

Remembering troops killed in combat zones

By SLOBODAN LEKIC, JOHN VANDIVER AND KARIN ZEITVOGEL

Stars and Stripes

Twelve service members died on overseas deployments to designated combat zones in Africa, Kosovo and the Arabian peninsula region, including waterways, in 2020.

One other soldier was killed in a terrorist attack in Kenya, which is not a designated combat zone.

The most deadly of the incidents was a helicopter crash in the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt in November, in which five American troops died and one was injured. The Americans were part of an international peacekeeping force that monitors compliance with the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace accord.

■ Henry J. Mayfield Jr.

Army Spc. Henry J. Mayfield Jr., 23, died Jan. 5 when insurgents connected to the Somalia-based al-Shabab militant group attacked Manda Bay Airfield in southwest Kenya.

He served with the 164th Theater Airfield Operations Group of the Army's 1st Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment.

Defense Department contractors Dustin Harrison, 47, and Bruce Triplett, 64, were also killed in the attack on the airfield.

■ Walter Lewark

Army Spc. Walter Lewark, 26, of Mountain, N.M., died Feb. 13 in a noncombat-related incident at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

He was serving with the 1st Battalion, 200th Infantry Regiment, 93rd Troop Command of the New Mexico Army National Guard, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom-Horn of Africa.

■ Nick Bravo-Regules

Army Spc. Nick Bravo-Regules, 20, of Largo, Fla., died June 23 in Jordan of injuries suffered in a noncombat-related incident.

He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment out of Fort Bliss, Texas.

Bravo-Regules was on his first deployment, in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

■ Alexander Blake Klass

Army Pfc. Alexander Blake Klass, 20, of Willamina, Ore., died July 4 in Kosovo in a noncombat-related incident.

Klass joined the Oregon Army National Guard in Jan. 2019. He was serving with the Operation Joint Guardian NATO peacekeeping mission in Kosovo and was due to return home in November.

■ Ian McKnight

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ian McKnight, 29, went overboard from the USS Nimitz as it operated in the North Arabian Sea on Sept. 6. Efforts to locate him were concluded two days later, the Navy said, and he was presumed dead.

McKnight, of North Carolina, enlisted in the Navy in February 2018 and was assigned to the Nimitz the following year. He had been promoted to E-5 in August 2020.

■ Jason Khai Phan

Senior Airman Jason Khai Phan, 26, was killed in a single-vehicle crash on Sept. 12 while patrolling the perimeter of the Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait.

Phan was assigned to the 66th Security Forces Squadron out of Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass.

Phan and his family moved to the U.S. from Vietnam when he was 16 and settled in southern California, news reports said. He joined the Air Force after getting a degree in computer science at Orange Coast College in California.

■ Ronald J. Ouellette

Air Force Staff Sgt. Ronald J. Ouellette, 23, died two days after Phan in an all-terrain vehicle wreck at Ali Al Salem Air Base in central Kuwait.

An Air Force reservist, Ouellette was a member of the 42nd Aerial Port Squadron stationed at Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass.

He served nearly six years in the Air Force Reserves.

■ Seth Vernon Vande Kamp

Army Capt. Seth Vernon Vande Kamp, 31, was one of five American service members who died in a Nov. 12 helicopter crash in the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, while serving with the Multinational Force and Observers peacekeeping contingent. A French officer and Czech soldier were also killed, and a sixth American was injured.

Vande Kamp joined the Army after graduating from A.T. Still University's Kirksville

College of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona in 2017, his obituary says. He completed his medical residency at Martin Army Community Hospital in Fort Benning, Ga., in June 2020.

■ Dallas Gerald Garza

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Dallas Gerald Garza, 34, also died in the crash. He was a Black Hawk pilot who enlisted in the Army in 2005 and commissioned in 2010.

His military awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, and a Joint Meritorious Service Medal.

■ Marwan Sameh Ghabour

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Marwan Sameh Ghabour, 27, from Arlington, Mass., left what his younger brother Muhaned described as a promising career in architecture to join the Army.

Marwan Ghabour commissioned as a warrant officer in 2018 and arrived in Egypt in January 2020 on his first overseas assignment. Like Garza, he was a pilot.

■ Kyle Robert McKee

Staff Sgt. Kyle Robert McKee, 35, was a helicopter repairer who enlisted in the Army in 2003.

His long list of awards includes a Combat Action Badge, an Air Medal and Army Commendation Medal.

■ Jeremy Cain Sherman

Sgt. Jeremy Cain Sherman, 23, was the youngest of the American service members who died in the Sinai Peninsula crash.

A crew chief, he enlisted in 2015 and arrived in Egypt in October 2020. He had previously served in South Korea and Afghanistan.

■ Kelliann Leli

Air Force Capt. Kelliann Leli, 30, died in a noncombat vehicle accident in the United Arab Emirates on Nov. 27.

A medical doctor with the 60th Healthcare Operations Squadron at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., she was assigned to the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing while deployed.

Leli completed her family medicine residency at Travis, where she and her husband, Capt. Jimmy Leli, were based.

Pardoned Blackwater guard defends actions

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Evan Liberty was reading in the top bunk of his cell one evening late last month when a prison supervisor delivered news he had hoped for.

“He says, ‘Are you ready for this?’” Liberty recalled. “I said, ‘Uh, I’m not sure. What is going on?’ He said, ‘Presidential pardon. Pack your stuff.’”

Liberty is one of four former Blackwater contractors pardoned by President Donald Trump in one of Trump’s final acts in office, freeing them from prison after a 2007 shooting rampage in Baghdad that killed more than a dozen Iraqi civilians. Even for a president who has repeatedly exercised his pardon power on personal associates and political supporters, Trump’s clemency for the contractors was met with especially intense condemnation, both in the United States and the Middle East.

In an interview with The Associated Press, his first since being released from prison, Liberty, 38, again expressed little remorse for actions he says were defensible given the context.

“I feel like I acted correctly,” he said of his conduct in 2007. “I regret any innocent

loss of life, but I’m just confident in how I acted and I can basically feel peace with that.”

The Blackwater rampage marked one of the darkest chapters of the Iraq war, staining the U.S. government reputation and prompting an international outcry about the role of contractors in military zones. The guards have long maintained they were targeted by insurgent gunfire at the traffic circle where the shooting occurred. Prosecutors argued there was no evidence to support that claim, noting that many victims were shot while in their cars or while taking shelter or trying to flee.

After a monthslong trial in 2014, a jury convicted the men in the deaths of 14 civilians and of injuring even more. A judge called the shootings an “overall wild thing” that cannot be condoned.

Liberty said he understands many may view him undeserving of clemency but attributes it to what he insists is a misguided narrative of the shooting. In the interview, he maintained that he did not shoot in the direction of any of the victims. “I didn’t shoot at anybody that wasn’t shooting at me,” he said.

Airstrikes in Somalia kill 3 militants

Stars and Stripes

At least three members of the Somalia-based al-Shabab extremist group were killed and a half-dozen buildings used by the militants were destroyed in U.S. airstrikes on New Year’s Day, U.S. Africa Command said.

The twin airstrikes launched in coordination with the Somali government targeted al-Shabab compounds near the town of Qunyo Barrow, AFRICOM said in a statement released Saturday.

“Current assessments indicate the strikes killed three and wounded one al-Shabab members and destroyed six and damaged one al-Shabab compound buildings,” the statement said.

No civilians were killed or injured in the strikes, an initial assessment found.

The first U.S. strikes of the year against al-Shabab were carried out as American troops withdraw from Somalia, following a Dec. 4 Defense Department directive. Most of them will be relocated to countries elsewhere in East Africa, from where they can rapidly move in and out of Somalia, AFRICOM has said.

The pullout is expected to be completed before President-elect Joe Biden takes office on Jan. 20.

Iraq marks one year since US drone strike

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Chanting anti-American slogans, thousands of Iraqis converged on a landmark square in central Baghdad on Sunday to commemorate the anniversary of the killing of a powerful Iranian general and a top Iraqi militia leader in a U.S. drone strike.

Roads leading to Tahrir Square were closed off and security was tight as the crowds gathered in response to a call by powerful Iran-backed militias for a rally marking the occasion and demanding the expulsion of U.S. troops from Iraq.

“No, no to America!” shouted some in the largely maskless crowd. “You killed our guest. There is no place here for your embassy,” read some of the banners.

Protesters at one point set fire to a large U.S. flag, drawing cheers from the crowd.

The killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis at Baghdad’s airport pushed Tehran and Washington perilously close to all-out conflict and sparked outrage in Iraq, leading parliament to pass a non-binding resolution days later calling for the expulsion of all foreign troops from Iraq.

Sunday’s rally was being held amid heightened tensions between Iran and the United States in the final days of President Donald Trump’s administration.

America has already conducted B-52 bomber flyovers and sent a nuclear submarine into the Persian Gulf over what Trump officials describe as the possibility of an Iranian at-

tack on the anniversary of the strike that killed Soleimani and al-Muhandis.

Carrying Iraqi and militia flags and posters of the two men, thousands of Iraqis marched toward Tahrir Square for the rally Sunday, demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops in implementation of the parliamentary resolution.

The event was organized by mostly Iran-backed militias known as the Popular Mobilization Forces.

“We call upon the government and the parliament to expel the occupying foreign forces, especially the brutal American forces, the infidels, the immoral, who killed the heroes and leaders of victory,” said Muhammad Shubr al-Husseini, a protester.

Guam, US military agree to prevent site damage

Associated Press

HAGATNA, Guam — The governor of Guam, a military official and the island's historic preservation officer have signed off on a new agreement that outlines how to mitigate damage to historic and culturally significant sites on the island during military training.

The Programmatic Agreement for Training and Testing was signed Tuesday by Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, Rear Adm. John Menoni, Commander, Joint Region Marianas and Carlotta Leon Guerrero, the Guam State Historic Preservation Officer.

The agreement is set to expire in five years.

The agreement will require all incom-

ing Department of Defense military and civilians, their families, contractors and visiting foreign military members to undergo cultural sensitivity training in partnership with the island's historic preservation office, the Pacific Daily News reported.

The deal also includes a detailed outline of planned military training events, their location and the type of archaeological report that will be generated after each event. The data will be used to monitor the effects of the training exercises on historic sites on the island.

The agreement replaces the Mariana Island Range Complex Programmatic Agreement from 2009.

Congress opening new session as virus, Biden win dominates

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congress convened Sunday for the start of a new session, swearing in lawmakers during a tumultuous period as a growing number of Republicans work to overturn Joe Biden's victory over President Donald Trump and the coronavirus surges.

Democrat Nancy Pelosi was set to be re-elected as House speaker by her party, which retains the majority in the House but with the slimmest margin in 20 years after a November election wipeout.

Opening the Senate could be among Mitch McConnell's final acts as majority leader. Republican control is in question until Tuesday's runoff elections for two Senate seats in Georgia. The outcome will determine which party holds the chamber.

The House and Senate opened at noon, as required by law, with strict COVID protocols.

It's often said that divided government can be a time for legislative compromises, but lawmakers are charging into the 117th Congress with the nation more torn than ever, disputing even basic facts including that Biden won the presidential election.

Fraud did not spoil the 2020 presidential election, a fact confirmed by election offi-

cialists across the country. Before stepping down last month, Attorney General William Barr, a Republican appointed by Trump, said fraud did not affect the election's outcome. Arizona's and Georgia's Republican governors, whose states were crucial to Biden's victory, have also stated that their election results were accurate.

Nevertheless, a dozen Republicans bound for the new Senate, led by Sens. Josh Hawley and Ted Cruz, and even more in the House have pledged to become a resistance force to Biden's White House, starting with efforts to subvert the will of American voters.

These GOP lawmakers plan to object to the election results when Congress meets on Wednesday to tally his 306-232 Electoral College victory over Trump.

Vice President Mike Pence, who as president of the Senate, presides over the session and declares the winner, is facing growing pressure from Trump's allies over that ceremonial role.

Democrats, meanwhile, are pushing ahead, eager to partner with Biden on shared priorities, starting with efforts to stem the pandemic and economic crisis. They plan to revisit the failed effort to boost pandemic aid to \$2,000 for most people.

Firm lockdown possible in UK as virus soars

Associated Press

LONDON — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned Sunday that more onerous lockdown restrictions in England are likely as the country reels from a new coronavirus variant that has pushed infection rates to their highest recorded levels.

Johnson, though, insisted he has "no doubt" that schools are safe and urged parents to send their children back into the classroom in areas of England where they can. Unions representing teachers have called for schools to turn to remote learning for at least a couple of weeks more due to the new variant, which scientists have said is up to 70% more contagious.

"We are entirely reconciled to do what it takes to get the virus under control, that may involve tougher measures in the weeks ahead," Johnson said in an interview with the BBC. "Obviously there are a range of tougher measures that we would have to consider."

Johnson conceded that school closures, curfews and the total banning of household mixing could be on the agenda for areas under the most stress.

Johnson's government is using a tiered coronavirus restrictions system. Most of England is already at the highest Tier 4 level, which involves the closure of shops selling nonessential items and places like gyms and recreation centers as well as a stay-at-home instruction.

"What we are using now is the tiering system, which is a very tough system, and alas probably about to get tougher to keep things under control," he said. "We'll review it and we have the prospect of vaccines coming down the tracks in their tens of millions, offering people literally life and hope."

The U.K. has moved quickly on the vaccination front. It was the first to begin vaccinating people over 80 and health care workers on Dec. 8 with the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine. Last week, regulators approved another vaccine made by Oxford University and pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca that is cheaper and easier to use than the Pfizer vaccine.

Hundreds of new vaccination sites are due to be up and running this week as the National Health Service ramps up its immunization program with the Oxford-AstraZeneca jab.

NY exceeds 1 million positive virus tests

Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York state has recorded more than 1 million positive COVID-19 cases since the pandemic began, according to figures released by Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Saturday.

The roughly 15,000 new positive tests reported statewide on Friday bring the total number of cases over 1 million, according to the state's data. Experts have said that the official number of coronavirus cases represents a significant undercount, since many people in the New York City area were infected with the coronavirus last spring when testing was largely unavailable.

New York is the fourth state to report more than 1 million positive COVID-19 tests after California, Texas and Florida. New York reported 128 COVID-19 deaths on Friday.

Alabama

BIRMINGHAM — A veteran Alabama lawman who led the state's department of public safety and Birmingham Police Department has died from complications linked to COVID-19.

Chief William Michael "Mike" Coppage had been fighting the coronavirus for several weeks before succumbing on Friday, AL.com reported. He was 71.

Coppage formerly served as chief of the Birmingham Police Department, director of the Alabama Department of Public Safety, director of Public Safety and Emergency Management at Samford University and as an Irondale city councilman.

"Mike was not just a great leader, but was an amazing public servant. During my tenure as chief, he was extremely supportive and was quick to offer a word of encouragement," said former Birmingham Police Chief A.C. Roper. "He understood the mantle of leadership, and his legacy will live on throughout the metropolitan area."

Florida

FORT LAUDERDALE — Health officials in Florida reported a two-day total 30,767 new cases of the coronavirus and 217 new deaths on Saturday.

Florida's Department of Health did not release numbers on New Year's Day. The state has also chosen not to report COVID-19 cases on two other holidays — Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The two-day total brings the overall number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Florida to 1,354,833. The agency posted that 21,015 cases were reported on Friday and 9,752 re-

ported on Saturday. The state's death toll during the coronavirus pandemic stands at 22,074.

On New Year's Eve, the state reported the highest daily jump in COVID-19 cases ever detected in Florida, with 17,192 new cases.

Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS — The state health department reported 39 additional COVID-19 deaths Saturday in Indiana, raising the confirmed total to 8,055.

Another 355 probable deaths have been reported based on diagnoses, although no positive tests were recorded. The health department also reported 5,429 new virus cases.

On Thursday, a bell tolled 121 times at St. Andrew Episcopal Church in Kokomo for each Howard County resident who has died from COVID-19.

"As you can imagine, it's not joyful, but it's important. It's about healing, and that's something we felt like we needed to express," church member Greg Wall told the Kokomo Tribune.

Louisiana

MONROE — Louisiana Congressman-elect Luke Letlow, who recently died from COVID-19 complications, was remembered Saturday as a man who loved people and felt called to serve others.

"This is a gentleman who cared about nothing but others," said former Republican U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham, who hired Letlow as chief of staff during his tenure in Washington and later backed Letlow's bid for Congress. "He was a true servant's servant. We never want to forget what he's done for our state, what he's done for me and my family."

Letlow, an incoming Republican member of the U.S. House, died Tuesday at 41. Gov. John Bel Edwards ordered flags flown at half-staff on Saturday for Letlow, who is survived by his wife, Julia Letlow, and their children, Jeremiah, 3, and Jacqueline, 1.

More than 200 people gathered at North Monroe Baptist Church for the memorial. Abraham acknowledged the presence of other members of the state's congressional delegation in attendance, including U.S. Reps. Clay Higgins and Garret Graves.

Michigan

LANSING — Michigan averaged about 3,000 new coronavirus cases a day from Thursday through Saturday, the state health department said.

The state also reported 265 additional

deaths from COVID-19, including 211 from days or weeks ago that were confirmed through a records check. Michigan is close to 12,600 deaths since last March.

More than 71,000 people in the state have received a COVID-19 vaccine and nearly 500 clinics are scheduled in upcoming weeks, said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, the state's chief medical executive.

"We do expect our case numbers and deaths to come down as the vaccine is distributed to the most vulnerable, those in health care facilities," Khaldun said.

South Carolina

COLUMBIA — South Carolina could prevent 450 deaths over the next three months if everyone wears masks, a state health official said Saturday.

During a Saturday news conference, Department of Health and Environmental Control interim public health director Dr. Brannon Traxler emphasized the importance of wearing masks to slow down the virus, even as vaccines for COVID-19 have begun to make their way into the state.

She said an Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation model has shown that statewide mask-wearing could reduce the number of deaths by 450 people between now and April 1.

More than 4,200 cases of COVID-19 were reported Saturday, bringing the statewide total to 287,776.

Texas

DALLAS — Coronavirus hospitalizations fell slightly in Texas on Saturday but remained near their record high, as health officials said there were about 600 intensive-care beds available across the state of nearly 29 million people.

Texas reported 12,319 COVID-19 patients in hospitals Saturday, ending five consecutive days of record-breaking hospitalizations. But even with the decrease of more than 160 patients from Friday, the virus continued to strain medical resources.

Intensive care units in several parts of Texas were full or nearly full, with 626 ICU beds available statewide Saturday, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The department reported 96 new fatalities, as well as 3,995 new, confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 487 probable cases.

Over the last seven days, nearly one in five coronavirus tests in Texas has come back positive, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Court sides with baseball team over foul ball injury

NC RALEIGH — A North Carolina appeals court ruled in favor of a baseball team that was sued after a foul ball struck an 11-year-old girl in the face in 2015. Angelina DeBlasio had surgery to correct several dislocated teeth and broken bones in and around her jaw.

The Raleigh News & Observer reported that the North Carolina Court of Appeals sided with the Durham Bulls because of a long-held legal precedent known as the “baseball rule.”

The rule holds that teams are not liable for injuries if they have offered some protected seating to fans. At Durham Bulls Athletic Park, the seats closest to home plate are guarded by a net.

Drugs seized from jail over 200 times in 4 years

NY EAST MEADOW — Officials at the Nassau County jail on Long Island seized drugs or drug paraphernalia from inmates 237 times over a period of less than four years, a Newsday analysis of state records found.

The drugs confiscated from inmates at the 1,540-bed jail between 2016 and the summer of 2019 included marijuana, prescription pills, heroin, cocaine and other banned substances. Newsday obtained the reports through a freedom of information law request.

Steve Martin, a lawyer who is a court-appointed monitor of New York City’s Rikers Island jail complex, said the data on drug seizures are fairly typical for a correctional facility of the Nassau jail’s size and location.

Police seize fireworks, report related injuries

HI HONOLULU — A Kauai resident died following a fireworks explosion on New Year’s Eve in Hawaii as many others were injured across the state in fireworks-related incidents, authorities said.

The Kauai Police Department said Kap-

pa resident Dexter Ibaan, 34, was attempting to light a firework when it apparently malfunctioned and exploded in his hand, Hawaii News Now reported.

Firefighters and paramedics attempted lifesaving efforts while Ibaan was being transported to Wilcox Medical Center where he was later pronounced dead.

On Oahu, authorities said at least six people were administered medical treatment following fireworks-related incidents, including three children.

Owner, disabled dog reunited after 10 months

IL EAST ST. LOUIS — A dog that disappeared from a yard in rural Missouri 10 months ago was reunited with her owner on New Year’s Day.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Athena was recovering from amputation surgery when she went missing from the yard of her owner, Dylan Summers, in the town of Bourbon.

A friend of Summers saw Athena’s photo on the Gateway Pet Guardians pet rescue web site while looking for a dog to adopt and notified Summers.

Bond set for man in discarded remains case

AZ PRESCOTT — Bond was set at \$250,000 for a man accused of discarding human remains believed to have been used for medical research in remote areas of central Arizona.

Walter Harold Mitchell appeared in the Prescott Justice Court via video from the Yavapai County jail a day after he was arrested in metropolitan Phoenix.

Authorities said they tied Mitchell to the body parts that included limbs and severed heads through tags and medical gauze that were found along with the remains.

Weather exhibits moving to discovery center

NH CONCORD — The Mount Washington Observatory is

moving exhibits from its now-closed Weather Discovery Center in North Conway to the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center in Concord.

A few exhibits will move to the observatory’s museum on top of the mountain, but most will find a new home in Concord, including the “Shaky Shack”, the replica of the 1930s-era Observatory staff’s mountain-top cabin in which the highest human-observed surface wind speed on Earth was recorded in 1934.

Police find 7 children in vacant apartment

IL CHICAGO — Jessie Hunt, 31, faces misdemeanor child endangerment charges after seven children — one of them a 23-month old baby — were found inside an apartment that was supposed to be vacant.

Police said that the children were found by officers during a wellbeing check after they received a tip about a person living in the first-floor apartment that was supposed to be empty.

All seven children were taken to St. Mary’s Hospital where, according to police, they were in good condition. It was not immediately clear if Hunt was the mother of the children.

Ex-employee accused of theft from local nonprofit

LA LAKE CHARLES — A 31-year-old Louisiana woman was accused of stealing more than \$175,000 from the local nonprofit she was working for, the Calcasieu Parish Sheriff’s Office said.

A news release said Meaghan J. Boudreaux of Sulphur transferred \$169,000 from the organization’s account to her personal account between January 2019 and November 2020, and also added herself to the organization’s insurance plans without having premiums deducted from her pay.

She turned herself in, was arrested on a charge of theft of at least \$25,000, and was released on \$50,000 bond, the statement said.

— From The Associated Press



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Move over for a new generation of stars

Associated Press

For some, the sky's the limit, which also just happens to be the title of the book written by 12-year-old British skateboarder Sky Brown.

For others, it's no stretch that big things appear ahead. Exhibit A: 7-foot-2 Denver Nuggets center Bol Bol and his roughly 7-8 wingspan.

So many potential stars in the making. So many stages for them to shine. One of the biggest will be this summer during the Tokyo Games, which were postponed a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

By the time 2021 ends, a new crop of names will start to become even more familiar. So let's name-drop a few (sorry, Trevor Lawrence, you're already too big of a name for this list):

■ **Brown**, a skateboarding prodigy who has her sights locked on the Tokyo Games. She turns 13 a few weeks before the opening ceremony as her sport makes its Olympic debut (along with sport climbing, karate and surfing). Brown already has a doll made in her image and sponsors such as Nike. In June, she posted a video on Instagram (770,000-plus followers) of a frightful crash during a training session.

■ **Bol**, forward/center, Nuggets. The son of towering 7-foot-7 former NBA center Manute Bol showed glimpses of his versatil-

ity inside the NBA bubble over the summer. He remains eligible for the rookie of the year award, with the favorites being Charlotte's LaMelo Ball (No. 3 pick overall) New York's Obi Topping (No. 8) and Minnesota's Anthony Edwards (No. 1).

■ **Iga Swiatek**, tennis, Poland. The 19-year-old who listens to Guns N' Roses before matches captured Poland's first Grand Slam singles title when she won the French Open in October. Swiatek had never won a tour-level title until Roland Garros.

■ **Stephanie Gilmore**, surfer, Australia. Nicknamed "Happy Gilmore," the seven-time world champion is well known on the surfing circuit. Gilmore, who turns 33 on Jan. 29, will be among the medal favorites in Tokyo.

■ **Ke'Bryan Hayes**, third baseman, Pittsburgh Pirates. A first-round pick in 2015, Hayes made his major league debut on Sept. 1 and showed his promise with a double and solo homer. The rookie-of-the-year candidate is the son of longtime major leaguer Charlie Hayes.

In the AL, there's Tampa Bay's Randy Arozarena, who remains eligible for rookie of the year. He earned the Babe Ruth award for the Most Valuable Player in the postseason after helping the Rays to the World Series.

■ **Catarina Macario**, midfield, U.S. Na-

tional Soccer Team. The Brazilian-born Macario became a U.S. citizen this fall. That news coincided with a call to the training camp for the U.S. Women's National Team.

■ **JoJo Earle**, wide receiver, Alabama. The speedy wideout originally committed to LSU before joining an Alabama program that's well known for producing wideouts. This season it's Heisman hopeful DeVonta Smith, who was just named The Associated Press college football player of the year.

■ **Alexis Lafrenière**, forward, New York Rangers. He was the top pick in the NHL draft after a stellar stint in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. Lafrenière was leading the league with 112 points (35 goals, 77 assists) in 52 games last season when play ended.

■ **Kliment Kolesnikov**, swimmer, Russian Federation. The backstroke extraordinaire counts Michael Phelps among his idols. Kolesnikov captured capturing six gold medals at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games.

■ **Keyshawn Davis**, boxer, U.S. The top professional prospect on the 2020 U.S. Olympic team decided to wait so he could fight for a medal in '21. The athletic, speedy lightweight from Virginia is hoping to follow the career path of friend Shakur Stevenson, who won a pro title just three years after earning a silver medal in the Rio Games.

Moore says he's staying put with Cowboys

Associated Press

Dallas offensive coordinator Kellen Moore said Saturday night he is no longer pursuing the Boise State job, and the Cowboys agreed on a multiyear contract extension with their play-caller.

The 32-year-old Moore was a candidate at his alma mater after Bryan Harsin took the Auburn job. Moore was the winningest quarterback in college football history with a 50-3 record when he left Boise State in 2011.

"I will always root for them, and I hope one day to be a part of the program again," Moore said in a statement issued by the

team. "We are building something special here in Dallas. I am excited for us to put it all together and finish the job."

Pens sign Marino to 6-year extension

The Pittsburgh Penguins are betting big on defenseman John Marino.

The team signed the 23-year-old Marino to a six-year contract extension on Sunday that carries an average annual value of \$4.4 million.

The deal caps a meteoric rise for Marino, who was acquired from Edmonton in July 2019 in exchange for a sixth-round pick. Marino impressed as a

rookie last season, scoring six goals to go with 20 assists in 56 games to go with a plus-17 rating. Marino is the sixth rookie defenseman in team history to register 20 assists.

Marlins sign veteran reliever Detwiler, Leon

Veteran left-hander Ross Detwiler has signed a one-year contract with the Miami Marlins, whose primary offseason goal is to upgrade their bullpen.

The Marlins also announced on Sunday the signing of veteran catcher Sandy Leon to a minor league contract with an invitation to major league spring training. Left-hander Stephen

Tarpley was designated for assignment.

Detwiler, 34, pitched in 16 games out of the bullpen for the Chicago White Sox in 2020, going 1-1 with a 3.20 ERA in 44 innings. He broke into the majors in 2007 and has a 4.56 ERA in 224 games for seven teams.

Leon, 31, batted .136 in 25 games last year for Cleveland.

Vhova wins WC slalom, Shiffrin takes 4th

Slovakia's Petra Vhova won the first women's World Cup slalom of 2021 on Sunday in Zagreb, Croatia.

Mikaela Shiffrin was 0.27 seconds behind in fourth.

No. 5 Aggies run past No. 14 Tar Heels

Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Texas A&M coach Jimbo Fisher pulled a hamstring as he tried to avoid the players who wanted to give him a celebratory Gatorade bath.

Luckily, Fisher didn't have to run in the Orange Bowl.

Devon Achane did more than enough of that for the Aggies.

Achane had two touchdowns in the final 3:44, including a 76-yarder that put Texas A&M ahead to stay, and the fifth-ranked Aggies beat No. 14 North Carolina 41-27 on Saturday night — capping a winless bowl season for the Atlantic Coast Conference.

"North Carolina had one heck of a team, man," Fisher said. "That was one of the great Orange Bowls. ... But I also say, there's a heck of a football team standing in front of me."

Kellen Mond passed for 232 yards and ran for a score for the Aggies (9-1), who were in the Orange Bowl for the first time since 1944 and were one spot away from making the College Football Playoff field. Fisher improved to 3-0 in Orange Bowls, winning two previous ones at Florida State.

Achane's go-ahead score came on a play where he nearly tripped over one of his own blockers, broke a tackle and then got loose down the left sideline.

"Ain't nobody catching me," Achane said.

Outback Bowl

Mississippi 26, No. 7 Indiana 20: Even before they took the field in Tampa, the Rebels felt good about the direction they were headed.

Coach Lane Kiffin was rewarded with a new contract despite having only been at the school one season. There also was no guarantee one of the nation's lowest-ranked defenses would be able to slow down the No. 7 Hoosiers enough to ensure the team's first nonlosing record since 2017.

"It's really only up from here," Ole Miss quarterback Matt Corral said Saturday after throwing for 342 yards and two touchdowns to ruin the finish to surprising Indiana's breakout season.

Corral's 3-yard pass to Dontario Drummond put the Rebels (5-5) ahead for good with 4:12 remaining.

Gator Bowl

Kentucky 23, No. 24 North Carolina State 21: The Wildcats' postgame locker room provided a scene players and coaches might never forget. They celebrated a third consecutive bowl victory while dedicating it to two guys who couldn't be there.

This one was for late offensive line coach

John Schlarman and rehabbing linebacker Chris Oats, who has been battling a significant medical condition since May.

A.J. Rose ran for a career-high 148 yards, Chris Rodriguez added 84 yards and two scores and Kentucky held off the Wolfpack in Jacksonville, Fla..

"It was extremely emotional, even walking into the locker room we were saying, 'That was for (Oats), that was for Schlarman,'" said linebacker Jamin Davis, who finished with 13 tackles and an interception.

Christopher Dunn missed two field goals for the Wolfpack (8-4).

Fiesta Bowl

No. 12 Iowa State 34, No. 25 Oregon 17: The youngest team in the FBS, the mistake-prone Ducks looked it in a loss to the Cyclones.

Oregon (4-3, CFP 25) committed a season-high five turnovers, including a muffed kickoff return, had a touchdown negated by a penalty and held the ball for only 17:12. The Ducks were 0-for-6 on third down.

"It is a game of execution," coach Mario Cristobal said. "We weren't able to execute and get done what we needed to get done."

Down 28-17 at the half, Oregon's six second-half possessions ended punt-fumble-punt-fumble-punt-interception.

Knicks rally past Pacers in overtime, improve to .500

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Austin Rivers made the go-ahead three-pointer with 3:23 left and finished with 15 points to help the New York Knicks rally past the Indiana Pacers 106-102 on Saturday night.

The Knicks have won three of four to pull to .500 after six games under new coach Tom Thibodeau. R.J. Barrett scored a team-best 25 points.

Malcolm Brogdon led the Pacers with a career-high 33 points but had his shot blocked with less than a minute to go, which led to another basket by Rivers during an 11-0 run that helped seal the win. Indiana has lost two of three.

76ers 127, Hornets 112: Joel Embiid had 19 points and 14 rebounds and Tobias Harris scored 24 points to lead host Philadelphia over Charlotte.

Ben Simmons had 15 points, 12 rebound and 11 assists to help the Sixers beat the

Hornets for the 12th straight time. Philadelphia has not lost to Charlotte since Nov. 2, 2016.

Terry Rozier scored 35 points for the Hornets.

The Sixers are rolling in Doc Rivers' first season on the bench and followed a 24-point win over Orlando with another victory in which they led by double digits for most of the game.

Pelicans 120, Raptors 116: Eric Bledsoe capped a 19-point, 10-assist performance with a go-ahead three-pointer in the final minute, and host New Orleans held on to beat Toronto.

Brandon Ingram added 31 points, capped by four free throws in the last 13 seconds, to seal the victory. Zion Williamson scored 21 points.

The Pelicans limited the Raptors to just one point during the final 2:47 of regulation.

Fred VanVleet scored 27 points and Chris Boucher added 24 for Toronto, which has

opened the season by losing four of its first five games.

Thunder 108, Magic 99: Darius Bazley had a season-high 19 points, George Hill scored 13 of his 18 points in the third quarter and Oklahoma City beat Orlando for its second road victory of the season.

The Thunder ended a three-game losing streak and bounced back nicely from a 33-point loss to New Orleans two nights earlier.

Orlando has dropped two straight after starting the season 4-0.

Rockets 102, Kings 94: John Wall scored 28 points and host Houston beat Sacramento despite playing without an injured James Harden.

Harden sat out with a sprained right ankle. He was not listed on the injury report.

Cavaliers 96, Hawks 91: Collin Sexton scored 27 points, Andre Drummond had 12 points and 11 rebounds and Cleveland wiped out a 15-point deficit in the third quarter and won at Atlanta.

No. 8 Texas romps at No. 3 Kansas

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Courtney Ramey scored 18 points to lead five Texas players in double-figures scoring, and the No. 8 Longhorns routed third-ranked Kansas 84-59 on Saturday to match the most lopsided win by an opponent in the history of Allen Fieldhouse.

Andrew Jones added 14 points, Matt Coleman III had 13 and Jericho Sims had 11 points and 12 rebounds for the Longhorns (8-1, 2-0 Big 12), who turned an eight-point halftime lead into a blowout in startling fashion.

The margin of victory was the most by an opponent in the Phog since Missouri's 91-66 victory on Feb. 1, 1989.

Jalen Wilson scored 20 points and Ochai Agbaji had 11 for the Jayhawks (8-2, 1-1), who shot 31% from the field and went just 3 of 23 from beyond the arc in losing their first game since their opener against top-ranked Gonzaga.

No. 1 Gonzaga 85, San Francisco 62: Corey Kispert scored 26 points on 9-for-11 shooting as the host Bulldogs opened their West Coast Conference schedule by beating the Dons.

Joel Ayayi added 18 points and Andrew Nembhard had 14 for Gonzaga (10-0, 1-0), which has won 44 consecutive home games — the longest streak in the nation. Drew Timme had 10 points and 11 rebounds.

Jamaree Bouyea scored 18 for San Francisco (7-5, 1-1), which has lost 20 consecutive games to the Bulldogs since 2012. The Dons were undone by poor shooting in the second half. Dzmitry Ryuny added 11 points.

Both teams shot well in the first half. San Francisco took a 14-13 lead, but the Zags replied with a 12-2 run to go up 25-16.

No. 2 Baylor 76, Iowa State 65: Jared Butler scored 21 points to lead four scorers in double figures and the Bears won on the road for their narrowest margin of victory this season.

Baylor (9-0, 2-0 Big 12) took seven of its previous eight games by at least 29 points, winning by an average of 32.8 points.

Alabama 71, No. 7 Tennessee 63: John Petty hit three critical three-pointers and finished with 19 points, leading the Crimson Tide to a stunning win on the road.

Alabama (7-3, 2-0 Southeastern Conference) turned a two-point halftime lead into a double-digit advantage midway through the second behind Petty's trio of threes and two more long-range makes by Joshua Primo.

Oklahoma 75, No. 9 West Virginia 71: Umoja Gibson made eight three-pointers and scored a season-high 29 points, and the host Sooners recovered after blowing an 18-point halftime lead.

Oklahoma (6-1, 2-1 Big 12) has won three straight and four of five against the Mountaineers (8-3, 1-2), including a season sweep in 2019-20. The Sooners also have won four of their last seven games against ranked opponents.

No. 10 Iowa 77, No. 14 Rutgers 75: Luka Garza had 25 points, 15 in the second half, and the Hawkeyes won on the road, thanks to the Scarlet Knights' free throw struggles.

Rutgers (7-2, 3-2 Big Ten) has struggled all season at the foul line this season, hitting just 62%. It went 4-for-12 against Iowa (9-2, 3-1 Big Ten), which was 18-for-23.

No. 11 Creighton 67, Providence 65:

Christian Bishop had a go-ahead dunk with 0.8 seconds left and the Bluejays held off a late rally to win on the road.

Marcus Zegarowski, who had the assist on Bishop's dunk, hit six three-pointers and had 20 points to help Creighton (8-2, 4-1 Big East) to its fourth straight victory.

No. 12 Missouri 81, Arkansas 68: Jeremiah Tilmon had 25 points and 11 rebounds, and the Mizzou handed the host Razorbacks their first loss of the season.

Tilmon eclipsed his season high in points during the first half and finished with a career high. He was joined in double figures by Xavier Pinson with 23 and Mark Smith with 11.

Oklahoma State 82, No. 13 Texas Tech 77, OT: Bryce Williams scored 15 points in his first start for the visiting Cowboys, including a steal and breakaway dunk in overtime.

Issac Likeleke and Avery Anderson III both had 17 points for the Oklahoma State (7-2, 1-2), which needed overtime after blowing an 11-point lead in the second half. The Cowboys lost their first two conference games by a combined five points.

No. 15 Illinois 66, Purdue 58: Kofi Cockburn had 14 points and 10 rebounds, Ayo Dosunmu scored 12 points and the Fighting Illini took a home win.

No. 17 Michigan State 84, Nebraska 77: Aaron Henry scored a career-high 27 points and the Spartans ended a three-game losing streak with a road victory.

No. 21 Oregon 73, Stanford 56: Chris Duarte scored 23 points and the host Ducks earned their eighth straight win.

Eugene Omoruyi added 15 points, and LJ Figueroa had 13 points and 12 rebounds.

Davis scores 26 points, leads Navy over Bucknell

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Cam Davis had 26 points as the Navy defeated Bucknell 78-69 in a Patriot League opening game for both teams.

Richard Njoku had 13 points and seven rebounds for the Midshipmen (4-1, 1-0). Daniel Deaver added 10 points. Greg Summers had eight points and 11 rebounds.

John Carter Jr., Navy's second leading scorer entering the contest at 14 points per game, failed to make a shot in eight attempts.

Andrew Funk had 16 points for the Bison (0-1, 0-1). Xander Rice added 13 points. Walter Ellis had 11 points.

Utah State 72, Air Force 53: Neemias Queta tallied 15 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Aggies to a road win.

Justin Bean had 15 points and seven rebounds for Utah State (7-3, 4-0 Mountain West Conference), which earned its sixth straight victory. Brock Miller added 13 points. Rollie Worster had 10 points. He also had seven turnovers but only three assists.

A.J. Walker had 19 points for the Falcons (3-5, 1-3). Chris Joyce added 11 points.

The Aggies improved to 2-0 against Air Force this season.

Utah State defeated the Falcons 83-48 last Thursday.

Colgate 101, Army 57: Nelly Cummings scored 24 points, tying his career high, as the Raiders opened their season on the road with a rout.

Cummings hit 4 of 6 three-pointers.

Both teams were playing their first Patriot League game of the season.

Tucker Richardson had 13 points and six assists for Colgate (1-0). Lonnie Grayson had nine points for the Black Knights (4-2).