

10K boosters given at Navy bases in Europe

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Navy medical personnel in southern Europe have injected more than 10,000 COVID-19 boosters to eligible adults and teens and vaccinated hundreds of children under the age of 12 in recent months since the shots were made available in the fall.

Bases in Spain, Italy and Greece reported strong turnout for COVID-19 boosters and pediatric doses of the vaccines with many base medical facilities offering multiple shot clinics in addition to scheduled or walk-in appointments.

"There has been a steady demand for COVID-19 boosters within our community since boosters were made available," U.S. Naval Hospital Sigonella in

Sicily said in a statement.

About 65% of shots given to adults 18 and older at southern Europe naval bases Nov. 1 through mid-January were of the Moderna vaccine followed by Pfizer at 34%, medical officials reported. Booster shots are urged by the Navy but not yet mandated.

Sigonella has given nearly 1,700 booster shots to adults 18 and older since Nov. 1 and administered 255 doses of the pediatric Pfizer vaccine to children ages 5-11, the hospital reported.

Officials did not offer details on the numbers of vaccinations or booster shots given to children ages 12-17. But in a Jan. 4 Facebook post Sigonella said booster shots were available for 16- and 17-year-olds and that it would later announce when

younger teens could get them.

At Naval Station Rota in Spain, more than 4,100 adults 18 and older received a booster shot over the same period. Another 200 booster shots were given to 16- and 17-year-olds, the base's hospital said. Nearly 500 doses of the pediatric vaccine were given to children ages 5-11. About 400 vaccinations were given to 12- to 17-year-olds, the data show.

Rota officials said it was hard to tell if a recent Navy directive urging sailors, their dependents and Defense Department civilians to get booster shots was influencing vaccination trends because the community's vaccination rates already were high.

Just more than 3,700 booster shots were given to adults since Nov. 1 at Naval Support Activity

Naples, medical officials there said. Forty-two booster doses were given to eligible 16- and 17-year-olds since U.S. Naval Hospital Naples began offering them Dec. 15.

Nearly 1,000 pediatric doses were administered to children ages 5-11 since Nov. 16, the hospital reported. Some 700 vaccinations were given to children ages 12-17 as of Jan. 11.

In Greece, Naval Support Activity Souda Bay reported that 342 booster vaccinations were given to adults 18 and older. The dependent restricted base gave just one booster dose to a teen and was scheduled to begin offering pediatric vaccinations to 5-11 year olds last week. Twenty vaccinations were administered to children ages 12-17, officials said.

Flights sent to assess Tonga status after volcanic eruption

Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — New Zealand and Australia were able to send military surveillance flights to Tonga on Monday to assess the damage a huge undersea volcanic eruption left in the Pacific island nation.

A towering ash cloud since Saturday's eruption had prevented earlier flights. New Zealand hopes to send essential supplies, including much-needed drinking water, on a military transport plane Tuesday.

No casualties have been confirmed on Tonga, although a British woman was reported missing.

The U.K. Foreign Office said Monday it was "supporting the family of a British woman reported missing in Tonga and are in contact with the local authorities."

Relatives of Angela Glover, who ran an animal rescue center in Tonga's capital, said she has not been seen since she was swept away by a tsunami wave. Her husband, James, survived by clinging to a tree.

Communications with Tonga remained extremely limited. The company that owns the single underwater fiber-optic cable that connects the island nation to the rest of the world said it was likely severed in the eruption and that repairs could take weeks.

The loss of the cable leaves most Tongans unable to use the internet or make phone calls abroad. Those that have managed to get messages out described their country as looking like a moonscape as they began cleaning up from the tsunami waves and volcanic ash fall.

N. Korea continues launches, fires 2 projectiles to its east

Stars and Stripes

North Korea launched two suspected short-range ballistic missiles Monday morning off its eastern coast, according to the South Korean military.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, in a series of messages to reporters, said the projectiles were fired at 8:50 a.m. and 8:54 a.m. from Sunan airport in Pyongyang. They reached a peak altitude of 26 miles and flew over 236 miles.

The launches come three days after the North test-fired what is thought to be a pair of short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea/Sea of Japan. Pyongyang claimed on Saturday that those projectiles had been launched from a train.

Days earlier, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was pre-

sent when his country test-fired a "hypersonic" ballistic missile off the eastern coast, according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency. That missile, launched at 7:27 a.m. last Tuesday, reached speeds of Mach 10, or 10 times the speed of sound, and was more advanced than one test-fired Jan. 5, South Korea's Defense Ministry said.

Last Tuesday's missile reached a peak altitude of 37 miles and flew over 435 miles.

President Joe Biden's administration sanctioned five North Korean officials in response to those launches. The Treasury Department announced Wednesday it was penalizing the officials for helping to obtain equipment and technology for Pyongyang's missile programs.

Celebrated Tuskegee Airman dies at 102

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Charles McGee, a Tuskegee Airman who flew 409 fighter combat missions over three wars and later helped to bring attention to the Black pilots who had battled racism at home to fight for freedom abroad, died Sunday. He was 102.

McGee died in his sleep at his home in Bethesda, Md., said his son, Ron McGee.

After the U.S. entry into World War II, McGee left the University of Illinois to join an experimental program for Black soldiers seeking to train as pilots after the Army Air Corps was forced to admit African Americans. In October 1942, he was sent to the Tuskegee

Army Air Field in Alabama for flight training, according to his biography on the website of the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

“You could say that one of the things we were fighting for was equality,” he told The Associated Press in a 1995 interview. “Equality of opportunity. We knew we had the same skills, or better.”

McGee graduated from flight school in June 1943 and in early 1944 joined the all-Black 332nd Fighter Group, known as the “Red Tails.” He flew 136 missions as the group accompanied bombers over Europe.

More than 900 men trained at Tuskegee from 1940 to 1946.

About 450 deployed overseas and 150 lost their lives in training or combat.

In recent years, the Tuskegee Airmen have been the subject of books, movies and documentaries highlighting their courage in the air and the doubts they faced on the ground because of their race. In 2007, a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award from Congress, was issued to recognize their “unique military record that inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces.”

McGee remained in the Army Air Corps, later the U.S. Air Force, and served for 30 years. He flew low-level bombing and

strafing missions during the Korean War and returned to combat again during the Vietnam War. The National Aviation Hall of Fame says his 409 aerial fighter combat missions in three wars remains a record.

He retired as a colonel in the Air Force in 1973, then earned a college degree in business administration and worked as a business executive. He was accorded an honorary commission promoting him to the one-star rank of brigadier general as he turned 100. Another event marked his centennial year: He flew a private jet between Frederick, Md., and Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

Milley, Berger test positive for COVID-19

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley has tested positive for COVID-19 and is experiencing very minor symptoms, a spokesperson said Monday. The Marine Corps said its commandant, Gen. David Berger, also has COVID-19.

Milley, who has received the vaccine and

a booster shot, tested positive on Sunday, Joint Chiefs spokesperson Col. Dave Butler said in a statement. Milley was isolating himself and working remotely from a location where he can perform all his duties, Butler said.

The Marine Corps said in a statement that Berger also tested positive, giving no other details except to say his ability to work is un-

affected. Other Joint Chiefs of Staff members tested negative, Butler said.

Milley’s most recent contact with President Joe Biden was on Wednesday at the funeral of Gen. Ray Odierno, who died of cancer in October. Milley, 63, tested negative several days before the contact with Biden and every day after until Sunday, the Joint Chiefs statement said.

Omicron fallout, tough labor talks could rattle supply chains

The Washington Post

Worker shortages caused by the omicron coronavirus variant and haggling over a new dockworkers contract are likely to aggravate costly supply chain jams over the next several months, clouding prospects for quick relief from the highest inflation in four decades.

The White House said the worst supply snarls may be in the past, noting that key Southern California ports are shrinking their cargo backlogs and transpacific shipping costs have plunged by more than one-third from their mid-September

peak.

But the cost of sending a standard metal container from China to the U.S. West Coast remains more than three times what it was one year ago and is expected to remain elevated through the first half of the year, fueling painful annual inflation readings, according to the Freightos index and industry executives.

Freight is taking longer than ever to cross the Pacific, with goods requiring an average of 113 days to travel from Chinese factory gates to American hands, according to data from

Flexport, a freight forwarder. On Friday, the floating traffic jam of container ships waiting to enter the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach numbered a near-record 106 vessels, according to the Marine Exchange of Southern California, a nonprofit maritime group.

“If anything, it’s getting worse,” said Phil Levy, Flexport’s chief economist. “I don’t think there’s any reason to be sounding the all-clear at this stage.”

In a statement Thursday, Cecilia Rouse, head of the president’s Council of Economic Ad-

visers, cited “potential improvement in prices for supply-chain related goods and services” in December as contributing to the smallest increase in wholesale prices in more than a year.

Likewise, the administration claims “very significant progress” on getting goods to move faster through major ports, National Economic Council Director Brian Deese told reporters this past week, citing a 40% decline in the amount of time that containers are sitting on docks in places such as Los Angeles and Savannah, Ga.

Oath Keepers prepared for Jan. 6 for weeks

Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. — Two days after the election on Nov. 3, 2020, the Oath Keepers were already convinced that victory had been stolen from President Donald Trump and members of the far-right militia group were making plans to march on the U.S. Capitol.

“We aren’t getting through this without a civil war,” the group’s leader, Stewart Rhodes, wrote fellow members, according to court documents. “Too late for that. Prepare your mind. body. spirit.”

Four days later, when The Associated Press and other news outlets declared Democrat Joe Biden the winner, the documents say Rhodes told Oath Keepers to “refuse to accept it and march en masse on the nation’s Capitol.”

The indictment last week of Rhodes, the leader of the Oath Keepers, and 10 other members or associates was stunning in part because federal prosecutors, after a year of investigating the insurrection of Jan. 6, 2021, charged them with seditious conspiracy, a rarely-used Civil War-era statute reserved for only the most serious of political criminals.

But the documents also show how quickly Trump’s most fervent and dangerous supporters mobilized to subvert the election results through force and violence, even though there was no widespread election fraud and Trump’s Cabinet and local election officials said the vote had been free and fair.

Elmer Stewart Rhodes III, 56, founded the Oath Keepers in 2009. He and some friends decided they would form an organization around the perception of “imminent tyranny,” concerned about federal overreach and a series of unrecognized threats, like the government was planning to attack its own citizens. He recruited current and former military, police and first responders.

He has said there were about

40,000 Oath Keepers at its peak; one extremism expert estimates the group’s membership stands at about 3,000 nationally. Members pledge to “fulfill the oath all military and police take to ‘defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic,’” according to its website.

Their motto: “Not on our watch!”

When it looked like Trump was going to lose the 2020 presidential election to Biden, the Oath Keepers got to work, prosecutors said.

On Nov. 9, 2020, Rhodes instructed his followers during a GoToMeeting call to go to Washington to let Trump know “that the people are behind him,” and he expressed hope that Trump would call up the militia to help stay in power, authorities say.

“It will be a bloody and desperate fight,” Rhodes warned. “We are going to have a fight. That can’t be avoided.”

On Dec. 14, 2020, as the electors in the states cast their votes, Rhodes published a letter on the Oath Keepers’ website “advocating for the use of force to stop the lawful transfer of presidential power,” according to the documents.

As that transition in Washington drew close, Oath Keepers spoke of an arsenal they would keep just a few minutes away and grab if needed. Rhodes is accused of spending \$15,500 on firearms and related equipment including a shotgun, AR-15, mounts, triggers, scopes and magazines, prosecutors said.

Others came prepared, too.

“Everyone coming has their own technical equipment and knows how to use it,” wrote Edward Vallejo, who was also charged in the conspiracy.

Oath Keepers staged the guns in hotels just outside of the District of Columbia. Rhodes said they were “QRFs” — military-speak for quick reaction force, according to court papers.

On the morning of Jan. 6, 2021, Vallejo and others were on a pod-

cast discussing the possibility of armed conflict. Members turned up wearing camouflaged combat attire and in helmets. They entered the Capitol with the large crowds of rioters who stormed past police barriers and smashed windows, injuring dozens of officers and sending lawmakers running.

The indictment against Rhodes alleges Oath Keepers formed two teams, or “stacks,” a military term. The first stack split up inside the building to separately go after the House and Senate. The second stack confronted officers inside the Capitol Rotunda, the indictment said.

The building was breached. The congressional certification had stopped. Rumors circulated that the left-wing antifa had breached the seat of American democracy.

“Nope. I’m right here, these are Patriots,” Rhodes wrote to his leadership group in a secure chat.

“All I see Trump doing is complaining,” Rhodes wrote, according to prosecutors. “I see no attempt by him to do anything. So the patriots are taking it in their own hands. They’ve had enough.”

One of the stacks hunted for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., but could not find her. Members of Congress were cowering in fear and Pelosi had been sent to a secure location. The siege continued for hours, until law enforcement finally gained control.

“We are acting like the founding fathers,” one wrote in the throes of the melee. “Can’t stand down.”

An Oath Keeper was the first defendant to plead guilty in the Jan. 6 melee. Jon Ryan Schaffer also agreed to cooperate with the government’s investigation and the Justice Department has promised to consider putting him in the witness security program, suggesting it saw him as a valuable cooperator in the probe.

Other cracks in the group are

showing. Before his arrest, Rhodes sought to distance himself from those who have been arrested, insisting the members went rogue and there was never a plan to enter the Capitol.

After the riot, the North Carolina Oath Keepers branch said it was splitting from Rhodes’ group. Its president told The News Reporter newspaper it wouldn’t be “a part of anything that terrorizes anybody or goes against law enforcement.”

A leader of an Arizona chapter also slammed Rhodes and those facing charges, saying on CBS’ “60 Minutes” that the attack “goes against everything we’ve ever taught, everything we believe in.”

For a long time, it didn’t look as though Rhodes would be charged. More than a dozen of his members were arrested on conspiracy accusations, and Rhodes was referred to in their indictments as “Person One.”

But as the months wore on it seemed increasingly unlikely anyone would face anything more serious like sedition — when two or more people in the United States conspire to “overthrow, put down, or to destroy by force” the government, or to levy war against it, or to oppose by force and try to prevent the execution of any law. That’s in part because such charges are rarely used and hard to win.

So far, more than 700 people have been charged. Most face lower-level crimes of entering a restricted building. About 150 people have been charged with assaulting police officers at the Capitol. And members of another far-right group the Proud Boys have been indicted on simple conspiracy charges that bring five years behind bars if convicted.

Rhodes was arrested Thursday and faced a judge on Friday who ordered him held in custody. After the hearing, his lawyers said he entered a not guilty plea and plans to fight the charges against him.

Biden: Americans must commit to MLK's work

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Americans must commit to the unfinished work of Martin Luther King Jr., delivering jobs and justice and protecting “the sacred right to vote, a right from which all other rights flow,” President Joe Biden said Monday.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is a moment when a mirror is being held up to America, the president said in a video address.

“It’s time for every elected official in America to make it clear where they stand,” Biden said. “It’s time for every American to stand up. Speak out, be heard. Where do you stand?”

Major events for the holiday also included the annual Martin Luther King Jr. service at the slain civil rights leader’s Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, whose senior pastor, U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, was hosting

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp and other politicians. Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and members of King’s family were offering remarks in Washington.

Monday would have been the 93rd birthday of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who was just 39 when he was assassinated in 1968 while helping sanitation workers strike for better pay and workplace safety in Memphis, Tenn.

King, who delivered his historic “I Have a Dream” speech while leading the 1963 March on Washington and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, considered racial equality inseparable from alleviating poverty and stopping war. His insistence on nonviolent protest continues to influence activists pushing for civil rights and social change.

The U.S. economy “has never

worked fairly for Black Americans — or, really, for any American of color,” Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a speech delivered Monday, one of many by national leaders acknowledging unmet needs for racial equality on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Yellen referred to King’s famous speech in remarks she recorded for delivery at the Rev. Al Sharpton’s National Action Network breakfast in Washington, noting the financial metaphor he used when describing the founding fathers’ promises of equality.

King said on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial that “America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned.” He called it “a bad check, a check which has come back marked insufficient funds. But we refuse to believe the bank of justice is

bankrupt!”

“It is compelling rhetoric, but I also think Dr. King knew it was a more than a metaphor. He knew that economic injustice was bound up in the larger injustice he fought against. From Reconstruction, to Jim Crow, to the present day, our economy has never worked fairly for Black Americans — or, really, for any American of color,” Yellen said.

She said the administration of President Joe Biden has sought to ensure that no economic institution fails to work for people of color. Equity was built into the American Rescue Plan so that communities of color would get pandemic relief, and Treasury is injecting \$9 billion into Community Development Financial Institutions and Minority Depository Institutions traditionally poorly served by the financial sector.

Winter storm that hit US South reaches Northeast

From wire reports

A major winter storm, which at one point left as many as 80 million under winter weather alerts from Mississippi to Maine, moved into the northeast United States on a holiday Monday.

The storm brought significant snowfall, strong thunderstorms and blustery winds.

The National Weather Service predicted Monday heavy snowfall over parts of the Lower Great Lakes, Central Appalachians and the Northeast, along with rain over southern and northern New England and possible flooding along the eastern coastline. A foot of snow was forecast for parts of New England, New York state, Ohio and Pennsylvania through Tuesday morning.

Forecasters in Buffalo, N.Y., said the snow was falling fast, dumping more than 16 inches by 8 a.m. The city advised people not to travel if they didn’t need to,

while some surrounding towns instituted a travel ban.

“WOW! (Latest) snow measurement at 1 AM was 4.6 inches in the last hour at the Buffalo Airport!” the National Weather Service in Buffalo tweeted overnight. “And tack on another 4 inches in the last hour ending at 2 AM! Total so far since late Sun evening - 10.2 inches.”

“We’ve had a very strong area of low pressure that’s kind of moved up the coast, with pretty heavy snowfall accumulations from Tennessee, North Carolina all the way into the northeast,” said meteorologist Marc Chenard at the weather service’s headquarters in College Park, Md.

After dumping up to a foot of snow across the Upper Midwest and Corn Belt on Friday and slipping into the Mid-South on Saturday, a mix of frozen precipitation spread up the eastern seaboard by Sunday night.

China rejects ‘Cold War mentality,’ pushes unity

Associated Press

GENEVA — Chinese President Xi Jinping called Monday for greater world cooperation against COVID-19 and pledged to send an additional 1 billion doses of the coronavirus vaccine to other countries, while urging other powers to discard a “Cold-War mentality” at a time of rising geopolitical tensions — a veiled swipe at the United States.

The Chinese leader touted his country’s efforts to share vaccines, fight climate change and promote development at home and abroad as he delivered the opening speech of a virtual gathering hosted by the World Economic Forum. The online event is being held in place of its annual January meeting in Davos, Switzerland, because of health concerns linked to the pandemic.

He touched on standard

themes from his previous talks to international audiences, including responding to complaints by China’s trading partners by promising to open its state-dominated economy wider to private and foreign competition.

His comments come as tensions between the U.S. and China have simmered on dossiers as diverse as Taiwan, intellectual property, trade, human rights and the South China Sea.

“We need to discard Cold War mentality and seek peaceful coexistence and win-win outcomes. Our world today is far from being tranquil,” said Xi, through a translator. “Protectionism and unilateralism can protect no one. They ultimately hurt the interests of others as well as one’s own. Even worse are the practices of hegemony and bullying, which run counter to the tide of history.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

3-year-old boy finds loaded gun, shoots self

AL BIRMINGHAM — Authorities are investigating after a 3-year-old boy accidentally shot himself in an unincorporated community in Alabama.

Jefferson County sheriff's deputies received a 911 call at 8:30 p.m. Friday and responded to a residence in Forestdale, said Deputy Chief David Agee. When they arrived, they found the toddler had sustained a gunshot wound to the leg, al.com reported.

Agee said the initial report is that the boy found a family member's loaded gun and accidentally shot himself. He is expected to survive.

1st female pilot in state history given marker

NH MILFORD — There's a new historical highway marker in New Hampshire honoring the first woman in the state who piloted a plane and was the first female commercial pilot in New England.

The marker honoring Bernice Blake Perry has been installed near the Milford Rotary Centennial Park on Route 101A.

Perry became the first woman to pilot a plane in New Hampshire in 1929. She was a charter member of the Ninety-Nines, a group of female pilots led by Amelia Earhart. She became known in the 1930s for her aerial photography, including site mapping to help develop New Hampshire airports, the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources said in a news release.

Perry, who died in 1996 at age 91, was also a philanthropist.

Boy, 13, dies days after overdosing at school

CT HARTFORD — A 13-year-old boy who apparently overdosed on the opioid fentanyl while in school died Saturday, police said.

The seventh-grade student from the Sports and Medical Science Academy in Hartford had been hospitalized since Thursday morning.

Two other students at the public school were sickened after apparently being exposed to the drug. Both recovered.

Police said the 13-year-old died shortly after 5:30 p.m. Saturday. His name has not been released because of his age.

Officer shoots teen who drew gun after chase

FL MIAMI — A Miami-Dade County police sergeant shot and critically wounded a 15-year-old early Sunday after the boy allegedly drew a gun on the officer during a chase.

According to police, the 15-year-old was driving a car carrying others when detectives assigned to a task force aimed at preventing violent crime tried to pull him over. The driver tried to flee, but soon crashed and the occupants took off running.

The sergeant took off after the driver, who police said was armed with a handgun. A confrontation ensued and the sergeant shot the boy, police said. He was transported to a hospital in critical condition. The officer was not injured.

Police said a handgun was re-

covered at the scene and an assault rifle was found in the car.

Drive-thru worker, 16, shot through window

AZ PHOENIX — A 16-year-old working a fast-food restaurant's drive-thru window was shot and critically wounded by a customer following an argument about an order, Phoenix police said Saturday.

After the argument Friday evening, the customer walked up to the window, pulled out a handgun and shot the employee working inside the restaurant, police said in a statement.

The gunman got into the passenger side of a vehicle that then drove off, but officers later arrested Theotis Polk, 27, the statement said.

Jail records said Polk was booked on multiple charges.

2 child care workers charged with child abuse

CA RANCHO CUCAMONGA — Two inland Southern California child care workers have been arrested on suspicion of child abuse after an 8-month-old boy was brought to a hospital with skull fracture, authorities said.

An investigation began after the boy who attended Kiddie Academy in Rancho Cucamonga was hospitalized last September, San Bernardino County sheriff's officials said in a news release.

Two Kiddie Academy employees, women ages 29 and 50, face charges including child abuse and conspiracy. The two conspired to conceal the child's injuries and neglected his well-

being, sheriff's officials said.

Worker fatally shoots stabbing assailant

MI DETROIT — A restaurant employee was stabbed before fatally shooting his attacker early Sunday morning in downtown Detroit, police said.

Detroit police said there was an altercation between the employee at Prime + Proper restaurant and the person who ultimately stabbed him about 12:10 a.m. Sunday. The restaurant employee then shot the 52-year-old attacker, police said.

No arrests have been announced, WDIV-TV reported. The stabbing victim was in stable condition, police said. No other injuries were reported.

Amtrak conductor dies after falling from train

RI WESTERLY — An Amtrak conductor was killed Saturday after falling from a train at a station in Westerly, police said.

The conductor is believed to have fallen off the train as it was leaving the station, WJAR-TV reported. The train was stopped to search for the conductor after staff realized she was not answering her radio.

The woman's body was found on the tracks north of the Westerly station, police said.

A Twitter account for the company's Northeast Corridor said around 3 p.m. that a train was stopped in Westerly "due to emergency personnel activity." It later said the train's passengers were given alternate transportation on another train.

— From wire reports

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49ers continue Cowboys' playoff blues

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Kyle Shanahan walked onto the field with an emphatic nod, believing his San Francisco 49ers had beaten the Dallas Cowboys in a chaotic wild card finish that left many not sure what was happening.

The official word came a short time later.

Deebo Samuel ran 26 yards for a touchdown for a comfortable lead in the third quarter before the Cowboys rallied and ran out of time trying to get a final play in the 49ers' 23-17 victory Sunday.

"I'm still trying to figure out where I'm at," Shanahan said after coaching San Francisco's first playoff victory at Dallas in a storied postseason rivalry. "It's pretty emotional out there. Lots of opportunities to win the game. Those guys (Cowboys) just kept fighting. We made a couple mistakes there at the end. We shouldn't have let it get there."

The 49ers (11-7) overcame an interception by Jimmy Garoppolo when they led by 13 in the fourth quarter, and are now headed to a divisional playoff next Saturday night at Green Bay two years after reaching the Super Bowl and losing to Kansas City.

The wait for Dallas (12-6) to reach even an NFC championship game will tick up to 27 years after another first-game flameout in

the postseason for Dak Prescott, the second in three trips over six seasons for the star quarterback. It was his first playoff game since signing a \$40-million-a-year contract in the offseason.

Prescott ran for a touchdown to get the Cowboys within a score after Garoppolo's interception, and he had plenty of time to get his team in front for the first time on a drive that ended near midfield. His desperation fourth-down pass was just out of receiver Cedrick Wilson's reach.

A 14th penalty from the NFL's most-penalized team in the regular season helped San Francisco run out most of the clock, and the 49ers intended to go for the win on fourth down when a run from Samuel ended up short — after the ball was nudged up on review.

Instead, San Francisco punted after a false start, giving Dallas one more chance. Without enough time, as it turned out.

The Cowboys started at their 20 with 32 seconds to go. Wilson pitched to CeeDee Lamb on a hook-and-ladder play for 20 yards, and Dalton Schultz gained 9 yards before getting out of bounds with 14 seconds remaining.

Prescott took off on a designed run and slid at the end of a 17-yard run, with about eight seconds to go. Umpire Ramon George

bumped Prescott trying to set the spot. The snap from the 49ers' 24 came after time expired.

Dallas coach Mike McCarthy suggested Prescott was slowed by the collision with George, and that a sideline official assured him the play was being reviewed.

"The communication that I was given on the sideline was they were reviewing it," McCarthy said. "They were going to put time back on the clock. And the next thing I know, they're running off the field."

Players from both teams streamed onto the field immediately after Prescott took the snap and spiked the ball, and many did a U-turn as officials discussed the play. Then referee Alex Kemp announced the game was over.

"It was like the whole day, it really was," Garoppolo said of the final sequence. "It was a dogfight, hell of an atmosphere out here."

As was the case most of the season, the Cowboys couldn't get the running game going with Ezekiel Elliott. The two-time rushing champion had 31 yards on 12 carries as Dallas was outgained 169-77 on the ground.

Prescott was 23-for-43 for 254 yards. Garoppolo, whose future with San Francisco is uncertain with rookie Trey Lance waiting his turn, was 16 of 25 for 172 yards.

Buccaneers dominate Eagles in wild-card romp

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — As the game clock expired, Tom Brady raised his arms in triumph along the sideline, whirled and tossed a football into the stands.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers and their jubilant 44-year-old quarterback took the first step on what they hope will be a journey back to the Super Bowl, dominating the Philadelphia Eagles 31-15 in a NFC wild-card playoff victory Sunday.

"It only gets tougher from here," said the seven-time Super Bowl winner, who's trying to help the Bucs become the first team to repeat as NFL champions since the Brady-led New England Patriots won back-to-back titles in the 2003 and 2004 seasons.

Tampa Bay (14-4) set the tem-

po from the start, with Brady leading a pair of long TD drives in the opening quarter and building the lead to 17-0 by halftime.

The three-time league MVP finished off the Eagles with TD passes of 2 yards to Rob Gronkowski and 36 yards to Mike Evans, improving his dazzling playoff record to 35-11 in a record 46 postseason starts.

The Bucs defense did its part, too, intercepting Jalen Hurts twice in the Philadelphia quarterback's playoff debut.

"We did some good things," Brady said. "I think we're just going to have to keep doing what we did today. Everyone's got to touch it, make some explosive plays. Did a good job possessing it, the defense played great, so it was a great team win. Special

teams played awesome — one of the best days we had on special teams all year."

Brady completed 29 of 37 attempts without an interception while extending his postseason record for TD passes to 85.

But Tampa Bay had matters well in hand before the reigning Super Bowl MVP found Gronkowski wide open in the middle of the end zone to make it 24-0 midway through the third quarter. The 6-foot-5 Evans punctuated his TD catch for a 31-0 lead with a front flip over the goal line.

Brady targeted Evans 10 times, completing nine of the throws for 117 yards. He's 5-0 in postseason games since joining the Bucs in 2020 after 20 seasons with the Patriots.

"I don't ever take it for grant-

ed," Evans said of Brady's leadership. "When he came to this team, I knew he was going to change the franchise. He's done that and then some. He makes sure we're always ready to play. He makes sure that we know what we're doing and he makes sure that we give it our all. That's all you can ask for."

The Eagles (9-9) scored on Boston Scott's 34-yard run and Hurts' 16-yard TD pass to Kenneth Gainwell, both in the fourth quarter. A 2-point conversion trimmed Philadelphia's deficit to 16 with 4:45 remaining, but that was as close as it would get.

"We didn't play good enough today, I didn't play good enough today," said Hurts, who was wearing a protective boot on his left foot after the game.

Mahomes leads Chiefs to wild-card rout of Steelers

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Kansas City was going nowhere on offense against Pittsburgh early Sunday night, so coach Andy Reid had wide receiver Mecole Hardman take a shotgun snap and hand off to running back Darrel Williams on a trick play.

Their exchange hit the ground, T.J. Watt picked it up and returned the fumble for a touchdown.

It was precisely the kind of play that should have energized the heavy underdogs, playing in a tough environment on the road, but it wound up doing something else entirely: It ticked off Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes.

He proceeded to throw for 404 yards and five scores, leading Kansas City to the end zone on six straight possessions after the turnover, and the Chiefs cruised through the second half for a 42-21 wild-card victory over the Steelers.

“We were all pissed at ourselves,” Mahomes said. “We weren’t playing with enough energy. We weren’t playing at a high enough level. We all motivated ourselves. Everyone was talking to each other, and we came out with a different urgency.”

Byron Pringle caught touchdown passes from both Mahomes and Kelce, and Jerick McKinnon and Tyreek Hill also had scoring catches, while Kansas City (13-5) shut down the retiring Ben Roethlisberger and the Pittsburgh offense.

The performance not only sent the Chiefs into the divisional round of the playoffs, but it

also turned next Sunday night’s game against Buffalo — a rematch of last year’s AFC title game — into appointment viewing. The Bills had a similarly easy time with their 47-17 victory over New England on Saturday.

Roethlisberger, who acknowledged the Steelers (9-8-1) were “not a very good football team” this week, wasn’t very good in his own right. The 39-year-old quarterback was 29-for-44 for 215 yards with two meaningless TD passes late in the game, providing the coda to a career that includes six Pro Bowl trips and two Super Bowl wins.

Judging by the final score, you’d never guess the first quarter was all about defense: Pittsburgh ran 14 plays and went 12 yards, while Kansas City had more punt return yards (70) than it had from scrimmage (62).

After the Steelers punted for a fifth straight time, the Chiefs inexplicably had Hardman take a snap rather than their four-time Pro Bowl quarterback. Williams bobbled the exchange, Watt grabbed the fumble and the Steelers had a 7-0 lead.

It didn’t last long.

Mahomes responded by completing his next six passes, capping a 76-yard drive with a nifty underhand flick to McKinnon that tied it. Then the brilliant young quarterback found Pringle in the corner of the end zone for a score, and he put an exclamation mark on the half by hitting Kelce with a 48-yard touchdown strike.

In the span of less than six minutes, Mahomes and the Chiefs had turned a seven-point deficit into a 21-7 lead.

Retirement now awaits Steelers’ Roethlisberger after loss in KC

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger raised some eyebrows ahead of their wild-card game against the defending AFC champion Chiefs on Sunday night when he admitted that “we probably aren’t supposed to be here.”

He wasn’t wrong.

After taking an early lead on T.J. Watt’s fumble return for a touchdown, the Steelers watched Patrick Mahomes guide the Chiefs to five straight touchdown drives. So by the time Roethlisberger finally led Pittsburgh past midfield for the first time, midway through the third quarter, the outcome of what’s likely his final game was already decided.

The Chiefs advanced to face Buffalo in the divisional round next Sunday night with a 42-21 blowout of the Steelers.

It was Pittsburgh’s fourth straight loss in the playoffs — the Steelers’ last win came in the divisional round in Kansas City almost five years ago to the day — and they trailed by at least 21 points in each of them. Two of those defeats came at home when Pittsburgh was a heavy favorite, including a wild card loss to the Browns last season.

“As opposed to coming in here and talking about the things we didn’t do, I’d just expressed it to the football team,” Roethlisberger said, “I think the classy thing to do is compliment the Kansas City Chiefs. They have a really good football team, they have an explosive football team, and they did a really good job tonight.”

Osaka, Nadal advance after Djokovic leaves Australia

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — The first test of Naomi Osaka’s new approach to tennis might have been when she completely whiffed an overhead to give her opponent a break point on Day 1 of the no-Novak Djokovic Australian Open.

Osaka didn’t throw her racket. She didn’t roll her eyes. She smiled.

“There are situations where I previously would get upset. But at this point in my life, like, I’m here because I want to be here and because I find that it’s fun for me,” Osaka said. “Might as well enjoy it while I still

can.”

In Osaka’s mind, the drama involving nine-time champion Djokovic’s deportation on the eve of the tournament was something for the players in the men’s draw to worry about. Her title defense began smoothly enough: She won the first five games on the way to a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Camila Osorio.

With so much attention on the 11-day saga of Djokovic’s attempt to participate in the year’s first Grand Slam tournament, the returns of Osaka and Rafael Nadal have been overshadowed.

Osaka wasn’t bothered by that. Nadal

didn’t seem to be put off by it, either, renewing his bid for a record 21st Grand Slam singles title with a 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 win over Marcos Giron.

Nadal is tied with Djokovic and Roger Federer with 20 major singles titles each, the most in the history of men’s tennis. With Djokovic unable to defend his crown in Melbourne because he didn’t meet Australia’s strict COVID-19 vaccination criteria, the door is slightly more ajar to Nadal.

Osaka’s main concern, meanwhile, is winning a third Australian title in four years.

McGee, Booker shine in homecoming rout

Associated Press

DETROIT — Devin Booker scored 30 points and JaVale McGee added 20 in their Michigan homecomings to help the NBA-leading Phoenix Suns rout the Detroit Pistons 135-108 on Sunday.

"I was just hitting shots and the guys were getting me the ball in good places," said Booker, from Grand Rapids. "I never got to see the Pistons play in person very often — I grew up about two hours west of here — so I love coming here to play what was my favorite team growing up."

Booker made 11 of his first 14 shots from the field. He said he had 40-50 friends and family at the game after having numerous guests when the Suns played in Indiana on Friday night.

"Because of the pandemic, I didn't get to have anything like normal interaction with my family," Booker said. "But at least I got to see them and I got to wave to a lot of friends. That's better than what we've been getting."

McGee, from Flint, also had a large contingent of family and friends at the game. He was 9-for-10 from the field, taking over after Phoenix starting center DeAndre Ayton left in the first quarter because of a sprained ankle.

Cameron Payne also had 20 points for the Suns, shooting 8 of 12. Phoenix has won the first three games on its four-game trip and six of seven to improve to 33-9. It is an NBA-best 16-4 on the road.

"We had two 39-point quarters, so we were obviously hitting shots," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "Detroit wears teams out by getting into the paint and getting to the line, and we were able to stay away from a lot

of that."

Pistons rookie Cade Cunningham had 21 points before being ejected in the third quarter.

Cory Joseph also had 21 points for Detroit. The Pistons are 5-4 in 2022 after finishing 2021 with 18 losses in 19 games.

"That's a championship-tier team, and we're not at that level yet," Detroit coach Dwane Casey said. "We know that, and there's not much we can do about it right now. When we did things well, they were able to match us. Playing teams like that is how a young team learns to win."

Phoenix built a 64-54 halftime lead behind 21 points from Booker, and McGee scored eight points in the first three minutes of the third to push the margin to 15.

Jazz 125, Nuggets 102: Rudy Gobert had 18 points and 19 rebounds in his return to Utah's lineup, Donovan Mitchell scored 31 points and the Jazz won at Denver.

Gobert missed the previous five games after testing positive for COVID-19. Bojan Bogdanovic finished with 21 points to help Utah end a four-game skid.

Nikola Jokic had 25 points, 15 rebounds and 14 assists for the Nuggets for his second triple-double in two days. He tied the Los Angeles Lakers' Russell Westbrook for the most in the NBA this season with nine, and has 66 in his career.

Rockets 118, Kings 112: Christian Wood had 23 points and 14 rebounds, Eric Gordon made a clutch bucket with 12.5 seconds left and Houston won at Sacramento to split a two-game set.

Buddy Hield scored 27 points for the Kings.

No. 14 Villanova routs Butler for 6th straight win

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Collin Gillespie hit five three-pointers and scored 17 points, and Justin Moore scored 15 points to lead No. 14 Villanova to its sixth straight win, 82-42 over Butler on Sunday.

The Wildcats (13-4, 6-1 Big East) are rolling again since dropping their conference opener and never let the Bulldogs get comfortable at the Wells Fargo Center.

Butler (9-7, 2-3) had given coach Jay Wright's team fits more than any other team in the Big East since 2016. The Bulldogs' five wins over that span were the most of any team against Villanova over that span.

No. 16 Ohio State 61, Penn State 56: E.J. Liddell scored 19 points and the host Buckeyes defeated the Nittany Lions.

Ohio State (11-4, 5-2 Big Ten) won despite shooting just 38.6% overall and going the final 5:07 without a basket.

Penn State (8-7, 3-4) pulled within four with seven seconds to go.

Navy 72, Boston University 65: Patrick Dorsey had 12 points off the bench to lead the visiting Midshipmen to a win over the Terriers.

Jaylen Walker had 11 points for Navy (12-5, 5-1 Patriot League), which won for a fourth straight time on the road.

Sukhmail Mathon scored a career-high 24 points and had 14 rebounds for Boston University (11-8, 2-4).

Lafayette 68, Army 54: Leo O'Boyle scored a team-high 16 points to lead the host Leopards to a Patriot League win.

The Black Knights (10-8, 4-2 Patriot League) had won four of the last five against Lafayette (4-11, 1-3 Patriot League), but it was the teams' first meeting since the 2019-20 season. Army was led by Jalen Rucker with 15 points.

Canucks take out Capitals, snap 3-game losing skid

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Elias Pettersson insisted he never worried throughout a monthlong drought about when his next goal would come.

"Sometimes it just doesn't go your way," he said. "I know what I'm capable of."

The gifted Swede showed Sunday what he's capable of, scoring twice to help the Vancouver Canucks beat the Washington Capitals 4-2 and snap a three-game losing streak. Petters-

son had two goals in the first five minutes of the second period after not scoring the past seven games dating to Dec. 14 against Columbus.

"Whether they went in off his head or great shots like he had, it didn't matter," coach Bruce Boudreau said after beating the team he got his first NHL job with in 2007. "We don't have a lot of natural scorers on our team, so him scoring or starting to score, hopefully it's not an anomaly and a one-off and he can con-

tinue to do this, and that'll make it an awful lot easier on us."

Pettersson's goals came 4:15 apart early in the second, the first on the power play and second at even strength to get the Canucks on the board and give them the lead. Thatcher Demko made sure they kept the lead, making a left pad save to stop Daniel Sprong all alone in tight and gobbling up a shot from Alex Ovechkin, who scored on the power play in the first.