

Unvaccinated troops seen as defying order

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The number of active-duty U.S. military personnel declining to be vaccinated against the coronavirus by their prescribed deadlines is as high as 40,000, with new Army data showing that, days ahead of its cutoff, about 3% of soldiers either have rejected President Joe Biden's mandate or sought a long-shot exemption.

While the vast majority of service members are fully vaccinated overall, military analysts have characterized the number of refusals and holdouts as a troubling indicator in a rigid, top-down culture where decision-making is often predicated on the understanding that the troops will do as they are told. It also suggests the nation's divisive politics have influenced a small but significant segment of the Defense Department, his-

torically an apolitical institution.

Military leaders have few options to address the dissent other than to hope that, as waiver requests are denied, more troops will choose to fall in line. The alternative, the Pentagon has said, is to purge the ranks of those failing to meet requirements, though some of those roughly 40,000 service members opting out had already planned to leave the military.

"We know there's some more work to do," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters Friday. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who four months ago mandated vaccination for every service member, "expects 100%" compliance, Kirby said.

But the numbers are unlikely to change much before Wednesday, when the Army's deadline arrives and all 1.3 million active-

duty personnel are expected either to be fully vaccinated or have an exemption in hand.

Posing added concern, officials have said, is the emergence of the virus' omicron variant, which public health experts fear may elude — to an extent that's still unknown — the protection afforded by existing vaccine regimens. In response, the Biden administration has begun an aggressive campaign urging those eligible to get booster shots, though it's unclear how this may impact federal policies. It's an active discussion among Pentagon leadership, Kirby said, noting that, for now, the Defense Department is encouraging troops to get the extra shot.

"Rest assured," Kirby added, "that should there be an addition to that in terms of the mandatory vaccine requirement, we will clearly communicate that and be transparent about it."

The more than 14,000 Army personnel who remain unvaccinated join another 25,000 approximately in the active-duty Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps who have also challenged the Biden administration's directive, according to a review of each service's official data. An additional 10,700 troops in the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard remained unvaccinated past their Dec. 2 deadline, pushing the military's overall tally of holdouts closer to 50,000.

Numbering roughly 475,000, the Army is the largest of the military services and set the last deadline by which active-duty troops were required to comply with the mandate. The Air Force, which had the military's most ambitious deadline of Nov. 2, continues to process thousands of appeals from airmen who declined to be vaccinated on medical or religious grounds.

Navy: Water contamination came from jet fuel leak

By Wyatt Olson

Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The Navy has determined that its water well near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam was contaminated with jet fuel from a Nov. 20 spill near the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, the commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet said Friday.

"We know now with a high degree of confidence based on water testing results analyzed at a certified, independent third-party laboratory that that contaminant is JP-5 jet fuel," Adm. Samuel Paparo said during a virtual briefing to members of the Hawaii State Legislature.

The briefing also included representatives of the Hawaii Department of Health and Oahu's Water Supply Board.

Tests indicate that the fuel found in the well came from a relatively new spill, he said.

"So from the test results and engineering analysis that we've done today, it appears some quantity of JP-5 jet fuel entered the Red Hill well in a single event, likely from the Nov. 20 spill, and then subsequently pumped from that well and distributed throughout those portions of our Navy's water distribution system."

Late last month, residents in military housing communities connected to the Navy water system began complaining of a foul odor and oily sheen in their tap water.

Subsequent testing confirmed that water from the Red Hill well was contaminated with petroleum. The well — one of three that supplies the Navy's system — is near the vast Red Hill collection of underground tanks built during World War II that hold about 150 million gallons of fuel.

The Navy has not used the Red Hill well since Nov. 27.

The Red Hill fuel tanks have experienced multiple leaks over the past decade, and despite growing calls by many Honolulu residents for the facility's closure, the Navy maintains that its operation is essential to national security.

On Monday, the Hawaii Department of Health issued an emergency order requiring the Navy to empty the tanks. The Navy has not agreed to do so.

Paparo told lawmakers the Navy is "confident that this event was not a result of a leak from one of the Red Hill tanks."

The fuel in the Red Hill well was from a water-fuel mixture "from a fire-suppression drain line in the lower tunnel" of the fuel storage facility, according to a Navy news release on Nov. 22. The service removed about 14,000 gallons of the mixture from the tunnel over the two days following the discovery of the spill on Nov. 20.

Commander becomes Santa again for Christmas drop

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Clad in a familiar Santa hat, Col. Andrew Campbell relishes the fact that few airlift pilots have flown as many missions for Operation Christmas Drop as he has over the years.

As commander of Yokota's 374th Airlift Wing, Campbell added two flights this year in C-130J Super Hercules airlifters to drop bundles of aid onto remote Pacific islands. He's made about 20 flights for Operation Christmas Drop over several years.

"For the children on these little islands, the only aircraft most of them have seen is a C-130," he told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday.

Campbell said he gets a kick out of wearing a Santa hat and seeing airmen with America's allies getting into the Christmas spirit. He was back at Yokota on Tuesday after his fifth trip to Guam for the operation.

Airlifters from Japan, South Korea and the U.S. work as one team to deliver the aid, he said.

During the operation — now in its 70th year — cargo planes parachute large bundles of donated food, clothing, tools, toiletries, toys and other supplies to thousands of people living on more than 55 tiny South Pacific islands. Most of the beneficiaries live in

the Federated States of Micronesia — Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae — and in the Republic of Palau.

The primary participants are the 36th Wing at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam; the 374th Airlift Wing out of Yokota; and the 515th Air Mobility Operations Wing from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, according to Pacific Air Forces.

From 2012-15, Campbell, originally from Pennsylvania, flew Christmas Drop missions as commander of Yokota's 36th Airlift Squadron. As base commander in 2020, he missed the event, which was scaled back with fewer drops and limited personnel to mitigate further spread of the coronavirus, he said.

The final sorties of this year's Christmas Drop, which began Dec. 6, were scheduled for Friday, he said.

This year was the first time South Korea's air force participated. Japan has been part of the operation since 2015. Both countries operate C-130H Hercules aircraft, the predecessor to the C-130J Super Hercules flown by the 374th.

Airmen from the three countries stayed at the same hotel, drove the same vehicles and planned operations from the same headquarters during the drill, Campbell said.

"It's a real team effort," he said.

Former Marine's food bank filling gap in Okinawa

BY FRANK ANDREWS
AND MARI HIGA
Stars and Stripes

OKINAWA CITY, Okinawa — Ask Chris and Yuko Nesbitt how deeply the coronavirus pandemic has struck Okinawa and they'll answer with one telling statistic.

The couple, who run Help Oki, a food bank and thrift shop in Okinawa City, has passed out five times as much food, clothing and other assistance during the pandemic as they did before.

"Before COVID we'd have maybe two families a week come in," Chris Nesbitt, a former Marine, told Stars and Stripes on Nov. 23. "Now it's 10 to 15 cases a week that are asking for help."

To curb the disease's spread, the prefectural government declared four separate states of emergency, the last from May 23 to Sept. 30. It urged tourists and young people to stay home, and bars and restaurants to close early and refrain from selling alcoholic beverages — hard measures for an economy that derives 15% of its revenues from tourism.

Nesbitt described how the owner of a Japanese pub came to him for help in 2020. The father of five had lost the business he inherited from his father due to the coronavirus measures.

"When he came to get clothing and food from us, he said to me, 'I never needed help before, but the COVID crisis brought me to this point,'" Nesbitt said of the former pub owner, who declined an interview request.

Okinawan social welfare agencies that relied on local businesses for food donations suddenly found themselves in need, Nesbitt said. They, too, turned to Help Oki for food support.

"The amount of food that we are getting out to the community, over a thousand kilograms of food every month," he said. "Our numbers have just tripled in terms of people coming for support."

Most of the food and clothing donations that Help Oki distributes come from U.S. service members and their families stationed on the island.

"We are always in need of food. We stock the shelves then next month there is almost nothing in there," Nesbitt said.

Austria ends lockdown for vaccinated

Associated Press

VIENNA — Austria ended lockdown restrictions for vaccinated people across most of the country on Sunday, three weeks after reimposing strict rules to combat a rising wave of coronavirus infections.

The rules, which vary by region within the country, largely allow for the reopening of theaters, museums and other cultural and entertainment venues on Sunday. Shops will follow on Monday.

Some regions are reopening restaurants and hotels on Sunday, while others will wait until later in the month. In all cases, there will be an 11 p.m. curfew for restaurants, and masks will still be required on public trans-

portation and inside stores and public spaces.

Chancellor Karl Nehammer last week called the move an "opening with a seatbelt," giving each of Austria's nine regions the ability to loosen or tighten restrictions based on the local situation.

Unvaccinated people will still be subject to the lockdown restrictions and should remain at home for all but a handful of specific reasons, like buying groceries, going to the doctor or exercising.

Austrian officials have stressed that high rates of vaccination are necessary to control the virus — 67.7% of the population is fully vaccinated, a relatively low rate for Western Europe.

Newsom wants Texas-like law to ban assault guns

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Saturday pledged to empower private citizens to enforce a ban on the manufacture and sale of assault weapons in the state, citing the same authority claimed by conservative lawmakers in Texas to outlaw most abortions once a heartbeat is detected.

California has banned the manufacture and sale of many assault-style weapons for decades. A federal judge overturned that ban in June, ruling it was unconstitutional and drawing the ire of the state's Democratic leaders by comparing the popular AR-15 rifle to a Swiss Army knife as "good for both home and battle." California's ban remained in place while the state appealed.

Meanwhile, Republican lawmakers in Texas this year passed a law banning abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected, which normally occurs at about six weeks into pregnancy. The Texas law allows private citizens to enforce the ban, empowering them to sue abortion clinics and anyone else who "aids and abets" with the procedure.

On Friday, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Texas law to remain in effect while abortion clinics sue to block it. That decision incensed Newsom, a Democrat who supports abortion rights.

"If states can now shield their laws from review by the federal courts that compare assault weapons to Swiss Army knives, then

California will use that authority to protect people's lives, where Texas used it to put women in harm's way," Newsom said in a statement released by his office at 7 p.m. on Saturday.

Newsom said he has directed his staff to work with the state's Legislature and its Democratic attorney general to pass a law that would let private citizens sue to enforce California's ban on assault weapons. Newsom said people who sue could win up to \$10,000 per violation plus other costs and attorneys fees against "anyone who manufactures, distributes or sells an assault weapon" in California.

"If the most efficient way to keep these devastating weapons off our streets is to add the threat of private lawsuits, we should do just that," Newsom said.

Newsom's gun proposal would first have to pass California's state Legislature before it could become law. The Legislature is not in session now and is scheduled to reconvene in January. It usually takes about eight months for new bills to pass the Legislature, barring special circumstances.

State Sen. Brian Dahle, a Republican from Bieber, would oppose the plan but predicted it could probably pass California's Democratic-dominated state Legislature. He said the proposal was most likely a stunt for Newsom to win favor with his progressive base of voters ahead of a possible run for president in the future.

Crews search for the missing after deadly tornadoes

Associated Press

MAYFIELD, Ky. — Rescuers in an increasingly bleak search picked through the tornado-splintered ruins of homes and businesses Sunday, including a candle factory that was bustling with night-shift employees when it was flattened, as Kentucky's governor warned the state's death toll from the outbreak could top 100.

Factory workers sought refuge in what was supposed to be the safest part of the building, but it may not have mattered because the storm Friday night was so monstrous, Gov. Andy Beshear said. Authorities on Saturday reported rescuing 40 of 110 people in the building at the time, but hopes of finding anyone else alive dwindled rapidly.

Jeremy Creason, Mayfield's fire chief and emergency services director, said rescuers had to crawl over the dead to get to the living.

A nursing home and an Amazon distribution center were also smashed in other states in the unusual mid-December swarm of twisters.

The tornado that carved the path of destruction in Kentucky touched down for more than 200 miles in the state. Eleven people were reported dead in and around the city of Bowling Green.

The outbreak also killed at least six people in Illinois, where an Amazon facility in Edwardsville was hit; four in Tennessee; two in Arkansas, where a nursing home was destroyed; and two in Missouri.

Major multiday storm headed toward Northern Calif.

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A major storm is headed toward Northern California, promising to drop up to 10 feet of snow on Sierra Nevada mountain peaks and bring much-needed rain throughout the region.

Rain was expected in the Bay Area, with snowfall in the Sierras starting Sunday before getting heavier between Monday and Tuesday, according to forecasters. There could even be a dusting of snow on Bay Area mountaintops.

"If you live in the Sierra, today is the final day to prepare for a multi-day winter storm that will likely be remembered for years to come," the National Weather Service warned in a forecast issued Saturday.

Another storm system predicted to hit California midweek could deliver almost continuous snow, said Scott McGuire, a meteorologist with the weather service's Reno office, which monitors an area straddling the Nevada state line. Downed trees and white-out conditions could endanger motorists. Meanwhile, the Sierra Avalanche Center warned heavy snow and strong winds on top of a weak snowpack could cause large and destructive avalanches.

"If you are traveling through the Sierra, either get ahead of the storm before snowfall begins or wait until it's over to get up there. It will be increasingly treacherous," he said.

A low-pressure system from the Pacific Northwest was on track to hit coastal areas

north of San Francisco on Saturday night and drop light rain.

In the Pacific Northwest, a winter storm warning was in place in an area including the ski resort where an avalanche Saturday killed a 60-year-old man and temporarily buried five others.

The heaviest rainfall near San Francisco was expected to come Sunday night into Monday morning as the storm spreads to the east and south, said Sarah McCorkle, a meteorologist with the weather service's Bay Area office.

Rainfall totals across the north could range between 2-6 inches, and the greatest amount was expected in the Santa Cruz and Santa Lucia mountain ranges.

G-7: Consequences if Russia invades Ukraine

Associated Press

LIVERPOOL, England — The Group of Seven economic powers told Russia on Sunday to “de-escalate” its military buildup near the Ukrainian border, warning that an invasion would have “massive consequences” and inflict severe economic pain on Moscow.

Foreign ministers from the United States, Britain and the rest of the G-7, joined by the European Union’s foreign affairs chief, issued a joint statement declaring themselves “united in our condemnation of Russia’s military buildup and aggressive rhetoric toward Ukraine.”

The G-7 called on Russia to “de-escalate, pursue diplomatic channels and abide by its international commitments on transparency of military activities,” and praised Ukraine’s “restraint.”

“Any use of force to change borders is strictly prohibited under international law. Russia should be in no doubt that further military aggression against Ukraine would have massive consequences and severe cost in response,” the statement said.

Russia’s movement of weapons and troops

to the border region dominated weekend talks among foreign ministers from the G-7 wealthy democracies in the English city of Liverpool.

The U.S. and its allies worry that the buildup could be a precursor to an invasion, and have vowed to inflict heavy sanctions on Russia’s economy if that happens.

Moscow has denied having any plans to attack Ukraine and has accused Kyiv of its own allegedly aggressive designs.

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, the conference host, said the G-7 was sending a “powerful signal to our adversaries and our allies.”

The statement promised a “common and comprehensive response” but contained no details. Truss said the G-7 was “considering all options” when it came to economic sanctions. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on NBC’s “Meet the Press” that “we are prepared to take the kinds of steps we’ve refrained from taking in the past” if Russia didn’t step back.

The U.S. and its allies have played down talk of a military response to defend Ukraine,

with efforts focusing on tough sanctions that would hit the Russian economy, rather than just individuals.

In the U.S., reporters asked President Joe Biden on Saturday about the possibility of sending combat troops to Ukraine, and he said that idea was never considered. “Are you ready to send American troops into war and go into Ukraine to fight Russians on the battlefield?” he said.

Biden, who spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin on a video call last week, said he had made clear that in the event of an invasion, “the economic consequences for his economy are going to be devastating. Devastating.”

Truss said Biden had made clear to Putin that the U.S. stance “carries the support of the G-7 countries as a whole. And that should be very concerning for Vladimir Putin.”

China’s muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region and the ailing Iran nuclear deal were also on the agenda for the meeting of top diplomats from the United Kingdom, U.S., Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan at the dockside Museum of Liverpool.

Despite US objections, India, Russia move ahead with missile system sale

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

India is moving ahead with a \$5.4 billion deal to buy a missile defense system from Russia, despite earlier warnings from U.S. officials of possible sanctions against the South Asian nation.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin met Dec. 6 in New Delhi for the 21st India-Russia Summit, during which the leaders agreed to expand defense ties.

Harsh Vardhan Shringla, India’s foreign secretary, told reporters Dec. 6 that the transfer of components for the S-400 Triumf air-defense system was already taking place.

“Supplies have begun this month and will continue to happen,” he said, according to a New York Times report Dec. 6.

India is also slated to buy \$600 million worth of Russian AK-203 rifles, the Times reported.

The deal could potentially trigger U.S. sanctions against India under the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which was passed to hold Russia accountable for pernicious behavior.

Since inking the missile defense deal in

2018, India’s quest for a more robust defense sector has only grown.

Its relations with China, its neighbor to the north, have badly deteriorated since the summer of 2020, when Indian and Chinese troops clashed in hand-to-hand combat on the disputed border between the two countries, leaving at least 20 Indian soldiers dead in the Galwan Valley. That summer’s hostilities marked the first time that shots were fired since the two sides entered into a no-fire agreement in 1996.

India’s perceived threat from China is one reason military cooperation has grown between it and the U.S. India and the U.S., along with Australia and Japan, have increased cooperation through participation in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad. Its stated purpose is to promote “a free-and-open Indo-Pacific,” but it is essentially a means of countering China’s growing economic, political and military influence in the region.

India has long been leery of aligning too closely with any single superpower, a reluctance that stretches back to the Cold War between the U.S. and Soviet Union. Given that history, it is not surprising that India would seek parallel cooperation with Russia.

Gas leak blasts Sicily buildings

Associated Press

MILAN — Firefighters in Sicily were digging through the rubble of a collapsed apartment building Sunday in the search for six missing people after an explosion apparently caused by a gas leak killed at least three, authorities said.

The building was occupied by nine members of an extended family, and two visiting relatives were also on the premises when the explosion occurred late Saturday in the town of Ravanusa, firefighters said.

Two women were rescued overnight. One of them, Rosa Carmina, 80, told La Repubblica daily that the lights went out suddenly “and the ceiling and floors collapsed.” Her sister-in-law, who lived one floor above her, was rescued from beneath a pile of rubble.

The explosion also collapsed three buildings that appear to have been unoccupied.

“It was certainly a gas leak that created a bubble of methane,” the head of Sicily’s civil protection agency, Salvatore Cocina, told ANSA. He said a preliminary finding indicates that the functioning of an elevator may have set off the explosion, which was then fed by a gas space heater.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

'Panther' the cat rescued after days on utility pole

CO AURORA — For at least two days and maybe more, residents of a suburban Denver neighborhood worried about the fate of a black cat called Panther who was perched atop a 36-foot utility pole.

Panther stayed put despite efforts by his co-owner, Alexis Soberanis, and others to coax him down in Aurora. Neither pleading nor the enticement of food did the trick, Sentinel Colorado reported.

Aurora resident Jessica Meadows said she and other neighbors called Aurora animal control and Xcel Energy for help.

"Everyone says they can't do anything," Meadows said.

News of Panther's plight reached Aurora Councilmember Curtis Gardner and city officials dispatched a ladder truck. After getting the truck into place, firefighters rescued the cat. Panther seemed eager to step into a pet carrier.

Student brought knives, slingshot to school

FL PEMBROKE PINES — A 12-year-old South Florida middle school student was accused of bringing weapons onto school property after being found with a slingshot, two rocks and four knives in his backpack, police said.

The student at Walter C. Young Middle School in Pembroke Pines was arrested. Police said the school's resource officer heard rumors that the boy had a slingshot and found the items in his backpack when he questioned him.

The boy did not make any threats or brandish the weapons.

He was taken to a juvenile assessment center.

Ancestral human remains discovered at work site

WA ASOTIN — Work has been halted at a residential construction site near the Asotin County Fairgrounds in eastern Washington where ancestral human remains were discovered.

Kayeloni Scott, spokeswoman for the Nez Perce Tribe, said the tribe was notified when crews inadvertently found a Native American gravesite on a hillside overlooking the city.

"We are grateful for the individuals who ceased work immediately and contacted us," Scott told the Lewiston Morning Tribune. "We also appreciate the property owners for doing the right thing by working with us so we can properly handle our ancestors' remains to ensure there is no further disturbance."

Bear cubs trash woman's car in foothill suburb

CA SIERRA MADRE — A Southern California woman awoke to find vandals had torn her car apart.

But they weren't people; they were bear cubs.

Jenny Kay said the two cubs somehow found their way into her sedan in Sierra Madre, a Los Angeles foothill community on the edge of the Angeles National Forest.

Her dog began barking overnight and when Kay went outside with a flashlight, she saw the seats and upholstery of the car had been shredded.

Neighbors told her that bears had gotten into the vehicle, she

told KABC-TV.

Video from a neighbor showed the large cubs climbing out of the car when police arrived.

Highway exit sign misspells state's name

DE WILMINGTON — A highway sign that recently went up in Delaware was noticeably missing a letter in the state's name.

The new Wilmington exit sign on Interstate 95 should have said "Delaware Ave" but was misspelled as "Delware," The News Journal reported.

Delaware's transportation department and its contractor, Kiewit Infrastructure Co., said the sign was always meant to be temporary and has been replaced.

Exit 7 was previously closed for construction. A subcontractor hurriedly made a placeholder sign after learning the permanent one might not arrive in time for when the northbound exit was scheduled to reopen.

Some people joked on social media that "Delware" is how locals pronounce the state's name anyway.

Ex-cop who admitted to sex solicitation arrested

HI HONOLULU — A former Maui police officer who was scheduled to report to federal prison next month for soliciting sex from a woman he pulled over has been arrested for offering money to have sex with a 13-year-old girl.

A judge sentenced Brandon Saffuels to 2 1/2 years in prison for fraud charges after he pleaded guilty and said he offered to help the woman by botching his

testimony in the 2019 traffic stop and eventually wanted to pursue a sexual relationship. Prosecutors said he got the woman's phone number from a police report and then solicited a bribe in the form of sexual favors in exchange for helping her circumvent prosecution for drunk driving.

Saffuels also allegedly used his cellphone to exchange messages with someone he thought was a 13-year-old girl, but was really an undercover officer working on a Maui police operation to arrest those who used the internet to commit sexual crimes against children.

He offered money for sex with the girl and sent a nude photo of himself, the court document said.

20 sea turtles flown south to avoid freezing

FL MARATHON — Twenty critically endangered juvenile Kemp's ridley sea turtles were flown from New England to the subtropical Florida Keys to convalesce at the Marathon Turtle Hospital after being rescued from Cape Cod Bay's frigid waters.

Each of the turtles suffers from "cold stunning," a hypothermic reaction that occurs when sea turtles are exposed to cold water for a prolonged time, according to hospital manager Bette Zirkelbach.

"These sea turtles are at the Turtle Hospital in the Florida Keys to warm up just like the tourists that come to the Keys to warm up," said Zirkelbach. "The Kemps ridley is the most critically endangered sea turtle in the world, so it's important to help these little ones survive."

— From wire reports



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Reversal of fortune: Navy downs Army

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Navy had its way with Army. It was good, aggressive, lucky and most of all angry with the idea the Black Knights had turned the tables in one of college football's biggest rivalries.

Quarterback Tai Lavatai ran for two touchdowns and the Midshipmen's defense limited Army to 57 second-half yards and a season-low 232 overall in a 17-13 victory Saturday in a game played at the Meadowlands to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The win more than made the season for Navy (4-8), which faced 11 bowl-bound teams, tops in the nation. It also gave the Midshipmen only their second win in the last six games with their biggest rival, and they were not averse to boasting about it.

"We've faced a lot of adversity this year and guys keep consistently coming back and battling and not giving up," senior linebacker Diego Fagot said. "Regardless of the score, we're going to keep playing as hard as we can. We pride ourselves on that. I mean, I can't say enough about how they think they're the last of the hard. But it's just not the case. They're our little brothers."

Navy dominated against bowl-bound Black Knights (8-4) after giving up an early touchdown. It outgained them 278 yards to

232, including 196-124 on the ground against the nation's No. 2 rushing offense. The Mids held the ball for 34:25 and converted three big plays, including a fourth-down, fake punt in the fourth quarter that wasn't supposed to be a fake punt.

"It is good to be lucky," Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo said of the 4-yard, first-down run by Fagot that set up Bijan Nichols' 43-yard field goal and kept alive a nearly nine-minute drive.

The up-back on a punt, Fagot said he made a line call because Army overloaded one side. Freshman center Ethan Nguyen mistook it for a fake call and Fagot got the first down despite being hit in the facemask with the snap.

"I mean, as a linebacker, you kind of already have tunnel vision, so I wasn't really expecting it," Fagot said. "So when I caught it, I just, I just started running straight."

The Midshipmen defense and Fagot also made the big play at the end, stopping Black Knights quarterback Christian Anderson a yard short at the Navy 46 on fourth down with 91 seconds left.

"Honestly, it came down to that last one," said Anderson, who scored on a 56-yard run on the fourth play from scrimmage. "I feel like we were moving the ball pretty OK. Then we got to the fourth down. I've just got

to be able to make that run and get that conversion."

The Mids ran out the clock and then celebrated.

"Obviously, it's something we dream of," Navy senior center Pierce Banbury said. "That is the reason I came to the Academy, to have that feeling. Right now, I am speechless."

Cole Talley added field goals of 31 and 32 yards in helping Army take a 13-7 halftime lead.

The Black Knights generated little after that in seeing their four-game winning streak snapped.

"They beat blocks, they just destroyed blocks," Army coach Jeff Monken said. "They just did a much better job defending us than we did attacking them on offense. We tried different things and none of them worked. We just got outplayed."

After Anderson's touchdown, Lavatai capped an 11-play, 83-yard response by the Midshipmen, scoring on an 8-yard run on which fullback James Harris helped carry him the final 3 yards.

"I was thinking about jumping," said Lavatai, who ran for 62 yards and was 4 of 6 for 82 yards passing. "Good thing I didn't because I probably would not have gotten there."

Young gives Crimson Tide back-to-back Heismans

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Bryce Young didn't just meet the standard set by the star quarterbacks who preceded him at Alabama, he exceeded it and gave the Crimson Tide a rare Heisman back-to-back.

Young became the first Tide quarterback to win the Heisman Trophy on Saturday night, making Alabama the fifth school with consecutive winners of college football's most prestigious player of the year award.

"This is amazing," said Young, dressed in all black with a sparkling diamond chain around his neck, as he started his acceptance speech.

He thanked his father, Craig, for being his "best friend," his

mother, Julie, for "always having my back," and his offensive line for "protecting me."

Young received 684 first-place votes and 2,311 points to easily outdistance Michigan defensive end Aidan Hutchinson (78, 954), who became the third defensive player to be Heisman runner-up and first since Notre Dame linebacker Manti Te'o in 2012.

Pittsburgh quarterback Kenny Pickett (28, 631) finished third and Ohio State QB C.J. Stroud (12, 399) was fourth. Alabama linebacker Will Anderson Jr. (31, 325) was fifth, putting two defensive players in the top five for the first time since 1962.

A year after former teammate DeVonta Smith won the Heisman, Young received 83%

of total points available, the seventh highest among 87 winners. He was named on 90% of all ballots, also the seventh highest in Heisman history.

Young has passed for 4,322 yards and 43 touchdowns this season, leading No. 1 Alabama to a Southeastern Conference title and a spot in the College Football Playoff. The defending national champion Crimson Tide will play No. 4 Cincinnati on Dec. 31 in the Cotton Bowl.

Young is Alabama's fourth Heisman winner, all in the last 13 years under coach Nick Saban. Only four schools have won more: Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma and Southern California each have won seven.

The other schools to have Heisman winners in consecu-

tive years are Yale (1936-37), Army (1945-46), Southern California (2004-05) — though Reggie Bush's 2005 victory was later vacated — and Oklahoma (2017-18).

Running backs Mark Ingram (2009) and Derrick Henry (2015) were Alabama's first two Heisman winners and Smith, a receiver, was No. 3 last year.

It seemed only a matter of time before a Tide quarterback took one home. Saban's Alabama dynasty has evolved into QB U.

Young, a sophomore, stepped into the starting role held by Mac Jones last year and Tua Tagovailoa the two seasons prior. Both are starting in the NFL after being selected in the first round of the draft.

Wesley's shot lifts Irish past No. 10 Kentucky

Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Freshman and hometown star Blake Wesley hit a go-ahead, pull-up jumper in the lane with 11.7 seconds left to give Notre Dame a 66-62 Saturday win over No. 10 Kentucky.

Wesley broke a 62-62 tie and Dane Goodwin added a dunk as time expired, prompting fans to storm the Purcell Pavilion court. The Irish scored the final five points in the closing 1:31.

Notre Dame (4-4) ended a three-game losing skid in its first matchup of the season against a ranked team. The Wildcats (7-2) had won seven in row.

Oklahoma 88, No. 12 Arkansas 66: In Tulsa, Okla., Elijah Harkless had 21 points and 11 rebounds as the Sooners handed the 12th-ranked Razorbacks their first loss of the season, frustrating their coach and top shooters.

Playing before a split crowd of 12,746 less than two hours from both schools, Oklahoma (8-2) rushed to a 13-0 lead in the first 4:37, helped by two three-pointers and a drive by Harkless.

Arkansas (9-1) never caught up and coach Eric Musselman was assessed two technical fouls and ejected with 3:30 to play.

No. 9 Alabama 83, No. 14 Houston 82: JD Davison's putback dunk with 33 seconds left and a final defensive stop gave the host Crimson Tide their second straight win over a recent Final Four team.

No. 4 UCLA 67, Marquette 56: Jaime Jaquez Jr. had 24 points and 11 rebounds to help the Bruins win on the road in a game that was pushed back several hours due to the team's flight problems.

Creighton 83, No. 24 BYU 71: At Sioux Falls, S.D., Ryan Hawkins scored 19 of his season-high 25 points in the first half and the Bluejays beat the Cougars.

No. 21 Ohio State 73, No. 22 Wisconsin 55: E.J. Liddell scored 28 points and the host Buckeyes shot 50% to defeat the Badgers.

No. 8 Kansas 102, Missouri 65: Ochai Agbaji scored 21 points, Christian Braun and Dajuan Harris had 13 apiece, and the host Jayhawks blew out the Tigers in the first meeting of the longtime Big 12 rivals as nonconference foes.

No. 11 Arizona 83, Illinois 79: Benedict Mathurin scored 30 points to power the Wildcats to a road win.

No. 13 Tennessee 76, UNC Greensboro 36: Josiah-Jordan James and Brandon Huntley-Hatfield scored 12 points each to lead the host Volunteers to the win.

No. 15 Connecticut 74, St. Bonaventure 64: In Newark, N.J., R.J. Cole scored 15 points and the Huskies surged midway through the second half to beat the Bonnies.

No. 18 Auburn 99, Nebraska 68: Playing minus suspended coach Bruce Pearl in Atlanta, the Tigers made 16 steals and routed the Cornhuskers.

No. 19 Michigan State 80, Penn State 64: Gabe Brown scored 15 points and Marcus Bingham Jr. had 12 points and 13 rebounds to lead the Spartans to a win in Atlanta.

No. 25 LSU 69, Georgia Tech 53: Tari Eason scored 23 points, and the Tigers recovered from a 15-point first-half deficit to beat the host Yellow Jackets and remain undefeated.

76ers defeat Warriors, delay Curry's record

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Joel Embiid had 26 points and nine rebounds and the Philadelphia 76ers delayed Stephen Curry's bid to break Ray Allen's career three-point record in a 102-93 victory over the Golden State Warriors on Saturday night.

Curry scored 18 points and shot 3-for-14 from three-point range to move within six of matching Allen's record. Curry's next shot at the record is Monday night at Indiana in the second game of a five-game trip. He needed nine threes against the Sixers to tie Allen's mark of 2,973 regular-season threes from 1996-2014.

Clippers 106, Magic 104: Reggie Jackson hit a step-back jumper with 2.2 seconds remaining to lift host Los Angeles past Orlando.

Jackson — who had nine of his 25 points in the fourth quarter — hit a 20-footer following a timeout after the Magic tied it at 104 on Cole Anthony's three-pointer with 23.6 seconds left.

Cavaliers 117, Kings 103: Rookie Evan Mobley had 15 points and a season-high 15 rebounds and host Cleveland beat Sacramento, matching its team record with 81 first-half points.

Jazz 123, Wizards 98: Donovan Mitchell scored 28 points, Rudy Gobert had 20 points and 11 rebounds and Utah rolled at Washington for its seventh straight victory.

Heat 118, Bulls 92: Duncan Robinson scored a season high-26 points and host Miami beat short-handed Chicago.

Nuggets 127, Spurs 112: Nikola Jokic had 35 points, 17 rebounds and eight assists and visiting Denver avenged an earlier loss to San Antonio.

Grizzlies 113, Rockets 106: Dillon Brooks scored 25 points, Desmond Bane added 19 points and host Memphis held off Houston.

Peña stops Nunes, earns belt in UFC 269 stunner

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Julianna Peña didn't even realize Amanda Nunes had tapped out of Peña's chokehold until somebody told her in the cage moments after the referee pulled her off the long-reigning champion.

One of the biggest upsets in UFC history might have been a surprise in the moment for Peña,

but she had never stopped believing she could do the nearly impossible.

"Everybody was sleeping on me, and I shook up the world and did exactly what I said I was going to do," Peña said. "But I'm not surprised. I have a big heart and determination."

Peña stopped Nunes by submission with a rear naked choke

in the second round at UFC 269 on Saturday night, claiming the bantamweight title from the long-reigning two-division champion in a 10-to-1 upset.

Charles Oliveira also defended his lightweight title for the first time with a third-round stoppage victory over Dustin Poirier by standing rear naked choke in the main event.

But the night belonged to Peña (11-4), who was a massive underdog against a vaunted opponent widely considered the greatest fighter in the history of women's mixed martial arts. Nunes had won 12 consecutive fights since 2014 and reigned simultaneously atop the 135-pound bantamweight and 145-pound featherweight divisions for three years.

Islanders finally get a win in new arena

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Zach Parise scored a tie-breaking goal in the second period and the New York Islanders finally won a game at their new arena, beating the New Jersey Devils 4-2 on Saturday night. Andy Greene scored the game-tying goal and Parise put the Islanders ahead, giving New York its second win in three games.

Noah Dobson and Jean-Gabriel Pageau also scored for New York, and Ilya Sorokin made 30 saves. Mathew Barzal extended his point streak to six games with two assists.

Jesper Bratt and Jack Hughes scored for New Jersey, which fell for the sixth time in seven games. Akira Schmid stopped 25 of 29 shots in his NHL debut. The Devils were without captain Nico Hischier and defenseman Ryan Graves, announcing before the game started that both were in COVID-19 protocol.

The Islanders' seven-game winless streak at UBS Arena had been the longest stretch in NHL history to open a new arena.

Senators 4, Lightning 0: Brady Tkachuk scored his first career hat trick as host Ottawa snapped Tampa Bay's five-game win streak.

Josh Norris also scored for the Senators (8-16-1) and Anton Forsberg made 24 saves for his first career shutout. Forsberg is riding a personal four-game win streak.

Penguins 1, Ducks 0: Casey DeSmith stopped 33 shots and Brock McGinn scored as host Pittsburgh extended its winning streak to four games with a victory over Ana-

heim.

DeSmith earned his seventh career shutout and first of the season. He also won consecutive games in his sixth appearance.

Maple Leafs 5, Blackhawks 4: David Kampf took a lucky carom off the end boards and scored with 1:20 left in the third period to give host Toronto a win over Chicago.

As Blackhawks goalie Kevin Lankinen went behind his net to stop Morgan Rielly's shot into the zone, the puck bounced to Kampf, who scored an easy goal against his former team. Lankinen gave up five goals on 26 shots.

Blues 4, Canadiens 1: Charlie Lindgren made 22 saves and Pavel Buchnevich had a goal and assist, leading host St. Louis over slumping Montreal.

Ivan Barbashev, Dakota Joshua and Torey Krug also scored for the Blues. Lindgren, making his second start of the season, replaced Jordan Binnington, who remains in the NHL's COVID-19 protocol.

Capitals 3, Sabres 2 (SO): T.J. Oshie and Evgeny Kuznetsov scored in the shootout, leading Washington to a win at Buffalo.

Martin Fehervary and Lars Eller scored in regulation, and Vitek Vanecek stopped 29 shots for the Capitals, who rebounded from Friday's 4-2 loss to Pittsburgh to earn a point for the 11th time in 12 games.

Flyers 5, Coyotes 3: James van Riemsdyk scored two goals and Patrick Brown scored his first goal of the season, leading Philadelphia to a win at Arizona.

Scott Laughton and Claude Giroux also

scored, and Travis Konecny had two assists for the Flyers, who scored twice in a 73-second span of the second period to break a 2-all tie.

Blue Jackets 5, Kraken 4 (OT): Max Domi had two goals and an assist and Jake Bean scored 55 seconds into overtime to give Columbus the win at Seattle.

Jack Roslovic and Oliver Bjorkstrand each had a goal and assist for the Blue Jackets, who won for just the second time in eight games. Elvis Merzlikins made 28 saves and Columbus withstood the Kraken's furious rally in the third period.

Hurricanes 3, Oilers 1: Sebastian Aho had two goals and an assist, and Carolina extended its winning streak to four games by winning at Edmonton.

Nino Niederreiter also scored for the Hurricanes, who improved to 12-3-1 on the road. Frederik Andersen made 22 saves.

Sharks 2, Stars 1: Tomas Hertl scored in his fourth straight game, James Reimer made 34 saves in his return to the lineup and host San Jose beat Dallas.

Hertl now has six goals in the past four games, and Erik Karlsson added one late in the second for his fifth in the past seven games to lead the way for the Sharks.

Bruins 4, Flames 2: Linus Ullmark made 40 saves and Brad Marchand had a goal and an assist as Boston won at Calgary.

Kings 2, Wild 1: Brendan Lemieux scored in his first game back after a suspension and host Los Angeles ended Minnesota's eight-game winning streak.

NYCFC wins MLS Cup, defeats Timbers in shootout

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — After more than a decade in Major League Soccer, goalkeeper Sean Johnson was finally able to lift the championship trophy.

He earned an MLS Cup MVP award, too.

Johnson stopped a pair of Portland penalties and New York City FC won its first MLS Cup title in a shootout after a 1-1 draw with the Portland Timbers on Saturday. Alex Callens converted on his attempt to clinch the shootout, 4-2.

Afterward, a teammate filled the cup with champagne and handed it to Johnson, who took a

drink. Johnson has been in MLS since 2010, first with the Chicago Fire. He joined the NYCFC in 2017.

“What a ride so far, this journey was crazy this year. So many up so many downs,” Johnson said. “We talked amongst ourselves before the game and just said it’s a massive opportunity to make it all worth it. And this is what we live for, these moments. To be the MVP of the finals, I mean it means the world, but it means so much more to lift the cup for this club.”

Golden Boot winner Valentin “Taty” Castellanos scored in the

opening half and it appeared that NYCFC was on its way to the league championship in regulation, but Portland's Felipe Mora scored in stoppage time to give the Timbers hope.

Johnson NYCFC's captain, stopped PKs from Mora and Diego Valeri in the shootout after the two teams went scoreless in extra time.

“I just wanted to make sure that we stayed level, we've been in that position before. I told the guys that we have the experience, not to panic, not to get down on ourselves, because there's more of an opportunity to go forward and win the

game,” he said about guiding the team to the finish.

NYCFC celebrated in front of the goal after Callens converted, while Valeri lay in the middle of the field in disbelief. A group of New York players broke off from the party to salute their fans, grouped in the opposite corner of the stadium.

NYCFC stayed on the field long after the victory. Coach Ronny Delia stripped down to his underwear and lifted the trophy.

“I don't regret that, it was a big moment,” Delia said. “I will keep on doing that if we keep on winning trophies.”