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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

US soldiers fight to keep base free of virus

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

CAMP WALKER, South Korea — U.S. soldiers wearing face masks and gloves wielded thermometers instead of guns, as the military fought to keep a deadly virus from spreading to this base in the middle of South Korea's hardest-hit area.

The central government raised the alert to its highest level Sunday as the number of confirmed cases of the new coronavirus soared past 600, with five deaths.

The outbreak has spread rapidly since hitting the southeastern city of Daegu and surrounding areas last week, prompting growing concern for the local Army garrison with more than 9,000 American soldiers, family members and other personnel.

Soldiers have been banned from nonessential off-post travel to and from the base, and were told Sunday not to shake hands with anyone.

Civilians have been encour-

aged to follow the same guidance. Base entry restrictions have been tightened to forbid most visitors, although authorized South Koreans were allowed to come to work.

Col. Edward Ballanco, the garrison's commander, said precautions were necessary but there was no reason to panic.

"We don't know of a single American or Korean who has tested positive who has stepped foot on a U.S. installation," he told Stars and Stripes during an interview at his office on Saturday. "And that remains true here in Daegu even with the outbreak."

The garrison, which oversees Camp Walker and several other installations in the region, also has implemented health checks at the gates. Soldiers screen all entrants with a questionnaire about possible exposure to the respiratory virus and temperature checks.

However, the military lacks the ability to do its own testing for coronavirus on post so suspected cases have to be sent to

local hospitals.

Officials were struggling to facilitate the needs of a community finding itself essentially on lockdown.

Face masks with the ability to filter pathogens were disappearing from the shelves of base stores within an hour of delivery.

Schools that were shuttered last week were to remain closed at least through Friday as a precautionary measure, the Department of Defense Education Activity said late Sunday.

Chaplains held virtual church services Sunday on the garrison's Facebook page.

The commissary extended the number of days it's open next week. Businesses asked customers to use hand sanitizer before entering.

And several soldiers and medics were diverted from their usual duties to act as health screeners at the gates, in addition to the usual guards who check IDs. They used thermal thermometers to avoid touching people.

Anybody with symptoms, which are similar to the flu, was encouraged to first call a hotline at the military hospital on Camp Humphreys. Tests were being routed through local hospitals.

"We are not testing the soldiers on post; we're sending them off-post to test," Ballanco said in response to a question on Sunday.

The spike in infections followed weeks of relatively low numbers in South Korea after the coronavirus appeared in China in December, killing more than 2,000 people on the mainland before spreading to other countries.

South Korea's Center for Disease Control said Sunday that more than half of the country's infections were linked to a secretive religious movement called the Shincheonji Church of Jesus the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony, which has a chapter about a mile from one of Camp Walker's gates in Daegu.

Venice Carnival canceled to stop spread of virus

Associated Press

CODOGNO, Italy — Italy stepped up measures Sunday to ban public gatherings amid rapidly rising numbers of COVID-19 cases in the country and a third death from the virus, calling off the famed Venice Carnival attended by thousands of revelers.

The decision to call off the Carnival was announced by Veneto regional Gov. Luca Zaia as the numbers of confirmed coronavirus cases soared to 152, the largest number outside Asia.

"The ordinance is immediately operative and will go into effect at midnight," said Zaia, whose area includes Venice, where thousands packed St. Mark's Square. Carnival would have run through Tuesday.

Buses, trains and other forms of public transport — including boats in Venice — were being disinfected, Zaia told reporters. Museums, a top tourist draw anytime of the year, were also ordered to shut down after Sunday in Venice. The shutdown is expected to last at least through March 1.

Authorities said three people in Venice have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, all of them in their late 80s and who are hospitalized in critical condition. Zaia said among those infected was a nurse.

Nearly all of Italy's 152 confirmed cases are clustered in the north, with 110 in Lombardy and others in the regions of Veneto, Emilia-Romagna and Piedmont. Only two cases have been found in the south, a Chinese couple in Rome earlier this month.

The death on Sunday of an elderly woman, who was already suffering from cancer and who contracted the virus, raised the nation's death toll to three, said Lombardy regional official Giulio Gallera. All three deaths occurred in the north.

Authorities expressed frustration that they haven't been able to track down the source of the virus spread in the north, which surfaced last week when an Italian man in Codogno, in his late 30s, became critically ill.

For now, Angelo Borrelli, head of the national Civil Protection agency, told reporters in Rome, the strategy is to concentrate on closures and other restrictions to try to stem the spread in the country.

Japanese woman admits to slaying of US airman in trial

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

TACHIKAWA, Japan — On the first day of her jury trial Friday in Tokyo District Court, a 28-year-old Japanese woman admitted to killing her U.S. airman boyfriend at his home near Yokota Air Base.

Aria Saito, of Tokyo, faces charges of murder and violation of Japan's Swords and Firearms Control Law in the November 2018 death of Master Sgt. Nicholas Vollweiler. The 35-year-old, who served as the Yokota security forces squadron's chief of standards and evaluation, was stabbed in the neck with an 8-inch kitchen knife.

Defense attorneys say the killing was not pre-meditated, but prosecutors insist Saito planned the attack. In response to a question from Presiding Judge Yu Takeshita, Saito admitted she committed the offenses in the indictment against her.

Saito was working at an adult entertainment business in June 2018 when she met Vollweiler. They began dating, vacationed

together on Okinawa the next month and she began splitting her time between his house near Yokota and her mother's Tokyo home, her attorneys said.

Vollweiler was separated from his wife, who lived in Hawaii. Saito's attorneys said he did not tell Saito he was married. Vollweiler's friend, Sgt. Maj. Douglas Hansen, testified Friday that Saito knew about his marital status.

Saito's attorneys said in court she had learned of Vollweiler's marriage through social media, but Vollweiler said he planned on a divorce.

On Nov. 3 or 4 of 2018, less than a week before his death, Vollweiler broke up with Saito, saying he did not want to divorce his wife, defense attorneys said. Saito then pushed and struck Vollweiler, broke some of his belongings and tried to let loose Vollweiler's retired military working dog, Jimmy. Military police arrived and took Saito to her mother's house, Hansen said.

On Nov. 8, Saito appeared at Vollweiler's home unannounced, with two kitchen

knives with 8- and 6.5-inch blades in her bag, prosecutors said. Saito's attorneys said she intended to use the knives to kill herself, not Vollweiler, but prosecutors disagreed.

In the days prior, Saito had searched Google for the terms "stab," "neck" and "fatal wound," according to printouts of her search history presented Friday.

They arrested Saito just before 8 p.m., and Vollweiler was pronounced dead an hour later at a local hospital, prosecutors said.

Defense attorneys argued events that day exceeded Saito's ability to cope with them, and that her Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder prevented her from controlling her actions and emotions.

Saito was "emotionally unstable" and "fragile more than others," the defense attorney said, adding that she had low self-worth.

The trial is scheduled to continue Tuesday. Witnesses expected to testify include Rodgers, a coroner and a psychologist who will speak about Saito's mental state.

2 chiefs fired for toxic environment in Hawaii

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The commander and chief master sergeant heading security forces at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam were removed from their positions Tuesday for fostering a toxic work environment.

Lt. Col. Christopher Robinson and Chief Master Sgt. Justin Crockett of the 647th Security Forces Squadron were "relieved following an investigation which revealed failures in leadership that led to a toxic work environment," Staff Sgt. Nicholas Brown, a 15th Wing spokesman, said in a statement. The wing has oversight of the security forces.

Col. Tammie Harris, the 647th Air Base Group commander, relieved Robinson, who took command in July 2018, "for lack of confidence in his ability to effectively command," while Crockett was removed "for his role in creating a toxic work environment," Brown said.

"Harris determined the command team did not take appropriate actions to enable and grow the appropriate organizational culture across all levels within the squadron," he said. "The investigation will not be released at this time to protect the privacy and due process rights of the airmen involved."

Another base official, who had knowledge of the matter but was not authorized to speak publicly, said Crockett had created "issues with morale or disrespecting personnel — either superiors or those under his supervision."

Lt. Col. Melissa Hull was designated acting commander of the 647th, Brown said. She was previously the Security Forces Division deputy at Headquarters Pacific Air Forces.

Troops take part in disaster relief exercise

BY JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A small group of U.S. airmen and Japanese troops met inside a hangar Friday to prepare for the next disaster relief effort in a nation prone to earthquakes and typhoons.

Yokota's 374th Airlift Wing participated for the first time in Japan's annual, nationwide Joint Bilateral Disaster Relief Exercise, which the Air Force calls Tomodachi Rescue Ex-

ercise, or TREX, said Capt. Jason Le Pré, of Owings, Md., the pilot and deputy mission commander.

Tomodachi recalls the monthslong, \$90 million relief operation of the same name that the U.S. Air Force undertook after a magnitude 9.0 earthquake and 130-foot-high tsunami devastated northeastern Japan in March 2011.

Friday's drill involved the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force driving 10,000 Meals, Ready to Eat to a Yokota

hangar in three trucks, said JGSDF Capt. Hideyuki Hosuki through a translator. The trucks arrived within a prescribed time window from several locations.

U.S. airmen with a forklift unloaded the trucks, staged the stacks of MREs on pallets designed for airlift and prepared them for loading onto one of Yokota's C-130J Super Hercules.

The MREs were bound the next day to Komaki Air Base, a Japan Air Self-Defense airfield north of Nagoya, Le Pré said.

ISIS, al-Qaida joining forces in West Africa

The Washington Post

NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania — Groups linked to al-Qaida and Islamic State, at war with each other in the Middle East, are working together to take control of territory across a vast stretch of West Africa, U.S. and local officials say, sparking fears the regional threat could grow into a global crisis.

Fighters appear to be coordinating attacks and carving out mutually agreed-upon areas of influence in the Sahel, a strip of land south of the Sahara desert. The rural territory at risk is so large it could “fit multiple Afghanistans and Iraqs,” said Brig. Gen. Dagvin Anderson, head of the U.S. military’s special operations arm in Africa.

“What we’ve seen is not just random acts of violence under a terrorist banner, but a deliberate campaign that is trying to bring these various groups under a common cause,” he said. “That larger effort then poses a threat to the United States.”

The militants have wielded increasingly complex tactics in recent months as they have rooted deeper into Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, ambushing army bases and dominating villages with surprising force, according to interviews with more than a dozen senior officials and military leaders from the U.S., France and West Africa. The groups are not declaring “caliphates,” so as to avoid scrutiny from the West, officials said, buying time to train, gather force and plot attacks that could ultimately reach major international targets.

A coalition of al-Qaida loyalists called JNIM has as many as 2,000 fighters in West Africa, according to a U.S. report released this month. The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, which staged the 2017 attack that killed four American soldiers in Niger, is also thought to be hundreds strong and recruiting combatants in northeastern Mali.

“This cancer will spread far beyond here if we don’t fight

together to end it,” said Gen. Ibrahim Fane, secretary-general of Mali’s ministry of defense, whose country has lost more than 100 soldiers in routine clashes since October.

While al-Qaida and ISIS are enemies in Syria and Yemen, allegiances in West Africa tend to be more fluid, bolstered by tribal ties and practical concerns rather than ideology. The affiliates have common foes — the West and local governments from which they’re trying to wrest control, the military leaders said.

U.S. officials have long worried about the possibility of alliances between the world’s most notorious terrorist organizations, and the concerns have grown in the months since the collapse of ISIS’ self-declared caliphate in Iraq and Syria.

American agencies watched late last year as al-Qaida and ISIS affiliates launched a seemingly coordinated campaign to isolate Ouagadougou, the capital in Burkina Faso, by periodically seizing control

of highways into the city of 2.2 million, said a counterterrorism official in Washington who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence assessments.

They bombed bridges and attacked military convoys, managing to halt transit until government forces arrived to reopen the roads, the official said.

The extremists are “more organized and they’re more mobile,” said a high-ranking French military official who also spoke on the condition of anonymity. “They’re carrying out professional attacks like we’ve never seen.”

The militants, the officials said, have employed a more “complex” approach to grabbing power, according to unclassified U.S. Africa Command slides obtained by *The Washington Post*. They’re destroying infrastructure, assassinating local leaders and emptying key army posts in coordinated strikes to separate people from the government.

US leads West Africa training exercises

Associated Press

THIES, Senegal — Crouching in the sparse brush, maneuvering into formations and then shooting at a target, about 10 soldiers from Burkina Faso are among a select group of African soldiers being trained to battle West Africa’s fast-growing extremist threat.

They are carrying out drills as part of the U.S. military-led annual counterterrorism exercise in West Africa, which, this year, takes place in the shadow of possible U.S. troop cuts in Africa, although extremist attacks in the region have reached a worrying new level.

A Pentagon decision on the size of the U.S. force in Africa is pending as part of a global review with the aim of better

countering Russia and China.

More than 1,500 service members from the armies of 34 African and partner training nations have assembled for the Flintlock exercises in Senegal and Mauritania, the two countries in West Africa’s sprawling Sahel region that, so far, have not been hit by violence from extremists linked to al-Qaida or the Islamic State.

The U.S. Africa Command defers questions about the possible troop cuts to the Pentagon. It has said that European nations should step up to help France’s 5,000-strong force leading the counterterrorism fight in the Sahel, the region just below the Sahara Desert. French leaders have appealed to Washington to keep U.S. troops in place.

Debris found in 70% of inspected 737 Max jets

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Debris has been found in the fuel tanks of 70% of grounded Boeing 737 Max jets that have been inspected, Boeing confirmed Saturday.

Boeing inspectors found the debris in 35 out of about 50 jets that were inspected. They are among 400 built in the past year that the company hasn’t been able to deliver to airline customers.

Boeing temporarily halted production last month because the planes were grounded after crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia that killed 346 people.

Although debris hasn’t been linked to those crashes, metal shavings, tools and other objects left in planes during assembly can raise the risk of

electrical short-circuiting and fires. On Tuesday, the company had said that debris was found in “several” planes, but it did not give a precise number.

The debris was discovered during maintenance on parked planes, and Boeing said that it immediately made corrections in its production system to prevent a recurrence. Those steps include more inspections before fuel tanks are sealed.

“This is unacceptable and won’t be tolerated on any Boeing aircraft when it’s delivered to the customer,” the company said in a statement Saturday.

A Boeing spokesman cautioned against applying the 70% to all 400 jets, saying that there’s no way to know how many have the same problem until they’re all inspected.

Sanders wins Nevada, takes national Democratic lead

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Bernie Sanders' commanding Nevada caucus victory made him a top target for his Democratic rivals and a growing source of anxiety for establishment Democrats worried that the nomination of a self-avowed democratic socialist could cost the party the White House.

Sanders' win solidified his front-runner status in the crowded field as the race turns to Saturday's presidential primary in South Carolina, where his moderate opponents will scramble to try to blunt the Vermont senator's momentum. Just three days after that contest, 14 states vote on Super Tuesday, March 3, when one-third of the delegates are awarded.

A strong showing in those states could put Sanders on a glide path to the nomination against Republican President Donald Trump.

That prospect has amplified concerns for Democrats who believe Sanders' liberal policies will drive away moderate and independent voters in the general election in November. South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn, the top-ranking black leader in Congress, warned of added risk for Democrats if Sanders was the nominee.

"I think it would be a real burden for us in these states or congressional districts that we have to do well in," Clyburn told "This Week" on ABC.

Sanders' campaign argued the candidate will bring in new voters — largely progressives, young people and voters of color — who have been alienated by politics.

He successfully relied on that coalition Saturday to dominate his Democratic rivals in Nevada, pulling far ahead of second-place finisher former Vice President Joe Biden and Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., who came in third. Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren landed in fourth, while Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Tom Steyer were still in a close race for fifth on Sunday.

"We are bringing our people together," Sanders said Saturday night. "In Nevada we have just

brought together a multigenerational, multiracial coalition which is not only going to win in Nevada, it's going to sweep this country."

But some Democrats are worried that the new focus on Sanders may be too little, too late. Democratic strategist James Carville bemoaned the fact that until recently, most of Sanders' opponents have largely failed to attack Sanders or draw scrutiny to his record.

If Sanders is the nominee, Carville said, "the risk in losing the election is deep and profound." He added: "We just gotta pray."

Indeed, Trump gloated on social media, continuing his weeklong push to sow discord between Sanders and his Democratic rivals. "Looks like Crazy Bernie is doing well in the Great State of Nevada. Biden & the rest look weak," Trump tweeted. "Congratulations Bernie, & don't let them take it away from you!"

All the Democratic candidates are pledging to stay in the race through South Carolina, and some candidates were already campaigning Sunday in Super Tuesday states.

Nevada's caucuses were the first chance for White House hopefuls to demonstrate appeal to a diverse group of voters in a state far more representative of the country as a whole than Iowa and New Hampshire. Sanders won by rallying his fiercely loyal base and tapping into support from the state's large Latino community.

Saturday's win built on his victory earlier this month in the New Hampshire primary. He essentially tied for first place in the Iowa caucuses with Buttigieg, who has sought to position himself as an ideological counter to Sanders' unabashedly progressive politics.

But for all the energy and attention devoted to the first three states, they award only a tiny fraction of the delegates needed to capture the nomination. After South Carolina, the contest becomes national in scope, putting a premium on candidates who have the resources to compete in states as large as California and Texas.

2nd person killed by a float at Mardi Gras

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — A man was struck and killed by a Mardi Gras float during a raucous Saturday night street parade in New Orleans, becoming the second person in days killed along a parade route during this year's Carnival season, authorities said.

The man was fatally injured just before 7 p.m. as the popular Krewe of Endymion was rolling, New Orleans police said in a statement. He was pronounced dead at the scene, and the Orleans Parish Coroner's Office was to release his name and cause of death after completing an autopsy and notifying his family.

The remainder of Endymion's parade was scrapped Saturday evening. Police said that 13 floats had already gone ahead when the accident occurred with the 14th float in the formation. Remaining floats that followed, along with marching groups, were diverted from the accident scene on Canal Street, a wide route popular with parade viewers in the Mississippi River port city.

The fatality came as New Orleans was still mourning the death of a 58-year-old woman who was run over by a parade float Wednesday night, witnesses said.

Mayor LaToya Cantrell said Saturday night that the south Louisiana city was grieving.

"To be confronted with such tragedy a second time at the height of our Carnival celebrations seems an unimaginable burden to bear. The City and the people of New Orleans will come together, we will grieve together, and we will persevere together," Cantrell said in a statement. "Our hearts break for those lost and for their loved ones, and our prayers and deepest sympathies are with them."

Rocket crash kills self-proclaimed daredevil

Associated Press

BARSTOW, Calif. — A self-styled daredevil died Saturday after a rocket in which he launched himself crashed into the ground, a colleague and a witness said.

"Mad" Mike Hughes died after the homemade rocket crashed on private property near Barstow about 1:52 p.m.

near Highway 247, the Daily Press of Victorville reported.

Waldo Stakes, a colleague who was at the rocket launch, said Hughes, 64, was killed.

Justin Chapman, a freelance journalist, told the AP that he and his wife witnessed the crash.

The rocket appeared to rub against the launch apparatus,

which might have torn the parachutes attached to it, Chapman said.

The rocket came straight down into the ground, Chapman said.

In March 2018, Hughes, who believed the Earth is flat, propelled himself about 1,875 feet into the air before a hard landing in the Mojave Desert.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Monastery vandalized with spray paint

CT FARMINGTON — Farmington police responded to reports of several instances of spray paint on monastery grounds that left the patrons “in shock” and may be investigated as a hate crime, the Hartford Courant reported.

Portions of the grounds of the Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center were “marred” by spray paint, according to a Facebook post by the monastery. The post said that the Peace Garden created in honor of Father John Baptist was desecrated.

Farmington police spokesperson Lt. Timothy McKenzie said the security footage of the monastery showed two vehicles pull into the parking lot but he did not go into specifics because of the ongoing investigation.

2019 was hottest year on record for Oahu

HI HONOLULU — Oahu experienced its hottest year on record in 2019, according to federal officials and municipal authorities.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said the island reached its highest temperatures last year, and the National Weather Service said 273 daily temperature records were tied or broken across the state, Hawaii Public Radio reported.

A separate study by the City and County of Honolulu also found the state experienced its hottest recorded day last year.

Woman dials 911 when parents end cell service

OH CANTON — An Ohio woman was arrested for calling 911 when her parents cut off her cellphone service, au-

thorities said.

Seloni Khetarpal was arrested by Massillon police and charged with disrupting police services, a fourth-degree felony, The Canton Repository reported.

Records show that Khetarpal, 36, repeatedly called emergency dispatchers because her parents had terminated her cellphone service, which they paid for.

An officer advised her to call emergency services only for emergencies.

Two hours later, she called again and “was belligerent and stated she believed it to be a legitimate issue,” according to jail records.

Truck carrying cattle overturns, killing some

NC WINSTON-SALEM — A truck carrying 41 cattle crashed on a North Carolina highway, and at least some of the animals on board died.

The Winston-Salem Journal reported that the crash occurred on Interstate 40.

State police said that the driver of the truck veered off the highway, and his rig overturned. The unidentified driver suffered minor injuries.

Officials from the Winston-Salem Fire Department said that some of the cattle were killed.

Manatee deaths drop to 606 in 2019

FL FORT LAUDERDALE — Statewide, manatee deaths decreased to 606 deaths last year, down from 824 in 2018.

Experts said it appears the main cause of the decline in deaths is the reduced effect of red tide algae on manatees. Twenty-one manatees died of red tide in 2019, compared with 288 in 2018, said Jaclyn Lopez,

a spokeswoman for the Florida Center for Biological Diversity.

The Sun-Sentinel reported that boats and other watercraft were the biggest cause of manatee deaths last year, causing at least 136 of the fatalities — or about 22% for the year.

College music hall to be named after donor

IN WEST LAFAYETTE — A new building for Purdue University’s bands and orchestral program will be named after a Florida couple who donated \$10 million toward the project.

Purdue President Mitch Daniels announced the donation came from Marc and Sharon Hagle.

Marc Hagle is president of the Florida-based real estate company Tricor International. He graduated from Purdue in 1971 with a bachelor’s degree and in 1972 with a master’s.

Construction of the \$20 million project is expected to begin in September and finish by the end of 2021.

Uber driver fires gun at backseat drivers

LA NEW ORLEANS — An Uber driver accused of firing shots at passengers who told him he was driving in the wrong direction was arrested.

Ahmad Ahmad, 53, picked up the passengers from a bar in New Orleans, news outlets reported. When Ahmad began driving across the Mississippi River, the passengers informed him he was going in the wrong direction, New Orleans police said in a news release. An argument began and Ahmad stopped the car.

One of the victims called police while another ordered another Uber. After the second ride-hailing driver arrived,

Ahmad allegedly took the key out of that car’s ignition, got a gun from his vehicle and fired shots at the victims.

Wendy’s pays to resolve labor law allegations

MA BOSTON — Fast-food chain Wendy’s agreed to pay \$400,000 to resolve allegations that it violated child labor laws by having teenage employees at dozens of Massachusetts restaurants work later and longer than allowed, the state attorney general’s office announced.

“The office began investigating after a minor employed at a Wendy’s in Worcester complained that teenagers were working too late into the night and too many hours per day.

Man owed \$780K in taxes, hid \$435K more

AL BIRMINGHAM — An Alabama man pleaded guilty to hiding more than \$435,000 from the Internal Revenue Service after acknowledging that he already owed about \$780,000 in back taxes.

John P. Cooney, 70, of Birmingham pleaded guilty to tax evasion, a Department of Justice news release said.

It said that court documents show that in 2011, he acknowledged filing three years of late returns admitting that he owed \$780,000 for taxes due in 2008 through 2010.

He then created a company, GVA Advisors LLC, where he had his employer deposit his pay and also had investment dividends sent, the department said.

“From 2013 through 2016, Cooney deposited more than \$435,000 into the GVA account, concealing the funds from the IRS,” it said.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Fury TKOs Wilder in 7th, reclaims title

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Tyson Fury reinvented himself once again, and once again he's a heavyweight champion.

The Gypsy King dropped Deontay Wilder twice Saturday night in their heavyweight title rematch, turning from boxer to puncher to win the title when Wilder's corner threw in the towel as he was taking a beating in the seventh round.

It was a stunning turnaround for a fighter who came back from drug and alcohol abuse to win the title for a second time, made even more surprising because Wilder was the devastating puncher in their first fight 14 months ago.

"The king has returned to his throne," proclaimed Fury, who fought to a draw with Wilder in their first fight.

Fury dropped Wilder in the third round with a right hand that seemed to take the legs out of the champion. He put him down again in the fifth round, this time with a left hand to the body.

He also bloodied Wilder's ear, and seemed to lick the blood off his shoulder in a bizarre scene in the sixth round. If that

wasn't enough fun for the night, he tried to lead the crowd in a singalong of "American Pie" after the fight. Fury knew all the words.

The end came at 1:39 of the seventh round when referee Kenny Bayless stopped the fight after Wilder's corner threw in the towel as he was getting pummeled in a neutral corner. Blood was pouring out of Wilder's ear for several rounds before Fury went in for the shoulder lick.

It was the first loss for Wilder in 44 fights, and it came in the 11th defense of the title he won in 2015.

"Even the greatest have lost and come back," Wilder said. "I make no excuses. This is what big-time boxing is all about."

The two fighters are under contract for a third fight, though Wilder could opt out of it as the loser. If the fight happens, Fury would get the better part of a 60-40 purse bid.

Fury stalked Wilder almost from the opening bell, using his jab to control the early rounds. He won every round on the scorecard of the Associated Press and was in total command of the fight when it ended.

Ringside punch stats demonstrated Fury's dominance, showing him out-landing Wilder 82-34 in total punches. Fury landed 58 power punches in less than seven rounds of the rematch after landing just 38 in the first fight. Wilder landed just 34 punches all fight and just 18 power shots.

Wilder briefly protested the stoppage, as a pro-Fury crowd of 15,816 at the MGM Grand hotel roared in delight. The highly anticipated fight drew a heavyweight record \$16.9 million gate and promoters believe it sold well on pay-per-view, too.

"I wish my corner would have let me go out on my shield," Wilder said. "He did what he did. There's no excuses."

Wilder, who at 6-foot-7 and 231 pounds was the smaller man in the ring to the 6-foot-9 British giant, was backpedaling the entire fight, trying to catch Fury coming in with a right hand. But he was never able to throw it effectively, and unable to deal with Fury's jab either.

Two judges had Fury winning every round, while the third gave Wilder one round. Fury had a point deducted for

grabbing and pushing in the fifth round.

"He manned up and he really did show the heart of a champion," Fury said. "He's a warrior, he will be back, he will be a champion again. But the king has returned."

Fury had bulked up to 273 pounds for the rematch, vowing to change tactics and become the big puncher. He was true to his word, dominating early with a jab that stopped Wilder in his tracks and then landing combinations to the head and body.

Fury (30-0-1, 21 KO) came into the ring carried aloft on a throne with a crown on his head. Then he showed he was really the Gypsy King as he made it an easy night against a fighter who had gone 12 years without losing as a pro.

For Wilder it was a stunning end to an unbeaten mark that had seen him knock out 41 of his previous 43 opponents. But his devastating right hand was never a factor, and Fury seemed to walk through it. That was unlike the first fight 14 months ago when Wilder knocked Fury down twice on his way to a draw.

NHL roundup

Caps' Ovechkin joins 700-goal club in loss to Leafs

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — With power and a prodigious shot, Alex Ovechkin now stands where few in hockey have been.

He became the eighth NHL player to score 700 career goals, reaching the milestone in the third period of the Washington Capitals' 3-2 loss to the New Jersey Devils on Saturday.

"It's a special moment," Ovechkin said. "When you get closer you start thinking when it's going to happen. Finally, it's over so we don't have to talk about it anymore. We're going to move on."

Hurricanes 6, Maple Leafs 3: Emergency backup goalie Dave Ayres made eight saves in relief of Carolina's two injured netminders in a win at Toronto.

"It was wild, it was fun," said Ayres, who gets paid \$500 and gets to keep his jersey.

The native of nearby Whitby, Ontario, faces shots from professional players on an almost-daily basis during the season but never thought he'd be called into service in an NHL game.

Coyotes 7, Lightning 3: Clayton Keller and Conor Garland each had two goals and an assist, leading host Arizona

past Tampa Bay.

Flyers 4, Jets 2: Scott Laughton scored two goals as host Philadelphia extended its winning streak to three games with a win over Winnipeg.

Rangers 3, Sharks 2: Jesper Fast scored twice, Igor Shesterkin made 44 saves and host New York won its third straight game.

Sabres 5, Penguins 2: Jack Eichel scored twice as visiting Buffalo dealt Pittsburgh its second blowout in three days.

Canadiens 3, Senators 0: Max Domi had a pair of goals to help Montreal won at Ottawa.

Predators 4, Blue Jackets 3 (SO): Rocco Grimaldi scored in the eighth round of the shootout, and host Nashville beat Columbus.

Canucks 9, Bruins 3: Tyler Toffoli scored his first two goals with his new team and added an assist as host Vancouver routed Boston.

Golden Knights 5, Panthers 3: Reilly Smith scored two goals, Marc-Andre Fleury made 31 saves and host Vegas beat Florida.

Avalanche 2, Kings 1 (SO): Joonas Donskoi scored in the shootout and Colorado earned its sixth straight road win.

College basketball roundup

Kansas stops Baylor's run

Associated Press

WACO, Texas — Udoka Azubuike had 23 points and a career-high 19 rebounds and No. 3 Kansas held on to beat No. 1 Baylor 64-61 on Saturday, snapping the Bears' 23-game winning streak and likely ending their five-week hold on the No. 1 spot in the AP poll.

The Jayhawks (24-3, 13-1 Big 12) have won 12 in a row since their first home loss to Baylor on Jan. 11. They had a 10-point lead with 6½ minutes left but had to hold off Baylor's late charge.

Isaiah Moss, who had 11 points, made two free throws for Kansas with 7.9 seconds left before a timeout. The Bears (24-2, 13-1) had one more shot, but Butler's three-pointer from beyond the top of the key ricocheted off the front of the iron as time expired.

No. 23 BYU 91, No. 2 Gonzaga 78: Yoeli Childs scored 28 points to help the host Cougars end the Bulldogs' 19-game winning streak.

UNLV 66, No. 4 San Diego State 63: The Runnin' Rebels won on the road to snap the Aztecs' 26-game winning streak and end their run as the nation's only undefeated team.

Elijah Mitrou-Long scored 19 points, including two free throws with 11.5 seconds left for UNLV.

No. 5 Dayton 80, Duquesne 70: Obi Toppin had 28 points as the host Flyers won their 16th game in a row, beating the Dukes.

No. 5 Duke 77, Virginia Tech 64: Cassius Stanley scored 21 points and made a season-high five three-pointers to help the host Blue Devils.

No. 8 Florida State 67, North Carolina State 61: M.J. Walker scored all 12 of his points after halftime to help the visiting Seminoles take control in the second half.

No. 10 Kentucky 65, Florida 59: Immanuel Quickley scored a career-high 26 points, including 15 of the host Wildcats' 17

points in overtime as Army completed its first regular-season sweep of Navy since the 2011-12 season by dominating the extra period to take an 86-75 victory on Saturday afternoon.

No. 11 Louisville 72, North Carolina 55: Jordan Nwora scored 18 points to lead the host Cardinals (23-5, 14-3 Atlantic Coast Conference), who won their second straight game and guaranteed they would stay in first place in the conference.

No. 12 Villanova 64, Xavier 55: Saddiq Bey scored 22 points and the Wildcats extended their late-February surge, beating the host Musketeers for their fourth straight win.

No. 13 Auburn 73, Tennessee 66: Samir Doughty scored 22 points and the host Tigers rallied from a 17-point deficit in the second half to beat the Volunteers in a game marred by an ugly incident involving a fan.

No. 14 Oregon 73, No. 24 Arizona 72 (OT): Payton Pritchard scored a career-high 38 points, Shakur Juiston added all of his team's nine points in overtime and the Ducks rallied to win on the road.

TCU 67, No. 17 West Virginia 60 (OT): Kevin Samuel scored six of his 19 points in overtime and the Horned Frogs extended the Mountaineers' Big 12 road woes.

UCLA 70, No. 18 Colorado 63: Tyger Campbell had seven of his 15 points during a 20-3 Bruins run in the second half, and UCLA rallied from nine points down to win on the road and tie the Buffaloes atop the Pac-12 Conference.

Providence 84, No. 19 Marquette 72: Luwane Pipkins scored 24 points and David Duke had 15 to lead the host Friars to their fourth straight victory over a ranked team.

Memphis 60, No. 22 Houston 59: Precious Achiuwa scored 10 points, including the go-ahead free throw with 28.2 seconds left, and the host Tigers beat the Cougars.

Army 86, Navy 75: Tommy Funk scored eight of his 32

Hecklers get signs stolen at Astros' exhibition

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Fans hoping to heckle the sign-stealing Houston Astros at their spring opener were met with quite the coincidence.

They got their signs stolen.

In the Astros' first spring training game since their sign-stealing scandal rocked baseball, some fans brought signs jeering Houston, and ballpark personnel confiscated them before the exhibition opener against the World Series champion Washington Nationals on Saturday night.

In a Series rematch, the Nats got hearty cheers, while everyone in an Astros jersey — including the mascot, Orbit — was booed. Houston did not use any players implicated in MLB's probe.

Two men in Nationals gear sitting behind the Astros dugout briefly held up crudely drawn signs just before first pitch. One read: "You see my hate?" in large block letters. And another said: "Houston" with an asterisk below it, suggesting the Astros' 2017 World Series title should be permanently blemished because of the cheating.

The men didn't get to show off their signs for long. A woman who worked for the ballpark quickly approached to take the signs. They didn't argue, but did look confused as she walked away with them folded in her arms.

The Astros and Nationals share a spring training complex. Houston was designated the home team Saturday.

Matthew Silliman, who held one of the signs, said he didn't know they were forbidden.

"I'm a big Nats fan and it's wrong," said Silliman, who drove to the game from Tampa Bay and said he's been waiting to let the Astros know what he thinks of them. "They're cheaters."

points in overtime as Army completed its first regular-season sweep of Navy since the 2011-12 season by dominating the extra period to take an 86-75 victory on Saturday afternoon.

Funk hit two free throws with 41 seconds left in regulation to give the Black Knights a 67-61 lead, but Army then missed four straight free throws in the final half-minute as the Midshipmen climbed back to tie after Cam Davis hit a three-pointer, Evan Wieck hit two free throws and Davis added three more from the line.

Alex King hit a three and Funk fed Josh Caldwell for a layup to open overtime before Funk scored twice at the basket and added a jumper that put the Black Knights up by nine, 80-71 after holding Navy to just a layup through the first four minutes of overtime.

Funk scored in double figures for the 23rd straight game for Army (14-13, 9-6 Patriot League), adding seven rebounds and seven assists. King was 4-for-4 from deep and finished with 22 points. Caldwell added 14 points and three steals and Matt Wilson added 13 points and grabbed 12 rebounds.

Davis finished with 28 points to lead the Midshipmen (13-14, 7-9). Greg Summers added 19 points and John Carter, Jr. added 11 points and 11 rebounds while Luke Loehr grabbed 11 boards.

Wyoming 78, Air Force 72: Greg Milton III came off the bench and more than doubled his previous career high with 28 points to help carry the Cowboys past the host Falcons.

Milton, a 6-foot-3 sophomore, posted his prior career high of 12 points on Feb. 1 against San Jose State. Against Air Force, he had 18 by halftime. He finished 9-for-14 shooting, including 4-for-7 from three-point range, and made 6 of 8 foul shots. He grabbed four rebounds, distributed three assists and committed just one turnover.

NBA roundup

Antetokounmpo, Bucks down 76ers

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The Milwaukee Bucks turned a tight game with the Philadelphia 76ers into a mismatch immediately in the second half, led by the reigning league MVP.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 31 points and 17 rebounds, Khris Middleton scored 25 points and the Bucks beat the 76ers 119-98 on Saturday night in a matchup of Eastern Conference rivals.

Antetokounmpo scored Milwaukee's first 11 points in the third quarter as the Bucks took advantage of the absence of Philadelphia big man Joel Embiid, who went to the bench less a minute into the period after picking up his fourth foul, and quickly put the game out of reach.

"We came out the third quarter and played fast," Antetokounmpo said. "We were able to rebound the ball and just attack them. Joel had four fouls. That worked in our favor. We tried to be aggressive in the third quarter and set the tone."

Antetokounmpo added eight assists as Milwaukee won for the 16th time in its last 18 games to improve its NBA-best record to 48-8.

The Bucks led 56-50 at the half before Antetokounmpo's scoring outburst put the Bucks in control. Milwaukee would go on to outscore the 76ers 37-23 in the period.

Embiid, coming off a 39-point performance on Thursday night, had 17 points and 11 rebounds but shot just 5-for-18. Furkan Korkmaz and Shake Milton also scored 17 points apiece for the 76ers, who fell to 9-20 on the road.

"I liked what I was seeing in the first half, and the death knock was Joel sitting," 76ers coach Brett Brown said. "We just didn't respond well to Milwaukee playing their tails off, and they shot the heck out of the ball."

Philadelphia lost All-Star Ben Simmons early in the first quarter. Simmons, who missed the 76ers' previous game with lower back tightness, headed to the locker room after consecutive driving layups.

Rockets 120, Jazz 110: James Harden shrugged off traps to score 38 points, Russell Westbrook faced two-time Defensive Player of the Year Rudy Gobert and still had 34 and the Rock 120-110 on Saturday night.

"I don't know if it's working. I get whatever I want. I get to the basket. I shoot. I drive and kick. The pace and speed you can't scout for," Westbrook said.

Harden (13-for-23, six three-pointers) and Westbrook (14-for-26) were efficient

all night and the Rockets rode a big third quarter to their third straight win.

"It obviously didn't work," Harden said when asked about putting the 7-foot-1 Gobert on the 6-3 Westbrook.

Eric Gordon and Ben McLemore each scored 12 off the bench for Houston.

Donovan Mitchell scored 31 and Jordan Clarkson had 22 for the Jazz, who cut the Rockets' lead to seven in the fourth quarter a couple times but could never get closer.

Houston made Salt Lake city pay when it occasionally double-teamed Harden and couldn't rotate fast enough to the perimeter shooters. After a season high-tying 25 three-pointers in their last outing against Golden State, the Rockets made 20-for-48 from beyond the arc.

"We have two guys, even more than two guys, that are able to put pressure on the rim. Teams are going to come and help and then our shooters have open shots," Harden said.

The Rockets made their move in the third quarter when they outscored the Jazz 38-19.

"When we don't make shots, it really impacts our defense. That said, I thought in the third quarter, we didn't have the same energy we needed on the defensive end," Utah coach Quin Snyder said.

Hawks 111, Mavericks 107: John Collins had 35 points and 17 rebounds, Trae Young scored 13 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter and host Atlanta rallied Saturday to beat Dallas.

Collins' follow shot, credited after a goal-tending call was overturned, sealed it with 8.4 seconds remaining.

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 20 of his season high-tying 33 points in the first half and Seth Curry added 22 for the Mavericks.

The game was billed as a showdown between Luka Doncic and Young, two second-year All-Stars linked together since a draft-night trade in 2018, but the matchup never materialized.

Doncic, who led Dallas to a win over Orlando the night before, was held out so he could rest his ankle, meaning that he and Young won't face each other again until next season. Doncic missed a 123-100 Mavericks win against the Hawks earlier this month in Dallas with a similar injury.

The Mavericks also were without Kristaps Porzingis, sidelined to rest his knee, and Willie Cauley-Stein, who missed the game for personal reasons.

Heat 124, Cavaliers 105: Miami was a worthy warmup act for Dwyane Wade's jersey retirement, breaking a 23-year-

old franchise record for points in the first half en route to a victory over visiting Cleveland.

The Heat shot 77% in the first half and then turned the stage over to Wade, whose No. 3 jersey was hoisted to the rafters at halftime. The ceremony was part of a three-day celebration of Wade's career that included three NBA titles with Miami.

The Heat broke the franchise record of 75 points in the first half in November 1997 against the Los Angeles Clippers, a mark that predated Wade's 16-year NBA career. The game was so lopsided that Wade's close friend, Udonis Haslem, played for only the third time this season during garbage time.

Rookie Kendrick Nunn led Miami with 24 points. The Heat shot a season-best 57% and made 19 three-pointers.

Cedi Osman led Cleveland with 19 points.

Kings 112, Clippers 103: Kent Bazemore scored a season-high 23 points, Bogdan Bogdanovic added 20 and Sacramento won on the road for the second time in less than a month.

De'Aaron Fox had 20 points and eight assists for the surging Kings. They have won two straight out of the All-Star break and eight of 12 overall.

Los Angeles' Kawhi Leonard scored 31 points in his return from his MVP performance in Chicago, but the Clippers returned from the All-Star break with their first three-game losing streak of the season.

Suns 112, Bulls 104: DeAndre Ayton dominated with 28 points and 19 rebounds, Devin Booker had 29 points and Phoenix won at Chicago.

The Suns outscored the Bulls by 13 in the third quarter to wipe out a 10-point halftime deficit and ended the game on a 17-4 run to come away with the win after losing seven of nine. Chicago dropped its eighth in a row.

Ricky Rubio added 18 points and 11 assists, and Kelly Oubre Jr. had 14 points to help Phoenix snap a five-game road losing streak.

Bulls rookie Coby White set a career high with 33 points and matched one by making seven three-pointers. Zach LaVine scored 20 points.

Nets 115, Hornets 86: Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot scored 21 points and visiting Brooklyn ended Charlotte's three-game winning streak.

Caris LeVert added 17 points, and Garrett Temple had 15 points and 10 rebounds.