

## DOD to take stock of ammo stockpiles

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — The Pentagon must develop a plan to fill munition stockpiles to levels needed for U.S. forces to fight multiple large-scale conflicts at once, according to a new defense spending bill expected to come up for a vote later this week.

Tucked into the National Defense Authorization Act for 2026 is a provision that requires Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to put together a report that details how to ensure access to a wide range of critical munitions in different parts of the world.

The assessment calls for a review of how many days U.S. forces could fight in multiple theaters of operation before current stockpiles are exhausted and an appraisal of how long it would take to

replenish those munitions.

Other aspects of the review require the Pentagon to examine the capabilities of adversaries like China and Russia while accounting for what allies would be expected to provide in a conflict. Upon completion of that analysis, the Pentagon must craft a plan by the next budget cycle to implement munitions requirements for fighting more than one adversary at a time, the NDAA says.

The need to bolster supplies comes amid concerns that U.S. adversaries are increasingly coordinating with each other.

U.S. European Command's Air Force Gen. Alexis Grynkeiwich, who also serves as NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, recently warned that allies must prepare for the possibility that Russia and China could

launch wars in Europe and the Pacific simultaneously. He said 2027 was a potential flashpoint year.

"We're going to need every bit of kit and equipment and munitions that we can in order to beat that," Grynkeiwich said during an Army conference in Wiesbaden, Germany, in July.

Grynkeiwich argued that if Chinese President Xi Jinping attacks Taiwan, he would probably coordinate such a move with Russian President Vladimir Putin, opening the possibility of a global conflict.

Last week, Grynkeiwich reinforced the notion of adversaries increasingly working together, saying the situation means more should be done to fortify the whole of the NATO alliance.

"With the alignment of our ad-

versaries around the globe, it is imperative we strengthen the Euro-Atlantic area as much as possible, and reinforce our posture in the High North," Grynkeiwich said in a statement related to a reorganization of NATO's command structure.

Besides adversaries aligning, the scale of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war also has been a driving factor in a NATO-wide push to ramp up ammunition production.

Secretary-General Mark Rutte in November said dozens of new production lines have opened across the alliance, with ammunition output now at its highest level in decades.

"Until recently, Russia was producing more ammunition than all NATO allies put together," Rutte said. "But not anymore."

## Navy establishes new information warfare squadron

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Navy established a first-of-its-kind information warfare squadron at Naval Station Norfolk, in Virginia, on Friday as part of a pilot program meant to streamline IW capabilities for carrier strike group commanders, according to service officials.

Information Warfare Squadron Two will spend the next four years testing, expanding and improving the new unit's capabilities in the information warfare domain, which defense officials have emphasized in recent years amid global power struggles with adversaries such as China and Russia. The Navy's information warfare community includes sailors who specialize in communications, networks, intelligence, oceanogra-

phy, meteorology, cryptology, electronic warfare, and cyberspace and space operations, according to the service.

The Navy has traditionally placed IW capabilities inside other units, including its carrier strike groups. Building the new information warfare squadrons will bring better capabilities to those strike groups, said Vice Adm. Mike Vernazza, who commands Naval Information Forces.

"This is a paradigm shift in how we fight and win in the 21st century," the admiral said in a news release from the Navy on Friday. "For too long, information warfare has been a collection of vital but often disparate capabilities. Today, we change that."

The Pentagon's military services have placed new empha-

sis on information warfare capabilities in recent years as it and its adversaries have adopted the latest battlefield technology from space-based capabilities to efforts to jam or disrupt enemy communications platforms and drones. Information warfare capabilities — especially electronic and cyber warfare — have been a critical part of the war in Ukraine, where both nations have used information warfare in an attempt to shape the narrative about the conflict, Pentagon officials have said.

The new information warfare squadron was named to align with Carrier Strike Group 2, which is led by the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. A second information warfare squadron is expected to be established next year on the U.S. West Coast, ac-

cording to the Navy.

The Navy expects the squadron to include about 70 sailors from various information warfare specialties once it is fully manned, said Lt. Cmdr. Madie Hansen, spokeswoman for Naval Information Forces. The service is taking a "phased approach" to build out the new squadron with sailors from the carrier strike group and some other commands, she said.

Navy Capt. Jon O'Connor took command of the new unit on Friday. O'Connor commissioned as a naval intelligence officer in 1997 and has served aboard several ships, served at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and U.S. Northern Command, and most recently served as the chief of staff at the Office of Naval Intelligence, according to his official biography.

# Navy pulls aircraft from South China Sea

By LARA KORTE  
*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. Navy has successfully recovered the two aircraft that crashed into the South China Sea earlier this year while operating off the USS Nimitz, the service said Monday.

A Navy MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter assigned to the “Battle Cats” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 73 went down in Oct. 26 while conducting routine operations. A half hour later, an F/A-18F Super Hornet assigned to the “Fighting Redcocks” of Strike Fighter

Squadron 22 also went down.

All crew members from the two separate crashes survived.

Recovery crews were able to locate and retrieve both aircraft from a depth of approximately 400 feet in the South China Sea last week, the Navy said.

The recovery effort was led by Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Andersen of the Navy’s Task Force 73, with the help of Task Force 75, the Naval Sea Systems Command’s Supervisor of Salvage and Diving, and CTG 73.6’s Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit.

“Everyone involved brought

critical expertise ensuring we could safely and successfully bring these aircraft back under U.S. custody,” Andersen said in the statement. “This operation highlights the importance of naval integration, readiness and the unmatched capability of our salvage and diving teams.”

The Nimitz, the flagship of Carrier Strike Group 11, is scheduled to pull into its homeport at Naval Base Kitsap in Bremerton, Wash., this month after a nine-month deployment in the Indo-Pacific region and the Arabian Sea.

First deployed in 1976, the Nimitz is the Navy’s oldest aircraft carrier and is scheduled to be decommissioned starting next year. The carrier is expected to arrive at Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia by May to begin the process of decommissioning and deactivating the ship, with completion planned for 2027.

All of the recovered aircraft components are being transported to a designated U.S. military installation in the Indo-Pacific region for detailed analysis, the Navy said. The incidents remain under investigation.

## Navy warships make 1st visit to Vietnamese city in 2 years

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

Two U.S. Navy warships pulled into Da Nang, Vietnam, on Monday for the first Navy visit to the city in two years, according to the service.

The amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli — lead vessel of the Navy’s only amphibious ready group outside the United States — arrived for the port call alongside the guided-missile cruiser USS Robert Smalls, the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam said in a Tuesday news release. The vessels carry a combined complement of approximately 2,300 sailors and Marines.

“Our visit highlights the strengthening relationship between our two nations and militaries, enables us to build operational understanding and trust, and reinforces our relationship on a personal level while advancing our shared goals of peace, prosperity, and economic security in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific,” Rear Adm. Tom Shultz, commander of Task Force 76, said in the release.

The last Navy vessels to visit Da Nang — the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, the Robert Smalls and the guided-missile cruiser USS Antietam — arrived there in 2023. It was the third U.S. carrier visit to the country since the Vietnam War ended in 1975.

The amphibious command ship USS Blue Ridge and the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Waesche stopped at Cam Ranh, Vietnam, together in July 2024.

The Tripoli is expected to stay four days in Da Nang, during which its crew is scheduled to take part in a language exchange with Vietnamese students and help restore the Village of Hope Orphanage, among other activities, the Vietnam News website reported Monday.

“The visit by USS Tripoli and USS Robert Smalls coming as we close out celebrations to mark 30 years of bilateral relations is proof that the U.S.-Vietnam partnership has never been better,” U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Marc Knapper said in the news release.

## Marines on Okinawa will be refining island defense

By BRIAN McELHINEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP COURTNEY, Okinawa — The Marine Corps is integrating new weapons and refining its island defense strategy alongside Japan to counter any military crisis in the Indo-Pacific region, the Marines’ top general on Okinawa said Tuesday.

“The last thing we want is a confrontation or conflict with China,” Lt. Gen. Roger Turner, commander of the III Marine Expeditionary Force, said at the start of a media roundtable at his headquarters on Courtney. “But we will not be deterred from continuing work alongside our allies and partners in support of our shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

Japan reported Sunday a Chinese J-15 fighter jet launched the previous day from the aircraft carrier Liaoning locked military radar on two Japanese F-15s that scrambled in response to potential airspace violations near Okinawa. A radar lock on a potential target can be the precursor to a missile attack.

The incident is a “good exam-

ple of the kinds of activity that we see day-to-day across the region,” Turner told the reporters.

“This particular act was more provocative than we have seen recently,” he said. “Over the last few years, we’ve seen these sorts of activities increase exponentially across the region.”

Turner took command of the expeditionary force in January 2024 and oversaw the integration of the 12th Marine Littoral Regiment’s three subordinate units, including logistics, anti-air and combat team elements.

The regiment’s stand-in force operations are a key tenet of the island-fighting doctrine found in the Marines’ Force Design plan. Littoral regiments are designed as smaller, mobile units inserted within enemy missile range to seize and hold key islands and deny enemy vessels access to surrounding areas.

The regiment helps the force to “not only be able to project power from the sea to the land, but our ability to project power from the land to the sea, in the air, and into space — in cyberspace,” Turner said.

# Court likely to expand Trump's firing power

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday seemed likely to expand presidential control over independent federal agencies, signaling support for President Donald Trump's firing of board members.

The court's conservative majority suggested it would overturn a unanimous 90-year-old decision that has limited when presidents can fire agencies' board members — in part to try to ensure decision making free of political influence — or leave it with only its shell intact.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh said the crux of the issue is that the officials who direct the agencies “are exercising massive power over individual liberty and billion-dollar industries” without being accountable to anyone.

Liberal justices warned that a

ruling sought by the administration to overturn the decision known as *Humphrey's Executor* would give the president, as Justice Elena Kagan said, “massive unchecked, uncontrolled power.”

No president before Trump has sought to wrest control of the agencies that regulate nuclear energy, product safety and labor relations. But the six conservatives, including three appointed by Trump, seemed more concerned about issuing a ruling that would endure than handing too much power to Trump.

Their rhetoric was reminiscent of the presidential immunity case in 2024 that allowed Trump to avoid prosecution for his efforts to undo the 2020 election results. The court is writing a decision “for the ages,” Justice Neil Gorsuch said then.

Solicitor General D. John

Sauer, who argued the immunity case for Trump, defended the president's decision to fire Federal Trade Commission member Rebecca Slaughter without cause and called on the court to jettison *Humphrey's Executor*.

The conservative side of the court already has signaled support for the administration's position, over the liberals' objection, by allowing Slaughter and the board members of other agencies to be removed from their jobs as their legal challenges continue.

Members of the National Labor Relations Board, the Merit Systems Protection Board and the Consumer Product Safety Commission also have been fired by Trump.

The only officials who have so far survived efforts to remove them are Lisa Cook, a Federal Reserve governor, and Shira Perl-

mutter, a copyright official with the Library of Congress.

The court has suggested that it will view the Fed differently from other independent agencies, and Trump has said he wants her out because of allegations of mortgage fraud. Cook says she did nothing wrong.

A second question in the Slaughter case could affect Cook. Even if a firing turns out to be illegal, the court wants to decide whether judges have the power to reinstate someone.

Gorsuch wrote earlier this year that fired employees who win in court can likely get back pay but not reinstatement.

That might affect Cook's ability to remain in her job. The justices have seemed wary about the economic uncertainty that might result if Trump can fire the leaders of the central bank.

## ICE arrests of Afghans on the rise, lawyers say

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — On a recent afternoon, Giselle Garcia, a volunteer who has been helping an Afghan family resettle, drove the father to a check-in with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. She warned him and his family to prepare for the worst.

The moment the father stepped into the ICE office in California's capital city, he was arrested.

Coming just days after the shooting of two National Guard troops by an Afghan national suspect, federal authorities have carried out increased arrests of Afghans in the U.S., immigration lawyers say as Afghans both in and outside the country have come under intense scrutiny by immigration officials.

Garcia said the family she helped had reported to all their appointments and were following all legal requirements.

They had fled Afghanistan un-

der threat by the Taliban because the wife's father had assisted the U.S. military, and they had asked for asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border, Garcia said. She is not identifying him or his family for fear other members could be arrested.

Since the Nov. 26 Guard shooting, The Associated Press has tracked roughly two dozen arrests of Afghan immigrants, most of which happened in Northern California. In Sacramento, home to one of the nation's largest Afghan communities, volunteers monitoring ICE activities say they witnessed at least nine arrests at the federal building last week after Afghan men received calls to check in there.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Dec. 1 that the Trump administration is “actively reexamining” all the Afghan nationals who entered the U.S. during President Joe Biden's administration.

## Guard finds steak, crab legs, pot dropped by drone for prisoners

Associated Press

BISHOPVILLE, S.C. — ‘Twas three weeks before Christmas, and in the prison yard, a drone-dropped package was found by a guard.

With steak, weed and crab legs, and cigarettes for days. And to season it all, a tin of Old Bay.

The illicit meal was dropped into the Lee Correctional Institution prison yard by a drone, the South Carolina Department of Corrections said on the social platform X with the hashtag #ContrabandChristmas.

A photo from the Bishopville prison showed a raw steak still in the grocery store packing, crab legs and Old Bay with plastic baggies of marijuana and a couple of cartons of cigarettes.

The drone was also seized Sunday morning, authorities said.

Prison officials said that they are investigating and that so far no arrests have been made in

the incident.

“I’m guessing the inmates who were expecting the package are crabby,” prisons spokeswoman Chrysti Shain said.

Keeping contraband out of state prisons is a constant battle.

People would toss or use a catapult to get packages of cell-phones, drugs or other illegal items over the perimeter fence until officials raised the fences and added netting at the top.

People trying to smuggle things behind bars moved on to drones, leaving corrections officials to constantly patrol the prison yard and just outside for the tiny aircraft trying to drop packages.

Just flying a drone near a prison in South Carolina is a misdemeanor crime that carries up to 30 days in jail.

Dropping contraband into the prison is a felony that can land someone behind bars for 10 years.



# Zelenskyy reaffirms refusal to cede territories

Associated Press

ROME — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has reaffirmed his strong refusal to cede any territory, resisting U.S. pressure for painful concessions to Russia as he moved ahead Tuesday to rally more European support for his country.

“Undoubtedly, Russia insists for us to give up territories. We, clearly, don’t want to give up anything. That’s what we are fighting for,” Zelenskyy told reporters in a WhatsApp chat late Monday.

“Do we consider ceding any territories? According to the law we don’t have such right,” he said. “According to Ukraine’s law, our constitution, international law, and to be frank, we

don’t have a moral right either.”

In an interview with Politico released Tuesday, President Donald Trump again pressed Zelenskyy to accept the U.S. proposal that Ukraine cede territory to Russia, arguing that Moscow retains the “upper hand” in its nearly 4-year-old invasion and that Zelenskyy’s government must make concessions and “play ball.”

Zelenskyy met with Pope Leo XIV at Castel Gandolfo, a papal residence outside Rome, and is to have talks with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni later in the day.

The Vatican said the pope “reiterated the need for the continuation of dialogue and expressed his urgent desire that the current diplomatic initia-

tives bring about a just and lasting peace.”

The Holy See has tried to stay neutral in the war while offering solidarity and assistance to what it calls the “martyred” people of Ukraine.

Leo, who has met with Zelenskyy three times and has spoken by telephone at least once with Russian President Vladimir Putin, has called for a ceasefire and urged Moscow in particular to make gestures to promote peace.

On Monday, Zelenskyy held talks in London with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz to strengthen Ukraine’s hand amid mounting impatience from Trump.

U.S. and Ukrainian negotiators completed three days of talks on Saturday aimed at trying to narrow differences on the Trump administration’s peace proposal.

A major sticking point in the plan is the suggestion that Kyiv must give up control of the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine to Russia, which illegally occupies most but not all of the territory. Ukraine and its European allies have firmly resisted the idea of handing over land.

Putin, speaking at a meeting Tuesday with pro-Kremlin activists, reaffirmed his claim that the Donbas is Russia’s “historic land” and vowed to fulfill the war goals set by the Kremlin. “We will certainly take it to the logical conclusion,” he said.

## Japan assesses the damage from 7.5 quake

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan was assessing damage Tuesday and cautioning people of potential aftershocks after a late-night 7.5 magnitude earthquake caused injuries, light damage and a tsunami in Pacific coastal communities.

At least 34 people were injured, one seriously, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency said. Most of them were hit by falling objects, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaiichi told reporters an emergency task force was formed to urgently assess damage. “We are putting people’s lives first and doing everything we can,” she said.

At a parliamentary session Tuesday, Takaichi pledged the government would continue its utmost effort and reminded people they have to protect themselves.

The 7.5 magnitude quake struck around 11:15 p.m. in the

Pacific Ocean, around 50 miles off the coast of Aomori, the northernmost prefecture of Japan’s main Honshu island. The U.S. Geological Survey measured the quake at 7.6 magnitude and said it occurred 27 miles below the surface.

A tsunami of up to 2 feet, 4 inches was measured in Kuji port in Iwate prefecture, just south of Aomori, and waves up to 1 foot, 8 inches struck other communities in the region, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. NHK reported the waves damaged some oyster rafts.

The agency lifted all tsunami advisories by 6:30 a.m. Tuesday.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said about 800 homes were without electricity and Shinkansen bullet trains and some local lines were suspended in parts of the region in the early hours of Tuesday. East Japan Railway said bullet trains resumed operation in the region later Tuesday.

## Cambodia vows fierce fight in border conflict with Thailand

Associated Press

SURIN, Thailand — Cambodia’s powerful Senate President Hun Sen on Tuesday vowed that his country would carry out a fierce fight against Thailand as a second day of widespread renewed combat between the Southeast Asian neighbors drove tens of thousands of people to flee border areas.

Fighting broke out following a skirmish on Sunday during which two Thai soldiers were injured, derailing a ceasefire that ended fighting over competing territorial claims in July. The five days of fighting left dozens dead on both sides and forced the evacuation of over 100,000 civilians.

In a sign that neither side was willing to back down, Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said Tuesday that Cambodia had not contacted Thailand about negotiations and fighting would continue.

Cambodia’s military announced Tuesday that the new fighting had killed seven civil-

ians and wounded 20. A Thai spokesperson announced Tuesday that three soldiers have been killed in the new fighting.

An evacuation shelter at a university in Thailand’s northeastern city of Surin is hosting more than 3,600 people. Evacuees sit or lie on thin mats spread across the floor, and several have set up small tents.

The Thai army said almost 500 temporary shelters have been set up in four border provinces, accommodating 125,838 people. Additionally displaced people are expected to stay with relatives in safe areas.

Cambodian Information Minister Neth Pheaktra said almost 55,000 people have been evacuated and the numbers are mounting.

Thailand and Cambodia have a history of enmity over centuries and experience periodic tensions along their border. Some of the disputed territory hosts centuries-old temples both nations covet as part of their legacy.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Cinnabon worker fired after racist outburst**

**WI** ASHWAUBENON — A Cinnabon worker in Wisconsin has been fired after a racist outburst directed at two customers went viral, the Georgia-based chain said.

Cinnabon posted a statement on social media that the worker, who it did not identify, was “immediately terminated” by the franchise owner over a “disturbing video” of the incident.

The video was posted on TikTok and showed a white, female employee cursing at and taunting the customers from behind the counter as one of them recorded the encounter. At one point she is seen on video uttering a racial slur and saying, “I am racist and I’ll say it to the whole entire world.”

**Sue Bird has jersey retired at UConn**

**CT** STORRS — Sue Bird walked onto the court at Gampel Pavilion on Sunday to a rousing ovation just as she did in her four seasons as one of the best players in UConn women’s basketball history.

The members of the top-ranked 2025-26 team stood on either side of the UConn legend as Bird came onto the court before a game against DePaul, this time without her famous UConn No. 10 jersey. A few minutes later, Bird joined classmate Swin Cash and Rebecca Lobo as the only UConn women’s basketball players to have their numbers retired.

Bird was a part of two national championship teams at UConn. Despite being limited to eight games as a freshman due

to a knee injury, Bird finished her career with 1,378 points, 585 assists and 240 steals. UConn was 114-4 with Bird in the lineup. She was the first pick in the 2002 WNBA draft by the Seattle Storm and helped Seattle win four WNBA titles. Bird was also part of five Olympic gold-medal winning teams and four FIBA World Cup championship squads.

**City rents climb at one of the fastest rates in US**

**NV** LAS VEGAS — Las Vegas rents climbed at one of the fastest rates in the county in recent years, a new report shows, as many locals have struggled to keep up with housing costs in Southern Nevada.

The typical rent for a one-bedroom unit in the Las Vegas area is \$1,478. That’s up 57.7%, or \$541, from five years earlier, according to personal-finance site LendingTree.

The price hike for a one-bedroom unit in Las Vegas, as measured by the percentage growth, was seventh-fastest among the 50 metro areas tracked for the report.

Landlords have lowered their prices lately, giving Las Vegas Valley tenants some relief. But overall, the new report underscores the affordability hurdles Southern Nevadans have faced.

**City spending \$800K to replace collapsed bridge**

**AL** HUNTSVILLE — The Huntsville City Council approved \$800,000 in funding for the \$6.3 million Aldridge Creek railroad bridge replacement project.

The new bridge would replace the one that collapsed in

July as a train was crossing. Two rail cars went into the creek, but no one was hurt.

The remaining funds for the project will be paid for by the Huntsville-Madison County Railroad Authority, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and a 2022 Federal Railroad Administration Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement grant.

**Man wearing wolf mask robbed cannabis store**

**NJ** WOODBURY — A Gloucester County man accused of robbing a cannabis dispensary while wearing a wolf mask will remain in jail while he awaits trial, a judge ruled last week.

Theodore D. Sparks, 25, of Woodbury, took \$700 from the dispensary, then drove to an Atlantic City casino, authorities said.

Superior Court Judge William Ziegler ordered Sparks remain detained until the case is resolved, finding the defendant “made a series of really bad decisions.”

Sparks was wearing a wolf mask when he forced his way into the business via a window, attempted to assault an employee and stole a cash drawer, prosecutors said. Employees told police Sparks, who was fired from the dispensary in September, previously brought the mask to work.

During an interview with police, Sparks admitted to the robbery and claimed the business owed him money, according to prosecutors. He claimed dispensary management took advantage of him, paying him for

fewer hours than he actually worked, and that employees plotted to get him fired.

After the robbery, he got a grilled cheese and a beer at a local bar before heading to an Atlantic City casino, where he spent the stolen money, according to police and statements made in court.

Defense attorney Robert Wolf challenged probable cause for the first-degree robbery charge, which requires use of a deadly weapon. He argued that his client didn’t use the crowbar as a weapon but to pry open the window he used to enter the business.

Following Sparks’ arrest, which was announced by police on Facebook, a woman came to Woodbury police to report a Sept. 3 incident in which she said Sparks accosted her in the parking lot after she left Nova Farms.

**Man sentenced for threatening to kill Biden**

**NC** RALEIGH — A Raleigh man was sentenced in federal court Friday after threatening to kill then-President Joe Biden and a U.S. Secret Service agent, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina said.

Michael James Ferr, 31, pleaded guilty Aug. 19, records show.

He’d been indicted April 15 on multiple federal charges in two separate incidents.

Ferr, also known as “Mikey,” will spend two years and three months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release, according to the news release.

— From wire reports

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# Chargers get messy OT win vs. Eagles

*Associated Press*

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Justin Herbert stiff-armed the opposition with his broken left hand, the defense forced big plays and the Los Angeles Chargers eked out a victory to move within two games of first place in the AFC West.

Cameron Dicker kicked a go-ahead 54-yard field goal — one of his five in the game — and Tony Jefferson intercepted Jalen Hurts at the 1-yard line in overtime of a messy 22-19 victory over the slumping Philadelphia Eagles on Monday night.

“What a team we have, they refuse to lose,” Chargers coach Jim Harbaugh effused, putting the win “in the discussion of the birth of my seven children, my marriage.”

Los Angeles (9-4) overcame Odafe Oweh’s penalty on a neutral zone infraction that gave the Eagles a first down on 4th and 4. Two plays later, Hurts threw deep to Jahan Dotson in double-coverage only to have Jefferson keep his feet in bounds on the game-ending play.

“Last night, we were talking, me and the corners, and you can ask Cam (Hart), I literally spoke this one into existence,” Jefferson said. “I told him, ‘Tip me the ball, I’ll be there.’ The football gods are looking out for me.”

Hurts threw four interceptions and the defending Super

Bowl champions lost their season-worst third in a row, falling to 8-5 on the season.

Dicker’s 46-yard field goal with 12 seconds left sent the game to the 10-minute extra session tied 19-19 after Jake Elliott’s 44-yarder minutes earlier had put Philadelphia ahead 19-16. Dicker was 5 for 5.

Elliott also kicked field goals of 54, 30 and 41 yards at SoFi Stadium, where the Eagles’ green-and-white jerseys dotted the crowd.

Saquon Barkley gave Philadelphia its first lead with a 52-yard touchdown to start the fourth quarter that made it 16-13. He ran for a combined 78 yards in the Eagles’ losses to the Cowboys and Bears before notching 122 on 20 carries for just the second time this season. He had 150 yards against the New York Giants on Oct. 26.

Herbert was 12 of 26 for 138 yards, one touchdown and one interception with a career-worst seven sacks. He also ran for 66 yards on 10 carries.

“He’s a superhero. He’s a competitive maniac,” Harbaugh said. “It felt like we were in a movie and you get to the point where you go, ‘OK, this is getting a little unrealistic.’”

Herbert said he knew he was going to play against Philadelphia as early as last Sunday, even before his surgery.

“The first couple days were kind of tough, getting the swelling down and be able to grip,” he said. “I did everything I could to hold onto the ball.”

Jefferson said, “He’s just a warrior.”

Hurts was 21-for-40 for 240 yards. In the first quarter, he had two turnovers on the same play as part of a chaotic sequence in which he was intercepted and he fumbled. Da’Shawn Hand picked off Hurts and then fumbled the ball before Hurts recovered and the quarterback fumbled and Troy Dye recovered to give the Chargers possession.

“We lost the game,” Hurts said, “and I didn’t play well enough to help us to win the game.”

The Eagles had five turnovers and six penalties for 53 yards.

“I thought the defense did a lot of good things and the offense moved the ball against a really good defense, but we didn’t finish,” Philadelphia coach Nick Sirianni said. “We kicked a lot of field goals and had some turnovers. It’s hard to beat a team on the road when you’re not finishing drives and getting three points. I have to put that on myself.”

LA tied the score 16-16 on Dicker’s 31-yard field goal with 7:26 remaining in the fourth.

The triple-turnover play in the second quarter typified Philadelphia’s offensive frustrations.

Hurts’ second-quarter pass to A.J. Brown was intercepted by Hand at the Los Angeles 17-yard line. Hand fumbled at the 24-yard line when he was hit by the Eagles’ Will Shipley. Hurts had the ball return to his hands at the 33, but he fumbled it when he was hit by the Chargers’ Jamarcee Caldwell.

Only Dye was able to secure the ball tightly when he jumped on it at the 43-yard line.

“It was amazing. You just can’t script that,” Hand said of his first career interception in eight NFL seasons. “It’s great football. That’s the moment you think about as a little kid.”

Hurts made history, becoming the only NFL player ever to throw an interception, recover a fumble and lose a fumble on the same play. Adding to the oddity was that Philadelphia entered with just eight giveaways all season, tied for the best in the NFL.

“As frustrating as the night was, we had an opportunity to win the game in the end,” Hurts said, when asked specifically about the wild second-quarter play. “I had the ball in my hands, driving down, having everything on our terms. And I didn’t bring it home.”

## Mendoza, Sayin, Love, Pavia named Heisman finalists

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Indiana quarterback Fernando Mendoza, Ohio State quarterback Julian Sayin, Notre Dame running back Jeremiyah Love and Vanderbilt quarterback Diego Pavia are the finalists for the Heisman Trophy given to the top player in college football.

The Heisman Trophy Trust announced the four finalists Monday night and invited them

to New York for the award presentation Saturday night.

Mendoza has guided the Hoosiers to their first No. 1 ranking and the top seed in the 12-team CFP bracket, throwing for 2,980 yards and a national-best 33 touchdown passes while also running for six scores.

He is the second Heisman finalist in school history, joining 1989 runner-up Anthony Thompson. Mendoza is the sev-

enth Indiana player to earn a top-10 finish and it marks another first in program history — having back-to-back players in the top 10. Hoosiers quarterback Kurtis Rourke was ninth last year.

Sayin led the Buckeyes to a No. 1 ranking for most of the season, throwing for 3,329 yards while tying for second in the country with 31 TD passes.

Love is fourth in the Bowl

Subdivision in yards rushing (1,372), fifth in per-game average (114.33) and third with 18 rushing touchdowns for the ninth-ranked Fighting Irish, who missed out on a College Football Playoff bid and opted not to play in a bowl game.

Pavia has thrown for a school-record 3,192 yards and 27 touchdowns for the No. 13 Commodores. He is the first Heisman finalist in Vanderbilt history.



# Sources: Dodgers sign Díaz, Phils keep Schwarber

*Associated Press*

ORLANDO, Fla. — Closer Edwin Díaz has agreed to a \$69 million, three-year contract with the World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press.

The person spoke Tuesday on the condition of anonymity because the agreement was subject to a successful physical. Díaz's agreement includes deferred payments by the Dodgers, who already owed \$1.051 billion in deferred pay to eight players from 2028-46.

A three-time All-Star who turns 32 on March 22, Díaz joins a Los Angeles bullpen that struggled last season, causing the team to shift rookie starter Roki Sasaki to closer in the post-season. Dodgers relievers had a 4.27 ERA, 21st among the 30 teams,

Meanwhile, Kyle Schwarber is staying in Philadelphia.

Multiple outlets reported on Tuesday that Schwarber had agreed to a \$150 million, five-year contract with the Phillies. ESPN was the first to report on the deal, citing unidentified sources.

Schwarber had been one of the biggest names in free agency. His new contract with Philadelphia could lead to more activity at baseball's winter meetings as his other suitors execute their alternative plans.

Schwarber is coming off an MVP-caliber season with the Phillies, setting career highs with an NL-best 56 homers and a major league-high 132 RBIs. He also scored a career-high 111 runs while leading the club to its second straight NL East title.

He won this year's All-Star Game for the NL by swatting three homers in a tiebreaking swing-off, and he finished second in the NL MVP race behind LA star Shohei Ohtani.

Relying on a 97-98 mph fastball and slider, Díaz became a fan favorite at Citi Field, where horns blared and fans danced when he entered games to "Narco" by Blasterjaxx & Timmy Trumpet.

The Mets prepared for his possible departure by agreeing to a \$51 million, three-year contract with Devin Williams, who left the crosstown Yankees after one season.

Díaz joins a Dodgers bullpen that includes left-hander Tanner Scott, who was bothered by elbow inflammation in his first season after signing a \$72 million, four-year contract. Jack Dreyer, Anthony Banda and Alex Vesia are also in the bullpen.

Díaz had 28 saves in 31 chances last season with a 6-3 record and 1.63 ERA for a disappointing Mets team that failed to reach the playoffs despite spending the second-most be-

hind Los Angeles.

He struck out 98 in 66⅓ innings.

Díaz has 253 saves in 294 chances over nine seasons with the Seattle Mariners (2016-18) and New York, which acquired him along with second baseman Robinson Canó for five players that included Jarred Kelenic and Anthony Swarzak. Díaz missed the 2023 season after tearing the patellar tendon in his right knee during a post-game celebration with Puerto Rico at the World Baseball Classic.

Díaz agreed to a \$102 million, five-year contract with the Mets after the 2022 season, a deal that included deferred money payable through 2042. He had the right to opt out after three years and \$64 million to become a free agent again. Of that \$64 million, \$15.5 million is deferred and payable through July 1, 2039.

## Jordan's legal team races against time in NASCAR trial

*Associated Press*

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Michael Jordan's attorneys were under pressure Tuesday to complete their presentation in the federal antitrust trial against NASCAR that is plodding so slowly the judge has repeatedly admonished both sides.

An economist used almost all of Monday to explain how he landed at a figure of \$364.7 million in damages owed by NASCAR to 23XI Racing and Front Row Motorsports in their revenue-sharing dispute with the top motorsports series in the United States.

U.S. District Judge Kenneth Bell had previously told Jeffrey Kessler, attorney for the two race teams, that he wants Kessler's case completed Tuesday, the seventh day of the trial in the Western District of North Carolina. He also asked the nine-person jury to serve an additional hour for the remainder of the week in an effort to avoid using a full third week to complete the case.

Edward Snyder, a professor of economics who worked in the antitrust division of the Department of Justice and has testified in more than 30 cases, including "Deflate-

gate" involving the NFL's New England Patriots, continued his testimony Tuesday.

He's so far outlined why he found NASCAR to be in a monopoly using anticompetitive business practices, and explained the complex formula to decide 23XI is owed \$215.8 million while Front Row is owed \$148.9 million.

Based on his calculations, Snyder determined NASCAR shorted 36 chartered teams \$1.06 billion from 2021-24.

NASCAR has contended Snyder's estimations are wrong and its own two experts "take serious issue" with the findings. Defense attorney Lawrence Buterman asked Snyder his opinion on NASCAR's upcoming expert witnesses and Snyder said they were two of the best economists in the world.

Bell wanted the defense to get to at least its first witness before end of day Tuesday, but Kessler had three remaining on his list once Snyder's testimony concluded. Kessler still planned to call NASCAR chairman Jim France, NASCAR commissioner Steve Phelps and Hall of Fame team owner Richard Childress.

The suit is about the 2025 charter agreement, which was presented to teams on a Friday in September 2024 with a same-day deadline to sign the 112-page document. The charter offer came after more than two years of bitter negotiations between NASCAR and its teams, who have called the agreement "a take-it-or-leave-it" ultimatum that they signed with "a gun to their head."

A charter is similar to the franchise model in other sports, but in NASCAR it guarantees 36 teams spots in the 40-car field, as well as specific revenue.

Jordan and three-time Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin for 23XI, along with Front Row Motorsports and owner Bob Jenkins, were the only two teams out of 15 to refuse the new charter agreement.

Snyder also testified NASCAR had \$250 million in annual earnings from 2021-24 and the France family took \$400 million in distributions during that period.

The final three witnesses for the two teams suing should shed more light on the acrimonious nature of the lengthy charter agreement negotiations.

# Nembhard helps Pacers hold off Kings

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Andrew Nembhard had 28 points and a season-high 12 assists, and helped Indiana regain control in the fourth quarter as the Pacers beat the Sacramento Kings 116-105 on Monday night.

Benedict Mathurin added 25 points and Pascal Siakam scored 23 for Indiana, which matched a season best with its second straight win and improved to 6-18 overall. The Pacers have won four of six after starting 2-16.

Russell Westbrook finished with 24 points, 14 assists and 13 rebounds for Sacramento in his fourth triple-double this season and the 207th of his career. DeMar DeRozan added 20 points and Zach LaVine had 16.

Indiana was in control much

of the way, extending a 66-51 halftime lead to 77-58 on Nembhard's layup with 8½ minutes remaining in the third quarter. But the Kings used a 37-point quarter to trim it to 92-88 going into the fourth, then reeled off an 11-0 run to open a 101-97 lead on Westbrook's basket midway through the period.

Nembhard made a 3-pointer to stem the tide and Mathurin followed with one of his own to put Indiana back on top at 103-101. Nembhard followed with another 3 and a layup to extend the Pacers' lead to 108-101.

**Suns 108, Timberwolves 105:** Mark Williams had 22 points and seven rebounds, and visiting Phoenix overcame Anthony Edwards' 40 points to snap Minnesota's five-game winning streak.

Collin Gillespie added 19 points and Dillon Brooks had 18 for the Suns, who stunned the Timberwolves with a late rally in their previous meeting but had an easier time Monday. Phoenix never trailed by more than two points in its final tuneup before traveling to Oklahoma City on Wednesday for an NBA Cup quarterfinal game.

Edwards shot 15-for-21 and Julius Randle had 21 points, but the rest of Minnesota's top players struggled. Naz Reid was 2-for-12 off the bench and Jaden McDaniels and Donte DiVincenzo both went 1-for-7.

Rudy Gobert was having a good night until he was ejected in the third quarter for a flagrant foul. He finished with 15 points and eight rebounds.

**Spurs 135, Pelicans 132:**

Harrison Barnes scored 24 points, rookie Dylan Harper capped a 22-point performance with a go-ahead driving floater with 9 seconds left and visiting San Antonio recovered from losing a 20-point halftime lead to beat reeling New Orleans.

Rookie Derik Queen led a furious Pelicans comeback bid, scoring 29 of his season-high 33 points in the second half, and adding 10 rebounds and 10 assists for his first triple-double.

De'Aaron Fox, who scored 14 points, hit two free throws with 1.1 seconds left for the final margin, which stood after Saddiq Bey's rushed 3-point shot at the horn bounced off the front rim.

Stephon Castle scored 18 points for the Spurs and Julian Champagnie added 17 points, highlighted by his five 3s.

# Hildeby's 1st shutout lifts Maple Leafs over Lightning

Associated Press

TORONTO — Dennis Hildeby made 29 saves for the first shutout of his NHL career as the Toronto Maple Leafs blanked the Tampa Bay Lightning 2-0 on Monday night.

Morgan Rielly and Auston Matthews, into the empty net, scored for Toronto, which improved to 4-0-1 over its last five games.

Jonas Johansson stopped 22 shots for Tampa Bay. The Lightning have dropped four straight after winning seven in a row.

Hildeby, who started the season as the Maple Leafs' No. 4 goaltending option, got another start with both Anthony Stolarz and Joseph Woll on injured reserve.

Tampa Bay had center Brayden Point and winger Nikita Kucherov back in the lineup from injury absences, but were minus No. 1 goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy. Point missed seven games with an undisclosed injury, while Kucherov sat out Saturday's 2-0 home loss to the New York Islanders.

**Kings 4, Mammoth 2:** Joel Armia scored twice, Adrian Kempe had a goal and assist, and visiting Los Angeles beat Utah.

Anze Kopitar also scored and Kevin Fiala had two assists to help the Kings get their third win in five games. Darcy Kuemper stopped 19 shots.

Clayton Keller had a goal and an assist, and Dylan Guenther also scored for the Mammoth in their sixth loss in eight games. Karel Vejmelka finished with 23 saves.

Kempe got LA on the scoreboard 7:50 into game as he got a pass from Fiala skated in on Vejmelka and put a backhand past the goalie for his 10th goal of the season.

**Flames 7, Sabres 4:** Yegor Sharangovich had two goals and an assist, and linemate Nazem Kadri added a goal and two assists to lead surging Calgary over visiting Buffalo.

Rasmus Andersson, Jonathan Huberdeau, Yan Kuznetsov and Mikael Backlund, into an empty net, also scored for the Flames (12-15-4). Calgary improved to 7-2-1 in its last 10 games.

Tage Thompson, Owen Power, Rasmus Dahlin and Alex Tuch scored for the Sabres (11-14-4). Buffalo has been outscored 16-7 while going 0-3 to begin a six-game trip.

Dustin Wolf made 25 saves to win his third straight start after watching backup Devin Cooley start three consecutive games.

**Red Wings 4, Canucks 0:** John Gibson made 39 saves for his first NHL shutout in nearly three years and visiting Detroit beat Vancouver.

James van Riemsdyk, Andrew Copp, Nate Danielson and Dylan Larkin scored for the Red Wings (16-11-3), who moved from just outside the crowded Eastern Conference playoff picture into first place in the Atlantic Division.

Detroit is 3-0-1 since an 0-3-1

slide.

The 32-year-old Gibson improved to 7-7-1 this season with his 25th career shutout and first since a 2-0 win for Anaheim over Dallas on Jan. 4, 2023. Four of his shutouts have come against the Canucks.

**Wild 4, Kraken 1:** Joel Eriksson Ek had a goal and two assists, and visiting Minnesota scored three times in the third period to beat Seattle.

Marcus Johansson, Kirill Kaprizov and Vladimir Tarasenko also scored to help the Wild snap a two-game skid that followed a 12-game point streak (10-0-2). Filip Gustavsson stopped 23 shots.

Jordan Eberle scored and Philipp Grubauer finished with 25 saves as the Kraken lost their sixth straight — fifth straight in regulation.

Kaprizov had an empty-netter for his 18th goal of the season with 1:15 remaining, and Tarasenko added another 24 seconds later to seal Minnesota's win.