It's literally every single week. We set some lofty goals at the beginning of the year to try to win 10 races. It's still achievable. We should have more than six easily."

Allgaier edges Cindric to win Xfinity race

DOVER, Del — Justin Allgaier had a tiff with a fellow driver last week that was as much about the veteran driver's frustration over a lengthy losing streak than anything that happened in the Xfinity Series race.

A week later, Allgaier kept his cool, stayed in control and held off a streaking Austin Cindric to win his first Xfinity race of the season Saturday at Dover

International Speedway.

The 34-year-old Allgaier snapped a 20-race winless streak and acknowledged the drought had frayed his emotions. He got into a post-race tiff with AJ Allmendinger at Daytona and said there were times this season he considered hanging up the helmet.

"Even as successful as we've been, it's been tough: mentally, physically, emotionally," Allgaier said. "I can tell you that in the last six months, I probably told my wife 10 times I'm not ready to be a race car driver anymore."

The JR Motorsports driver, of course, couldn't even celebrate with his family — his wife and daughter watched from a hotel near the track.

Positive COVID-19 tests from NJ lab could be false

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NFL revealed Sunday that several positive COVID-19 tests were found a day earlier by one of its testing partners. Among teams reporting false positives, the Minnesota Vikings said they had 12, the New York Jets 10 and the Chicago Bears nine.

The league has asked the New Jersey lab BioReference to investigate the results "while the clubs work to confirm or rule out the positive tests." The NFL did not identify the teams or say how many tests altogether were positive.

The Jets canceled a walk-through on Saturday night but had a full practice Sunday morning after the previously positive tests came back negative. The Bears moved their practice scheduled for Sunday morning to the afternoon.

The Pittsburgh Steelers said

they had six false positives and those players will be back at practice Monday. The Philadelphia Eagles held out four players from working out Sunday. The Cleveland Browns called off their workout altogether.

The number of positive COVID-19 tests from a specific facility that might actually be false demonstrates the precarious position the NFL is in less than three weeks from the regular-season opener.

"Definitely probably better that this happened now than three weeks from now," said Buffalo Bills general manager Brandon Beane, whose club had some of those positive results.

Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 — even a false positive upon a retest — is required to have two more negative tests before being cleared. The NFL uses BioReference for all of its COVID-19 testing.

Murray wins his 1st match in 9 months in ATP return

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Andy Murray wore a coronavirus-conscious mask on his way to the unusual, no-spectators setting and avoided handshakes when he left. In between, the three-time Grand Slam champion offered his usual mix of hustling and muttering.

Murray's first match in nine months as he resumes his climb back from two hip operations came at the first ATP tournament for anyone in five months, a 7-6 (6), 3-6, 6-1 victory over Frances Tiafoe at the Western & Southern Open on Saturday.

"Physically, I thought I did pretty well," said Murray, who won Wimbledon twice and the U.S. Open in 2012. "I moved maybe better than what I expected to."

The men's tennis tour had been suspended since March because of the pandemic; the

resumption came at a hard-court event moved from its home in Ohio to the site of the U.S. Open, which begins Aug. 31.

Murray moved into a second-round test against No. 5 seed Alexander Zverev. Other men advancing Saturday included two-time Grand Slam runner-up Kevin Anderson, Canadians Milos Raonic, Felix Auger-Aliassime and Denis Shapovalov, and Americans Taylor Fritz and Reilly Opelka.

"To have no sound during the whole match, it was really odd," said No. 15 seed Auger-Aliassime, the first winner of an ATP match since March, 6-4, 6-1 against Nikoloz Basilashvili.

Shapovalov had a similarly straightforward victory over 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic, winning the day's last match 6-3, 6-3.