

Navy ignores Hawaii order to empty tanks

By **WYATT OLSON**
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The U.S. Navy secretary has ordered a halt to operations at the Red Hill underground storage facility, but ignored emergency instructions from Hawaii to empty the 150 million gallons of fuel held there.

The Navy is investigating the source of petroleum contamination in the water supply for hundreds of families living on or near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, many of whom are temporarily displaced as a result. Preliminary tests traced the contamination to Red Hill well, one of three sources for the Navy's water system.

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro on Tuesday directed the service to pause all operations at the storage facility. His order does not mention the state Health Department's

emergency order on Monday but includes most of the same criteria, except for the state demand to empty 20 fuel tanks.

"The Department of the Navy will take every action to identify and remedy this incident," according to Del Toro's memo, which the Navy made public on Wednesday.

Hawaii's order would essentially require the Navy to abandon the underground tanks.

"Hawaii's well-being and the safety of our residents, including military families, must come first," Hawaii Gov. David Ige said in a news release Tuesday. "We cannot have national security without ensuring public health and safety."

The Navy on Nov. 27 suspended transfer of fuel from the underground tanks after residents of military housing began complaining of foul-smelling water and an oily sheen. Navy

testing last week confirmed that water samples contained petroleum and traced the source to the Red Hill well.

Del Toro's memo directed Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday to:

- Cease all operations at the Red Hill underground fuel storage tanks "until the investigation into the cause of the incident is complete."
- Continue to isolate the Red Hill and Halawa wells, which are part of the Navy water system, until the distribution main and all affected homes and buildings have been flushed and can be supplied uncontaminated tap water.
- Evaluate acquiring a drinking water treatment system or systems for the Red Hill well to ensure that water conforms to standards of the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Consult with an independ-

ent third party to assess the system integrity at the Red Hill fuel facility within 30 calendar days. The consultant would develop a work plan and schedule to "conduct necessary repairs and make necessary changes in operations to address any deficiencies identified in the assessment."

• Approve a final work plan following the consultant's assessment and "expeditiously perform work and make necessary changes in operations."

"We are aiming for a new normal: One where this never happens again," Del Toro said in a news release Wednesday. "The Department is determined and committed to making the necessary changes. We can and will take care of our people, while also preserving and protecting our national security interests in the Pacific and at home."

Biden sounds alarm about democracy at virtual summit

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Thursday opened the first White House Summit for Democracy by sounding an alarm about a global slide for democratic institutions and called for world leaders to "lock arms" and demonstrate democracies can deliver.

Biden called it a critical moment for fellow leaders to redouble their efforts to bolster democracies. In making the case for action, he noted his own battle to win passage of voting rights legislation at home and alluded to challenges to America's democratic institutions and traditions.

"This is an urgent matter," Biden said in remarks to open the two-day virtual summit. "The data we're seeing is largely pointing in the wrong direction."

The video gathering comes as Biden has

repeatedly made a case that the United States and like-minded allies need to show the world that democracies are a far better vehicle for societies than autocracies.

That is a central tenet of Biden's foreign policy outlook — one that he vowed would be more outward looking than his predecessor Donald Trump's "America First" approach. Biden in his speech announced plans to launch an initiative that would spend up to \$424 million for programming around the world that supports independent media, anti-corruption work and more.

But the gathering also drew backlash from America's chief adversaries and other nations that were not invited to participate.

Ahead of the summit, the ambassadors to the U.S. from China and Russia wrote a joint essay describing the Biden administration as exhibiting a "Cold-War mental-

ity" that will "stoke up ideological confrontation and a rift in the world." The administration has also faced scrutiny over how it went about deciding which countries to invite. China and Russia were among those not receiving invitations.

Other leaders took turns delivering their own remarks on the state of democracy — many prerecorded — often reflecting on the stress that rapidly evolving technology is having on their nations. They also bemoaned the increase of disinformation campaigns aimed at and undermining institutions and elections.

"The democratic conversation is changing," said Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen. "New technologies and large tech companies are increasingly setting the stage for the democratic dialogue, sometimes with more emphasis on reach than on freedom of speech."

Biden to award 3 Medals of Honor

The Washington Post

The Biden administration is planning to award Medals of Honor to three U.S. soldiers who fought in Afghanistan and Iraq, according to people familiar with the matter, a group that includes the first Black service member to be recognized with the nation's top combat distinction for either conflict.

The soldiers are Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn Cashe, who suffered mortal injuries in Iraq while rescuing fellow soldiers from a burning vehicle in 2005; Master Sgt. Earl Plumlee, a Special Forces soldier who fought off Taliban suicide bombers in Afghanistan in 2013; and Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Celiz, an Army Ranger who died after stepping between Taliban fighters targeting a U.S. helicopter evacuating his fellow soldiers in 2018.

Recognition for each — the nation's highest for battlefield valor — could happen as soon as Dec. 16, four current and former U.S. officials said. They spoke on the condition of anonymity ahead of an expected White House announcement.

Spokespeople for the White House and the Pentagon declined to comment.

The awards come as the administration pivots away from 20 years of counterinsurgency wars, and four months after a chaotic and deadly withdrawal from Afghanistan in which some Americans and Afghan partners were left behind. Advocates have long pressed for awards for Cashe and Plumlee after earlier nominations were denied, while Celiz's case surfaced more recently.

Other cases are still under review, U.S. officials said.

By law, Medals of Honor must be awarded within five years of the combat action recognized, but in legislation passed early this year, Congress cleared a path for additional consideration for Cashe, Plumlee and two other soldiers. One of them, retired Col. Ralph Puckett, 95, received the Medal of Honor in May for valor in the Korean War in 1950. No resolution has emerged in the case of the other veteran, Dwight Birdwell, who received two Silver Stars for valor in Vietnam in 1968.

US to deliver small arms and ammunition to Ukraine

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The United States is expected to deliver small arms and ammunition to Ukraine this week as Russian troops continue to mass at the nation's northeastern border, chief Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Wednesday.

The weapons are the last portion of a \$60 million security-assistance package announced Sept. 1 meant to help Ukraine “more effectively defend itself against Russian aggression,” the White House said at the time.

That package also included other lethal and nonlethal capabilities, including Javelin anti-tank missile systems, patrol boats and “more benign articles” such as medical assistance, Kirby told reporters at the Pentagon.

The delivery comes as U.S. intelligence has indicated Russian President Vladimir Putin is poised to deploy as many as 175,000 Russian troops to the Ukrainian border by early 2022, according to news reports. So far, Russia has massed about 70,000 troops near its border with Ukraine.

Since 2014, the U.S. has contributed \$2.5 billion in support of Ukrainian forces, including \$400 million this year, according to the White House.

The U.S. instructed Ukraine not to use the weapons offensively, “but there is no geographical restriction on where they can be used,” Kirby said. “We expect them to use them responsibly and for the purposes of self-defense.”

Another \$300 million for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative is included in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets policy priorities and directs spending for the Defense Department. The House passed the NDAA on Tuesday. The Senate has yet to vote on the bill.

The proposed NDAA also provides about \$4 billion for the European Deterrence Initiative, the U.S.-led efforts in Europe to deter Russian aggression, which includes major training exercises and troop rotations in Eastern Europe.

Kirby did not say what kind of weapons could be provided should the bill become law, but he said it could depend on the specifics included in the NDAA.

US to end Iraq mission by end of year

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The United States is expected to carry out its commitment to end its combat mission in Iraq by the end of the year, chief Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Wednesday.

President Joe Biden in July pledged to remove all U.S. troops with a combat role from Iraq by 2022 as part of an agreement with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. At the time, there were about 2,500 troops in Iraq targeting Islamic State fighters.

“The United States will uphold our commitments, including that there will be no U.S. forces with a combat role by the end of the year,” Kirby told reporters Wednesday at the Pentagon.

As part of the agreement, Biden said he would keep some troops in the country to

operate in an advisory role.

“U.S. forces will remain in Iraq of course at the invitation of the government of Iraq in an advising, assisting, enabling and an intelligence-sharing role to support the Iraqi Security Forces in their fight against ISIS,” Kirby said.

He did not say how many troops are now serving combat roles in Iraq. The U.S. has already begun shifting toward training Iraqi forces, however, so the change is not expected to have a major impact, defense officials have said.

The U.S. and Iraq on Thursday will conduct a meeting of its military-technical committees, which were established to discuss and implement the decisions made in the July agreement.

The two nations will issue a joint statement at the end of the meeting, Kirby said.

US unemployment claims drop to 184K

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits plunged last week to the lowest level in 52 years, more evidence that the U.S. job market is recovering from last year's coronavirus recession.

Unemployment claims dropped by 43,000 to 184,000 last week, the lowest since September 1969, the Labor Department said Thursday. The four-week moving average, which smooths out week-to-week volatility, fell to below 219,000, lowest since the pandemic hit the United States hard in March 2020.

Overall, just under 2 million Americans

were collecting traditional unemployment benefits the week that ended Nov. 27.

Weekly claims, which are a proxy for layoffs, have fallen steadily most of the year since topping 900,000 one week in early January. They are now below to the 220,000-a-week level typical before the coronavirus pandemic slammed the U.S. economy in March 2020; COVID-19 forced consumers to stay home as health precaution and businesses to close or reduce hours and to lay off staff.

In March and April last year, employers shed a staggering 22.4 million jobs.

Massive government aid and the rollout of vaccines helped revive the economy and

the job market by giving Americans the confidence and financial wherewithal to go on a shopping spree, often online, for goods such as lawn furniture and coffee makers.

Since April last year, the United States has regained nearly 18.5 million jobs. But the economy is still 3.9 million jobs short of where it stood in February 2020 and the prospects for the economy remain vulnerable to COVID variants such as omicron.

The Labor Department reported last week that employers added a disappointing 210,000 jobs last month. But the report also showed that the unemployment rate dropped to a pandemic low of 4.2% from 4.6% in October.

Air Force announces new coronavirus vaccine policy

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Unvaccinated airmen denied medical, administrative or religious exemptions to the Defense Department's coronavirus vaccine mandate must get immunized within five days or face possible punishment including separation, the Air Force announced in a policy issued Wednesday.

More than 97% of active-duty airmen were vaccinated against the coronavirus as of Tuesday, according to the Air Force. The remaining troops are either waiting for decisions on their exemption requests, have not started the vaccination process or have verbally declined the shots.

So far, the service has approved 1,133 medical exemptions, 184 administrative exemptions, but no religious exemptions for its

active-duty force of about 326,000, the service said Tuesday. About 4,756 active-duty airmen are awaiting decisions on religious exemptions requests.

The service required all active-duty troops to become fully vaccinated by Nov. 2 after Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in August ordered all service members to receive the vaccine.

"Immediately following notification of final adjudication, [Air Force] members must comply with the vaccination requirement," the service said in its new policy. "Any refusal to receive the [coronavirus] vaccine, absent an approved exemption, may be punishable under the [Uniform Code of Military Justice]."

The UCMJ is the military's legal framework, which includes a provision that allows for the separation of troops for failing to obey

a lawful order.

Airmen denied medical exemptions may delay the five-day deadline by requesting a second opinion or submitting an appeal to the service's final appeal authority, according to the policy. However, the clock will restart to get vaccinated if the appeal is denied.

The policy also stated that after Dec. 31, unvaccinated Air National Guard members without pending or approved exemptions "may not participate in drills, training or other duty" under federal or state authority.

The National Guard provision comes after Oklahoma Adjutant General Tommy Mancino canceled the state's coronavirus vaccine requirement last month, arguing Oklahoma did not have to enforce the Pentagon's mandate. The Defense Department has said its mandate is still valid for Oklahoma troops.

Navy SEAL team leader dies after training accident

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The commanding officer of SEAL Team 8 in Little Creek, Va., died Tuesday after he was hurt in a training exercise during the weekend, according to a Naval Special Warfare Command statement.

Cmdr. Brian Bourgeois, 43, died three days after sustaining injuries "during a fast-rope training evolution" in Virginia Beach, Va., according to the statement issued Wednesday.

Further details about his injuries were

not available because the incident is under investigation, according to the statement. The SEAL team's executive officer has temporarily assumed Bourgeois' duties.

"Findings will be made available at the appropriate time," according to the statement.

Capt. Donald G. Wetherbee, commodore of Naval Special Warfare Group 2, said in the statement that the loss of Bourgeois and the nature of his death "weighs heavily on us all."

"We are working with SEAL Team 8 to provide every form of support we possibly

can to Brian's family and teammates," Wetherbee said. "Brian was as tough as they come, an outstanding leader, and a committed father, husband and friend."

Bourgeois was a 2001 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, where he played football. He also attended the naval postgraduate school and "humbly served the Navy and naval special warfare community for over 20 years," according to the statement.

"Brian was one of our very best leaders, who possessed all the attributes that make our force effective," NSWC commander Rear Adm. H.W. Howard III said.

District facing 2 \$100M suits over shooting

Associated Press

Two lawsuits seeking \$100 million each have been filed against a Michigan school district, its superintendent and others after four students were fatally shot and others wounded at Oxford High School, a lawyer announced Thursday.

The lawsuits were filed in federal court in Detroit by Jeffrey and Brandi Franz on behalf of their daughters, Riley, a 17-year-old senior who was shot in the neck Nov. 30, and her sister Bella, a 14-year-old ninth grader who was next to her at the time, attorney Geoffrey Fieger

said.

Named in the suits are the Oxford Community School District, Superintendent Timothy Throne, Oxford High School principal Steven Wolf, the dean of students, two counselors, two teachers and a staff member.

Ten students and a teacher were shot at the school in Oxford Township, roughly 30 miles north of Detroit.

Ethan Crumbley, a 15-year-old sophomore at the school, was arrested at the school and has been charged as an adult with murder, terrorism and other crimes. His parents, James

and Jennifer Crumbley, were later charged with involuntary manslaughter and arrested.

Personal injury lawyers have expressed doubt that the school district could be successfully sued for letting Crumbley stay in school. That's because Michigan law sets a high bar to wring liability out of public schools and other arms of government.

"You have to show that the administration or faculty members were grossly negligent, meaning they had a reckless disregard for whether an injury was likely to take place," said attorney A. Vince Colella.

The gun used in the shooting was bought days before by James Crumbley and their son had full access to the gun used in the killings, prosecutors said.

The morning before the shooting school officials met with Ethan Crumbley and his parents after the school after a teacher found a drawing of a gun, a bullet and a person who appeared to have been shot, along with messages stating "My life is useless" and "The world is dead."

The Crumbleys "flatly refused" to take their son home, Throne has said.

Video crucial in trial over police shooting of Wright

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Prosecutors building their case against a suburban Minneapolis police officer who killed Black motorist Daunte Wright repeatedly played body-camera video of the fatal shooting, with the officer heard shouting "Taser!" and then collapsing in wails of "Oh my God!" after she had instead fired her handgun.

They used their opening statement Wednesday to portray Kim Potter as a veteran cop who had been repeatedly trained in Taser use, including warnings on avoiding such deadly mix-ups.

Potter's attorney countered that she made an error, saying, "Police officers are human beings." And he cast blame on Wright, saying all the 20-year-old had to do that day was surrender.

Potter, 49, killed Wright, who wasn't armed, during a traffic stop on April 11 in Brooklyn Center. The white officer resigned two days later. She's charged with manslaughter.

Jurors saw video from officers' body cameras and the po-

lice car dashboard that showed Potter threatening to shoot Wright with a Taser as another officer tried to pull him out of his car. After she shot him with her gun, Potter can be heard saying, "I just shot him. ... I grabbed the wrong (expletive) gun!"

A car crash can be heard after Wright drives away and Potter — who defense attorney Paul Engh said had never fired her gun or Taser while on duty in her 26-year career — can be heard wailing uncontrollably afterward, "Oh my God. Oh my God!" before she crumples over.

Wright's mother, Katie Bryant, testified about the moment she saw her son lying in his car after he'd been shot. She said she tried to contact him through a video call after losing an earlier phone connection, and a woman — presumably Wright's passenger — answered and screamed, "They shot him!" and pointed the phone toward the driver's seat.

"And my son was laying there. He was unresponsive and he looked dead," Bryant said through tears.

China dismisses Canada, UK Olympic boycott as a 'farce'

Associated Press

BELJING — China on Thursday dismissed the decision by Canada and the United Kingdom to join Washington's diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games as a "farce."

China is also not concerned that the officials' absence would spark a chain reaction, and numerous heads of state, government leaders and members of royal families have registered to attend, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a daily briefing.

The three countries have said they won't send government dignitaries to the games, which run Feb. 4-20, to protest human rights abuses in China, while New Zealand said it informed Beijing earlier that it wouldn't be sending any officials due to pandemic travel restrictions but had also communicated its human rights concerns.

Under the diplomatic boycott, the countries will still send their athletes to compete.

Wang said China had not extended invitations to the U.S., Canada or the U.K. and that it "doesn't matter if their officials come or not, they will see the success of the Beijing Winter Olym-

pics."

"Sports has nothing to do with politics," Wang said. "It is they who have written, directed and performed this farce."

China is confident there will be no chain reaction, and perceives overwhelming global support for the games, he said.

"As of now, numerous heads of state, leaders of government and royal family members have registered to attend the Beijing Winter Olympics, and we welcome them," Wang said. "China is committed to making greater contributions to the international Olympic cause and will offer up a streamlined, safe and exciting Olympics to the world."

China has vowed to respond to the U.S. with "firm countermeasures" over the boycott, but has given no details on how it plans to retaliate.

Rights groups have called for a total boycott of the Beijing Winter Games, citing Chinese human rights abuses against its Uyghur minority in the northwest Xinjiang region, which some have called genocide. They also point to Beijing's suppression of democratic protests in Hong Kong and a sweeping crackdown on dissent in the semi-autonomous territory.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman accuses FedEx driver of stealing dog

AL HELENA—A woman told police that a FedEx driver stole her service dog, touching off an investigation by local police and the Memphis, Tenn.-based shipping company.

The woman reported the dog was seen in a FedEx truck, Helena Police Chief Brad Flynn said. Helena detectives met with FedEx management, who put authorities in touch with the contract driver, and the dog was returned to the owner, Al.com reported.

Investigators are trying to set up an interview with the driver to hear his side of the story, Flynn said.

“He believes he was rescuing a dog to keep it from getting hit, but at the same time, the dog doesn’t belong to you,” Flynn said.

Utility sued for \$50M over deadly house blast

MI FLINT — A \$50 million lawsuit was filed against a utility company over an explosion that killed two people and damaged several homes in Flint, Mich.

The lawsuit was filed Nov. 30 in Genesee County Circuit Court on behalf of 55-year-old Lisa Rochowiak, who died eight days after the home next to hers exploded.

Police haven’t determined the cause of the Nov. 22 explosion, which also killed a 4-year-old girl, injured two other people and damaged or destroyed 27 homes. And a top police investigator said it would likely take months to sort out.

But Fieger Law, the firm that

filed the lawsuit, says Rochowiak reported smelling gas on the morning of the explosion and claims utility Consumers Energy was negligent. Consumers Energy issued a written statement denying responsibility for the explosion.

“Our investigation shows there were no leaks or other issues relating to our natural gas system, equipment or service outside the home,” the utility said.

Norwegian tall ship in US as part of expedition

FL MIAMI — A tall sailing ship built in 1914 has arrived in Miami as part of an environmental expedition that will end in 2023.

The Statsraad Lehmkuhl is 321 feet tall and is based in Norway. The three-masted vessel is equipped for research with instruments that measure levels of carbon dioxide, ocean temperature and other data. Its passengers are students, scientists and other professionals assisting in the journey.

The One Ocean Expedition sailed from Arendal, Norway, in August. It hosts events and meetings about the degradation of marine ecosystems.

Woman killed in crash during thieves’ flight

CA FRESNO — Authorities believe that a 64-year-old woman was killed in central California after an SUV carrying suspected mail thieves fleeing the crime crashed into her sedan on Monday.

The woman was driving through an intersection in Fresno, around 1 p.m. when the SUV

drove through a stop sign and hit the sedan’s driver side, according to the California Highway Patrol as reported by The Fresno Bee.

The woman, whose name was not made public, was pronounced dead at the scene, the newspaper reported.

The Fresno County Sheriff’s Office said the three people in the SUV are believed to have been fleeing after stealing mail from a nearby mailbox, The Bee reported. KSEE reported that the SUV’s driver is facing vehicular manslaughter charges.

Officials say restaurant fire intentionally set

DE NEWARK — Fire investigators in Delaware have determined that a fire that damaged a Newark restaurant last month was intentionally set.

The Delaware State Fire Marshal’s office announced Tuesday that the investigators are conducting a criminal investigation to find those responsible for the blaze at Miller’s Ale House on Nov. 24. A surveillance camera caught a suspect on the property before and during the fire, officials said.

The fire was reported around 5:30 a.m. and when firefighters arrived, flames were visible on the front of the building.

Damage was estimated at \$50,000, officials said.

State dissolving town because of problem

NC RALEIGH — A south-central North Carolina town will be shuttered next summer after a state panel decided Tuesday that it has too

many financial, demographic and electoral troubles.

The state Local Government Commission, which monitors the finances of municipalities, voted unanimously to dissolve the Scotland County town of East Laurinburg, which has a population of less than 250, according to census data.

Commission staff told the commission that East Laurinburg has failed to comply with fiscal standards, including the absence of a financial audit for several years. East Laurinburg, with a \$75,000 annual budget, got attention in October when a state audit found the town’s ex-finance director spent more than \$11,000 in town funds on her home utility bills and other questionable items.

Town assets will be transferred to another local government, possibly Scotland County. The date of dissolution is set for the end of June.

2 skiers die at resort in just over a week

CO BOULDER — A 60-year-old skier died after crashing into a tree at Eldora Mountain in northern Colorado, the second death at the resort in about a week.

Boulder County sheriff’s officials said ski patrollers found the man lying on the ground in a group of trees on the intermediate Hotdog Alley run Tuesday morning. The skier, whose name has not been released, was unconscious and alone and appeared to have crashed at some point earlier in the day.

On Nov. 30, a 72-year-old skier died in a collision with a snowboarder.

— From wire reports

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Carter wreaking havoc for Black Knights

Associated Press

Mention Army linebacker Andre Carter II to Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo and you'll likely get a one-word reply.

"Whew!"

Enough said.

When the archrivals meet Saturday for the 122nd time, the Navy offense will be keeping close watch on the junior from Missouri City, Texas. At 6-foot-7 and 250 pounds, Carter has been easy to spot in his first full season as a starter because he's been showing up in the backfield an awful lot. He leads the nation with 1.32 sacks per game and has 14.5 in 11 games, 13 of them solo (Will Anderson Jr. of Alabama has one more sack but has played in two more games).

"I'm not surprised that I'm having success just because I know the work that I put in, but I will say that coming in my goal was to get double-digit sacks by the end of the season," said Carter, who mostly was a tight end in high school. "To see that amount of success has definitely been a little surprising to me."

Carter also has forced four fumbles, snared one interception and blocked a kick. It's a résumé West Point hopes will garner All-America status.

"I'm glad he's on my side," Army coach Jeff Monken said. "We're fortunate to have him here."

"We knew that he could be very special the day he stepped foot" on campus, senior defensive back Cedrick Cunningham said. "He was a tall, skinny kid when he first got here. Now, it's awesome to see how much he's grown as a player on and off the field. When you see a guy with the work ethic like he has, you just know that he's going to have

a chance."

A chance was all that Carter wanted, and his road to West Point was about as circuitous as it could be. The family moved from California to the Houston area the summer before his junior year of high school. He transferred to a private school and missed much of his senior year with an injury.

With not much traction in recruiting, his mother, Melissa, started searching for a prep school to give Carter another year to develop. The family decided on Cheshire Academy in Connecticut after speaking with coach David Dykeman, who needed help on defense.

"He came here as a guy who had never played defense and really embraced the opportunity," Dykeman said. "He had a strip sack he took back for 97 yards. Things that he did were just phenomenal. He was driven."

Army, just 90 miles away, came calling first with an offer after linebackers coach John Loose got a firsthand look at Carter, who didn't know much about West Point but thought it made perfect sense. He'd have a chance to play college football at the highest level, get a first-rate education and be able to serve his country after graduation.

"I think he likes that they're pretty down-to-earth," his mother said. "And I think he really respects coach Monken and his program."

Carter didn't play his freshman year but made his presence felt in practice.

"He's a turnover-making machine, to be honest," offensive coordinator Brent Davis said. "He's so sudden and so long you really don't know exactly what you're going to get. It makes it difficult. He used to do that to us all the time when he was on the scout team.

He was a pain in the butt."

Carter played in 10 of Army's 12 games last season, mostly coming in on third down until logging two starts. Against Georgia Southern in late November, he gave a glimpse of what was to come, registering a sack, an interception, a forced fumble and a blocked kick.

"He only got one sack last year, but he was still a disruptive player for us," defensive coordinator Nate Woody said. "If you could just come out and look in practice at his work ethic, it's amazing the mental preparation that he puts in for practice and for games."

Carter began this season with three sacks against Georgia Southern and had a strip sack at Wisconsin that the offense was unable to convert in a tight game. In an overtime victory over Air Force with the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy on the line, Carter had one sack among his two tackles for loss, one quarterback hurry and an impressive pass breakup along the sideline deep in Army territory that deflected to teammate Cameron Jones, who returned it 45 yards.

"He stands out," Wisconsin coach Paul Chryst said. "He's talented and the effort that he plays with — that's a really good combination."

Now comes the big game against Navy at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J., and another chance to wreak some havoc.

"He's excited about it. That's what gets me excited about it," Carter's father said. "He's now become his own man and you can't be anything but proud. That's just on a whole different level proud, no matter what he does from this day forward. I let him know how proud I am of him because he's doing some remarkable stuff that in your wildest dreams you couldn't imagine."

Woods making return to competition at PNC championship

Associated Press

Ten months after his right leg was badly hurt in a car crash, Tiger Woods is returning to competition next week with 12-year-old son Charlie in the PNC Championship.

"Although it's been a long and challenging year, I am very excited to close it out by competing in the PNC Championship with my son Charlie," Woods tweeted. "I'm playing as a Dad and couldn't be more excited and proud."

It will be his first competition, even in a tournament Woods described last week as the "hit-and-giggle" variety that he can play, since he and his son tied for seventh a

year ago in the unofficial event that pairs family members.

The tournament was holding a spot for Woods, and he fueled speculation he might play the Dec. 18-19 event at the Ritz Carlton Golf Club Orlando when he took swings on Saturday and Sunday during his Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas.

"We have been liaising with Tiger and his team for some time and are delighted that he has now decided to make his return to competitive golf at the PNC Championship," said Alastair Johnston of IMG, the executive chairman of the event.

Woods was driving to a Los Angeles

course for a television shoot on Feb. 23 when police say he was driving about 85 mph along a winding, coastal suburban road. The SUV crashed through a median and plunged down a hill.

Doctors said he shattered the tibia and fibula bones in his right leg in multiple locations. Those were stabilized by a rod in the tibia. A combination of screws and pins were used to stabilize additional injuries in the ankle and foot.

Woods said last week that amputation was considered. He declined to discuss specifics of the crash, saying only "you can read about all that there in the police report."

Kuzma's 3 lifts Wizards in overtime

Associated Press

DETROIT — Kyle Kuzma hit a three-pointer with 0.6 seconds left in overtime and the Washington Wizards handed the Detroit Pistons their 10th straight loss, 119-116 on Wednesday night.

Kuzma scored 26 points and Bradley Beal added 25 for the Wizards, who blew a 13-point lead in the fourth quarter.

Jeremi Grant scored 28 points for the Pistons, who haven't won since beating Indiana on Nov. 17. The 10-game skid matches Detroit's longest since a 13-game slide from Nov. 15 to Dec. 9, 2014. The Pistons also lost 10 straight from Feb. 24 to March 14, 2015.

Washington led by 13 with 7:14 left, but Frank Jackson's three-pointer pulled Detroit within 104-102 with 1:46 to play. Grant later hit two free throws to tie it.

Warriors 104, Trail Blazers 94: Stephen Curry scored 22 points and moved within nine three-pointers of Ray Allen's career record as host Golden State held off depleted Portland.

The reigning NBA scoring champion shot 6-for-17 from beyond the arc, missing his initial four three-point tries before connecting at the 5:55 mark of the first quarter.

Norman Powell scored 26 points but went 1-for-7 from deep, and the Blazers were just 8-for-30 from long range. Star guards Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum sat out because of injuries.

Clippers 114, Celtics 111: Brandon Boston Jr. had career highs of 27 points and five three-pointers, sparking host Los Angeles over Boston in a matchup of teams barely above .500.

On a night when Paul George was sidelined with a bruised right elbow, Boston electrified his teammates and most of the crowd with a three-pointer that beat the halftime buzzer. It capped 18 points in 14 minutes for the rookie out of Kentucky.

Jazz 136, Timberwolves 104: Donovan Mitchell scored 36 points and sharp-shooting Utah won at Minnesota for its fifth straight win.

Mitchell made 14 of 23 shots and the Jazz connected for 25 three-pointers, two shy of their season high set last Friday against Boston.

Heat 113, Bucks 104: Caleb Martin scored a career-high 28 points and host Miami beat Milwaukee.

Rockets 114, Nets 104: Eric Gordon scored 21 points before being ejected in the fourth quarter and Garrison Mathews added 19 as host Houston extended its winning streak to seven games with a victory over shorthanded Brooklyn.

76ers 110, Hornets 106: Joel Embiid had 32 points, Seth Curry added 23 points and eight assists, and visiting Philadelphia beat Charlotte for the second time in three

nights.

Tobias Harris added 18 points in a rematch of a game the 76ers won 127-124 in overtime Monday night on the same court.

Pacers 122, Knicks 102: Chris Duarte scored 23 points, Myles Turner had 22 and host Indiana beat New York.

Thunder 110, Raptors 109: Mike Muscala made a go-ahead three-pointer with nine seconds remaining, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 16 of his 26 points in the third quarter, and Oklahoma City held on late to win its second straight game, rallying from a 13-point deficit to win at injury-depleted Toronto.

Cavaliers 115, Bulls 92: Darius Garland scored 24 points and rookie power forward Evan Mobley had 16 points and nine rebounds to send host Cleveland past Chicago.

Mavericks 104, Grizzlies 96: Luka Doncic scored 26 points, Kristaps Porzingis added 19 and visiting Dallas used a fourth-quarter rally to end a three-game skid.

Nuggets 120, Pelicans 114 (OT): Nikola Jokic scored 11 of his season-high 39 points in overtime to go with his 11 assists and 11 rebounds, and Denver won at mistake-prone New Orleans.

Kings 142, Magic 130: De'Aaron Fox scored 33 points, Tyrese Haliburton had a big fourth quarter and host Sacramento won its season-best third straight game by beating Orlando.

Sherman, West Virginia hold off No. 15 Connecticut

Associated Press

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — Taz Sherman scored 23 points and West Virginia held on for a 56-53 victory over No. 15 UConn on Wednesday night.

The Mountaineers (8-1) were terrible at the free-throw line but made enough in the closing minute to beat a ranked opponent in their first try this season.

Sean McNeil, who missed West Virginia's last game with a sore back, added 16 points for the Mountaineers.

Short-handed UConn (8-2) was held to a season low in points in its first true road game. Isaiah Whaley led the Huskies with 15 points. R.J. Cole added 14 and Andre Jackson scored 10.

West Virginia went 12-for-27

(44%) from the free-throw line, its worst performance of the season.

No. 11 Arizona 94, Wyoming 65: Benedict Mathurin had 24 points and 10 rebounds, Kerr Kriisa added 17 points and the host Wildcats dominated the Cowboys in the first half.

Arizona (8-0) continued its run of overwhelming opponents, smothering Wyoming (8-1) on the defensive end to set up easy baskets in transition for a 31-point halftime lead.

No. 19 Michigan State 75, Minnesota 67: Gabe Brown, Malik Hall and Tyson Walker scored 15 points apiece for the visiting Spartans in the first Big Ten opener for Golden Gophers coach Ben Johnson and the 27th for Michigan State coach Tom Izzo.

Brown had three three-pointers as the Spartans (8-2, 1-0) went 10-for-21 from long range against a Gophers team that entered the game with the best three-point defense in the nation at 23.1% allowed.

No. 20 Florida 85, North Florida 55: Colin Castleton had a career-high 26 points and eight rebounds, Myreon Jones added 14 points and the host Gators ended a two-game skid by beating the Ospreys.

Coming off a stunning home loss to previously winless Texas Southern, Florida (7-2) dominated from the opening tip and improved to 27-0 all time against North Florida (2-9).

No. 21 Ohio State 85, Towson 74: Kyle Young scored 18 points,

Justin Ahrens had 16 points on five three-pointers and the host Buckeyes held off the Tigers.

E.J. Liddell made all eight of his free throws and scored 15 points for Ohio State (7-2), and Zed Key added 13 points for the Buckeyes, who have beaten two unranked opponents since knocking off then-No. 1 Duke last week.

No. 22 Wisconsin 64, Indiana 59: Johnny Davis scored 23 points and made a go-ahead three-pointer with 1:18 left to help the Badgers erase a 22-point deficit and beat the visiting Hoosiers.

No. 24 BYU 82, Utah State 71: Alex Barcello scored 17 points while Te'Jon Lucas added 14 points and six assists to lead the host Cougars past the Aggies.

Devils hand Flyers 10th straight loss

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Mackenzie Blackwood made 25 saves and the New Jersey Devils snapped a four-game skid and sent the reeling Philadelphia Flyers to their 10th straight loss, 3-0 on Wednesday night.

Jesper Bratt had a second-period goal and assisted on a power-play goal by rookie Dawson Mercer later in the period. Michael McLeod scored into an empty net late as the Devils beat the Flyers for the second time in 10 days.

Carter Hart had 24 saves for the Flyers, who fell to 0-2 under interim coach Mike Yeo. He took over on Monday after Alain Vigneault was fired.

The Flyers' 10-game skid (0-8-2) is two shy of the team's longest winless streak. The record of 12 games (0-8-4) was set from Feb. 24-March 16, 1999. Philadelphia's last win was 2-1 over Calgary on Nov. 16.

The longest current skid in the NHL is 11, shared by Arizona and the New York Islanders.

Avalanche 7, Rangers 3: Lo-

gan O'Connor scored twice in a 22-second span in a five-goal second period, and visiting Colorado snapped New York's seven-game winning streak.

Mikko Rantanen also scored twice for Colorado. Nathan MacKinnon, Nazem Kadri and Alex Newhook added goals, and Darcy Kuemper made 26 saves. Kadri, Devon Toews and Samuel Girard each had two assists as the Avalanche improved to 8-2-1 in their last 11 games.

Rangers defenseman Jacob Trouba had a goal and an assist and delivered a crushing check in the second straight game. One night after appearing to drive his right shoulder into the chin of Chicago's Jujhar Khaira, sending the Blackhawks forward to the hospital and into concussion protocol, Trouba hit MacKinnon with a shoulder check midway through the second period. The Avalanche's Gabriel Landeskog immediately dropped his gloves and squared off against Trouba.

Nils Lundkvist and Filip Chytil also scored for the Rangers,

who lost at home for the first time since Oct. 25 against Calgary. Rangers rookie Adam Huska made his NHL debut and finished with 32 saves.

Canucks 2, Bruins 1 (SO): J.T. Miller scored the shootout winner, giving host Vancouver a victory over Boston.

The Canucks winger patiently outwaited Bruins goalie Jeremy Swayman, and tucked a shot in behind his right skate. Bo Horvat also scored in the shootout.

Brock Boeser scored in regulation for Vancouver, which improved to 2-0 under new coach Bruce Boudreau.

Patrice Bergeron got a power-play goal for Boston on a 5-on-3 advantage early in the third.

Canucks goalie Thatcher Demko made 35 saves on his 26th birthday. Swayman stopped 31 of 32 shots for Boston.

Golden Knights 5, Stars 4: Mark Stone had two goals and Max Pacioretty scored the winner as host Vegas defeated Dallas.

Vegas won its third in a row while bringing an abrupt end to Dallas' seven-game winning streak.

Trailing by two goals in the third period, the Golden Knights used three unanswered goals and scored at least five times for the fourth time in six games.

Trailing the Stars 4-2, Michael Amadio made it a one-goal game with his second of the season, Stone punched home his second of the night, and Pacioretty netted the go-ahead goal with a little more than four minutes left.

Jonathan Marchessault, playing in his 300th game as a Golden Knight, also scored.

Vegas starting goaltender Robin Lehner made seven saves before being pulled in the second period after allowing three goals. Laurent Brossoit stopped 12 of the 13 shots he faced.

Joe Pavelski scored twice, and Jason Robertson and Tyler Seguin added goals for the Stars. Braden Holtby made 40 saves.

Packers' Rodgers: Off week helped with injured toe

Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers said the off week has assisted him in his recovery from a toe injury, though it's still painful enough to keep the reigning MVP from practicing.

Rodgers wasn't on the practice field Wednesday as the Packers (9-3) prepared for their Sunday night home game with the Chicago Bears (4-8). He practiced just once before a Nov. 21 loss at Minnesota and didn't practice at all before a Nov. 28 victory over the Los Angeles Rams.

"I feel good these two weeks are going to give me a real good chance to get a lot of the heal-

ing done," Rodgers said Wednesday. "We're so far out now from the initial injury that I'd like to think that any damage I might do on Sunday will pale in comparison to the healing that's been done the last couple of weeks."

Rodgers said he fractured his pinky toe while working out at home during his quarantine last month after testing positive for COVID-19.

But the lack of practice time due to the injury hasn't limited his effectiveness on Sundays.

"For him, picking up a football and throwing it, you can see it right away when we go out there in pregame warmups, it's like riding a bike," Green Bay coach Matt LaFleur said.

Rodgers, who turned 38 last Thursday, went 23-for-33 for 385 yards and four touchdowns at Minnesota. He followed that by going 28-for-45 for 307 yards with a pair of touchdown passes against the Rams. He didn't throw an interception in either game.

The toe injury hasn't even had any notable impact on his running ability. Rodgers had a 1-yard touchdown run against the Rams and a season-long 17-yard carry at Minnesota.

"As far as being able to move around, I've been fortunate enough to have very little pain on game day," Rodgers said. "And obviously there's things the team can do to alleviate your pain, but I've been fortun-

nate to enjoy some really good weeks of healing and feel good, and then obviously at some point during the game or after the game, I'm in a lot more pain."

The Packers' quarterback depth took another hit this week with backup Jordan Love going on the reserve/COVID-19 list. The only other quarterback on the roster is Kurt Benkert, though the Packers signed Danny Etling to the practice squad Tuesday.

Rodgers didn't know how many more weeks he might have to deal with limited practice time due to the injury, though he said the extra rest he got during the off week should help in that regard.