

Navy effort addresses barracks issues

By CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

The Navy is overhauling moldy and pest-riddled substandard barracks as part of a long-term effort to improve sailor quality of life, the service said Tuesday.

The sea service said it is focusing on renovating its squalid unaccompanied housing and stepping up maintenance and management of living conditions. The effort is meant to address issues identified by a 2023 Government Accountability Office report that found poor living conditions across Defense Department-owned housing.

The military services manage nearly 9,000 barracks facilities worldwide, and almost all barracks are government-owned, operated and maintained, the GAO said. In managing barracks,

the military services face challenges, including aging infrastructure and competition with other facilities for maintenance and construction funding. In recent years, there have been reports of barracks being abruptly closed after detection of problems such as mold, pests and broken air conditioning.

"Navy unaccompanied housing hasn't consistently hit the mark in taking care of sailors' needs, but we're making significant strides toward improving barracks facilities and sailors' overall residential experience," said Vice Adm. Scott Gray, commander of Navy Installations Command, which oversees service housing across 70 installations.

The effort, dubbed the "Forge Communities of Excellence" ini-

tiative, is a three-tiered plan designed to improve barracks through targeted investments, renovations and construction.

The next step is to ensure consistent customer service by improving workforce training, optimization and resourcing. The final step is to provide sailors with a comfortable environment and high-quality services, such as Wi-Fi and better access to food.

"By focusing our efforts on three key areas of need, we can effectively and efficiently improve facility condition and improve resident satisfaction," Gray said.

Service members and lawmakers have raised the issue of substandard housing for years, launching complaints of mold, leaky roofs, poor plumbing, pest infestations and otherwise un-

safe and unhealthy conditions. Congress mandated in 2020 that the services develop a uniform code of basic housing standards, plus plan, contract and conduct inspections in family housing, report to lawmakers on the inspections and develop a hazard assessment tool.

But the Navy did not embark on a focused quality of life and service initiative until 2022 following rushes of suicides among young, mostly single sailors.

The Navy has already invested \$59 million to replace furnishings at 63 buildings at 35 locations. In the past year, renovation projects were initiated for barracks at Submarine Base Kings Bay, Ga.; Naval Air Station Sigonella, Italy; Naval Base Kitsap, Wash.; Naval Base Ventura County, Calif.; and Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

General fired for meddling in promotion process

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Army Secretary Christine Wormuth fired one of the service's top generals after an inspector general investigation concluded he improperly intervened in a subordinate's promotion, the service reported Tuesday.

"Based on the findings of a Department of the Army inspector general investigation, the secretary of the Army has relieved Gen. Charles Hamilton of command," Army spokeswoman Cynthia Smith said in a statement. "The current acting commander of Army Materiel Command, Lt. Gen. Chris Mohan, will continue in this role pending the nomination of a permanent replacement to serve as the commander of Ar-

my Materiel Command."

Hamilton was one of 12 four-star generals in the Army.

According to officials and documents, Hamilton inappropriately tried to push an assessment board to approve a command assignment for a female lieutenant colonel, the Associated Press reported. He successfully persuaded the board to give the officer a second interview after a board initially voted 5-0 not to recommend her for command.

Before the second interview took place, Hamilton contacted senior leaders who could have been on her second panel to discuss their voting parameters and the candidates. The second panel also deemed her not certified for command, according to the AP.

The Army Inspector General Office's investigation came after it received an anonymous complaint in December 2023 that Hamilton and the lieutenant colonel were having an "inappropriate, fraternizing and likely sexual relationship," the investigation said. Investigators subsequently found that though Hamilton and the lieutenant colonel had an "overly familiar relationship," there was no "definitive evidence" that the two had a sexual relationship.

At first, the matter was referred to the Defense Department Inspector General's Office, which closed the case in January after finding "insufficient evidence in the complaint to warrant further investigation."

But the day after a news re-

port in March that Hamilton pressured Army officials to select the lieutenant colonel for command, the Defense Department Inspector General's Office referred the matter to the Army Inspector General's Office for investigation.

Wormuth suspended Hamilton on March 22 and removed the lieutenant colonel's name from the command selection list, according to the investigation.

Hamilton, who is Black as is the female officer who sought a promotion, wrote a letter to Wormuth in August asking to be reinstated as commander of Army Materiel Command, and he laid out his case in the lieutenant colonel's promotion and his view on the Command Assessment Program, or CAP.

Destroyers thwart attack by Houthis in Gulf of Aden

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Two U.S. Navy destroyers defeated a Houthi militant drone and missile attack earlier this week while escorting merchant ships through the Gulf of Aden, U.S. military officials said.

The multiple one-way drone and single anti-ship cruise missile attack came Monday and Tuesday as USS Stockdale and USS O'Kane were protecting three U.S. flagged, owned and operated ships transiting the gulf, U.S. Central Command said in a statement.

There was no damage to any of the vessels and no one was injured, CENTCOM said Tuesday. The statement didn't identify the civilian ships under attack.

Last week, USS Stockdale and USS O'Kane shot down three

Houthi anti-ship ballistic missiles, one anti-ship cruise missile and three drones while escorting commercial vessels.

There have been at least 111 reported incidents involving ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since the Iran-backed Houthi militants in Yemen began their campaign in November 2023, according to Joint Maritime Information Center data.

Those attacks have sunk two vessels, left four mariners dead and severely injured two others, according to the center.

The Houthis have said they will continue attacking ships connected to Israel until there is a cease-fire in Gaza. U.S. officials have pointed out that the group has fired indiscriminately on military and civilian ships with no apparent Israeli connection.

Taiwan demands China end 'military intimidation'

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan—Taiwan demanded Wednesday that China end its ongoing military activity in nearby waters, which it said is unilaterally undermining peace and stability and disrupting international shipping and trade.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on its website that it was responding in part to the activities of a "large number" of Chinese ships in the first-island chain, the Pacific archipelago

off the Asian continental mainland that includes Japan, Taiwan and part of the Philippines.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs solemnly demands that the Beijing authorities immediately stop military intimidation and all irrational activities that endanger regional peace and stability," the statement said.

Taiwan's military has detected Chinese ships in nearby waters since Monday.

Marine Osprey flights resume after pause

By SETH ROBSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The U.S. Marine Corps has resumed flying its MV-22B Ospreys days after the U.S. military grounded the entire tiltrotor fleet due to safety concerns, according to a 1st Marine Aircraft Wing spokesman.

"The Deputy Commandant for Aviation has directed the resumption of non-essential MV-22 Osprey flight operations after a thorough fleet review conducted during the operational pause," Maj. Joseph Butterfield, a spokesman for the Okinawa-based 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, said by email Wednesday.

The Department of Defense grounded its entire tiltrotor fleet Monday while investigating whether weakened metal components played a role in a recent near-crash. The Marine Ospreys had been grounded since Friday.

An investigative report published last month by The Associated Press found that Osprey parts are wearing out faster than expected and the hybrid aircraft design itself is contributing to many of the accidents.

U.S. Air Force and Japanese tiltrotors remained grounded Wednesday, according to officials from both countries. U.S. Navy spokespeople did not immediately respond to emails requesting the flight status of the service's Ospreys that day.

The Marines' MV-22B flight operations are cleared to resume with certain temporary restrictions in place and exemptions for mission requirements, Butterfield wrote.

"This guidance will be revisited following an interservice review later this week," he said.

The Air Force Special Oper-

ations Command has not resumed CV-22B flight operations, Capt. Richard Caesar, a spokesman for the Okinawa-based 353rd Special Operations Wing, said by email Wednesday.

Concurring with the recommendation, AFSOC commander Lt. Gen. Michael Conley has directed a pause for all CV-22 flight training, the statement said.

"A pause in flight training operations allows time and space for us to understand what happened in the most recent event before we accept risk with unknown variables," the statement said.

The Japanese military's 17 Ospreys were grounded Tuesday with exceptions only for mercy flights such as disaster relief, Kimihito Aguin, the spokesman for Japan's Ministry of Defense, said at a news conference that day.

"Ensuring flight safety is the top priority for Osprey flight operations within Japan," he said, according to a transcript on the ministry's website.

The Ospreys remained grounded Wednesday, according to a Japan Ground Self-Defense spokesman. Some Japanese government officials may speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

The Japanese Ospreys had resumed flying on Nov. 15. The fleet was grounded in late October after one of the aircraft tilted violently during takeoff and struck the ground in Okinawa prefecture.

The pause to U.S. Osprey flights was recommended last week "out of an abundance of caution" by Vice Adm. Carl Chebi, the head of Naval Air Systems Command, which runs the Osprey program for the military.

Navy base in Italy to check water lines for lead

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Officials at the Navy's largest base in Italy are determining whether pipes carrying water to homes, child care centers, schools and other facilities at the installation may pose a higher risk of lead contamination.

Water lines at Naval Support Activity Naples' Support Site appear to be made of galvanized steel or an unknown material, base commander Capt. John Randazzo wrote in a Dec. 4 let-

ter to consumers living on or doing business at Support Site and about 55 tenant commands.

Lead particles that have attached themselves to the surface of galvanized steel pipes can enter the water over time, resulting in increased lead levels, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Further investigation is needed to determine if any service lines require replacement," Randazzo said in the letter, which was also posted to the base's Facebook page.

NSA Naples discovered the issue while fulfilling obligations of a revised EPA rule requiring water systems to inventory their lines and notify people of any that have or may have lead. Water systems were required to start complying with the revised rule Oct. 16.

In February, NSA Naples will inspect the lines at Support Site, evaluating each one's connection point with a main water pipe and at the point where it enters a building, the base said Tuesday in a statement.

It's unclear what actions might be taken following that survey, but officials said the site's water system complies with EPA rules regarding lead and copper.

"People living in homes with a galvanized service line that has adsorbed lead may have an increased risk of exposure to lead from their drinking water," Randazzo wrote.

Water lines at the base's Capodichino site, about 18 miles from Support Site, were not affected, the base said Tuesday.

Biden OKs guidance for national security

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden approved a new national security memorandum that is meant to serve as a roadmap for the incoming Trump administration as it looks to counter growing cooperation among China, Iran, North Korea and Russia, the White House said Wednesday.

Biden administration officials began developing the guidance this summer.

It was shaped to be a document that could help the next administration build its approach from day one on how it will go about dealing with the tightening relationships between the United States' most prominent adversaries and competitors, according to two senior administration officials.

The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the White House, said the classified memorandum would not be made public because of the sensitivity of some of its findings.

The document includes four broad recommendations: improving U.S. government inter-agency cooperation, speeding up the sharing of information with allies about the four adversaries, calibrating the U.S. government's

use of sanctions and other economic tools for maximum effectiveness, and bolstering preparation to manage simultaneous crises involving the adversaries.

The U.S. for many years has been concerned about cooperation among the four countries. Coordination has accelerated between the countries in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The officials noted that as Russia has become more isolated by much of the world, Moscow has turned to Iran for drones and missiles.

From North Korea, the Russians have received artillery, missiles and even thousands of troops that have traveled to help the Russians try to repel Ukrainian forces from the Kursk region.

China, meanwhile, has supported Russia with dual use components that help keep its military industrial base afloat.

In return, Russia has sent fighter jets to Iran and assisted Tehran as it looks to bolster its missile defense and space technology.

North Korea has received from Russia much-needed fuel and funding to help build out its manufacturing and military capabilities.

S. Korean ex-defense minister attempted suicide after arrest

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's previous defense minister was stopped from attempting suicide while in detention over last week's martial law declaration, officials said Wednesday, as President Yoon Suk Yeol's office resisted a police attempt to search the compound.

The main liberal opposition Democratic Party is pushing for a new motion to impeach Yoon for his Dec. 3 decree that imposed martial law in South Korea for the first time in more than four decades. Its first impeachment attempt against Yoon last Saturday failed after ruling party lawmakers boycotted the vote. The party said it plans to submit the new motion Thursday to set up a vote Saturday.

Yoon's ill-conceived power grab has paralyzed South Korean politics, frozen its foreign policy and rattled financial markets. On Wednesday, rival North Korea's state media for the first time reported about the turmoil across the border, but the country hasn't shown any suspicious activities.

Shin Yong Hae, commissioner general of the Korea Correctional Service, told lawmakers

that former Defense Minister Kim Yong Hyun tried to kill himself the previous night at a detention center in Seoul. He said correctional officers stopped him and that he was in stable condition.

Kim was arrested by prosecutors early Wednesday on allegations of playing a key role in a rebellion and committing abuse of power. He became the first person formally arrested over the martial law decree.

Kim, one of Yoon's close associates, has been accused of recommending martial law to Yoon and sending troops to the National Assembly to block lawmakers from voting on it. Enough lawmakers eventually managed to enter a parliament chamber and they unanimously rejected Yoon's decree, forcing the Cabinet to lift it before daybreak Dec. 4.

Prosecutors have up to 20 days to determine whether to indict Kim.

Later Wednesday, police detained National Police Agency Commissioner General Cho Ji Ho and Kim Bong-sik, head of Seoul's metropolitan police. They were accused of deploying police forces to parliament to block lawmakers from voting.

Writings of suspect in CEO slaying recovered

Associated Press

ALTOONA, Pa. — Authorities have recovered a spiral notebook that the suspect in the killing of UnitedHealthcare's CEO kept, along with a three-page handwritten letter found when he was arrested, a law enforcement official said Wednesday.

The letter, found when Luigi Mangione was arrested Monday in Altoona, Pa., teased the possibility that clues to the attack — “some straggling notes and To Do lists that illuminate the gist of it” — could be found in the notebook, the law enforcement official said. The official wasn't authorized to disclose information about the investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The New York Police Department's top detective, Joseph Kenny, told CBS New York on Tuesday that the motive might have been related to an accident that sent Mangione to an emergency room on July 4, 2023.

A law enforcement bulletin said the letter expressed anger with what Mangione called “parasitic” health insurance companies and a disdain for corporate greed and power. The prep school and Ivy League graduate wrote that the U.S. has the most expensive health care system in the world and that profits of major corporations continue to rise while life expectancy doesn't, according to the bulletin.

Kenny also said that authorities were analyzing a finger-

print on a cellphone found after the killing of UnitedHealthcare's CEO.

No prints were found on bullets that killed Brian Thompson, but one fingerprint on a cellphone was recovered. Kenney said the evidence was being processed and didn't say whether it appeared to match Mangione, the 26-year-old charged in the shooting last week in midtown Manhattan.

In his first public words since his arrest, Mangione emerged from a patrol car Tuesday shouting about an “insult to the intelligence of the American people” while deputies pushed him into a courthouse. Mangione remained jailed without bail in Pennsylvania, where he was initially charged with gun

and forgery offenses.

Manhattan prosecutors were working to bring Mangione to New York. At a brief hearing Tuesday in Pennsylvania, defense lawyer Thomas Dickey said Mangione will not waive extradition and instead wants a hearing on the issue.

“You can't rush to judgment in this case or any case,” Dickey said afterward. “He's presumed innocent. Let's not forget that.”

Mangione was arrested in Altoona, about 230 miles west of New York City, after a McDonald's customer recognized him and notified an employee, authorities said.

His relatives have said in a statement that they are was “shocked and devastated” at his arrest.

Winds boost Malibu fires, prompting evacuations

Associated Press

MALIBU, Calif. — Officials in Southern California reported significant overnight growth of a wind-driven wildfire that has forced thousands of people, including celebrities like Cher and Dick Van Dyke, from their homes in Malibu, but forecasters said firefighters would get a break from improving weather conditions.

With much of the coastal city under evacuation orders and warnings, residents waited anxiously to see whether their properties had been spared by the fire, which erupted late Monday and grew to more than 6 square miles by Wednesday morning. It was just 7% contained.

More than 1,500 firefighters were battling the blaze, with many climbing in steep canyons near lines of flames and others hosing down collapsed roofs of horse stables and charred homes.

“The deep and rugged terrain, along with the strong

winds and low humidity, continue to pose challenges for firefighters,” the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said in an incident update.

The National Weather Service said the strongest Santa Ana winds, with gusts that reached 40 mph, have passed.

“We're far better off this morning than we were in the last 30-plus hours,” Malibu Mayor Doug Stewart said at a Wednesday news conference.

Even as the weather was expected to improve, forecasters said gusty winds will continue through Wednesday morning, especially in the mountains, and critical fire conditions remain. Santa Ana's notorious seasonal winds are withering, dry gusts that sweep out of the interior toward the coast, pushing back moist ocean breezes.

Los Angeles County Fire Department Chief Anthony C. Marrone said the blaze grew by nearly 40% overnight.

Judge rejects The Onion's \$1.5B Infowars auction win

Associated Press

A federal judge in Texas rejected the auction sale of Alex Jones' Infowars to The Onion satirical news outlet, criticizing the bidding for the conspiracy theory platform as flawed as well as how much money families of the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary shooting stood to receive.

The decision late Tuesday night is a victory for Jones, whose Infowars site was put up for sale as part of his bankruptcy case in the wake of the nearly \$1.5 billion that courts have ordered him to pay over falsely calling one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history a hoax. Families of the Sandy Hook victims had backed The Onion's bid.

Following a two-day hearing in Houston, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Christopher Lopez said he would not approve the sale, while citing concerns about transparency in the auction. That clears the way for Jones to

keep — at least for now — Infowars, which is headquartered in Austin, Texas. The Onion had planned to kick Jones out and relaunch Infowars in January as a parody.

“We are deeply disappointed in today's decision, but The Onion will continue to seek a resolution that helps the Sandy Hook families receive a positive outcome for the horror they endured,” Ben Collins, CEO of The Onion's parent company, Global Tetrahedron, posted on social media late Tuesday.

Lopez cited problems — but no wrongdoing — with the auction process.

He said he did not think that those involved in the auction acted in bad faith and that everyone “put their best foot forward and tried to play within the rules.”

Still, Lopez said he did not want another auction and left it up to the trustee who oversaw the auction to determine the next steps.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Satanic Temple statue put near city Nativity

NH CONCORD — A dark, horned figure with a goat's head stands in front of the New Hampshire State House.

It's a holiday display installed by the Satanic Temple — near the city of Concord's Nativity scene, according to the city's Dec. 7 Facebook post.

The nationwide group, which has congregations in dozens of states, is recognized as a church by the IRS and describes itself as "the primary religious Satanic organization in the world."

The Satanic Temple was issued a permit that allows it to keep its statue in front of the State House for the month of December, according to Concord. The statue is of Baphomet, a pagan idol associated with the occult. With glowing yellow eyes, the Satanic Temple's statue of Baphomet is seen holding lilacs in one hand and an apple in the other, the Concord Monitor reported.

Police: Bomb threat came from Russia

GA ATLANTA — The Rome Police Department has determined that an emailed threat claiming that a bomb had been placed at the home of U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene was a hoax that originated from a Russian IP address.

"We are pleased to report that Congresswoman Greene is safe," her office said in a news release Monday. "She extends her heartfelt gratitude to the Rome Police Department for their swift and professional re-

sponse in ensuring her safety."

The release said the email was sent to the assistant chief of police, who immediately dispatched the bomb squad to search Greene's property. Greene, a Republican, lives in the city.

The officers determined there was no active threat. But because the email appeared to come from an international source, Rome police notified federal law enforcement, including the FBI.

Firms sue to stop law that raises wages

MO COLUMBIA, Mo. — Missouri business groups announced Monday that they have filed a lawsuit to try to stop a voter-approved law that will raise the state's minimum wage and require employers to give workers paid sick leave.

The powerful Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, restaurant and grocers associations say the law violates a state constitutional requirement that ballot measures only address one issue because it included the minimum wage increase and paid sick leave.

The law will increase the state's minimum wage from the current \$12.30 an hour to \$13.75 in January and \$15 in 2026. It gives workers up to seven paid sick days per year starting in May.

Door kept open for drilling in refuge

AK JUNEAU — The Biden administration has approved plans for a sale of oil and gas leases in Alaska that

leaves open the door for drilling in a portion of the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The sale will be held Jan. 9, less than two weeks before President Joe Biden leaves office. It will include a fraction of the land total that was available for bidding roughly four years ago in a sale held during the Trump administration.

President-elect Donald Trump pledged during his latest run for the White House to expand oil drilling in the U.S., and he's pointed to the passage of a 2017 law that enabled Monday's announcement as a highlight when it comes to Alaska policy.

The law called for lease sales in the refuge's coastal plain, a roughly 1.5-million acre swath of the vast, wild refuge that borders the Beaufort Sea.

Boeing layoffs affect Washington, California

WA SEATTLE — Boeing has laid off hundreds of additional employees in Washington state and California as part of planned cuts that will eventually reduce the company's workforce by about 17,000.

Nearly 400 Boeing employees were laid off in Washington state and more than 500 in California, news outlets reported Monday.

The aerospace giant announced previously it would reduce its workforce by 10% in the coming months as it tries to recover from financial and regulatory troubles and a strike by its machinists that lasted almost two months.

CEO Kelly Ortberg has said the strike did not cause the layoffs, which he said was the

result of overstaffing.

Boeing, based in Arlington, Va., has been in financial trouble since two crashes of its 737 Max jetliner killed 346 people in 2018 and 2019. The company's fortunes and reputation took an additional hit when a panel blew off the fuselage of an Alaska Airlines plane in January.

Officers accused of 'egregious misconduct'

MA BOSTON — Worcester police officers were accused of sexually assaulting women, engaging in sex acts with prostitutes, and other "egregious misconduct" in a new scathing report from the feds.

The Department of Justice on Monday released a bombshell report about the Worcester Police Department, alleging that the city and police department have committed civil rights violations.

"First, WPD uses excessive force," the DOJ wrote. "Second, WPD engages in outrageous government conduct by permitting undercover officers to participate in sexual contact with women suspected of being involved in the commercial sex trade."

The Department of Justice also raised "serious concerns" that Worcester officers have sexually assaulted women under threat of arrest and engaged in other sexual misconduct.

The report acknowledges the changes already made by the city and WPD, and identifies additional remedial measures that the department believes are necessary to address its findings.

— From Associated Press

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Biathletes: US officials ignored abuses

Associated Press

Sexual abuse and harassment by coaches and others who held positions of power over women on the U.S. Biathlon team have been dismissed, ignored or excused over decades by officials more concerned with winning medals than holding offenders accountable, according to a half-dozen former Olympians and other biathletes.

While the men involved climbed the ranks of the sport, these women — who described a culture of abuse dating back to the 1990s — told The Associated Press they were forced to end their racing careers early.

One coach resigned after the young biathlete he was accused of sexually abusing attempted suicide, but he was later hired to coach the U.S. Paralympic team.

Max Cobb, who the women said was informed but failed to address the claims, went from U.S. domestic team manager to CEO of the U.S. Biathlon Association and is now secretary

general of the International Biathlon Union, the worldwide governing body of the sport, which combines cross-country skiing with target shooting.

Two male coaches and a former racer on the men's team confirmed the culture of misogyny described by the women, who all said they faced retaliation for speaking up.

"My safety on the team was clearly secondary to a top-down power structure focused on image, medals and marketing," said two-time Olympian Joan Wilder, 58, who said her coach got away with trying to sexually assault her in 1990 despite her complaints to Cobb.

Grace Boutot, a 2009 Youth World Championship silver medalist, said her reports to Cobb and other officials about abuse committed by two coaches, beginning when she was 15, also went unheeded, eventually leading to a suicide attempt.

"U.S. Biathlon leadership always seems to choose to support the predators instead of the per-

son who was abused," the now 33-year-old Boutot said.

The women came forward after the AP reported that Olympian Joanne Reid was sexually abused and harassed for years, according to findings by the U.S. Center for SafeSport, a watchdog group created to investigate sex-abuse allegations in Olympic sports in the aftermath of the Larry Nassar U.S. Gymnastics scandal.

The AP generally does not identify victims of sexual abuse except in cases where they publicly identify themselves or share their stories openly, as these women have.

Reid told the AP her repeated complaints to top U.S. Biathlon officials, which were relayed to Cobb, were ignored for three years.

Cobb denied the women's allegations that he failed to act.

"During my 33 years at U.S. Biathlon, athlete safety was always fundamental to me and I can't recall ever hearing from athletes or others that my ef-

forts in this regard were not appropriate," he said in an email to the AP.

Cobb declined to be interviewed to respond to specific allegations raised by the women, saying it would be a violation of SafeSport's code.

However, an independent investigation ordered by U.S. Biathlon into team culture and safety following the AP report found biathletes faced "misogynistic" behavior while racing and feared retaliation if they came forward with their concerns.

The assessment by outside auditor Vestry Laight, released last week, said the athletes surveyed described a sport "dominated by men who have a very different outlook on how to treat women" and criticized the "lack of attention paid to create a respectful environment."

Biathlon officials said they were adopting an "action plan" in response to the auditor's report.

Source: Fried, Yanks agree to record contract for lefty

Associated Press

DALLAS — The New York Yankees hope Max Fried pitches like he did in 2021 — when he won the World Series clincher for the Atlanta Braves.

Two days after the Yankees lost Juan Soto to the rival Mets, Fried agreed Tuesday to join the pinstripes with a \$218 million, eight-year contract, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press.

Fried's deal is the largest for a left-handed pitcher in baseball history, \$1 million more than David Price's seven-year contract with the Boston Red Sox ahead of the 2016 season. Fried's agreement, first reported by ESPN, was subject to a successful physical, the person said on condition of anonymity because the deal had not been fi-

nalized.

Yankees fans were angry after Soto accepted the Mets' \$765 million, 15-year offer over the Yankees' \$760 million, 16-year proposal. The Yankees then redirected money to starting pitching, though Fried represents some risk: The two-time All-Star has been on the injured list 10 times since 2018, including at least once each season.

After spending his first eight seasons with the Braves, Fried joins a list of rotation possibilities that also includes Gerrit Cole, Carlos Rodón, Luis Gil, Clarke Schmidt, Nestor Cortes and Marcus Stroman, making additional moves likely. He reached the agreement the day Cortes turned 30 and Rodón turned 32.

A three-time Gold Glove win-

ner who turns 31 on Jan. 18, Fried has one of the broadest repertoires in the majors, throwing seven pitches.

He was 11-10 with a 3.25 ERA over 29 starts this year, striking out 166 and walking a career-high 57 in 174½ innings. Fried missed time for left forearm neuritis, his seventh straight season on the IL.

Source: RHP Eovaldi staying with Rangers

The Texas Rangers have accomplished one of their primary offseason goals with a deal to re-sign Nathan Eovaldi, the winning pitcher in their 2023 World Series clincher.

Texas has agreed on a \$75 million, three-year contract with the right-hander, a person with knowledge of the deal told

The Associated Press on Tuesday night. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the deal was subject to a successful physical. Eovaldi became a free agent Nov. 4 after declining a vested \$20 million player option for the 2025 season. The Rangers had expected that move, but said one of their priorities was to re-sign the Texas native who will turn 35 in February.

Eovaldi will stay in the Rangers rotation with two-time NL Cy Young Award winner Jacob deGrom, who made three starts at the end of last season after missing nearly 17 months following right elbow surgery. Texas won all six of deGrom's starts at the beginning of the 2023 season before he got hurt that April.

Rantanen hat trick lifts Avalanche

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Mikko Rantanen collected his 10th career hat trick and added two assists as the Colorado Avalanche beat the Pittsburgh Penguins 6-2 on Tuesday night.

Rantanen, playing in his 600th game, flipped in a puck over Tristan Jarry late in the first period, beat Jarry from in close early in the second and added an empty-netter in the third.

Nathan MacKinnon added a goal and four assists for Colorado. Valeri Nichushkin and Artturi Lehkonen also scored for the Avalanche.

Scott Wedgewood made 24 saves for Colorado to win for the third time in four starts. Goal-tender MacKenzie Blackwood, acquired in a deal with San Jose on Monday, was scratched due to an illness.

Michael Bunting scored his seventh goal for Pittsburgh. Cody Glass collected his first of the season. Jarry stopped 21 shots for the Penguins, who lost for just the second time in seven games.

Flyers 5, Blue Jackets 3: Travis Konecny scored twice in the second period and visiting Philadelphia snapped a three-game slide with its first victory in December.

Noah Cates, Owen Tippett and Morgan Frost also scored for the Flyers. Matvei Michkov had two assists and Samuel Erisson made 15 saves.

Sean Monahan finished with a goal and an assist, Zach Werenski scored with a man advantage, and Kent Johnson added a goal for Columbus, which has lost four of its past five games. Elvis Merzlikins made 19 saves for the Blue Jackets.

Hurricanes 3, Sharks 2: Jalen Chatfield scored with 2:39 left, and host Carolina beat San Jose.

Chatfield caught a high clearing attempt at the top of the right circle, then dropped the puck

and pushed a shot at the goal that snuck under Vitek Vanecek's right arm. It was Chatfield's third goal of the season.

Luke Kunin scored both of the Sharks' goals. Vanecek made 25 saves in San Jose's first game since it traded goalie Mackenzie Blackwood to Colorado on Monday.

Brent Burns and Shayne Gostisbehere also scored for the Hurricanes.

Maple Leafs 2, Devils 1 (OT): Auston Matthews scored with 2:09 left in overtime to give Toronto a victory at New Jersey.

Matthews outskated Devils defenseman Brett Pesce, grabbing a loose puck near center ice in for a breakaway, and beat New Jersey's Jacob Markstrom on the glove side for his ninth goal of the season.

Pontus Holmberg scored short-handed for the Maple Leafs at 10:42 of the third period and tied the game at 1.

Ondrej Palat gave the Devils a 1-0 lead at 7:16 of the second, scoring off an assist from Jesper Bratt. It was Palat's first goal since Nov. 12, against Florida, a span of 11 games.

Anthony Stolarz stopped 37 shots for the Maple Leafs. Markstrom had 11 saves.

Kings 3, Islanders 1: Adrian Kempe and Kevin Fiala scored, Darcy Kuemper made 19 saves and visiting Los Angeles beat New York for its sixth straight win.

The Kings started a seven-game road trip, their longest of the season, with a strong performance. Mikey Anderson added an empty-net goal as Los Angeles improved to 17-8-3 with its eighth victory in 10 games.

Anders Lee scored for the Islanders, who had won their previous two.

Kemper opened the scoring at 13:51 of the first period with his 14th goal. Kings captain Anze Kopitar, playing his 1,401st career game, assisted along with Trevor Moore.

Kopitar, 37, leads Los Angeles with 32 points, including eight goals.

Flames 4, Predators 3: Jonathan Huberdeau and Kevin Rooney each scored a goal and added an assist to lead visiting Calgary to a comeback victory over skidding Nashville.

Brayden Pachal and Nazem Kadri also scored and Dan Vladar made 17 saves for the Flames, who had lost six of seven.

Jonathan Marchessault scored twice and Tommy Novak had a goal for the Predators, who tied a franchise record with their eighth straight loss. Juuse Saros made 24 saves.

Nashville captain Roman Josi did not play in the final two periods due to a lower-body injury. The Predators were already without regular defensemen Jeremy Lauzon and Alexandre Carrier, both sidelined due to injury.

Jets 8, Bruins 1: Mark Scheifele scored two goals and added an assist to lead host Winnipeg to a convincing victory over Boston.

Nikita Chibrikov, Mason Appleton, Alex Iafallo, Gabriel Vilardi, Kyle Connor and Vladislav Namestnikov scored the other Jets goals.

Scheifele has a 13-game point streak at home, totaling 20 points in that stretch.

David Pastrnak scored for the Bruins, who had a four-game winning streak snapped.

Connor Hellebuyck made 23 saves for Winnipeg. Jeremy Swayman stopped 27 shots for Boston.

Oilers 2, Lightning 1: Leon Draisaitl had a goal and an assist and host Edmonton won its third straight game, beating Tampa Bay.

Connor McDavid also scored for the Oilers (16-10-2) who have won six of their past seven.

Jake Guentzel scored for the Lightning (14-10-2) who had their two-game winning streak

halted.

Stuart Skinner made 21 stops for Edmonton. Andrei Vasilevski had 23 saves for Tampa Bay.

Wild 5, Utah 4 (SO): Matt Boldy, the only scorer in the shootout, lifted Minnesota to a victory at Utah.

The Wild's Marco Rossi scored with 43.2 seconds left in regulation to force overtime. Kirill Kaprizov added his 18th goal of the season, and Marat Khushnutdinov and Marcus Johansson also scored for Minnesota. Filip Gustavsson finished with 21 saves.

Clayton Keller scored twice in the third period to rally Utah from a one-goal deficit. Kevin Stenlund and Juuso Valimaki also scored, and Karel Vejmelka made 34 saves.

Panthers 2, Kraken 1 (SO): Aleksander Barkov scored the tying goal late in the second period and then scored in the shootout, and Sam Reinhart scored the clinching shootout goal as Florida won at Seattle.

Reinhart also had the assist on Barkov's equalizer.

Panthers goalie Sergei Bobrovsky, who had 17 saves through regulation and overtime, made stick saves on Eeli Tolvanen and Oliver Bjorkstrand in the shootout.

Blues 4, Canucks 3 (OT): Dylan Holloway scored 1:40 into overtime as visiting St. Louis beat Vancouver.

Robert Thomas had a goal and two assists for the Blues. Zack Bolduc and Jordan Kyrou also scored, and Joel Hofer stopped 22 shots.

The Canucks got a goal and an assist from Elias Pettersson. Dakota Joshua and Jake DeBrusk also scored, while Brock Boeser and Conor Garland each had two assists.

Thatcher Demko made 21 saves in his first start for Vancouver since injuring his knee at the beginning of the postseason earlier this year.

Thunder top Mavericks in NBA Cup quarterfinals

Associated Press

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 39 points, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Dallas Mavericks 118-104 on Tuesday night in an NBA Cup quarterfinal.

Jalen Williams scored 18 points and Isaiah Hartenstein added 10 points and 13 rebounds for the Thunder, who will play Wednesday's Golden State-Houston winner in a semifinal Saturday in Las Vegas.

Oklahoma City's largest lead was 20 points in a rematch of last season's Western Conference semifinals series that Dallas won 4-2.

The Thunder and their collection of elite perimeter defenders held Luka Doncic to 16 points on 5-for-15 shooting. Lu Dort led the effort, with Alex Caruso and Cason Wallace

among the primary helpers.

Naji Marshall and Klay Thompson each scored 19 points and Kyrie Irving added 17 for the Mavericks.

P.J. Washington, a thorn in Oklahoma City's side during the playoffs last season and in Dallas' victory last month, missed the game with an illness.

The Thunder led 57-54 at halftime behind 18 points from Gilgeous-Alexander. Doncic had two points on 1-for-7 shooting at the break.

Gilgeous-Alexander scored 16 points on 7-for-8 shooting in the third quarter to help Oklahoma City take control. Isaiah Joe's deep 3-pointer at the buzzer gave the Thunder a 90-73 lead heading into the fourth.

Bucks 114, Magic 109: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 37 points, Damian Lillard had

nine of his 28 in the final minute and host Milwaukee returned to the NBA Cup semifinals in Las Vegas by beating Orlando.

The Bucks reached the semifinals of the in-season tournament in Las Vegas last December and will be the only returning team in Year 2. They will play Saturday against the winner of Wednesday's quarterfinal between the New York Knicks and Atlanta Hawks.

Jalen Suggs led a short-handed Magic team with 32 points but missed a potential go-ahead 3-pointer with 12 seconds left. Lillard was fouled and sank two free throws with 9.1 seconds remaining and Suggs missed a potential tying 3.

Antetokounmpo then made both free throws with 5 seconds left and Milwaukee was able to hold on.

Scheffler again voted top player

Associated Press

Scottie Scheffler added another trophy to his awesome display Tuesday when he won the Jack Nicklaus Award as PGA Tour player of the year in a landslide, joining Tiger Woods as the only players to win the award three straight times.

Scheffler won 91% of the vote from players and appeared to be the obvious choice given the victories he piled up, including an Olympic gold medal when he shot 62 on the final day.

His seven PGA Tour wins included a second Masters title, and he became the first repeat winner of The Players Championship. He also won the Tour Championship to claim the FedEx Cup. His other four wins were all signature events against the strongest fields — Bay Hill and Memorial, Hilton Head and Hartford.

No one could match that year, but there was the question of how players would view Xander Schauffele's rare feat of winning two majors in one year, in the PGA Championship and the British Open.

Schauffele became the first player to win two majors but not player of the year since the award began in 1990. Nick Faldo won the Masters and British Open in 1990, but he was not a PGA Tour member and ineligible for the award.

Woods, an 11-time winner of the award, won five straight from 1999-2003 and three straight from 2005-2007.

Lainer leads No. 1 Tennessee over Miami

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Chaz Lainer scored 22 points, and No. 1 Tennessee beat Miami 75-62 on Tuesday at the Jimmy V Classic in Madison Square Garden.

Igor Milicic Jr. added 16 and nine rebounds for the Volunteers, who took the top spot in the AP Top 25 this week for the first time since February 2019. Zakai Zeigler added 13 points and nine assists for Tennessee, which pulled away late in the first half and withstood a Hurricanes comeback attempt for its first 9-0 start since 2000-01.

Lynn Kidd scored 14 as Miami (3-8) dropped its seventh straight game. Nyjel Pack added 12 and AJ Station-McCray added 11 for the Hurricanes, who shot 39.3%.

No. 4 Duke 72, Incarnate

Word 46: Khaman Maluach scored a season-high 17 points and the Blue Devils beat the visiting Cardinals.

Maluach — a 7-foot-2 freshman center from South Sudan — shot 6 of 7 from floor and had seven rebounds as Duke (8-2) won its fourth straight.

Jalin Anderson and Dylan Hayman each scored 11 points for Incarnate Word (5-5).

Arkansas 89, No. 14 Michigan 87: Boogie Fland scored 20 points as the Razorbacks stormed back from a 15-point deficit, withstood a late comeback attempt and hung on for a victory over the Wolverines in the Jimmy V Classic.

D.J. Wagner added 16 points for Arkansas (8-2), which went without a basket for the final 3:01 and nearly blew an 18-point

lead.

Goldin scored 17 for Michigan (8-2), which had won seven straight games and was trying to match last season's win total.

No. 15 Houston 62, Troy 42: L.J. Cryer scored 22 points and had six 3-pointers, and the Cougars used a strong defensive effort to beat the visiting Trojans.

Cryer scored 16 points in the first half on 6-of-9 shooting from the field, including 4 of 5 on 3-pointers, as Houston (6-3) built a 33-11 halftime lead. He finished 8 of 11 from the field.

Illinois 86, No. 20 Wisconsin 80: Kasparas Jakucionis scored a career-high 24 points, Tre White had 23 points and eight rebounds and Kylan Boswell added 19 points and six assists to lead the host Illini (7-2) past the Badgers (8-3).