

Solomon Islands halting all navy visits

By AARON KIDD
Stars and Stripes

The Solomon Islands will not allow foreign navy ships to enter its ports until the government works out new procedures for arriving military vessels, the prime minister's office said Tuesday. The United States suspects the move is related to China's expanding influence in the South Pacific.

The announcement comes more than a week after the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Oliver Henry and British patrol vessel HMS Spey were denied entry to the Solomons, and the same day that Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare welcomed the hospital ship USNS Mercy for a Pacific Partnership mission.

"We have requested our partners to give

us time to review, and put in place our new processes, before sending further requests for military vessels to enter the country," the prime minister said in a statement.

The Oliver Henry, which is based in Guam, was scheduled for a routine logistics port call on Guadalcanal, Lt. Kristin Kam, a spokeswoman for the 14th Coast Guard District in Honolulu, told Stars and Stripes in an email Thursday.

"The Government of the Solomon Islands did not respond to the U.S. Government's request for diplomatic clearance for the vessel to refuel and provision in Honiara," Kam said. "Accordingly, CGC Oliver Henry diverted to Papua New Guinea to refuel and provision."

In Washington, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the State Department was in contact with the Solomon Islands' government and "we certainly expected future clearances are going to be provided to U.S. ships."

"We're disappointed in this decision — by the lack of diplomatic clearance," he said. "However, the United States is pleased that the US Navy hospital ship (USNS Mercy) received diplomatic clearance and was able to take port in Solomon's island on [Aug.] 29."

The U.S. suspects the Oliver Henry denial may have had to do with the Solomon Islands' relationship with China, which is considered a U.S. adversary, according to Kirby.

Coast Guard carves out niche with its African allies

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The Coast Guard's centuries-old mission of defending U.S. shores and enforcing the nation's laws has led to a demand for its skills abroad, including giving the service a role in America's broader goals in Africa.

Combating illegal fishing, drug trafficking, human smuggling and other crimes falls outside the primary missions of the Navy and Marine Corps.

The Coast Guard's assistance — prized by coastal African nations afflicted by criminal cartels and terror networks — helps foster relationships that counter Chinese and Russian bids for influence and resources, U.S. officials have said.

"Our brand is maritime security, a rules-based economic order and helping partners protect their maritime sovereignty," said Coast Guard Cmdr. Derek Cromwell, the liaison officer to U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet. "And ideally, that's with us."

Earlier this month, the State Department announced a significant shift in its approach to sub-Saharan Africa.

The new policy seeks to bolster U.S. favorability by addressing mutual interests, without forcing African nations to choose a U.S. partnership exclusively over other countries.

The effort comes amid a heavy challenge to American influence. For example, just 28 of the 54 U.N. member states in Africa voted in favor of a March resolution that, among other statements, condemned Russia's attack on Ukraine, according to a March 9 report by the Brookings Institution.

During a July visit to Egypt, Congo, Uganda and Ethiopia, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov blamed the United States for grain shortages tied to the war in Ukraine. He didn't mention that Russia had imposed a naval blockade in the Black Sea preventing Ukraine grain ships from leaving port. Just days before Lavrov's visit, Russia and Ukraine reached a

deal that unblocked the ports.

Many African countries, such as Kenya, Sudan, Congo, Egypt and Uganda, heavily rely on Russian wheat exports, according to a June United Nations report.

Meanwhile, China has a military base nearby the U.S. Navy's base in Djibouti and is seeking a base on the West African coast, U.S. Africa Command has said.

Beijing's expansive presence in Africa already is evident in financial support for projects such as roads, ports, power stations and railways. But China is also interested in African natural resources, such as oil, and building new export markets.

Checking those moves would require a mix of U.S. statecraft and business investment, along with security assistance that differs from some other parts of the world.

In early July, the Coast Guard cutter Mohawk arrived in Dakar, Senegal, the first stop of a deployment to the U.S. Naval Forces-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility. Since then,

the Mohawk mostly has sailed in the Gulf of Guinea, helping West African countries such as Senegal, Cape Verde and Sierra Leone enforce their maritime laws.

Those countries are dealing with issues of foreign fleets or criminal cartels fishing in their waters without permission, avoiding payment of taxes or duties or committing other related violations.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is a global problem but is most acute in West Africa, where it was estimated to account for \$2.3 billion in losses annually, according to a 2016 study funded by the MAVA Foundation, a conservation group headquartered in Switzerland.

Lost fishery revenues not only affect national finances but also mean fewer jobs, making people vulnerable to drug cartels, terrorist groups and criminals seeking cheap labor.

The resulting security problems, in waterways such as the Gulf of Guinea, have a global impact, officials have said.

Panel IDs Confederate names at academies

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A commission tasked with rooting out commemorations of the Confederacy in the U.S. military singled out a small number of assets at West Point and the U.S. Naval Academy on Monday for renaming or removal.

The Naming Commission identified about a dozen assets named for Confederate leaders and sympathizers at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and three assets at the U.S. Naval Academy, according to a report the group submitted to Congress.

“The Commissioners do not make these recommendations with any intention of ‘erasing history,’” the report states. “The facts of the past remain, and the Commissioners are confident the history of the Civil War will continue to be taught at all Service academies with all the quality and complex detail our national past deserves.”

Created by Congress in 2021 after racial justice protests swept the nation, the commission is

charged with reviewing hundreds of buildings, streets, ships and other military assets memorializing the Confederacy.

At West Point, the commissioners identified two places, a barracks, housing area, road, gate, portrait, plaza, triptych and monument bearing the names of men “who fought against the United States of America, and whose cause sought to destroy the nation as we know it.” Nearly half of them reference Robert E. Lee, the commander of the Confederate States Army, and should be renamed, the group said.

Commissioners also called for the renaming of Hardee Place, named for the Confederate Gen. William J. Hardee, as well as Beauregard Place, which honors Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard.

The group unanimously agreed that a portrait of Lee, a former West Point superintendent, in Confederate uniform should be removed from Jefferson Hall. Commissioners also said West Point should review Reconciliation Plaza, a series of

markers depicting reconciliation between North and South, to remove engraved images that commemorate individuals who voluntarily served in the Confederacy.

It would cost about \$424,000 to make the changes proposed by the Commission, according to estimates by the U.S. Army.

West Point long avoided associations with the Confederacy and did not allow Confederate monuments on campus until 1930, when a movement romanticizing the Confederate war effort gained traction in the U.S.

The commission noted that while most cadets from Confederate-aligned states departed for Confederate service at the start of the war in 1861, the majority of the graduate pool remained loyal to the U.S.

At the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, about one out of four midshipmen joined and fought for the Confederacy. Only two Confederate names become memorialized on the academy’s campus, however.

The academy in 1915 named a

new building after Matthew F. Maury, a prominent oceanographer and climatologist who advocated for the mass enslavement of African Americans, and named a road leading to the academy superintendent’s residence in honor of Franklin Buchanan, commander of the Confederate warship CSS Virginia. Buchanan was the academy’s first superintendent, and his name was bestowed on the superintendent’s residence itself in 1976.

The commission recommended renaming Buchanan House, Buchanan Road and Maury Hall for an estimated price of \$27,000. Memorials containing roll calls of West Point and Naval Academy graduates who fought for the Confederacy can remain unchanged, commissioners said.

The group will release a final report to Congress in October and the Defense Department is expected to implement a plan to remove all names, symbols, displays, monuments and paraphernalia that honor or commemorate the Confederacy over the next few years.

Ukraine’s claims fuel speculation of counteroffensive

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine claimed to have destroyed bridges and ammunition depots and pounded command posts in a surge of fighting in the Russian-occupied south, fueling speculation Tuesday that its long-awaited counteroffensive to try to turn the tide of war was underway. Russia said it repelled the attack and inflicted heavy casualties.

The clashes took place in the country’s Kherson region, where Moscow’s forces rolled up major gains early in the war.

But Ukrainian authorities kept the world guessing about their intentions.

While independent verifica-

tion of battlefield action has been difficult, Britain’s Defense Ministry said in an intelligence report that several Ukrainian brigades had stepped up their artillery fire in front-line sectors across southern Ukraine.

The port city of Kherson, with a prewar population of about 300,000, is an important economic hub close to the Black Sea and the first major city to fall to the Russians in the war that began six months ago.

The port remains at the heart of Ukraine’s efforts to preserve its vital access to the sea, while Russia has viewed it as a key point in a land corridor extending from its border to the Crimean Peninsula,

which it seized in 2014.

Occupation forces have spoken of plans to hold a referendum on making the Kherson region a part of Russia and have pressured residents to take Russian citizenship and stop using Ukraine’s currency.

Ukraine’s presidential office reported that “powerful explosions continued during the day and night in the Kherson region. Tough battles are ongoing practically across all” of the area. Ukrainian forces, the office said, destroyed ammunition depots and all large bridges across the Dnieper River vital to supplying Russian troops.

The Ukrainian military also re-

ported destroying a pontoon bridge on the Dnieper that the Russian forces were setting up and hitting a dozen command posts with artillery fire.

The British said most of Russia’s units around Kherson “are likely under-manned and are reliant upon fragile supply lines” while its forces there are undergoing a significant reorganization.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Lt. Gen. Igor Konashenkov maintained that its forces stood up well and that Ukraine lost hundreds of troops, tanks and other armored vehicles in Monday’s action. His claim could not be independently verified.

US reviews possibly privileged Trump papers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department has completed its review of potentially privileged documents seized from former President Donald Trump's Florida estate this month and has identified "a limited set of materials that potentially contain attorney-client privileged information," according to a court filing Monday.

The filing from the department follows a judge's weekend

order indicating that she was inclined to grant the Trump legal team's request for a special master who would oversee the review of documents taken during the Aug. 8 search of the Mar-a-Lago estate and ensure that any that might be protected by claims of legal privilege be set aside.

In revealing that the department had completed its review of potentially privileged communications, law enforcement offi-

cial appeared to be suggesting that the appointment of a third-party special master might now be moot. The department had been relying on a specialized team to filter out potentially privileged communications and said Monday that it had completed its review of those materials before the judge's order.

U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon said Saturday that it was her "preliminary intent" to appoint a special master — which

would be an early procedural win for the Trump legal team — but gave the department an opportunity to respond and scheduled a Thursday hearing to discuss the matter further.

The judge also directed the Justice Department to submit under seal a more detailed description of the materials that were seized from Trump's estate in Palm Beach, something the department on Monday said it would do.

Storms blamed in deaths of at least 3 in Mich., Ohio, Ark.

Associated Press

MONROE, Mich. — Severe storms that brought damaging winds, heavy rains and flash flooding to parts of the Midwest and the South were blamed for the deaths of three people, including two children in Michigan and Arkansas as well as a woman in Ohio.

Monday's storms also knocked out electrical service to hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses in Michigan and Indiana.

In the Michigan city of Monroe, a 14-year-old girl was electrocuted Monday night in the backyard of her home after coming into contact with an electrical line that was knocked down by a thunderstorm, the public safety department said in a Facebook post.

The girl was with a friend and she reached for what she believed was a stick, but it turned out to be the power line, the department said.

And in the Detroit-area community of Warren, two boys were hospitalized — including an 8-year-old who was in critical condition — after one of them touched a downed power line Tuesday morning, The Detroit News reported, citing a fire department official.

In Arkansas, an 11-year-old boy died after he was swept into

a storm drain during heavy rainfall Monday, authorities said.

A 47-year-old woman who tried to help the child was also pulled from the drain and taken to a hospital for treatment, according to police in Bentonville. Slow-moving thunderstorms brought heavy rainfall to the area Monday and caused localized flash flooding, the National Weather Service said.

"Those heavy rains, when they fell, a lot of them fell really quickly and in a short time," said meteorologist Brad McGavock with the weather service in Tulsa, Okla., which also covers parts of Arkansas. "Water management through those storm drains can really lead to a big volume of water through those culverts."

In Ohio, a woman was killed Monday night when a tree fell on her behind her home in Toledo just as a strong storm moved through the area, the city's fire department said. Her name and age were not released.

The storms were widespread in states including Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Tree branches and power lines fell while winds gusted as high as 58 mph at Battle Creek Executive Airport in Michigan and 60 mph in Huntington, southwest of Fort Wayne, Ind., the weather service reported.

Indianapolis police quiet on Dutch soldier's fatal shooting

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Two Dutch soldiers wounded in a downtown Indianapolis shooting that killed another member of their commando unit could soon return to the Netherlands, city police said Monday while providing no new information on the search for the other people involved.

The 26-year-old member of the Dutch Commando Corps died of his injuries "surrounded by family and colleagues" after the shooting early Saturday, the country's Defense Ministry said in a statement.

The Marion County coroner's office in Indianapolis identified the victim as Simmie Poetsema but didn't immediately release any additional information.

Poetsema and the two other soldiers were shot after what Indianapolis police believe was a disturbance outside the hotel where they were staying at about 3:30 a.m. Saturday near several downtown bars and nightclubs, authorities said. The soldiers were in the United States for training exercises at a southern Indiana military base.

Indianapolis police on Monday described the injuries to the two surviving soldiers as "non-life-threatening" and the Dutch Defense Ministry said they were conscious. City police said they were working with U.S. and

Dutch agencies to coordinate family members coming to Indianapolis and returning the victims to the Netherlands.

Police, however, released no additional information Monday about the circumstances of the shooting, nor did they make any police officials available for interviews. No arrests have been announced. The agency said in a statement that detectives were working to identify those involved in the shooting and that "the release of certain investigative information could negatively impact the ability to obtain justice in this case."

The Indiana National Guard said the soldiers had been training at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, a 1,000-acre complex about 70 miles southeast of the downtown Indianapolis shooting scene. The Guard said in a statement that the center is used for training by the Department of Defense "as well as other allies."

On Tuesday, Dutch Defense Minister Kaja Ollongren expressed concern at gun violence in the U.S.

"We do many trainings of our servicemen in the United States, and we really don't expect this to happen. So it's very, very concerning for us," Ollongren told The Associated Press at a meeting of European Union defense ministers in Prague.

Student loan relief limited due to US drug war

Associated Press

President Joe Biden says he hopes his proposal to forgive federal student loans will narrow the nation's racial wealth gap. But a generation of Black and Hispanic Americans was disproportionately shut out of one of the keys to Biden's plan: the Pell Grant program.

As part of the "war on drugs" — a consequential, anti-crime legislative agenda that Biden championed as a U.S. senator — an estimated hundreds of thousands of convicted drug offenders had their access to federal financial aid delayed or denied, including Pell Grants and student loans. If they wanted to go to college after their prison terms ended, these offenders had to take on larger, often predatory, private student loans. Some were discouraged from seeking federal aid by a requirement to disclose their drug record on financial aid applications, while others put off attending college or dropped out entirely.

The people most harmed by these policies: Black and Latino men, thanks to drug laws in the 1990s with harsh punishments for crack cocaine and marijuana offenses. Incarceration rates for men of color skyrocketed. The policies remained

in place for 25 years, until Congress repealed the Pell Grant ban in 2020.

America's student loan debt burden, which now tops \$1.6 trillion, "is especially heavy on Black and Hispanic borrowers, who on average have less family wealth to pay for it," Biden said last week as he announced the forgiveness plan.

The administration has offered to forgive up to \$10,000 in student debt for individuals earning annual incomes of less than \$125,000, or less than \$250,000 for families. And its offer doubles the debt relief to \$20,000 for borrowers who also received Pell Grants, a federal program that gives the neediest undergraduates aid that they don't have to repay.

Studies show that Pell Grants — one of the nation's most effective financial aid programs — routinely help more than half of Black students and almost half of Hispanic students afford college. According to the White House, among the 43 million borrowers who are eligible for debt relief under Biden's plan, more than 60% are Pell Grant recipients.

The White House said in a statement to The Associated Press that the student debt relief plan will wipe away about half of the average debt held by Black and

Hispanic borrowers, not counting the additional \$10,000 cancellation for Pell Grant recipients.

Amid debate over whether Biden's forgiveness plan goes far enough for disproportionately indebted communities, criminal justice reform advocates say the president's solutions to the student debt crisis must be as comprehensive as the anti-drug laws were.

"I think there's a particular onus on this administration and on this president to be part of the solution for issues that he was very deeply involved in," said Melissa Moore, the director of civil systems reform at Drug Policy Alliance.

There's a generation of former drug offenders who borrowed to pay for school, but don't have Pell Grants or federal loans, and won't have any of their student debt forgiven. According to a Student Borrower Protection Center report on private loan debt, Black students are four times as likely as white students to struggle in repayment of private loans.

"For people who previously would have had to check that box, there should be some mechanism by which, if you were excluded in the past, you are prioritized now for relief," Moore said.

Police: Safeway worker, an Army vet, saved shoppers

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — A Safeway employee who previously served in the U.S. Army for two decades attacked a gunman in the produce section of the Bend, Ore., supermarket, police said Monday, possibly preventing more casualties from a shooting that left the employee and one other person dead.

Police hailed the employee, 66-year-old Donald Ray Surrett Jr., of Bend, as a hero and said his actions may have saved shoppers at the store in the high-desert city ringed by mountains in the central part of the state. Customer Glenn Edward Bennett, 84, of Bend, was also killed Sunday evening, police spokeswoman Sheila Miller said.

"Mr. Surrett engaged with the shooter, attempted to disarm him and may very well have prevented further deaths. Mr. Surrett acted heroically turning this terrible event," Miller said at a news conference as she struggled against tears.

Police said Monday the shooter died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound; his body was found by police near an AR-15-style weapon and a shotgun.

Police identified the gunman as Ethan Blair Miller, 20, of Bend.

Debora Jean Surrett, the ex-wife of the Safeway employee killed in the attack, told The Associated Press in a phone interview that Surrett served in the Army for 20 years as a combat engineer.

Study suggests tea drinkers enjoy possible health benefits

Associated Press

A cup of tea just got a bit more relaxing.

Tea can be part of a healthy diet and people who drink tea may even be a little more likely to live longer than those who don't, according to a large study.

Tea contains helpful substances known to reduce inflammation. Past studies in China and Japan, where green tea is popular, suggested health benefits.

The new study extends the good news to the U.K.'s favorite drink: black tea.

Scientists from the U.S. National Cancer Institute asked about the tea habits of nearly a half million adults in the United Kingdom, then followed them for up to 14 years. They adjust-

ed for risk factors such as health, socioeconomic, smoking, alcohol intake, diet, age, race and gender.

Higher tea intake — two or more cups daily — was linked to a modest benefit: a 9% to 13% lower risk of death from any cause vs. non-tea drinkers.

The study, published Monday in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, found the association held up for heart disease deaths, but there was also no real clear trend for cancer deaths.

Researchers weren't sure why, but it's possible there weren't enough cancer deaths for any effect to show up, said Maki Inoue-Choi, who led the study.

A study like this, based on observing people's habits and health, can't prove cause and effect.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man dies after being struck by his own boat

MO LAKE OF THE OZARKS — A Missouri man died after being thrown from the boat he was riding in and struck by the same boat in the Lake of the Ozarks.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol said the incident happened around 4:30 p.m. near the 13-mile mark of the main channel, according to the Kansas City Star.

The 2019 Sylvan Pontoon boat that Daniel Cortez, 29, was riding in hit a wake and overturned. Cortez was ejected from the boat, and then the boat struck him.

Cortez, of Kansas City, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Kenyan cyclist dies in crash during gravel race

VT WEST WINDSOR — Kenyan cyclist Sule Kangangi died in a crash while competing in a gravel race in Vermont.

Kangangi was riding at a high speed in the Vermont Overland race when he crashed.

“Sule is our captain, friend, brother. He is also a father, husband and son. Gaping holes are left when giants fall. Sule was a giant,” his Team AMANI posted on social media. “Instead of leading us at the front of the pack, he will now lead us as our guiding pole star as we press forward in the realization of his dream.”

Rachel Ruto, the wife of President-elect William Ruto of Kenya, posted on Twitter that she was shocked to learn the sad news that he had passed away after a tragic crash.

“My heartfelt condolences to his family, and the entire cycling community, that has lost a talented cyclist, a mentor and a friend,” she wrote. “We will all miss him as an individual. Kenya has lost a champion. Rest in peace Sule.”

The Vermont Overland is a 59-mile dirt road bicycle race that includes nearly 7,000 feet of climbing, according to the race’s website.

Man to pay restitution in romance fraud scheme

WV HUNTINGTON — A man who admitted to his role in a romance fraud scheme in West Virginia has been ordered to pay more than \$156,000 in restitution.

Banabas Ganidekam, 25, of Ghana, also was sentenced in federal court in Huntington to three years of probation for his March guilty plea to wire fraud.

Court records showed that he received money through wire transfers and checks from at least 14 people, including a woman who believed he was her boyfriend. Ganidekam kept some of the money for himself and forwarded some to others in the United States and overseas.

BYU bans fan who yelled slur at volleyball player

UT PROVO — Brigham Young University banned a fan who yelled a racial slur at a Black player on the Duke volleyball team during a match, the university said in a statement.

The fan was sitting in the BYU student section but was not a student, and has been banned from all athletic venues on campus,

the statement said.

“We will not tolerate behavior of this kind. Specifically, the use of a racial slur at any of our athletic events is absolutely unacceptable and BYU Athletics holds a zero-tolerance approach to this behavior,” the statement said. “We wholeheartedly apologize to Duke University and especially its student-athlete competing last night for what they experienced. We want BYU athletic events to provide a safe environment for all, and there is no place for behaviors like this in our venues.”

The player, Rachel Richardson, who is the only Black starter on the team, was called a racial slur “every time she served,” Richardson’s godmother, Lesa Pamplin, said in a tweet.

“For far too long, individuals have been subjected to racist slurs, taunts and threats like the unfortunate incident that happened to my goddaughter, Rachel Richardson, at BYU. It is unfortunate that this incident has only received attention after I tweeted about it,” Pamplin, a candidate for circuit court judge in Fort Worth, Texas, said in an emailed statement.

Man awarded \$100M in stun gun paralysis suit

GA ATLANTA — A federal jury in Atlanta has awarded \$100 million to a panhandler who fell and broke his neck after a police officer shocked him with a stun gun during a foot chase, news agencies reported.

Jerry Blasingame now needs round-the-clock care costing \$1 million a year, and has \$14 million in medical bills so far, attorney Ven Johnson told jurors.

Jurors found that Officer Jon Grubbs used unreasonable force against Blasingame, who was 65 years old and had been asking drivers for money on July 10, 2018. He was paralyzed from the neck down and is now 69 years old.

Jurors found that the Atlanta Police Department should pay \$60 million and Grubbs should pay \$40 million, WXIA-TV and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

The city has filed a motion for a directed verdict. A ruling from a judge on that motion may amend the jury’s verdict.

Historic marker at home of late Rep. John Lewis

AL TROY — There’s now a historic marker at the one-story brick house in Alabama where the late civil rights leader and Georgia Congressman John Lewis grew up as one of 11 children.

Lewis’ family said at the ceremony that they believe it’s their duty to carry his legacy and continue making what they call “good trouble.”

Troy Mayor Jason Reeves said the house, now a historic landmark, will become part of the story of the civil rights movement in Alabama, starting with his birthplace and ending in Montgomery.

“The fact that he is the ‘Boy from Troy’ and is known all over the world for all that he accomplished, this a great sense of pride for us,” Reeves said.

His younger sister, Ethel Lewis-Tyner, told WSFA-TV she never thought “in a million years” their home would be a part of history.

— From wire reports



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Pioneering Air Raid offense still evolving

Associated Press

Mike Leach settles into a leather chair in his office overlooking Mississippi State's practice field after a routine spring session with his team and is asked to give a status report on the Air Raid offense, which has been carving up major-college defenses for the last 25 years.

As is often the case with Leach, his assessment of the pioneering, pass-centric scheme he helped hone into a record-breaking tour de force is a bit over the top but not without merit.

"Well, three of the last four teams that won the Super Bowl have run it so I guess it's doing pretty good," the 61-year-old head coach said.

Born from the mind of Hal Mumme at a high school in East Texas in the 1980s and passed down to the latest batch of Leach-inspired, 30-something coaches, the Air Raid's evolution over four decades has made the offense both ubiquitous and inconspicuous.

It would be difficult to watch a football game at any level and not find a team running at least some of the Air Raid's foundational concepts and plays — mesh, Y cross, four verts, the quick game.

However, finding a team at the highest levels of the sport running Air Raid in a way that resembles what Mumme unleashed on the Southeastern Conference as Kentucky's coach in 1997 is nearly impossible — outside of Leach's teams.

"It's everywhere and nowhere," said Nate Tice, a former quarterback at Wisconsin who is now a football analyst for The Athletic. "Everyone in college runs Y cross. If you watch Ohio State, they run it 100 times a game, but you don't think of Ohio State as an Air Raid team. But they're running Air Raid concepts."

The Air Raid is more a process than a playbook these days. Keeping things simple, stressing execution over matchups and seemingly endless repetition of a relatively small num-

ber of plays in practice are what links the Air Raid's past and present.

"That really to me is the genius of Hal (Mumme) and Mike Leach and what they've done is they have a system of teaching and practicing that allows the players to improve at a high level," said Colorado State coach Jay Norvell, whose quarterbacks coach is Matt Mumme, Hal's son.

Hal Mumme's monster was created at Copperas Cove (Texas) High School and inspired by LaVell Edwards' BYU passing game and Bill Walsh's West Coast offense that was turning the San Francisco 49ers into an NFL dynasty.

One-word play calls, hand signals that take just a finger or two and a slim playbook were hallmarks of Mumme's Air Raid and still are Leach staples.

"He was basically trying to dumb this thing down for guys that were just learning to play football," Matt Mumme said of his father. "But then realized that the way he was doing it can

be highly successful at the collegiate level and it has."

Of the top 25 most-prolific passing seasons in major college football history by yards per game, 12 have direct connections to Mumme and Leach — from Kentucky to Houston to Texas Tech to New Mexico State to Washington State.

Those teams not only produced gaudy stats but numerous coaches, starting with Leach's first star quarterback at Texas Tech: Arizona Cardinals coach Kliff Kingsbury, who also did a stint leading his alma mater and tutoring Patrick Mahomes in Lubbock.

Other Air Raid descendants who are currently FBS head coaches include USC's Lincoln Riley, Houston's Dana Holgorsen, TCU's Sonny Dykes, West Virginia's Neal Brown and Louisiana Tech's Sonny Cumbie.

This offseason, Brown hired former offensive coordinator Graham Harrell, another one of Leach's former Red Raiders quarterbacks, to run his offense.

Serena prevails in opening match at US Open

Associated Press

NEW YORK — They came from far and wide for Serena — no last name required, befitting someone as much an icon as superstar athlete — to see her practice and play and, it turned out, win a match at the U.S. Open on Monday night, turning out in record numbers to fill Arthur Ashe Stadium and shout and applaud and pump their fists right along with her.

Serena Williams is not ready to say goodbye just yet. Nor, clearly, are her fans. And she heard them, loud and clear.

In her first match at what is expected to be the last U.S. Open — and last tournament — of her remarkable playing career, even if she insists that she won't quite say so, Williams overcame a shaky start to overpower Danka Kovinic 6-3, 6-3 amid an atmosphere more akin to a festival than a farewell.

What memory will stick with her the most from the evening?

"When I walked out, the reception was re-

ally overwhelming. It was loud and I could feel it in my chest. It was a really good feeling," said the owner of six U.S. Open championships and 23 Grand Slam titles overall, numbers unsurpassed by any other player in the sport's professional era.

"It's a feeling I'll never forget," she added. "Yeah, that meant a lot to me."

This opening outing against Kovinic, a 27-year-old from Montenegro ranked 80th, became an event with a capital "E." Spike Lee participated in the pre-match coin toss. Former President Bill Clinton was in the stands. So were Mike Tyson and Martina Navratilova, sitting next to each other. And sitting with Dad and Grandma was Williams' daughter, Olympia, who turns 5 on Thursday, wearing white beads in her hair just like Mom did while winning the U.S. Open for the first time at age 17 back in 1999.

Williams is now 40, and told the world three weeks ago via an essay for *Vogue* that she was ready to concentrate on having a

second child and her venture capital firm.

Asked after her victory Monday whether this will definitively be her final tournament, Williams replied with a knowing smile: "Yeah, I've been pretty vague about it, right?"

Then she added: "I'm going to stay vague, because you never know."

The night session drew 29,000 folks, a high for the tournament — more than 23,000 were in Ashe; thousands more watched on a video screen outside the arena — and the place was as loud as ever. Certainly louder than any other first-round match in memory.

Both players called the decibel level "crazy." Kovinic said she couldn't hear the ball come off Williams' racket strings — or even her own.

Early, Williams was not at her best. Maybe it was the significance of the moment. There were double-faults. Other missed strokes, missed opportunities.

Cincinnati, Houston favored in AAC

Associated Press

The Big 12 is skimming the cream off the top of the American Athletic Conference next season, shifting the landscape for a second-tier conference that has struggled for a measure of national respectability.

Last year's AAC champion, Cincinnati (13-1, 8-0 AAC), became the first school outside a major conference to reach the College Football Playoff. Runner-up Houston (12-2, 8-0) beat Auburn in the Birmingham Bowl and finished No. 17 in the country. Central Florida (9-4, 5-3) took down Florida in the Gasparilla Bowl.

All three will make the move to the Big 12 in 2023. First, though, they are expected to finish top of the table in their final AAC campaign.

Behind transfers and established upper-classmen, Cincinnati had a lightning-in-a-bottle 2021 season and made the CFP, only to lose to Alabama in a semifinal.

The Bearcats saw nine players chosen in the NFL

Draft, including quarterback Desmond Ridder, running back Jerome Ford and cornerbacks Ahmad Gardner and Coby Bryant.

"We lost a lot of big-time players and players that have been here for a long time," Cincinnati coach Luke Fickell said. "I say that life without Desmond Ridder and Coby Bryant is different, but I think that sometimes players in their own way are really excited about proving who they are and what they have done as leaders."

The No. 23 Bearcats will try to replace Ridder, one of the nation's top QBs a year ago, with Ben Bryant, who was Ridder's backup for two seasons before playing at Eastern Michigan last season, or sophomore Evan Prater. Cincinnati ended fall camp without declaring a starter.

The uncertainty is reflected in the AAC preseason media poll that picked Houston to finish No. 1 over the Bearcats by a single point (243-242).

Cougars coach Dana Holgor-

sen isn't buying it.

"I doubt they were relying on just those guys within their program," Holgorsen said. "They probably have some good players behind them. They haven't lost a game in the conference in the last couple of years, so (Cincinnati) is going to have to be my pick. They are setting the standard for what it takes to win in the American."

No. 24 Houston has one of the more experienced quarterbacks in Clayton Tune, a fifth-year player who completed more than 68% of his passes and threw 30 touchdowns in 2021. He has started 30 college games.

"I've always believed in Clayton," Holgorsen said. "I think he's one of the best quarterbacks in the country, no doubt. Probably the biggest key is we got better pieces around him right now."

Tune's weapons include Nathaniel Dell, who was one of the nation's top receivers last year.

Welcome back

At least seven other experienced quarterbacks are set to lead AAC squads in 2022: Holton Ahlers at East Carolina; Seth Henigan at Memphis; Davis Brin at Tulsa; Michael Pratt at Tulane; Tai Lavatai at Navy; D'Wan Mathis at Temple; and Tanner Mordecai at SMU.

Changing uniforms

Making the AAC more unpredictable is the number of new players coming to the teams via the transfer portal.

SMU, South Florida, Central Florida and East Carolina brought in at least a dozen new players via the portal. UCF coach Gus Malzahn noted that eight of the 16 transfers coming to Orlando left Southeastern Conference schools to do so.

Ole Miss transfer John Rhys Plumlee won the starting quarterback job at UCF, and Baylor transfer Gerry Bohanon was named starting QB at South Florida.

No. 25 BYU has experience in last independent year

Associated Press

PROVO, Utah—Experience is No. 25 BYU's biggest strength entering its final season as an independent before joining the Big 12 in 2023.

The Cougars return 18 starters from a team that posted 10 wins and finished in the AP Top 25 for a second consecutive season. Several key veteran playmakers will lead the offense, including quarterback Jaren Hall, tight end Isaac Rex, and receivers Gunner Romney and Puka Nacua.

"We're experienced at every position," Hall said. "Guys know where they're supposed to be, they know what they're doing. It's a good flow right now with the offense."

Hall, a fifth-year junior, is the lynchpin, giving BYU a dynamic dual-threat presence that gave defenses fits. In 10 starts last season, Hall threw for 2,583 yards and 20 touchdowns while tossing only five interceptions. He completed 64% of his pass attempts.

Hall settled into a comfortable rhythm as a passer as the season progressed and helped the Cougars average 33.1 points and 451.5 yards per game—ranking in the top 30 nationally in both categories.

Their success has bred confidence throughout the program and built a winning culture in Provo ahead of BYU's transition to the Power 5.

"They're always looking to learn," said Cougars coach Kalani Sitake. "That's what our culture is. We want our guys to keep learning as much as they can."

Replacing Allgeier

BYU used the transfer portal to find a capable successor for Tyler Allgeier in the backfield. Allgeier left for the NFL after racking up 1,606 yards and 23 touchdowns on the ground last season—both BYU single-season records.

California transfer Christopher Brooks

enters the season as Allgeier's successor as the Cougars' lead back. He made his mark in three seasons with the Bears, leading California in rushing in the 2019 and 2021 seasons.

The senior doesn't feel extra pressure filling Allgeier's shoes, saying he believes BYU's offense is tailored to his skills as a running back.

"It was just the right fit and the right place at the right time," Brooks said.

Healthy again

The injury bug decimated BYU's defense as last season progressed, causing problems for the Cougars with stopping the run. BYU should see improvement in that area. Starting linebackers Keenan Pili and Payton Wilgar are fully healthy after last year's season-ending injuries, and the entire two-deep unit for the Cougars at that position has starting experience.

Freeman, Dodgers edge Marlins in 10

Associated Press

MIAMI — Chris Martin has exceeded the Los Angeles Dodgers' expectations since they traded for him in late July.

The well-traveled reliever inherited a bases-loaded jam in the bottom of the 10th inning and got the final two outs as the NL-West leading Dodgers defeated the Miami Marlins 3-2 on Monday night.

"He came over here and just allowed us to poke holes or add to his mix and find out what plays best," Los Angeles manager Dave Roberts said, "and he's just been all in, whether the location, the sequencing, what pitches he decides to use. He's been bought in from the get-go."

Freddie Freeman drove in the go-ahead run with a grounder in the top half of the inning.

Trea Turner had his 1,000th career hit with an infield single against reliever Huascar Brazoban (0-1) to begin the Dodgers 10th, advancing automatic runner Cody Bellinger to third.

Freeman hit a grounder to first baseman Charles Leblanc, who got a forceout at second as Bellinger scored. Freeman had two earlier hits and leads the majors with 163.

Jon Berti walked to lead off the bottom half against reliever Craig Kimbrel (4-5) and Brian Anderson reached on a fielder's choice, advancing automatic runner Joey Wendle to third. Kimbrel then walked JJ Bleday.

Martin relieved Kimbrel and struck out Garrett Cooper and retired Jacob Stallings on a popout to first for his first save since

posting one for Atlanta last year. "There's nothing like experiencing those situations," Martin said. "Obviously, the playoffs kind of help you with that in the regular season. But these games count, in my opinion, just as much. Just go out there and just compete every single pitch. That's all I try to do."

Now with his sixth big league team, the Dodgers got the 36-year-old right-hander from the Chicago Cubs for utilityman Zach McKinstry.

The Dodgers, with a major league-best 89 wins, took three of four in the series.

"You're going to have to win these games in the postseason," Turner said, "so a little bit of practice, a little bit of intensity and adrenaline — these last four games were pretty tough for the most part. They played us really well this series. We had to battle for these three wins."

Cardinals 13, Reds 4: Slugger Albert Pujols tagged his major league record 450th different pitcher for a home run, connecting off left-hander Ross Detwiler in a rout of Cincinnati.

Pujols hit his 694th home run overall.

He had been tied with Barry Bonds for most pitchers as longball victims at 449.

Bonds leads the all-time home run list with 762, followed by Hank Aaron (755), Babe Ruth (714) and Alex Rodriguez (696).

Angels 4, Yankees 3: Aaron Judge hit his 50th home run of the season but Shohei Ohtani also went deep during their MVP showdown, and host Los Angeles held off slumping New York.

Ohtani broke a 2-all tie in the fifth inning

with his 29th homer, a two-run drive to right-center. Judge connected in the eighth for a 434-foot shot off reliever Ryan Tepera that made it 4-3.

Blue Jays 5, Cubs 4 (11): Danny Jansen hit a three-run homer in the seventh inning and singled home the winning run in the 11th as host Toronto overcame a four-run deficit to beat Chicago.

Jansen connected off Erich Uelmen for his 11th homer, then won it with a base hit to left field against Mark Leiter Jr. (2-6) that scored Matt Chapman from second base and ended the Blue Jays' three-game skid.

Padres 6, Giants 5: Brandon Drury hit a two-run homer in the first inning and later added an RBI single to lead San Diego to a win at San Francisco.

Josh Bell had an RBI single for the Padres to get things started in the first, then Austin Nola hit a two-run single in the fourth.

Brewers 7, Pirates 5: Garrett Mitchell hit a tying home run in the eighth inning and Keston Hiura connected for a game-ending shot in the ninth as host Milwaukee rallied past Pittsburgh.

Hiura launched a two-run homer off reliever Wil Crowe (5-8) that bounced off the top of the left-field wall.

Twins 4, Red Sox 2: Gio Urshela's three-run double in the fifth inning pushed host Minnesota ahead and four relievers made the lead stand up.

Diamondbacks 13, Phillies 7: Corbin Carroll hit a go-ahead, two-run double in his big league debut and host Arizona climbed out of an early seven-run hole.

Source: Garoppolo staying put with 49ers

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Jimmy Garoppolo is staying in San Francisco after agreeing to a reduced contract to be the backup to Trey Lance on the 49ers.

A person familiar with the deal said on condition of anonymity Monday that the sides are finalizing a deal to reduce Garoppolo's \$24.2 million base salary for 2022. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal hadn't been announced.

ESPN reported Garoppolo will receive a \$6.5 million fully guaranteed base salary, \$500,000 in

roster bonuses and the chance to make nearly \$9 million more in playing time bonuses. The deal also includes a no-trade clause and prevents San Francisco from using the franchise tag on Garoppolo next offseason.

The Niners had been unable to find a trade partner for Garoppolo and were facing a deadline with rosters being cut to 53 players on Tuesday.

They were unwilling to keep Garoppolo as a backup at his full salary, and with no chances at a starting job on another team, the two sides found a compromise.

Garoppolo had not taken part in a single practice or meeting with the team this training camp, working out on the side on his own as he works his way back from offseason shoulder surgery.

But after spending the past five years in San Francisco, he should have little problem getting back up to speed on coach Kyle Shanahan's offense and he gives the Niners insurance if Lance struggles or gets hurt.

The other quarterbacks on the roster are seventh-round rookie Brock Purdy and Nate Sudfeld,

who hasn't started a game in the NFL.

San Francisco had set in motion the plan to move on from Garoppolo before the 2021 season when the 49ers traded three first-round picks to draft Lance third overall. Lance spent most of his rookie season on the bench adjusting to the NFL but was put in the starting role at the start of the 2022 offseason program.

Lance has started just three games the past two seasons in college and the pros after starting for one season at lower-level North Dakota State in 2019.