

## China seen likely to continue Taiwan tests

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

Numerous Chinese military vessels and aircraft were spotted near Taiwan over the weekend, even after Beijing announced the end to a weeklong series of drills around the self-governed island.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said Sunday on its Twitter account that the 10 fighter jets that crossed the midpoint of the Taiwan Strait were among 22 Chinese military aircraft and six naval ships detected in the area around Taiwan by 5 p.m., The Associated Press reported.

Six Chinese warships and 21 aircraft were active Thursday in the Taiwan Strait and waters around the island, with 11 aircraft flying past the unofficial median line, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said in a tweet that day.

The increased activity likely represents the "new normal," according to Lyle Goldstein, director of Asia Engagement at the Washington, D.C.-based Defense Priorities think tank.

"These deployments help familiarize [Chinese military] personnel with the is-

land's geography and defensive capabilities," he said in a Thursday email to Stars and Stripes. "Of course, they also have high intimidation value, as well."

China on Wednesday concluded a series of drills that began on Aug. 4 and included missile launches and live fire by land and naval forces. They were a response to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan on Aug. 3.

The drills effectively surrounded Taiwan and had a "serious impact" on international trade and regional security, Taiwanese Foreign Minister Joseph Wu said Tuesday. He also speculated that the exercises could be a pretext for an invasion.

The same day the exercises concluded, 10 Chinese warships and 36 aircraft were operating in the region, Taiwan's defense ministry said. Of those, 17 aircraft flew east of the median line.

Prior to Pelosi's visit, Beijing routinely sent aircraft into Taiwan's air defense identification zone on a near daily basis, according to daily updates by the defense ministry. The presence of warships in those incursions, however, was relatively rare. Taiwan

has remained functionally separate from China since 1949, but Beijing regards the island as a breakaway province that must be reunited politically with the mainland, by force if necessary.

The conclusion of China's exercises represents a temporary abatement, but the long-term outlook remains grim, Goldstein said.

China reaffirmed that it would not "renounce the use of force" in its efforts to bring Taiwan back into its fold, according to a white paper released Wednesday by the Taiwan Affairs Office in Beijing. It stated that while China will exert its "utmost efforts to achieve peaceful reunification," it reserves the ability to take "all necessary measures" in achieving its goal. The threat of force shouldn't be taken lightly, according to Goldstein.

"I have been concerned for many years that Beijing is deadly serious about enforcing its claims to Taiwan," he said. "I find it plausible that China will assume a more and more aggressive posture against Taiwan, commensurate with its rapidly growing military power."

## Navy takes part in exercise near Solomon Islands

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

A U.S. Navy warship recently took part in a goodwill exercise with the Solomon Islands' maritime police and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, the first such operation between Tokyo and the Oceania nation.

The littoral combat ship USS Oakland, the Japanese destroyer JS Kirisame and the Solomon Islands patrol boat Taro practiced tactical maneuvering near the Solomons on Aug. 8, according to a news release the next day from Japan's Ministry of Defense.

The maneuvers were then followed by a separate exercise in the area by the Oakland and

Kirisame.

The U.S. 3rd Fleet acknowledged Stars and Stripes' request for additional details on Thursday but did not respond by Friday evening.

The exercises were a part of a two-day effort to build closer ties with the Solomon Islands, according to the defense ministry.

The Pacific archipelago in April signed a five-year security agreement with China, raising concern in the United States and Australia that Beijing might establish a military base there.

Australian and U.S. diplomats headed to the Solomons to mend the breach and by June Solomon Island Prime Minister

Manasseh Sogavare had pledged that his country would never host a Chinese installation.

Relations between the U.S. and the Solomon Islands remain relatively cold, however.

Last Sunday, Sogavare skipped a memorial service commemorating 80 years since the World War II Battle of Guadalcanal, a service attended by several dignitaries, including U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, whose father died fighting in the Solomon Islands.

Local media described Sogavare's absence as a snub, Reuters reported Tuesday.

Sherman on Tuesday con-

cluded a trip to five Pacific nations, including the Solomon Islands, and told reporters in New Zealand that the U.S. is "doubling down on our investment here in the Pacific," The Associated Press reported Wednesday.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced in February that the U.S. would open an embassy in the Solomon Islands' capital, Honiara, to "deepen cooperation with Pacific Island partners," according to the State Department.

The U.S. closed its embassy in Honiara in 1993 and moved all diplomatic functions to the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

# Mold concerns at S. Korea base gain push

By DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Complaints of mold growing inside buildings at Kunsan Air Base in South Korea have caught the attention of a Missouri congressman.

Photos shared Wednesday on the Air Force amn/nco/snco Facebook group purported to show water spots, leaky ceilings and black mold growing in buildings on the air base about 115 miles south of Seoul.

The Facebook group is popular with airmen who anonymously submit messages about life in the military, including complaints and memes. It has more than 93,000 followers.

Information posted with the

photos indicate some Kunsan dormitory occupants had no hot water or working air conditioners for several weeks.

“There are hundreds of people on this base and in this building that are suffering from the same situation,” said a post on Monday.

A representative for Rep. Billy Long, a Republican from Springfield, Mo., said Long’s office has been in touch with service members from Kunsan. The congressman’s director of constituent services, Lisa Taylor, told Stars and Stripes by phone on Friday that Long plans to request an inquiry into the complaints.

A post in the Facebook group Monday shows a flyer for a “Bake and Raffle” event in which residents of dorm No. 535 could win a

new air-conditioning unit.

“Temperatures in the rooms can reach over 90 F even with a fan running,” the post said. “Now they post these flyers all over the building as a solution.”

A spokeswoman for the 8th Fighter Wing said the flyer was posted by a “private organization, not sponsored or in coordination” with the wing.

“The health, safety and quality of life of our Wolfpack Airmen is one of 8th Fighter Wing’s highest priorities,” Capt. K. Paige Hankerson said in an email to Stars and Stripes on Friday. “We are aware of the concerns regarding mold/mildew in Kunsan facilities currently circulating social media, and as we continue to fight an uphill battle against a very

moist climate, we remain committed to ensuring our airmen are equipped with the proper tools to prevent and mitigate the presence of mold/mildew.”

The fighter wing was distributing dehumidifiers to every airman’s room and briefing them on ways to prevent mold and mildew, Hankerson said.

Kunsan is on the western coast of South Korea. The Korean Peninsula is in the middle of monsoon season, with torrential rains and high humidity that lasts for days.

Heavy rain and flooding in South Korea killed at least 12 people last week. Seoul received its heaviest rainfall in 80 years with about 5.5 inches of water an hour Monday, according to the Korea Meteorological Administration.

## Victory Corps team wins Best Squad competition

By MICHAEL SLAVIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — The squad from “Victory Corps” lived up to its name last week, crowned as champions of the U.S. Army Europe and Africa’s first Best Squad competition held on the Grafenwoehr Training Area.

Iron Troop, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment was one of eight teams from across the U.S. Army Europe and Africa’s subordinate commands that underwent the grueling six-day event. Spending 72 hours out in a simulated real world operational environment, squads completed patrolling, live firing and medical scenarios.

“We started planning for this event about a year ago after the completion of the Best Warrior competition,” said Master Sgt. Jacob Hurt, lead planner of the competition. “The fighting force of the Army is at the squad level.

Instead of recognizing individual excellence, we want to recognize squad level excellence.”

Teams covered more than 35 miles over the course of the competition, which replaces the annual Best Warrior event.

“There is no one thing you can be good at to win this thing, so you have to be a PT stud, you have to know your patrols, a master of your weapon all while being privy to your medical tasks,” said Staff Sgt. William Powell, squad leader of 7th Army Training Command squad.

“It’s been more mentally challenging than anything; at some point when you are doing all these different things, you can know all your stuff and still hit a wall. That’s when you have to keep pushing through,” said Spc. Garret Headden of the V Corps squad. The squad now has time to prepare for the Department of the Army level competition next month at Fort Bragg, N.C.

## Austin takes command of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION FUTENMA, Okinawa — A former Harrier pilot with a Harvard credential took charge Friday of the Marine Corps’ only aircraft wing outside the U.S.

Maj. Gen. Eric Austin assumed command of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing from Maj. Gen. Brian Cavanaugh during a flight-line ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

Austin comes to wing headquarters on Okinawa with the risk of conflict with China and North Korea at a 50-year high.

“I couldn’t have picked a better person to come behind me,” Cavanaugh said as he addressed his replacement shortly after handing over the unit colors. “I think you’ll make this wing more lethal and that’s exactly what’s needed out here.”

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing is the aviation element of the III

Marine Expeditionary Force and consists of approximately 7,000 Marines and sailors in three aircraft groups at Marine Corps Air Stations Futenma and Iwakuni in Japan and Kaneohe Bay in Hawaii.

Austin attended the Defense Department’s Kubasaki High School at Camp Foster, where the wing headquarters are located, while his father served as a Marine officer on the island.

Austin earned a bachelor’s in aeronautical engineering at the U.S. Naval Academy in 1991 and finished flight school in 1994, his official biography states. He flew the AV-8B Harrier and has deployed multiple times to Kuwait and Iraq.

Cavanaugh is bound for Hampton Roads, Va., to take over Marine Corps Forces Command and is approved by Congress for promotion, wing spokesman 1st Lt. Jude Hydrick said.

# Taliban rout evokes raw emotions 1 year later

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

It's been a year since the Taliban swept into Kabul, and the images of terrified Afghans fleeing their homeland have largely faded from the memories of Americans who viewed the evacuation passively from afar.

But for many of the Americans who tried to help, sometimes without success, and the Afghans who braved the crowds and checkpoints for a chance at freedom, the last two weeks of August 2021 remain indelibly seared into their consciousness.

"I'll never be able to forget those moments," said Laily Ghawsi, the wife of an Afghan interpreter and U.S. citizen who was stranded in Afghanistan when the country fell.

She recalled searching for a path through the thousands of people surrounding the airport in Kabul as Taliban fighters shot seemingly endless rounds into the sky.

Ghawsi, 22, navigated the chaos via the phone in her hand. That phone was her lifeline to her husband, Hekmat, on the other side of the world in Las Vegas as he tried to direct her to someone inside the airport who could snatch her from the crowd and bring her to safety.

Hekmat feared that his wife would be targeted or harassed because of his previous work as an interpreter for U.S. troops.

The 32-year-old had received a Special Immigrant Visa to come to the U.S. in 2014. He started work as an Uber driver in Las Vegas and married his wife in Kabul in 2020 with hopes of bringing her to the U.S.

During the evacuation, he reconnected with the American soldiers with whom he had worked in a bid to reunite with his wife.

On Aug. 19, 2021, Laily led a small group of women, all wives of interpreters, into the crowd at the airport. She recalled tear gas wafting through the air and difficulty breathing. Some people passed out or were trampled un-

derneath the masses. She feared for her life.

She and the other interpreters' wives could not find a way into the airport that day.

Hekmat recalled a mixture of feelings: bravado, filling him with the desire to fly there and rescue her, like James Bond; helplessness at not knowing whether he could get her out of the crowd; and fear that he was sending her to the wrong gate, into greater danger.

To Hekmat and others trying to guide people into the airport, there seemed to be a chaotic lottery in which some with adequate paperwork were turned away, while others with no documentation or connection to the U.S. got in.

On Aug. 24, Laily and the other wives finally reached the inside of the airport, just a few days before U.S. troops left the country.

But as the military aircraft took off from Kabul, Laily realized that leaving Afghanistan was closing a chapter of her life and beginning another one in an unknown land. She wondered whether she would ever see her family again, and she felt guilt about leaving them behind.

"That was the quiet moment for me," she said. "That was the moment that I broke into tears, and I cried almost the whole flight."

American service members who had direct involvement in the evacuation said they are still affected by those events a year later.

Marines, soldiers, sailors and airmen rushed to Afghanistan and bases in the Middle East during the final phase of the war. Together, they evacuated more than 120,000 people.

They were suddenly thrust into an unprecedented, risky and sometimes overwhelming new mission.

"You see humanity at its best and a little bit of humanity at its worst," recalled Col. Amy Rivera, who was the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing's director of staff

during the evacuation at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

Many of those lucky enough to be plucked from the crowds at Kabul airport were brought to U.S. bases in the Middle East like Al Udeid. They were held at these bases until cleared to go to other military installations to continue their visa processing.

The airmen at Al Udeid rehearsed for an evacuation on Aug. 4, said Senior Master Sgt. Megan Harper, operations superintendent of the 379th Security Forces Squadron during the evac.

But that preparation was for the U.S. Embassy staff, an estimated 2,500 people. It did not anticipate the 60,000 or so people arriving from the seemingly endless chain of aircraft coming from Kabul, she said.

"We got overwhelmed so quickly," Harper said in a recent interview.

Conditions became "deplorable," she recalled. Supplies began running out. Tensions rose in the sweltering heat. Evacuees fought over baby formula and cots. At one point, 6,000 or so evacuees crowded a hangar meant for airplanes or 2,500 people at most, Harper said.

Harper said she could recognize, in part, the desperation of those whose lives had been upended. But on another level, she could not understand what would motivate someone to push an old man off a cot and onto the floor in a skirmish for sleeping space.

Humanitarian missions expose troops to not just the shock of seeing innocent people dying or suffering, but also to the trauma of seeing "the worst in people, when everyone is desperate," said Amy Williams, chief clinical officer at the New York-based Headstrong Project, which provides mental health treatment to veterans.

On Aug. 16, a plane that was feared to have been hijacked approached Al Udeid for landing, Harper said. Two men at the Kabul airport had brandished guns

to force themselves onto a military plane, Harper said.

Security forces rushed to surround the plane, Reach 871, on the runway. Then the rear door of the plane dropped. The airmen learned the two men had given up their weapons to the crew and were now more panicked than hostile.

The focus became the welfare of the hundreds of people onboard the overloaded aircraft and taking them off the plane before the intense heat in Qatar caused them to pass out.

"When you drop that door and the first person who comes off is a 5-year-old little girl, now your mentality has to shift," said Harper, who still keeps a letter from an Afghan girl thanking the airmen for their hospitality.

For many veterans and service members, the year since the last U.S. soldier in Afghanistan, Maj. Gen. Chris Donahue, ascended into the sky on a C-17 prompted reflection on whether their efforts had any meaning.

"The withdrawal of American troops out of Afghanistan really forced military personnel and veterans to examine their service, especially as it connected to Afghanistan," Laura Falk, a former Air Force chaplain's assistant, said in a recent interview.

Falk, a licensed mental health counselor, started a virtual support group on Zoom last fall for the veterans, troops and other volunteers involved in the evacuation.

She found that many veterans felt angry and ashamed after witnessing the messy withdrawal and the Afghan military's sudden collapse. Many felt gutted by the thought that some people who worked with them had been left behind.

"It was very traumatic for many folks, both active-duty and veterans," Falk said. "A lot of individuals, especially veterans, were left asking 'What did it all mean? What did our service mean? Why did we sacrifice so much for it to end like this?'"

# FBI finds sensitive papers in Trump raid

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The FBI recovered “top secret” and even more sensitive documents from former President Donald Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, according to court papers released Friday after a federal judge unsealed the warrant that authorized the sudden, unprecedented search last week.

A property receipt unsealed by the court shows FBI agents took 11 sets of classified records from the estate during a search last Monday.

The seized records include some marked not only top secret but also “sensitive compartmented information,” a special category meant to protect the nation’s most important secrets that if revealed publicly could cause “exceptionally grave” damage to U.S. interests.

The court records did not provide specific details about information the documents might contain.

The warrant says federal agents were in-

vestigating potential violations of three different federal laws, including one that governs gathering, transmitting or losing defense information under the Espionage Act. The other statutes address the concealment, mutilation or removal of records and the destruction, alteration or falsification of records in federal investigations.

The property receipt also shows federal agents collected other potential presidential records, including the order pardoning Trump ally Roger Stone, a “leatherbound box of documents,” and information about the “President of France.” A binder of photos, a handwritten note, “miscellaneous secret documents” and “miscellaneous confidential documents” were also seized in the search.

Trump’s attorney, Christina Bobb, who was present at Mar-a-Lago when the agents conducted the search, signed two property receipts — one that was two pages long and another that is a single page.

In a statement earlier Friday, Trump

claimed that the documents seized by agents were “all declassified,” and argued that he would have turned them over if the Justice Department had asked.

While incumbent presidents generally have the power to declassify information, that authority lapses as soon as they leave office and it was not clear if the documents in question have ever been declassified. And even an incumbent’s powers to declassify may be limited regarding secrets dealing with nuclear weapons programs, covert operations and operatives, and some data shared with allies.

Trump kept possession of the documents despite multiple requests from agencies, including the National Archives, to turn over presidential records in accordance with federal law.

The Mar-a-Lago search warrant served last Monday was part of an ongoing Justice Department investigation into the discovery of classified White House records recovered from Trump’s home earlier this year.

# Ship carrying grain for Ethiopia leaves Ukraine

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — A United Nations-chartered ship loaded with 23,000 metric tons of Ukrainian grain destined for Ethiopia set sail Sunday from a Black Sea port, the first shipment of its kind in a program to assist countries facing famine.

The Liberia-flagged Brave Commander departed from the Ukrainian port of Yuzhne, east of Odesa, according to regional governor Maksym Marchenko. It plans to sail to Djibouti, where the grain will be unloaded and transferred to Ethiopia under

the World Food Program initiative.

Ukraine and Russia reached a deal with Turkey on July 22 to restart Black Sea grain deliveries, addressing the major export disruption that has occurred since Russia invaded Ukraine in February.

Ethiopia is one of five countries that the UN considers at risk of starvation.

“The capacity is there. The grain is there. The demand is there across the world and in particular, these countries,” WFP Ukraine coordinator Denise Brown told The Associated Press. “So if the stars are aligned, we

are very, very hopeful that all the actors around this agreement will come together on what is really an issue for humanity. So today was very positive.”

On the front line, Russian forces on Sunday fired rockets on the Mykolaiv region in southern Ukraine, killing at least one person. That region is just north of the Russian-occupied city of Kherson, which Ukrainian forces have vowed to retake. The Ukrainian emergency service said one person was killed in shelling early Sunday settlement of Berezhuvate in Mykolaiv.

# Tropical Storm Meari hammers Japan with heavy rainfall

*Associated Press*

TOKYO — Tropical Storm Meari unleashed heavy rains on Japan’s main Honshu island as it headed northward Saturday toward the capital, Tokyo, according to Japanese weather officials.

The Japan Meteorological Agency said that Meari made landfall in Shizuoka prefecture southwest of Tokyo in the afternoon, bringing sudden heavy rains and blasting winds to a widespread area and prompting warnings about mudslides and flooding.

More than 72,000 people in the area’s

main city of Shizuoka were told to evacuate due to possible landslides.

Meari, packing sustained winds of up to 45 mph, passed over Shizuoka and was traveling at a speed of about 12 mph. The storm was expected to continue northward before veering eastward, swinging over the Pacific Ocean by early Sunday.

The Tokyo area was hammered by periodic downpours starting in the late morning. Warnings on high waves in coastal areas were issued for Tokyo, Kanagawa prefecture southwest of Tokyo, and other near-

by areas.

The authorities warned against going near rivers and other waters, as the levels may rise suddenly. Rainfall was expected to worsen in Tokyo and areas north of Tokyo in the evening, they said. Warnings of flooding, strong winds and heavy rainfall were issued for the Tokyo area.

Japanese media reports showed video of rivers rising perilously, almost reaching bridge decks, as rain splashed down on homes and people scurried in the streets, clinging to their umbrellas.

**AMERICAN ROUNDUP**

**Snake researcher dies from rattlesnake bite**

**VA** FALLS CHURCH — A respected snake researcher who had been making significant discoveries about the species since childhood has died after being bitten by a timber rattler.

William H. “Marty” Martin died after being bitten the day before by a captive snake on the property at his home in Harpers Ferry, W.Va., according to his wife, Renee Martin.

Martin, who was 80 years old, continued to make arduous mountain hikes to document and count snake populations in remote sites, said Joe Villari, who manages the Bull Run Mountains Preserve in northern Virginia and would accompany Martin on his outings there.

As a boy, Martin found a population of timber rattlers in the Bull Run Mountains that was previously unknown, and convinced a herpetologist to come out and verify the find.

**Museum to return illegally exported art to Italy**

**CA** LOS ANGELES — The J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles is returning ancient sculptures and other works of art that were illegally exported from Italy, the museum announced.

The Getty will return a nearly life-size group of Greek terracotta sculptures known as “Orpheus and the Sirens,” believed to date from the fourth century B.C., according to the museum.

The sculpture group was purchased by J. Paul Getty in 1976 shortly before his death and

had been on display for decades.

However, the museum now believes they were illegally excavated and taken out of Italy, based on evidence uncovered by the Manhattan district attorney’s office, the Getty said in a statement.

**Zoo sees first gorilla birth in almost 20 years**

**NM** ALBUQUERQUE — The Albuquerque BioPark Zoo is celebrating the first birth of a gorilla in nearly 20 years.

Zoo officials said a baby western lowland gorilla was born to mother Samantha and father Kojo.

Bob Lee, the zoo’s associate director, said the zoo does not yet know the new baby’s gender because the mother is keeping it very close. As a result, the zoo has temporarily shuttered the ape walk area so mother and baby can bond with some privacy.

The zoo’s total number of western lowland gorillas is now up to eight. The last time a gorilla was born here was in 2004.

**Bank robber grabs cop’s gun, fires during scuffle**

**NE** OMAHA — Omaha police said a man who tried to rob a bank got into a scuffle with an off-duty police officer on the way out and fired one round after grabbing the officer’s gun, but no one was hurt.

Police said the incident was reported when the off-duty officer radioed for help from the First National Bank branch near 50th Street and Ames Avenue where he was working.

Before the encounter with

the officer, the man went into the bank and handed an employee a note indicating there was a bomb in the building, but the man didn’t get any cash before he left. During the struggle with the officer the man grabbed the gun and fired, but the officer was able to take the gun back before the man fled.

The 41-year-old man was found a few blocks away after he had broken into a home. He was arrested with the help of a police dog.

**Sheriff indicted on tampering, misconduct**

**KY** FRANKFORT — A western Kentucky sheriff has been indicted on charges of official misconduct and tampering with a witness, Attorney General Daniel Cameron said.

A grand jury handed down the two-count indictment against Webster County Sheriff Donald Jones, 57, of Sebree, Cameron said in a statement.

Details on what led to the charges weren’t released.

**Hospital to refuse some patients due to capacity**

**WA** SEATTLE — Harborview Medical Center in Seattle will temporarily stop accepting less acute patients and will divert them to other health care systems as capacity challenges worsen, according to the hospital’s CEO.

“All hospital systems (are) very much over capacity with very high census numbers, particularly because of an inability to discharge patients into post-acute care settings,” Harborview CEO Sommer Kleweno

Walley said in a media briefing. “This morning ... Harborview reached an unprecedented census level.”

The hospital is caring for some 560 inpatients, more than 130% of its licensed capacity of 413 patients. About 100 are patients who no longer need hospitalization and are waiting to be discharged to a long-term care facility, like an adult family home, Kleweno Walley said.

**Chiropractor charged with selling fentanyl**

**MS** GULFPORT — A Mississippi chiropractor accused of selling fentanyl and being in possession of drug paraphernalia was taken into custody after an undercover investigation.

Joseph “Joey” Andrew Rogers, 53, of Long Beach, faces charges including possession of meth, tampering with evidence and sale of a controlled substance. The fentanyl charges came from “previous undercover operations,” Harrison County Sheriff Troy Peterson said in a news release.

Authorities executed search warrants at the home and office of Rogers, the Sun Herald reported. When authorities arrived at Rogers’ house to serve the warrant, he fled and discarded a substance suspected to be fentanyl in the toilet.

Rogers was apprehended and arrested. Investigators found meth and paraphernalia used for ingesting heroin and fentanyl in his home, Peterson said.

— From wire reports



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**Reporting World, National and Military News**

# Brissett moves into Browns' starting spot

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Jacoby Brissett has jumped ahead of Deshaun Watson on Cleveland's depth chart. Maybe for a while.

Browns coach Kevin Stefanski said Brissett will take the majority of snaps with Cleveland's first-team offense starting Sunday, a move necessitated by Watson's pending suspension for violating the NFL's personal conduct policy for sexual misconduct allegations.

Watson, who made his debut with the Browns by starting Friday's exhibition win over Jacksonville, has been the No. 1 quarterback throughout training camp.

But he's going to miss at least the first six regular-season games — and potentially more — so the team needs to get Brissett ready for the Sept. 11 opener at Carolina.

"That has been the plan really from the beginning is just to at some point let Jacoby get the majority of them, still work Deshaun, still work Josh Dobbs and still work Josh Rosen," Stefanski said, referring to Cleveland's four QBs during a Zoom call with reporters.

Watson's situation remains in flux.

His six-game suspension handed down by independent arbiter Sue L. Robinson was appealed by the NFL and is being decided by Peter C. Harvey, a former New Jersey Attorney General appointed by Commissioner Roger Goodell.

Harvey's ruling could come at any time and there's still the possibility Watson and the league could agree to a settlement.

On Thursday, a person familiar with Watson's defense told the AP the three-time Pro Bowler would accept an eight-game suspension and \$5 million fine. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the case.

Before Friday's game, Watson's first in nearly 600 days, he apologized for the first time since two dozen women filed lawsuits against him alleging sexual harassment and assault during massage therapy sessions while he played for Houston.

"I'm truly sorry to all of the women that I have impacted," Watson said.

In her ruling, Robinson noted Watson's lack of remorse played a factor in her decision to suspend him.

Stefanski said the apology was a good step for Watson.

"I just think Deshaun has been very committed to being the best version of himself," Stefanski said. "That is off the field and that is on the field, obviously when he is in this building, but more so I do think he wants to learn and grow as a person. That is important."

In the meantime, the Browns need to get ready for the season.

Brissett was signed in March by Cleve-

land, which viewed him as a perfect plug-in while Watson is sidelined. The 29-year-old Brissett has made 37 career starts and been thrown into unique situations, including in 2019 when he became Indianapolis' starter following Andrew Luck's stunning retirement.

The Browns didn't play Brissett against the Jaguars to avoid the risk of an injury and to get Watson back into the flow of a game. Now, it's time for Brissett to get more time with Cleveland's starters.

Stefanski has been pleased with the team's plan to this point.

"Jacoby has gotten a lot of reps to date. I go back to the nine-week offseason program and the weeks we have been together, he has gotten a ton of reps with the ones and with the twos," he said. "Even the way we structure our routes versus air and individual period, he has gotten a lot of reps with the quote-unquote ones and the twos."

"He will keep on that same process and making sure he is running the show when he is in there. He does a nice job in the quarterback meeting room with those guys, so I just think this is also the natural progression for him moving forward."

The Browns will practice twice this week against the Philadelphia Eagles before hosting them next Sunday in their first home exhibition.

## Giants' run game steps up in opening preseason win

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — If there has been a takeaway from the first two weeks of the New York Giants' training camp, it's been the signs Saquon Barkley is once again close to finding his top form.

The ACL injury is almost two years removed and the No. 2 pick overall in the 2018 draft is running with conviction, confidence and power.

The running game has shown depth and it has a new, improved line to run behind.

New York ran for 177 yards on 33 carries in its 23-21 preseason win over the Patriots on Thursday night in Brian Daboll's debut as head coach. That's a 5.4-yard average.

Barkley only played the open-

ing series, but he had four carries for 13 yards and caught an 8-yard pass on third down to keep alive a drive that resulted in the first of three Graham Gano field goals.

First-year pro Antonio Williams led the team with nine carries for 61 yards, with a long of 19. Second-year pro Gary Brightwell had seven carries for 40 yards and rookie free agent Jashaun Corbin of Florida State had six carries for 23 yards and five catches for 28.

Matt Breida, the six-year veteran who is supposed to be Barkley's backup, didn't play.

"It's a competitive room," Daboll said Friday. "They're tough, doing a good job with the system. You know, they're a very supportive group. Even though it's a competitive group, they run downhill with power, break tack-

les."

The one negative was Brightwell missed a block in pass protection and quarterback Daniel Jones was hit around the knees while stepping forward to make a pass. He was not hurt.

Barkley, who didn't play in the preseason last year, said he felt good.

"I think our offensive line did a great job," said Barkley, who rushed for 593 yards in his post ACL season. "We were able to move the ball."

Overall, the offense gained 418 yards and ran 81 plays with new offensive coordinator Mike Kafka running the show. Daboll has not said who will call the plays once the regular season starts.

There were negatives, too.

Cornerback Aaron Robinson,

who was given the job on the left side after James Bradberry was released in a salary cap move, was beaten on consecutive deep throws in the first half. Daboll didn't seem concerned but the depth at the position is thin with rookie Cor'Dale Flott sustaining a groin injury in the game.

The offensive line also was banged up. Left guard Shane Lemieux injured a toe early and was later seen in the sideline in a walking boot. Backup tackle Jamil Douglas sustained an ankle injury in the second half.

Daboll had no update on any of the injuries on Friday. Receiver Kadarius Toney, who missed seven games last season, was left in New Jersey for the preseason opener after tweaking a knee or leg in practice on Tuesday.

# Journeyman Johnson shines for Broncos

*Associated Press*

DENVER — The new Denver Broncos quarterback who wowed the crowd at Empower Field wasn't Russell Wilson but journeyman Josh Johnson.

Johnson, who's 36 years old and playing for his 14th NFL team, threw a pair of first-half touchdown passes and the Broncos beat the penalty-prone Dallas Cowboys 17-7 on a starless and rainy Saturday night.

"I'm just enjoying the ride, honestly," Johnson said. "... I like to say for us backups, the preseason is the season."

Johnson was signed in the offseason to compete with Brett Rypien for the job backing up Wilson, who sat this one out along with Cowboys QB Dak Prescott.

Rypien was 8 of 18 for 113 yards, including a 42-yard strike to Jalen Virgil from his own 1. Both Johnson and Rypien drew praise from new Broncos coach Nathaniel Hackett, who won his NFL head coaching debut, albeit in a preseason game that won't really count.

Johnson overcame a slow start to throw for 172 yards and two touchdowns on 16-of-23 passing. He hit Seth Williams from a yard out and added a 24-yarder to Kendall Hinton. Williams' grab followed a 40-yard reception by rookie Brandon Johnson, son of former Colorado Rockies catcher Charles Johnson.

Johnson has been signed, released and signed again so often over his NFL career that he's lost count.

For the record: 27 signings/re-signings to go with 17 releases/cuts, according to his lengthy transaction page.

He can't instantly recall all the quarterbacks he's backed up, competed against or beaten out since being picked in the fifth round by Tampa Bay in 2008. He had to

think for a long moment just to name the ones he's crossed paths with who've won Super Bowl titles (three, by his tally).

"If I'm leaving out somebody, sorry," Johnson said with a laugh after a recent practice. "Being able to throw the ball, put that jersey on, that's a blessing. I'm just enjoying every minute of every moment."

His arm and his experience have opened many doors. He signed a total of seven times with San Francisco (including practice squad), three times with the New York Jets and twice each with Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Houston, the New York Giants and Baltimore. He's also signed contracts with the Bucs, Cleveland, Buffalo, the Raiders, Washington, Detroit and now Denver, which he penned in March.

That's a lot of teammates — and playbooks — over a career where he's played in 37 games for 14 teams and started nine times. For his career, he has 13 TD passes, 16 interceptions and 2,270 passing yards.

He's just enjoying the ride — as whirlwind as it may be (he's had tenures with teams that lasted only a handful of days).

"I'm not really in the business of proving people wrong anymore," said Johnson, who was drafted out of the University of San Diego, an FCS program.

The Super-Bowl-winning signal-callers he's worked beside include Eli Manning with the Giants, Joe Flacco when they were teammates with the Jets last season and these days, Wilson.

He received some advice a while back that's proven to be extremely applicable.

"Control what you can control and understand that no matter who you are, the nature of this business is looking to replace you unless you don't allow it," said Johnson, who is competing with Rypien for the No. 2 spot.

"I'm grateful for the journey itself."

His top statistical season was 2009 with Tampa Bay, when he played in six games (four starts) and threw for 685 yards along with his first career TD pass — an 8-yard strike to Antonio Bryant.

Last December, he was on the practice squad with the Jets when he was signed to the active roster by Baltimore. The Ravens needed another QB with Lamar Jackson recovering from an ankle injury. Just 11 days later, Johnson found himself starting after Tyler Huntley went on the COVID-19 list. Johnson threw for 304 yards and two TDs in a 41-21 loss at Cincinnati.

His experience played a role in first-year Broncos coach Nathaniel Hackett bringing him in.

"I think he's as old as me," cracked Hackett, who is 42. "He's seen so much so he can go into the game at any time and play."

Johnson is enjoying his time with Wilson, whom the Broncos traded for during the offseason in the hopes of ending a six-year playoff drought.

"He sets the pace and we all follow," Johnson said of Wilson, who led Seattle to a Super Bowl win over the Broncos following the 2013 season. "It's been nothing but great energy every day."

Johnson's football excursions have also included suiting up for the L.A. Wildcats of the XFL, where he led the league in passer rating (106.3).

To stay grounded through all the uncertainty of football, Johnson has kept his base of operations in his hometown of Oakland, Calif. He has three kids.

"My trials and tribulations are not my family's," said Johnson, who started a foundation with his cousin, longtime NFL running back Marshawn Lynch.

## Hawkeyes looking for more consistency on offense

*Associated Press*

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Iowa's defense was a big reason the Hawkeyes won 10 games and the Big Ten West last season.

The inconsistency of the offense played a big part in Iowa's four losses, including a 42-3 defeat to Michigan in the Big Ten championship game and the 20-17 loss to Kentucky in the Citrus Bowl.

The Hawkeyes know they have to be better with the ball.

"I think it's just consistency, doing the little things right," Iowa wide receiver Arland Bruce IV said Friday at media day. "I think I left a lot of stuff on the field last year, and I think a lot of other players think that way about themselves. It's about the details. It's just the little things."

The Hawkeyes finished 99th

nationally in scoring offense at 23.4 points per game. They were 101st in rushing offense (123.6 yards per game), 109th in passing offense (180.1) and 121st in total offense (303.7).

"I'd say we have to improve in pretty much every measurable area, because I thought we were subpar in every measurable area on offense last year," said quarterback Spencer Petras, who had

his own struggles last season and is battling with Alex Padilla for the starting job in fall camp. "We need to be better in third downs, red zone, first half, second half. All of the above, we have to be better."

"No one was happy from last year's performance and what we did last season," added offensive coordinator Brian Ferentz, the son of head coach Kirk Ferentz.

# Mets silence Phils in NL showdown

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jacob deGrom struck out 10 in six dominant innings and Edwin Díaz earned his 200th career save, helping the New York Mets beat the Philadelphia Phillies 1-0 on Saturday night.

Pete Alonso hit an early RBI single as the NL East leaders improved to 31-9 following a loss and 10-4 in the season series with the Phillies. Alonso leads the NL with 97 RBIs.

Díaz issued two walks in the ninth, and Philadelphia had runners on second and third when Nick Castellanos struck out swinging for the final out. It was Díaz's 27th save of the season.

The All-Star closer became the sixth active pitcher to reach 200 saves.

"It's awesome," deGrom said. "He's done a great job and you're comfortable any time he's in the game."

The Mets posted their MLB-best 15th shutout. It was their first 1-0 win over the Phillies since R.A. Dickey tossed a one-hitter exactly 12 years ago at Citi Field.

"The star of the show was our pitching staff," Alonso said.

After spending the first part of the season on the injured list, deGrom (2-0) allowed two hits and walked none in his third start. He has yielded six hits, struck out 28 and issued one walk in 16⅓ innings so far this year.

"You don't really know what to expect coming back, but last time out I was able to look at a couple of things where I felt I was getting off mechanically and try to make those adjustments while I was going through a pretty slow process of coming back," deGrom said. "That seems to have paid off a little bit."

**Dodgers 13, Royals 3:** Max Muncy had a homer and four RBIs, Mookie Betts hit his team-leading 26th home run and visiting Los Angeles extended its winning streak to 12 games with a win over Kansas City.

Muncy went 4-for-5, including his 14th homer of the season, a two-run shot to right field in the fourth inning. Betts led off the game with a homer as part of a five-run first inning. A season-high six Dodgers homered, including Joey Gallo, Cody Bellinger, Will Smith and Gavin Lux.

Andrew Heaney allowed two runs with five strikeouts in three innings. Los Angeles relievers Caleb Ferguson, Chris Martin, Phil Bickford (2-1) and Reyes Moronta held Kansas City to a run.

**Yankees 3, Red Sox 2:** Isiah Kiner-Falefa drove in the go-ahead run with a safety squeeze in the ninth inning and hit his first

career homer with New York, sending the AL East-leading team past host Boston for its second win in 10 games.

Andrew Benintendi sparked the Yankees' winning rally with a one-out double off the center-field wall against John Schreiber (3-2). Jose Trevino reached on an infield hit before Kiner-Falefa laid down a perfect bunt toward first base on the next pitch, with Benintendi scoring on a headfirst slide.

**Blue Jays 2, Guardians 1:** Teoscar Hernández hit a tiebreaking home run in the seventh inning, Matt Chapman also connected and host Toronto ended Cleveland's six-game winning streak.

Hernández and Chapman connected off Guardians starter Triston McKenzie, who has lost three of his past four decisions.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. extended his career-best hitting streak to 22 games with a double in the first as the Blue Jays snapped a three-game losing streak.

**Nationals 4, Padres 3:** San Diego and new slugger Juan Soto repeatedly failed to come through in the clutch against his former club, and last-place host Washington beat the wild-card-chasing Padres when the go-ahead run scored thanks to an overruled call on a play at the plate.

San Diego built a 3-0 lead as Manny Machado and Trent Grisham hit solo homers. But Yu Darvish (10-6) gave away that edge on back-to-back deep balls by Yadiel Hernández and Joey Meneses.

With Luis García on in relief, Victor Robles smacked a single to right and César Hernández (three hits, stolen base) raced home.

**Brewers 3, Cardinals 2 (10):** Hunter Renfroe tripled home the go-ahead run in the 10th inning, and host St. Louis wasted a magnificent start by Adam Wainwright.

**Braves 5-6, Marlins 2-2:** Ronald Acuña homered on the first pitch of the game, Matt Olson hit his 24th homer and visiting Atlanta completed a doubleheader sweep of Miami.

Rookie Vaughn Grissom also went deep for the surging Braves, who won their fifth straight after losing four of five to the NL East-leading New York Mets.

**Rays 8, Orioles 2:** All-Star Shane Bieber stopped a two-start losing streak, working six solid innings as host Tampa Bay moved in front of Baltimore in the AL wild card race.

McClanahan (11-5) gave up two runs, seven hits and three walks, and had five strikeouts. Jose Siri had three hits and scored three runs, including on Taylor Walls' two-

run homer in the eighth.

**Astros 8, Athletics 0:** Lance McCullers Jr. pitched six shutout innings in his season debut, Alex Bregman homered and Trey Mancini had three hits as host Houston blanked Oakland.

McCullers, an All-Star in 2017, allowed two hits, struck out five and walked four, tossing 47 of his 81 pitches for strikes. The 28-year-old McCullers (1-0) pitched for the first time in 305 days for the Astros, last going for the team in Game 4 of the 2021 AL Divisional Series.

**Cubs 7, Reds 2:** Ian Happ, Willson Contreras and Franmil Reyes homered, powering visiting Chicago to its third straight win.

Happ hit an RBI single in the fifth inning and a three-run shot in the seventh, continuing his long run of success at Cincinnati. The All-Star outfielder has 16 career homers at Great American Ball Park.

**White Sox 6, Tigers 4:** Andrew Vaughn hit a tiebreaking single in the seventh inning for the second consecutive night, AJ Pollock homered in the eighth and host Chicago handed Detroit its sixth straight loss.

Vaughn had three hits for the White Sox, who moved within 2½ games of AL Central leader Cleveland.

**Rangers 7, Mariners 4:** Corey Seager matched a career high with his 26th homer and rookie Bubba Thompson drove in a run with a sacrifice squeeze bunt as host Texas snapped a nine-game losing streak to Seattle.

The Rangers trailed 3-0 before a four-run outburst in the fourth inning that was capped by Thompson's bunt pushed to the right side as Charlie Culberson crossed home plate.

**Angels 5, Twins 3 (11):** Shohei Ohtani hit a homer in the eighth inning to get the Angels' offense started, and Taylor Ward hit a game-ending two-run blast to right-center in the 11th inning as host Los Angeles rallied to beat Minnesota.

Carlos Correa hit a home and Luis Arraez had three hits for the Twins, who blew a three-run lead in the eighth inning and remained 1½ games behind the Cleveland Guardians in the AL Central.

**Diamondbacks 6, Rockies 0:** Zac Gallen pitched two-hit ball for seven innings, Emmanuel Rivera went deep twice for his first career multihomer game, and visiting Arizona beat Colorado.

**Giants 2, Pirates 0:** Logan Webb struck out nine in eight sparkling innings, and host San Francisco beat Pittsburgh.